

To: Leader and Members of the Executive Board

(Councillors D Wright, Barnett, Bell, Clews, Jackson, H Phillips, Reilly, Ridley, Ririe, Simpson, Stuart, Symonds, M Watson and S Watson

For the information of other Members of the Council

For general enquiries please contact the Democratic Services Team on 01827 719221 or via e-mail – democraticservices@northwarks.gov.uk

For enquiries about specific reports please contact the officer named in the reports.

The agenda and reports are available in large print and electronic accessible formats if requested.

EXECUTIVE BOARD AGENDA

16 JULY 2025

The Executive Board will meet in The Chamber, The Council House, South Street, Atherstone on Wednesday, 16 July 2025 at 6.30pm.

The day after the meeting a recording will be available to be viewed on the Council's YouTube channel at [NorthWarks - YouTube](#).

AGENDA

- 1 Evacuation Procedure.**
- 2 Apologies for Absence / Members away on official Council business.**
- 3 Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests.**

4 **Public Participation**

Up to twenty minutes will be set aside for members of the public to put questions to elected Members.

Members of the public wishing to address the Board must register their intention to do so by 9:30am two working days prior to the meeting. Participants are restricted to five minutes each.

If you wish to put a question to the meeting, please register by email to democraticservices@northwarks.gov.uk or telephone 01827 719221 / 719237 / 719226.

Once registered to speak, the person asking the question has the option to either:

- a) attend the meeting in person at the Council Chamber;
- b) attend remotely via Teams; or
- c) request that the Chair reads out their written question.

If attending in person, precautions will be in place in the Council Chamber to protect those who are present however this will limit the number of people who can be accommodated so it may be more convenient to attend remotely.

If attending remotely an invitation will be sent to join the Teams video conferencing for this meeting. Those registered to speak should dial the telephone number and ID number (provided on their invitation) when joining the meeting to ask their question. However, whilst waiting they will be able to hear what is being said at the meeting.

- 5 **Minutes of the Executive Board held on 10 June 2025** – copies herewith, to be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION (WHITE PAPERS)

- 6 **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review** – Report of the Chief Executive

Summary:

This report informs the Board about the results of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review 2024/25. The report highlights the number of complaints and enquiries considered by the Ombudsman relating to the Council and the outcome of their determinations. The report also provides some contextual information about the compliments and complaints received via the Council's corporate Compliments and Complaints Procedure.

The Contact Officer for this report is Steve Maxey (719438).

7 **Transformation Team Updates** – Report of the Head of Corporate Services

Summary:

This is the annual report that provides Members with an update to the work that the Transformation team is undertaking.

The Contact Officers for this report are Trudi Barnsley (719388) and Evan Ross (719270).

8 **Local Government Reorganisation and English Devolution** – Report of the Chief Executive

Summary:

This report provides further information to Members on the two options submitted to the Government in the Interim Plan for Local Government Reorganisation. The report asks Members to identify a preferred option for further development and consultation ahead of a final submission in November.

The Contact Officer for this report is Steve Maxey (719438).

9 **Whistleblowing Policy** - Report of Head of Legal Services

The Report seeks to approve the Whistleblowing Policy.

The Contact Officer for this report is Sofia Ali (719251).

10 **Minutes of the Safer Communities Sub-Committee** held on 30 June 2025 – copies herewith.

11 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

To consider, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, whether it is in the public interest that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act.

12 **Forward Planning Staffing Changes** - Report of the Chief Executive

This report seeks Member approval for staffing changes.

The Contact Officer for this report is Dorothy Barratt (719250).

- 13 **Exempt Extract of the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board held on 10 June 2025** – copy herewith to be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

STEVE MAXEY
Chief Executive

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE
EXECUTIVE BOARD**

10 June 2025

Present: Councillor D Wright in the Chair

Councillors Barnett, Bell, Clews, Fowler, Jackson, Jenns, H Phillips, Reilly, Ridley, Stuart, Symonds, Turley and S Watson.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ririe (Substitute Councillor Turley), Councillor Simpson (Substitute Councillor Jenns) and Councillor M Watson (Substitute Councillor Fowler).

1 Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interest

None were declared at the meeting.

2 Minutes of the Executive Board held on 17 March 2025

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 17 March 2025, copies having been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 Safeguarding Update

The Interim Director of Leisure and Community Development updated Members on the Authority's progress in respect of its safeguarding responsibilities and sought consideration of a revised policy.

Resolved:

- a That the Authority's progress in respect of its safeguarding responsibilities, further to the adoption of its Safeguarding Policy and Procedure (2022 to 2025) in June 2023, be noted; and**
- b That the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure (2025 to March 2028) attached as Appendix A to the report of the Interim Director of Leisure and Community Development, be adopted and implemented with immediate effect.**

4 **Update on Grants**

The Interim Director of Leisure and Community Development informed Members of the progress made in respect of the delivery of Internal grant schemes.

Resolved:

That the progress made in respect of the delivery of internal grant schemes be noted.

5 **Corporate Peer Challenge**

The Chief Executive asked the Board to note the action plan following the Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC).

Resolved:

That the Corporate Peer Challenge (CPS) action plan be agreed subject to additional information regarding timescales for and ownership of the actions.

6 **Community Governance Review - Caldecote**

The Chief Executive asked the Board to recommend to Council that a Community Governance review for Caldecote and part of Hartshill be undertaken.

Recommended:

That a Community Governance review of Caldecote and Hartshill be undertaken.

7 **Appointment to Working Groups**

The Chief Executive asked the Board to appoint representatives to two Working Groups established by the Board.

Resolved:

- a **That Councillors D Wright (Chair), Jarvis, Jenns, Symonds, Bell, Barnett, Farrow, H Phillips, Ridley and Stuart appointed to the Shop Front Improvement Working Group; and**
- b **That Councillors M Watson (Chair), Fowler, Symonds, Reilly, Simpson, H Phillips, Dirveiks, Chapman, Stuart and Guilmant be appointed to the HS2 Consultative Working Group.**

8 **Metal Detecting Policy**

The Head of Legal Services sought approval of the Metal Detecting Policy

Resolved:

That the Metal Detecting Policy be approved and formally adopted.

9 **Minutes of the Safer Communities Sub-Committee held on 25 March 2025**

The minutes of the meeting of the Safer Communities Sub-Committee held on 25 March 2025, were received and noted.

10 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

Resolved:

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act.

11 **Staffing Matters – requests for supplementary estimates**

The Chief Executive sought approval for supplementary estimates as set out in his report.

Resolved:

That the recommendation set out in the report of the Chief Executive be approved.

12 **Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution Update**

The Leader of the Council gave a verbal update on Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution.

Resolved:

That the Member Working Group for Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution consist of all Members of the Executive Board

13 **Exempt extract of the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board held on 17 March 2025.**

The exempt extract of the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board held on 17 March 2025, copies having been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

D Wright
CHAIRMAN

Agenda Item No 6

Executive Board

16 July 2025

Report of the Chief Executive

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review 2024/25

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report informs the Board about the results of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review 2024/25. The report highlights the number of complaints and enquiries considered by the Ombudsman relating to the Council and the outcome of their determinations. The report also provides some contextual information about the compliments and complaints received via the Council's corporate Compliments and Complaints Procedure.

Recommendation to the Board

That the report be noted.

2 Consultation

- 2.1 Consultation has been carried out with the chair, vice chair and opposition spokesperson. Any comments received regarding the report will be highlighted to the Board.

3 Background

- 3.1 This report has been prepared following receipt of the Annual Review Letter 2024/25 from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The Annual Review provides a summary of the complaints and enquiries made to the Ombudsman relating to the Council during the 2024/25 year. The Annual review also shows what decisions the Ombudsman made about the complaints and enquires received.

4 Annual Review 2024/25

- 4.1 Attached at **Appendix A** is a copy of the letter received by the Chief Executive from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman dated 21 May 2025. In 2024/25 the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman changed their investigation processes, contributing towards an increase in the average upheld rate across complaints made to them against all Councils. It is therefore appropriate to consider comparing individual council uphold rates against the average rate upheld nationally this year rather than against the number upheld against this Council in previous years. The annual review shows that 7 enquiries were carried out by the Ombudsman relating to the Council.

- 2 Not upheld
- 3 Referred back for local resolution
- 2 Closed after initial enquiries

4.2 The cases referred back for local resolution will have been considered via the Council's Complaints Procedure. Members are requested to note that the Ombudsman is aiming to focus on the lessons that can be learned and the wider improvements that can be achieved through their recommendations to improve services. The Ombudsman is publishing more information about outcomes of their investigations and highlighting where recommendations result in improvements to local services.

4.3 More information about the outcomes from investigations is available on the website link shown below.

[North Warwickshire Borough Council - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

4.4 Members should also note that the Housing Ombudsman investigates complaints regarding social housing, and they have a Memorandum of Understanding with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. More information about what kind of complaints they can investigate is shown on the website link below:

[Which ombudsman for social housing complaints? - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

4.5 Of the 7 enquiries received by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman were regarding the following services:

- Planning & Development
- Council Tax
- Environmental Health

5 Compliments and Complaints 2024/25

... 5.1 Attached at **Appendix B** is a table showing the numbers of compliments and complaints received by service department through the Council's corporate procedure during the 2024/25 year. The table shows that 146 complaints, 141 requests for service and 121 compliments were received in the 2024/25 year. The number of complaints has increased by 77 (53%) from 2023/24.

5.2 The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code became a statutory requirement in April 2024 for all social housing landlords. The foreword to the Code says "The heartbeat of this code is enabling a positive complaints culture across the social housing sector". The Ombudsman says "Landlords must embrace complaints through increased transparency, accessibility and complaint handling governance, demonstrating that residents are core to its service delivery and good complaint handling is central to that".

- 5.3 Housing Maintenance have received the most complaints from 22 in 2023/24 to 38 in 2024/25. Environmental Health complaints have increased from 5 in 2023/24 to 29 in 2024/25. The complaints recorded are mainly regarding issues with the Abattoir.
- 5.4 The number of requests for service has decreased from 173 to 141. The requests for service are complaint contacts which were considered not to be Stage 1 Complaints. These can include the raising of an issue for the first time without the relevant service being aware of the issue. The requests for service are mainly being received via the Council's complaint's web page.
- 5.5 The majority of complaints received relate to Housing Maintenance, Housing Management, Revenue Collection & Benefits and Environmental Health. Combined they account for 118 (81%) of the complaints received. These are service areas with high customer contacts and therefore it is not unusual to expect this.
- 5.6 Overall, the number of complaints received, 146, remains low when compared to the total number of contacts received and people dealt with.
- 5.7 An outcome status against each complaint is determined to show whether the complaint was considered to be justified (upheld) or not upheld. This can be a matter of judgement and there will be some complaints, which can be interpreted either way. Some complaints will have elements that could have been dealt with differently or better on occasions. Of the complaints received in 2024/25 80 (55%) were deemed to be not upheld, 66 (45%) justified.
- 5.8 The compliments received show some examples of positive feedback received from residents and customers. The compliment figures do not include customer feedback responses received by any service areas.
- 5.9 Shown below is a table of the totals of compliments and complaints received during the last 10 years.
- 5.10 Table of Compliments and Complaints Totals

Year	Compliments	Complaints
2015/16	79	73
2016/17	61	58
2017/18	62	85
2018/19	34	42
2019/20	47	61
2020/21	71	37
2021/22	52	58
2022/23	147	33
2023/24	134	69
2024/25	121	146

6 Summary

- 6.1 Overall the number of complaints received is low in comparison to the number of customer contacts the Council has. Members are requested to note the report and to identify any areas that require further consideration.

7 Report Implications

7.1 Legal Data Protection and Human Rights Implications

- 7.1.1 Some complaint cases can ultimately be investigated by either the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or the Housing Ombudsman. If an adverse finding is made by the Ombudsman concerned, they can order the Council to pay compensation to the affected person and can also require the Council to consider a report on their findings and confirm the action they will take to deal with the issue concerned. The Council's Monitoring Officer also has a duty to prepare a report to the Council where the Ombudsman has investigated and concluded that the Council's actions constituted maladministration or injustice. Members should note that two of the complaints upheld by the Ombudsman fall within this category. The Monitoring Officer will shortly be preparing a report to Council on the issues concerned.

- 7.1.2 Various legal and Human Rights implications can arise during such investigations and, when engaging with the Ombudsman in relation to each case, any such matters will be considered to the appropriate extent.

- 7.1.3 Complaints regarding data protection or information requests are considered under the Complaints Procedure and can be referred to the Information Commissioner's Office for further investigation. For that reason, complaints relating to those matters are not included in the Appendices to this report.

7.2 Environment and Sustainability Implications

- 7.2.1 Improvements in the performance and quality of services will contribute to improving the quality of life within the community. Feedback and learning from Complaints and Compliments helps the Divisions identify service improvements. The Procedure includes a specific requirement to identify any service improvements arising from each complaint investigation.

7.3 Equality Implications

- 7.3.1 The Complaint investigations provide an opportunity to identify any equality related implications. No adverse implications have been identified from the complaints received in 2024/25. The monitoring of complaints and compliments helps inform the Council's consideration of meeting the Equality Act requirements.

7.4 Risk Management Implications

7.4.1 Effective performance monitoring and analysis of complaints received will enable the Council to minimise associated risks with the failure to achieve targets and deliver services at the required performance and quality level.

7.5 Health and Well Being and Leisure Implications

7.5.1 Some complaints received do raise concerns relating to the health and wellbeing of individuals. These can include concerns about conditions of properties and impacts from outstanding repair works.

7.6 Financial Implications

7.6.1 Any financial payments and credits identified in complaint investigations are made from the appropriate service budget under provisions relating to that service.

7.7 Links to Council's Priorities

7.7.1 By having an open and accessible complaints procedure this will contribute towards the achievement of the Council's priorities and in particular promoting vibrant and sustainable communities.

The Contact Officer for this report is Steve Maxey (719438).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date

Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN

21 May 2025

By email

Mr Maxey
Chief Executive
North Warwickshire Borough Council

Dear Mr Maxey

Annual Review letter 2024-25

I write to you with your annual summary of complaint statistics from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the year ending 31 March 2025. The information offers valuable insight about your organisation's approach to complaints, and I know you will consider it as part of your corporate governance processes. We have listened to your feedback, and I am pleased to be able to share your annual statistics earlier in the year to better fit with local reporting cycles. I hope this proves helpful to you.

[Your annual statistics are available here.](#)

In addition, you can find the detail of the decisions we have made about your Council, read the public reports we have issued, and view the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

In a change to our approach, we will write to organisations in July where there is exceptional practice or where we have concerns about an organisation's complaint handling. Not all organisations will get a letter. If you do receive a letter it will be sent in advance of its publication on our website on 16 July 2025, alongside our annual Review of Local Government Complaints.

Supporting complaint and service improvement

In February we published [good practice guides](#) to support councils to adopt our [Complaint Handling Code](#). The guides were developed in consultation with councils that have been piloting the Code and are based on the real-life, front-line experience of people handling complaints day-to-day, including their experience of reporting to senior leaders and elected members. The guides were issued alongside free [training resources](#) organisations can use to make sure front-line staff understand what to do when someone raises a complaint. We will be applying the Code in our casework from April 2026 and we know a large number of councils have already adopted it into their local policies with positive results.

This year we relaunched our popular [complaint handling training](#) programme. The training is now more interactive than ever, providing delegates with an opportunity to consider a complaint from receipt to resolution. Early feedback has been extremely positive with delegates reporting an increase in confidence in handling complaints after completing the training. To find out more contact training@lgo.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Amerdeep Somal
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

Cumulative Table of Complaints – April – March 2024/25

DEPARTMENT	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS	NUMBER OF REQUEST FOR SERVICE	NUMBER OF COMPLIMENTS
Chief Executive		1	
• Corporate PA Support Unit		34	
• Legal	5		
• Democratic Services			
• Environmental Health & Licensing	29	19	2
• Development Control	10	3	17
• Forward Planning			2
• Building Control Service			
• Enforcement		1	
Corporate Director - Resources			
• Audit			
• Financial Accountancy		1	
• Management Accountancy			
• Payroll and Risk Management			
• Human Resources, Training & Health and Safety			
• Revenue Collection & Benefits	28	7	2
• One Stop Shop and Contact Centre			
• Financial Inclusion, Hubs and Outreach			
Director of Housing			
• Strategic Housing			1
• Housing Management	23	5	10
• Housing Maintenance	38	26	65
• Private Sector Housing	5	1	
Director of Leisure & Community Development			
• Landscape Management		2	
• Partnership Development			
• Leisure Facilities	1	2	
• Community Development			2
Corporate Director - Streetscape			
• Refuse and Recycling	4	27	6
• Corporate Property & Transport			
• Facilities Management			
• Grounds Maintenance & Street Cleaning	3	4	13
• Car Parks		6	
Corporate Services			
• ICT		1	
• Procurement & Printing			
• Central Services			
• Communication & Public Relations			1
Corporate		1	
WCC			
TOTAL	146	141	121

Complaint User Satisfaction Summary		
Question	Yes	No
Did you find it easy to complain?	3	1
Were you given an apology?	1	3
Were you satisfied with the explanation given?	1	3
Was the complaint dealt with quickly enough?	3	1

2024/25 April – March

Not upheld – 80 (55%)

Justified – 66 (45%)

Total – 146

Housing Division Complaint User Satisfaction Summary		
Question	Yes	No
Were you satisfied with how we handled your complaint?	3	5
What would have improved your experience of our service?	<p>“Listening and taking positive action, instead of brushing complaints under the carpet.”</p> <p>“Complaint not resolved.”</p> <p>“Actually have someone getting back to me and carrying out the repair.”</p> <p>“Somebody paying for whole of my son’s bed furniture due to leak”</p> <p>“You done nothing”</p>	
Did we resolve your complaint? Were you happy with the outcome?	3	5
Please tell us why you were dissatisfied so that we can improve our service.	<p>“Nothing ever improves, the good people leaving should tell you all you need to know.”</p> <p>“Take too long to write.”</p> <p>“Despite constant phone calls from me nothing has been sorted.”</p> <p>“You did not acknowledge damage you caused through a flood disgusting.”</p>	

	<p>“Because you do not do anything no reply to the complaint at all”</p>
<p>Any other comments</p>	<p>“Workman worked very well with the work he had to rectify. Officers were very helpful also and put my mind to ease.”</p> <p>“Officers most helpful.”</p> <p>“Nothing will change until the council takes more positive steps to improve it’s quality. Each jobs not the same, therefore adequate time is rarely allowed to complete a job t a decent standard. Lying to tenants and management should result in dismissal. But it not therefore it’s acceptable by the council. Having to repeat the same job numerous times because cutting corners is inefficient, frustrating.”</p> <p>“Complaint not resolved.”</p> <p>“One of your contractors made a very bad comment about my son’s autism, I will be taking this further. I am putting formal complaint in against a man who has issues with disabled children.”</p> <p>“I be taking this further trust me”</p>

Agenda Item No 7

Executive Board

16 July 2025

Report of the Head of Corporate Services Transformation Team Updates

1 Summary

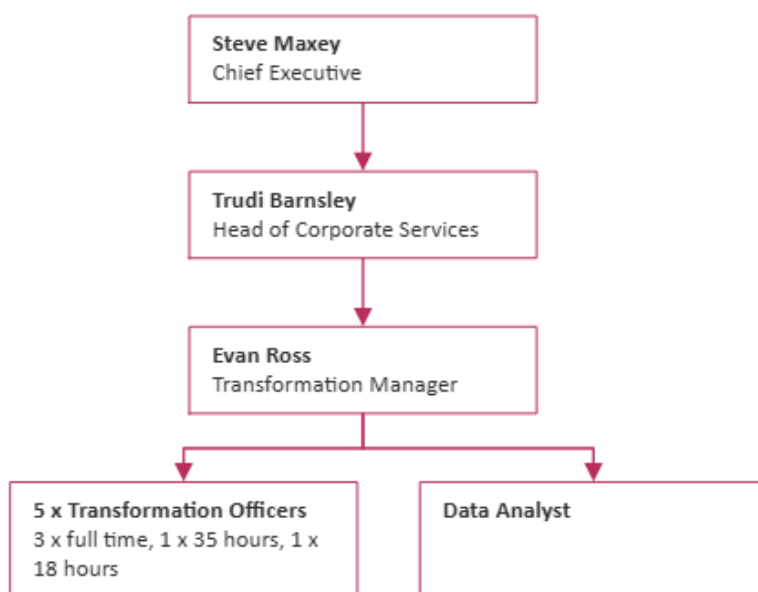
1.1 This is the annual report that provides Members with an update to the work that the Transformation team is undertaking.

<p>Recommendation to the Board</p> <p>a That the report is acknowledged; and</p> <p>b That the report be noted.</p>
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2 Background

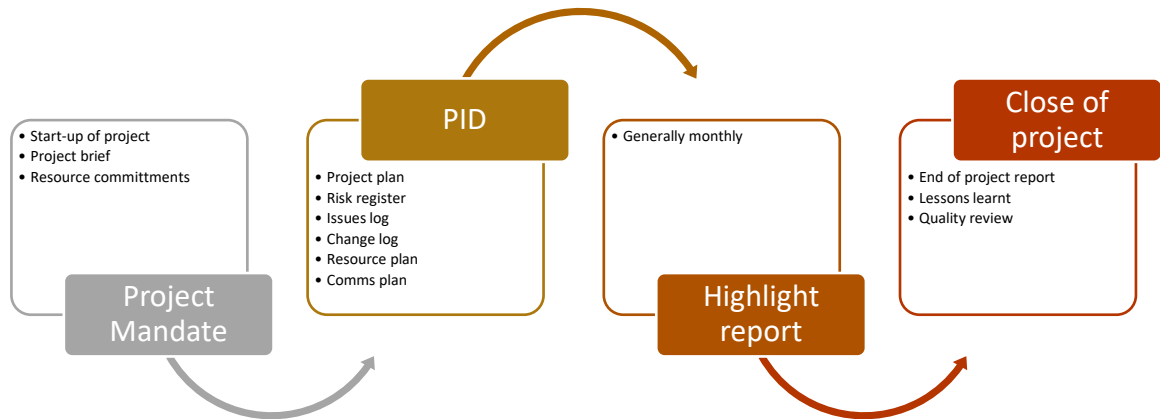
2.1 The Transformation Team is managed by the Transformation Manager who reports directly to the Head of Corporate Services and works closely with the Chief Executive and Management Team.

2.2 The team structure is as shown below:



2.3 The Transformation teamwork with colleagues across all divisions within the Council in order to deliver desired outcomes.

- 2.4 Five of the Transformation team are Prince II qualified, and we are now doing more project documentation, as follows:



Note: some smaller projects will not require full documentation, however mandates and business cases will need to be done to assess if the project is viable.

- 2.5 We are involving the Data Analyst in more projects to ensure the right information is being captured to enable more reporting.

3 Reviewing Processes

- 3.1 When we review processes, we always understand the current process end to end before making any changes. Whatever we review, we take into consideration several elements. Our staff: what they do and what impact it may have on them, the process, and the technology we use. Our aim is always to work with colleagues and want them to embrace the change as much as we do.

4 Cost Considerations

- 4.1 Our Microsoft tenancy agreement gives us access to some applications that are included within our annual maintenance, so where possible we will utilise 'free' applications providing they are fit for purpose. We have used Microsoft power automate and approvals for some new electronic processes, for example approving contracts and updating the contract register, approving a procurement exemption, and we will be implementing data protection impact assessments in September so tightening up on the Council's governance.

- 4.2 Any project spending commitments will seek board approval.

5 **Key updates**

- 5.1 Payment Management Solution upgraded to hosted.
- 5.2 Members will be aware that approval was sought to procure a new Planning and Local Land Charges system in May 2025. The implementation has commenced with a go live date of November 2025.
- 5.3 Work is ongoing with transferring knowledge for the implementation with Unit 4 (Finance system).
- 5.4 Working with Streetscape colleagues to implement the new Bartek in-cab and mobile working system for the Refuse and Recycling crews.
- 5.5 In addition, to the above the team have also implemented a number of 'mini systems and processes to support work across the Council with a number of additional works planned. The programme of work is mainly derived from annual service plans, further details can be found in **Appendix 1**.
- ...

6 **Conclusion**

- 6.1 There are several ways in which efficiencies can be measured, they are:
- Being more productive,
 - Reducing the cost of the service,
 - Generating income,
 - Providing a better service,
 - Reducing errors and getting things right first time,
 - Reducing demand; and
 - Removing duplication and hand-offs.
- 6.2 Our role in transformation will be to lead on service or process reviews and system implementations or upgrades.

7 **Report Implications**

7.1 **Finance and Value for Money Implications**

- 7.1.1 None specifically arising from this report.

8.2 **Legal and Data Protection Implications**

- 8.2.1 Legal Services are consulted before entering any new contracts. Specific legal advice on compliance and risk will be included in any reports made to the Council or its Boards recommending major changes to processes or acquisition of systems.
- 8.2.2 It is also a statutory requirement to provide the DPO with the necessary resources to undertake their role, together with access to all relevant information required. In turn the DPO must advise the Council as to its obligations under data protection legislation. The Head of Legal Services is the

Council's DPO. The Head of Corporate Services and Head of Legal Services work closely together and discuss all IT related contracts.

8.2.3 Where any changes are anticipated in relation to processes, systems or software which will relate to data protection it is therefore essential to engage the DPO at the outset of the process so that appropriate steps can be taken to comply with those obligations.

8.3 Environment, Climate Change and Health Implications

8.3.1 Improvements in the performance and quality of services will contribute to improving the quality of life within the community.

8.4 Risk Management Implications

8.4.1 There are several risks that could prevent progress being made, they are:

- Resources
Having insufficient resources available. For example, not having the right people available at the right time, either within the Transformation Team and/or other key areas of the Council.
- Benefits
Not being captured and clearly defined, delivered, or communicated.
- Lack of Buy-In, commitment, engagement and support
From Senior Management, the Council's DPO or colleagues.

8.5 Links to Council's Priorities

8.5.1 The work that the Transformation Team undertake contributes towards the Council's Corporate Plan in progressing to become a more efficient organisation. This will be supported by having a robust transformation programme to ensure our services and processes are as lean as possible, consider new models of working and providing services, and develop our staff in the new skills needed, whilst being supported by IT.

The Contact Officers for this report are Trudi Barnsley (719388) and Evan Ross (719270).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date
1	Transformation Manager	Transformation Team Updates 13th June 2022: Executive Board North Warwickshire Borough Council (northwarks.gov.uk) (Pages 50 -59)	June 2022
2	Transformation Manager	Increase of Charges for Street Naming and Numbering Community and Environment Board Agenda 25 July 2022 (4).pdf (Pages 7-10)	July 2022

3	Transformation Manager	Website Upgrade 21st March 2023: Executive Board North Warwickshire Borough Council (northwarks.gov.uk) (Pages 12 – 17)	March 2023
4	Transformation Manager and Environmental Health Manager	Fly Tipping 16th March 2023: Safer Communities Sub-Committee North Warwickshire Borough Council (northwarks.gov.uk) (Pages 5-10)	March 2023
5	Transformation Manager	Transformation Team updates 19th July 2023: Executive Board North Warwickshire Borough Council (northwarks.gov.uk) (Pages 61-67)	July 2023
6	Head of Corporate Services and Transformation Manager	Transformation Team updates Download%20the%20Agenda%2C%20Reports%20and%20Appendices (Pages 9-19)	Sept 2024

Appendix 1

Title	Description	Progress	Start date	Due date	Assigned to	Notes
TRIM document migration to SharePoint	Replace TRIM with SharePoint	In progress	01/01/2025	01/06/2025	Chris Hinds;	
Cadcorp Web Map	Implement Cadcorp Web Map	Completed	01/01/2024	31/03/2024	Chris Hinds;	
Asset Management - system review and option appraisal	A need has arisen to review the management of our assets and associated documentation. Scope includes lease monitoring, various building check scheduling possibly with some reminders set for due dates of inspections and reviews	Completed	31/05/2024	30/09/2024	Evan Ross;	
DEF Planning System Implementation	Implement a new Local Land Charges System	In progress	31/05/2025	01//2025	Chris Hinds;	
Gazetteer Implementation	Due to the Planning system upgrade the Gazetteer which is linked to iLap with require updating	Blocked	01/09/2024	28/02/2025	Chelsey Baker;	Can the system do SNN? We need the contract before we can progress with the Purchase Order
Pay360 Upgrade	Pay360 the council income management system requires upgrading to a SaaS	Completed	01/04/2024	24//2024	Helen Thom;	
Recruitment Galaxy	BLOCKED due to it being not know if we need to do this or not (TB) Create a separate recruitment galaxy	Blocked		31/12/2024	Helen Thom;	HR System implementation to take precedent.
SharePoint Intranet	Investigate using SharePoint as the Councils Intranet	Not started		31/03/2025	Helen Thom;	

IDOX Portal	Launch the IDOX portal for Environmental Health	Blocked	01/01/2024	31/12/2024	Chelsey Baker;	Portal live however awaiting upgrade from supplier to improve functionality
Housing System Upgrade	Upgrade current housing system	Not started		01/04/2025	Helen Thom;	
Play area App	Implementation of a Play area app to digitalise safety inspections of boroughs play areas.	Completed	01/01/2024	01/04/2024	Chelsey Baker;	
Lambs App	Street Cleaning inspection app	Completed	01/01/2024	04/01/2024	Chelsey Baker;	
Webaspx - Christmas Calendars	Waste Management software - Christmas Schedule	Completed	01/09/2024	30//2024	Chelsey Baker;	
Corporate Letter Head, Email Signatures etc	Create and rollout corporate branding	Completed	01/01/2024	04/01/2024	Chelsey Baker;	
New Finance System Implementation	Implement a new Finance System Unit4	Completed	01/01/2024	04/02/2024	Steve Clarke;	
Finance Phase 2	Continued support of the Finance team to implement new process efficiencies	In progress	01/04/2024	31/03/2025	Steve Clarke;	
Total upgrade	Upgrade old finance system, reduce licence to a 'read only' status and migrate to newer server to improve security	Completed	01/09/2024	01//2024	Steve Clarke;	
TEAMS training SharePoint site	Create a training site for TEAMS related applications	Completed	04/01/2024	31/12/2024	Steve Clarke;	
Implement a HR System	HR have highlighted a need for a system to support more efficient working practices.	In progress	01/09/2024		Steve Clarke;Martin Cooper;	Mandates completed. Next step brief and conversations around resources and financial need to take place.
Implement a Transport System	A digital transport system is required to meet the recommendation set out in the Waste and Transport Audit	In progress	26/03/2025		Martin Cooper;	Mandates completed; A detailed business case is currently under review

Review, Create and Develop Corporate PI's	Gather corporate PI's and develop a dashboard for council performance	Ongoing	01/09/2024		Charlotte Allan-Stubbs;
Board Reports	Review and migrate the board report process to SharePoint/One Drive Three elements to the process 1. internal process 2. Councillors need access to reports once finalised especially confidential 3. external publication	In progress	01/09/2024		Trudi Barnsley; Martin Cooper; Evan Ross; TB to have a scoping meeting with Amanda initially. Will need to involve Tracy S for comms at the right time.
Compliments Process	Create a Microsoft form for the compliments process, involving HofLS	Started			Evan Ross; Chelsey Baker;
WhatsApp Business Investigation	Investigate WhatsApp business - how much, functionality, can it work from a PC/web browser or just Mobile	Paused	05/01/2025		Chelsey Baker; We want to progress - we need costings and functionality
Post review	Review the post in and out process including sensitive documents etc	Not started			
Planning Call for sites	Nomination Form	Completed	01/09/2024	30/09/2024	Chelsey Baker;
Procurement Card Process	Review the current process and digitise and add in reminders as appropriate	Not started			
Timesheet Process	Review Process and add in digitise	Not started			

Gladstone System Upgrade	The Learn2 Courses platform is being upgraded to the new GoLearn platform and is also being moved from our server to be hosted on the Gladstone cloud. Data migration (AS Site) - Testing - Training - Implementing. Need to consider. Home Portal, does it link with the new GoLearn - Payment Top Ups (credit card). Plus2 (still onsite server), does it link with GoLearn - Customer account details held in Plus2. iPads configuration (swim teachers).	In progress	10/03/2025	30/09/2025	Steve Clarke;	
VE Day Grants	Set up a process for grant applications and processing	Completed	03/03/2025	28/03/2025	Evan Ross;	
DPIA - workflow for creation to authorisation	Working with HofLS & HofCS	In progress	10/03/2025	04/2025	Martin Cooper;	Launch in Sept '25 at Security Sept presentations with HofLS
Bartek Implementation	New route optimisation software for refuse vehicles	In progress	01/05/2025	20/07/2025	Chelsey Baker;	Awaiting business case sign off this month
Create a SharePoint site for IT training		Ongoing			Martin Cooper;	
Sport Pitch Booking Process and Workflow		Completed	23/03/2025	02/05/2025	Martin Cooper;	

Review CRM system alternatives to incumbent system		Completed	01/05/2025	31/05/2025	Martin Cooper;
Big Day Out Bookings		Completed			Martin Cooper;
Intranet Audit	Review the intranet with a view to making improvements in a SharePoint site and any links to out-of-date forms etc the audit finds	Completed			Martin Cooper; https://staffconnect.org.uk/
Fly Tipping review	Developing an app for capturing complaints, issues fly tipping cases to be collected and capture data for reporting	In progress			Evan Ross Developed and next step for crew to test
EH Data extract	James Munday Rise, Lea Marston Shooting Club and Licences	In progress			Evan Ross Awaiting service to check
P360 Telephone Payments	Implementation or SecureCall to help with PCI DSS compliance	In progress			Evan Ross;Trudi Barnsley;Helen Thom Determining best option before we move forward.
Open Digital Planning	Plotting 4 Datasets and Publishing them on the Website for Download by MHCLG, more details (although it's not all of this, just plotting 4 datasets) here: https://opendigitalplanning.org/digital-planning-improvement .	Paused			Chris Hinds;
Power Automate	Explore and learn fundamentals of Power Automate	Completed			Martin Cooper;

Power Apps	Explore and learn fundamentals of Power Apps	Completed		Martin Cooper;	
HMLR Local Land Charges to Land Registry	Move some LL searches to Land Registry	Not started		Chris Hinds;	Cannot take place until after Planning and Local Land Charges system goes live in November
IT Assets Tracker	Create tracker for MA (IT helpdesk team) Needs dialogue with IT, regarding data cleanse before proceeding.	In progress		Martin Cooper;	Need a system to log Employees borrowing equipment (taking out and returning) and also a way of them signing up to this agreement , saying they accept responsibility for returning etc. Can be new employees being issued with new kit or existing employees borrowing kit for events or certain job roles (Phones, laptops, monitors, PCs, Audio Visual etc)
IT security policy	Research IT security policies for Trudi and Sofia	Completed		Martin Cooper;	
Mobile App Investigation		Completed	01/03/2025	Chelsey Baker;	
Council Tax Support Hardship Fund Form		Paused		Helen Thom;	Waiting for Benefits testing
Replacement bins - additional bins		Completed		Helen Thom;	
Housing ASB form updates		In progress		Helen Thom;	

Housing Repairs - inspections and fencing updates		Not started	Helen Thom;
Street Naming and Numbering - change existing address		In progress	Helen Thom;
AR - Support	To assist the AR process (after staff changes) Ensuring an understanding of the following processes and related problem solving is sufficient for business as usual. Subscription Processing. Direct Debit Processing. Debt Recovery. Subscription - Advanced tick. Check Rent Prices - 'Price Override' affecting price changes	In progress	Steve Clarke;
Cadcorp Data Check and WebMap Development	Checking GIS Data for Planning and Environmental Health along with adding new WebMap options e.g. Create a Map and Planning Constraints	In progress	Chris Hinds;
Unit4 Workspace Development	To improve the end user experience of Unit4 by creating Workspaces. Workspaces can be created for roles within Unit4 - for example - AR Workspace, Budget Holder Workspace, Procurement Workspace.	In progress	Steve Clarke;
Unit4 Reporting Dashboards	To create a set of Reporting Dashboards to be used by MA's and presented to Budget Holders.	Not started	Steve Clarke;

AR Reminder Letter Process	To begin the process of debt recovery by sending out reminder letters. Testing has taken place. However, an understanding of the process needs to be in place with the AR team before a sensible time is agreed to start the process. Comms with the Contact Centre is also essential.	Completed	02/06/2025	Steve Clarke;	
Debt Recovery - Debt Write Off Process	Test and implement the Write Off Process.	Paused		Steve Clarke;	Awaiting decision from service.
Embridge Support Tickets	To continue work on any open support tickets with Embridge.	In progress		Steve Clarke;	
Procurement Support (Unit4)	To assist the Procurement Team with Unit4 queries, questions and system changes as and when required.	Completed		Steve Clarke;	
Unit4 SharePoint Training Site	SharePoint Training Site to include; Unit4 User Guide - updated with changes when required. Short series of instructional Videos. Frequently Asked Questions sheet.	Completed		Steve Clarke;	
FOI Data Process	Working with Charlotte - there is currently three places Charlotte needs to pull data from to get the data for the corporate report. A simplified process is needed.	In progress		Evan Ross; Charlotte Allan-Stubbs;	
Permiserv (Garden Waste)	Only applicable during sign up window	Completed	01/02/2025	30/06/2025	Chelsey Baker;
EH - IDOX APP		Blocked		Chelsey Baker	Awaiting for a release of app from supplier
GIS Improvements	Improvement to external customers in how we present our data	Not started	31/03/2026	Chris Hinds	

Monitoring Improvement	Reduce staff time in re keying in information and allow for additional time to be used for other monitoring	In progress	31/03/2026	Chris Hinds; Charlotte Allan-Stubbs
Councillor Map - for Website?		Not started		Charlotte Allan-Stubbs;;Chris Hinds;
Maps Landing Page on Website - Links Needed	Links on landing page need to link to the layers - https://www.northwarks.gov.uk/contact-us-location-maps-1/maps	Not started		Chris Hinds
AVD Training Notes	For new homeworking solution	Not started		Martin Cooper
Affordable Homes Process - Paul Roberts	Review what Paul needs from Planning, Open Housing and implement a simpler solution	Not started		Charlotte Allan-Stubbs
Digitalise the Information security policy declaration		Not started		
Digitalise the Leaving or transferring from form		Not started		
Move new training portal to transformation account	move over from my account to the transformation account. Change MS form to send emails to transformation account rather than mine, so any member of the team can pick up requests.	Completed		Martin Cooper; Done New URL : https://northwarks.sharepoint.com/sites/MicrosoftLearningPortal
Map Links on Website	https://www.northwarks.gov.uk/contact-us-location-maps-1/maps - this page doesn't link to the maps that are listed within the page, can this be added please?			Chris Hinds;

Homeworking Solution Video		Not started		
Cloud 9 Project	<p>Meet with local councils who have implemented Cloud 9 to find out any lessons learnt, how they approached different phases of the project; internal adoption / external comms.</p> <p>Meetings arranged for: Thursday 5th with Cloud9 Friday 6th with Stratford upon avon council Monday 9th with Somerset council</p> <p>Notes kept in OneNote.</p>	Investigation Completed		Martin Cooper; Approval sought from C&E board – due July 2025.
Solved form	Minor update	Completed		Helen Thom;
ASB form - housing change		Completed	03/06/2025	Helen Thom;
MS Form Training	Awaiting Paul Docherty's availability	Blocked		Martin Cooper;
Cesspools - payment calculation changes		Completed		Helen Thom;
Update work flow for Exemptions	<p>We need to be able to re-direct approvals should any problems with the process present themselves. Suggestion is push form entry to a list and then trigger the approvals with a update or modified trigger from the list rather than through the form.</p>	In progress		Evan Ross;

Close down of Trim	Document store all areas except HR and Board reports	In progress		Chris Hinds;	Chris demo'ed to Revs and Bens Procurement done
Microsoft Sway	Investigate for possible use for creating internal newsletters, rather than Canva.	In progress	01/07/2025	Martin Cooper;	

Agenda Item No 8

Executive Board

16 July 2025

Report of the Chief Executive

Local Government Reorganisation and English Devolution

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides further information to Members on the two options submitted to the Government in the Interim Plan for Local Government Reorganisation. The report asks Members to identify a preferred option for further development and consultation ahead of a final submission in November.

Recommendation to the Board

- a To note the Deloitte report assessing each option against the Government's criteria, the PeopleToo report on Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care options, the Government's response to the Council's Interim Plan and the letter from the West Midlands Combined Authority regarding Warwickshire's Strategic Authority options;
- b To identify a preferred option for Local Government Reorganisation, including the Strategic Authority options;
- c Note that this option will be the subject of public and stakeholder consultation as set out in the report; and
- d To delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and other Group Leaders, to take such further steps in the preparation of the final submission to Government as are necessary.

2 Report

- 2.1 The background on this matter can be found in previous [reports](#) to this Board and Members will recall the briefings given to the Member Working Group earlier this year and on the 9th July. The two new Councillors elected in May have had a presentation on this subject as part of their induction to the Council.

- ...
- 2.2 Since the submission of the Interim Plan, agreed by Council in March, the Government has provided a formal letter of feedback. The letter (**Appendix 1**) is general in nature and similar to those received in a number of other areas. It notes the progress to that point and, in effect, does not raise any in principle objections to the two options that this Council said it would consider further.
- 2.3 The main points from the feedback letter can be summarised as follows. The 500,000 population guidance figure is still mentioned but it could be argued the position on this has softened. The White Paper stated that most Councils would be of that size but that there may be some exceptions. The feedback letter describes this target as a guiding principle rather than a hard target.
- 2.4 The potential disaggregation of services is clearly still a keen concern of Government, particularly Adult and Children's Services as well as other services, and this is discussed later in this report. Our bid will need to flag up that the *aggregation* of services such as planning, housing and revenues and benefits is not without risk and that designing all of these services around meaningful places reduces that risk and is more likely to lead to prevention agendas being effective.
- 2.5 The Government is also clear that it wants to see clear evidence in all submissions, particularly with regard to any claimed benefits/savings/efficiencies. It is suggested this is helpful in that Members have raised concerns about how claims of savings often do not always materialise, either at all or within the timescales included in LGR bids.
- 2.6 The issue of the Strategic Authorities is also emphasised as is the need for engagement with stakeholders. These matters are addressed in this report. The reference in the letter to meaningful geographies should also be noted and is something that Members have identified as being important. The Minister's remarks that proposals and decisions will be a compromise between efficiency and geography is something that should be at the heart of the November bid.
- 2.7 Finally as well as the specific feedback on our Interim Plan, the Government provided national general feedback on themes emerging from all Interim Plans. This contained something of a change of emphasis with regard to what arrangements there should be below the new Council(s), with a move away from assuming Town and Parish Councils will always be the answer or need to move into the space left when there are no District/Borough Councils. The passage is worth setting out in full:

“Strong community voice: We welcome the steps areas are taking to consider how to maintain strong community voice. Local Government Reorganisation should facilitate better and sustained community engagement and needs a clear and accountable system of local area-working and governance. Neighbourhood Area Committees, led by frontline ward councillors, offer a model of place-based engagement and leadership which maximises the structural efficiencies brought about by Local Government Reorganisation and strengthens localism and community participation across all areas.

Neighbourhood Area Committees help councils fulfil their commitments to working in partnership with communities at the neighbourhood level. They can also include other service providers, such as town or parish councillors, when applicable, along with co-opted members from local community organisations. Areas considering new town or parish councils should think carefully about how they might be funded, to avoid putting further pressure on local authority finances and/or new burdens on the taxpayer. We recognise the value that town and parish councils offer to their local communities, but they are independent institutions and are not a substitute for meaningful community engagement and neighbourhood working by a local authority. We want to see every local authority hardwiring local community engagement into their own structures, preferably through neighbourhood Area Committees.”

This also will need to be reflected in the final submission.

- 2.8 Members will recall the Government’s wish that Local Government Reorganisation unlocks Devolution and therefore the Strategic Authority that the new Council(s) will form part is an important element of the submission in November. The Council identified three options in the Interim Plan – joining the West Midlands Combined Authority (‘WMCA’), a new Warwickshire Strategic Authority or joining a Strategic Authority elsewhere. The links, in terms of housing, planning, employment and travel, with the WMCA’s area led Members to identify this as the leading option.
- 2.9 As previously identified however the consent of the Mayor of an existing Combined/Strategic Authority is required for a new area to join. The six Warwickshire Councils therefore wrote last month to the WMCA Mayor asking for his views and his reply can be seen at **Appendix 2**. The view set out by the Mayor is very clear that he does not support the expansion of the WMCA area. Whilst the Government could legislate in this area, this is not the current plan and therefore for the purposes of the bid to be submitted in November, the prospect of one or both of the new Council(s) joining the WMCA cannot currently be relied upon.
- 2.10 That leaves, therefore, the other two options – either a Warwickshire Strategic Authority or attempting to join another area. It is suggested that both of these options improve the business case for there being two unitary Councils in Warwickshire. Firstly, there cannot be a Warwickshire Strategic Authority with a single Warwickshire unitary Council. Whilst the population figure for Warwickshire is well below the 1.5m guidance from Government, it exceeds the proposed Cumbria Strategic Authority (population c.500,000) and is comparable to the proposed Cheshire and Warrington Strategic Authority (population c.980,000).
- 2.11 The other option is to seek to join another area, outside of Warwickshire. No one area has the same place based connections with the different parts of Warwickshire as the WMCA or a Warwickshire Strategic Authority. It would be a significant risk to the development and wellbeing of the area in this scenario therefore for there to be a single unitary Council; two unitaries would give

some flexibility for the two distinct areas to seek to join a Strategic Authority that better relates to the socio-economic needs of the area.

- 2.12 It is suggested that these two options form the basis for the Strategic Authority element of the bid to be submitted in November, albeit that the submission can still reflect the initial ambition to be part of the WMCA.
- 2.13 Members have previously considered an interim report from Deloitte and their updated report is appended as **Appendix 3**. The report uses the factors in the Government's criteria and assesses the key issues within Warwickshire to evaluate the two options for Local Government Reorganisation.
- 2.14 The report discusses at length the 6 criteria. Both options have been given a ranking against each of the 6 criteria, as indicated in the table below (note that a ranking of one is best and a ranking of two is worst). Deloitte was commissioned to undertake this process objectively by assessing the relative merits of the evidence (where available) as well as the theoretical benefits and disbenefits of each option against each criterion.
- 2.15 The rankings for each option have then been added together and ranked with the lowest score (i.e. the total number of first place rankings) being selected as the preferred option. The results of this exercise are summarised in the following table

Criteria	Option 1 Single-Unitary	Option 2 Two-Unitary
Establishment of a single tier of local government	2	1
Right size to achieve efficiencies, and withstand financial shocks	1	2
Public service delivery	2	1
Councils working together and local place identity	2	1
Support devolution arrangements	2	1
Stronger Community engagement	2	1
Overall Ranking	2 nd Place Score: 11	1 st Place Score:7

- 2.16 The report explores each of the specific criteria in depth, however, for each of the specific areas the report also summarises the position as follows:
- Criteria one: Establishment of a single tier of local government

The two-unitary model creates sensible economic areas for Warwickshire due to its focus on place. The North and South of the county have extremely different economies and challenges. This is clear from the data whether economic, social, health, housing or travel to work issues are observed. This means that local plans are required to meet local needs. Economic growth is a priority for the County as a whole but given the North / South divide, a two-unitary model is more suitable to drive this agenda for the economies of North and South Warwickshire.

- Criteria two: Right size to achieve efficiencies, and withstand financial shocks

A rapid financial assessment has been undertaken as part of this work and while it indicates that the single county unitary is likely to achieve greater financial benefits due to its scale, both the single county unitary and the two-unitary options deliver savings when compared to the status quo. The gap between the two options is not significant when the total spend of local government across the county is considered.

- Criteria three: Public service delivery

The two-unitary model is the preferred option for Warwickshire as it strikes a strategic balance between achieving efficiency and effectively addressing the diverse needs of its residents.

This model acknowledges the inadequacy of a one-size-fits-all approach to service delivery, empowering two distinct authorities to tailor services to their respective jurisdictions while collaborating on county-wide priorities, such as children's services. This approach ensures both local responsiveness and strategic alignment, fostering greater agility, stronger community relationships, and a more effective allocation of resources compared to a highly centralised single-authority model.

- Criteria four: Councils working together and local place identity

The two-unitary model better maintains a sense of real place and community. Any proposed model of local government should be reflective of the way people live their lives, including where they live and where they work. The current county council area of Warwickshire (of course excluding Coventry) is not a coherent single place but represents an administrative set of boundaries.

- Criteria five: Support devolution arrangements

As mentioned above, a two-unitary model is optimal for Warwickshire as it balances strategic scale with a vital focus on local needs.

A single countywide unitary could potentially join the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) as a full member. However, there would be risks of this approach. In allocation of the financial Integrated Settlement, Warwickshire could lose out to the more deprived areas elsewhere across the WMCA footprint. In addition, if a single county unitary joined WMCA, it

would immediately become the second largest Council by some margin, and could unbalance this established Combined Authority.

Another option proposed has been for a Warwickshire Strategic Authority. If this were the case, it would preclude a single county unitary, as the two organisations could not be the same size according to guidance.

Fundamentally, if the WMCA is not an option for the reasons set out above, it is difficult to find a logical devolution solution for a future single county unitary in the future. There may be an option to look towards Leicestershire, or towards Worcestershire and Herefordshire, but in both cases, there are differences of geography and economy between South Warwickshire and Leicestershire, or North Warwickshire and the Worcestershire / Herefordshire footprint. Looking eastward to Northamptonshire is also technically an option but has the same issues as the other geographic options.

- Criteria six: Stronger community engagement

The Councils appointed ORS (Opinion Research Services) in 2020 to conduct an extensive engagement programme to examine the options for local government across Warwickshire.

Divided views were expressed across the focus groups but, on balance, residents and stakeholders were slightly more in favour of two-unitary councils for Warwickshire than a single authority. Residents were particularly in favour of a two-unitary model.

As mentioned later in the report, it is proposed to refresh the engagement across a range of stakeholders.

- 2.17 The Deloitte report discusses the approach to the harmonization of Council Tax. This is an issue particularly for part of the south of the county area as the Council Tax (Band D) figure for the south are lower than the North. Whilst there is already a standard rate for the County Council element, the District and Boroughs have different rates as identified within the following table:

	2025/26 Council Tax (Band D)
	£ : p
Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council	271.47
North Warwickshire Borough Council	242.75
Rugby Borough Council	223.53
Warwick District Council	187.60
Stratford on Avon District Council	169.12

- 2.18 The table demonstrates that there is currently a difference of £102.35 between the Council Tax for NBBC (the highest) and SDC (the lowest) and £83.47 between NBBC and WDC, due in part at least to the Bands of the properties the Councils are most reliant on for their funding. Under plans for a single unitary Warwickshire this would therefore require harmonization, eventually the same level of Council Tax will need to be charged over the whole area. Whilst future decisions on Council Tax will be the responsibility of the new unitary authority/authorities it would be likely that this would result in higher increases for council taxpayers in SDC and WDC areas.
- 2.19 Under the two unitary Warwickshire the difference between Stratford on Avon District Council and Warwick District Council is much less at £18.48, therefore expected increases would be more modest. It should be noted however, that the consequence of lower increases for SDC and WDC residents under a two unitary solution means that more “potential” Council Tax income is foregone.
- 2.20 Within the northern Warwickshire authorities, the council tax difference between the 3 authorities is £28.72 between NBBC and NWBC; £19.22 between NWBC and RBC; and £47.94 between NBBC and RBC. These are much smaller increases than faced by SDC and WDC within a county wide unitary and not that much more than between SDC and WDC (NBBC and RBC aside).

Fair Funding Review

- 2.21 It is worth mentioning that since Deloitte completed its work the Government has started a Fair Funding Review for Local Government and this will have implications for all existing councils and future ones. The consultation documents indicate a government policy desire to give more assistance to those areas experiencing significant deprivation. This ought to benefit the NBBC, NWBC and Rugby areas if they were in a separate unitary council area. However, a county wide council would average out the deprivation impact and so could reduce the funding available to those areas.

Adult Social Services and Children’s Services

- 2.22 A key area which will require additional research relates in the event of a two unitary Warwickshire is the potential financial and service impact of desegregation services such as social care, children’s services etc. The County Council through a PWC report have identified this at a potential additional cost of £9.9m recurring. As detailed above, the Government has identified these areas as ‘critical services’ and how the reorganisation proposals deal with them could have a major impact on the Government’s decision on the two options. This point is recognised within the Deloitte report, that due to economies of scale it is likely to be more cost effective to have a single unitary council for Warwickshire than for two, however, the difference is not as significant, by some margin, as suggested by PWC.

2.23 To help further understand these issues, the Warwickshire District and Borough Councils commissioned a report from Peopletoo. The purpose of this report is to identify what the optimum size of commissioning service exists for the current countywide adult social services and children’s services. Their report is attached at **Appendix 4**.

2.24 In summary, it indicates that Councils in the population bracket of 250,000 to 350,000 are lower cost than larger ones and that arises because of the lack of development of local markets. It suggests that significant savings could be achieved if a two unitary model could achieve the costs of existing unitaries of a similar population size of 250,000 to 350,000 which is the parameter for the two unitary council option. As illustrated in the table below it is implicit that not only is WCC higher on cost, which would continue in the new unitary given the reasons for the current cost would continue to apply in a single unitary option. Benchmarking indicates that a unitary with a population of 500-750k (which would be the size of one unitary in Warwickshire), is on average higher cost when benchmarking key areas of expenditure.

Average costs	unit	S251 LAC unit cost	S251 residential unit cost	S251 SEN unit cost	Nursing unit cost	Residential unit cost	Residential & Nursing unit cost
Population 500-750k		£1,949	£7,406	£123	£1,087	£1,160	£1,138
Population 350-500k		£1,946	£8,465	£118	£1,151	£1,209	£1,166
Population 250-350k		£1,718	£6,772	£96	£1,006	£1,028	£1,023
Population <250k		£1,759	£7,220	£100	£1,044	£1,059	£1,048

2.25 Overall therefore it is suggested that the Council should indicate that two unitary Councils is its preferred option if there is to be Local Government Reorganisation so that officers can focus on the bid to be submitted for that option.

2.26 The Council will want to engage with stakeholders on this issue and the Government have made it clear that they will wish to see that the final proposal has been influenced by such engagement. Whilst the consultation programme is still being developed it will follow on from the work the Districts and Boroughs did in 2020 in order to update our findings from that time from a representative sample of residents, using a mix of online, in person and telephone contacts.

3 **Report Implications**

3.1 Financial Implications

The Council has a reserve of £50,0000 created as part of this year's budget for Local Government Reorganisation. Warwickshire has received a total of £258,565 split equally between the Districts/Boroughs and the County Councils providing another £25,856.50 to this reserve.

The final costs for using Deloitte and Connect PA to work on the final submission and the costs of the consultation are still being finalised however current indications suggest this reserve should be sufficient.

3.2 Legal and Equalities Implications

The Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty which requires Councils to have regard to how policies and decisions impact on people with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

3.3 It is suggested that the main consideration for the Council in coming to a preferred option with regard to Local Government Reorganisation is the best interests of its residents, particularly with regard to wellbeing, economic opportunity and access to important public services. The levels of deprivation and issues of inequality are central to that consideration and the markedly difference socio-economic profile of the Northern area compared the South (as a whole) is key to Members' previous indications that a single unitary Council is not likely to be in the best interests of residents. A number of the matters referenced in this report and its Appendices, particularly the work on Adult and Children's Services, specifically seek to address the public services that those with protected characteristics rely on most, with a very clear emphasis on obtaining the best outcomes from those services for service users.

The Contact Officer for this report is Steve Maxey (719438).

OFFICIAL



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

3 June 2025

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION INTERIM PLAN FEEDBACK: WARWICKSHIRE

To the Chief Executives of:
North Warwickshire Borough Council
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
Rugby Borough Council
Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Warwick District Council
Warwickshire County Council

Overview

Thank you for submitting your interim plans. The amount of work from all councils is clear to see across the options being considered. For the final proposal(s), each council can submit a single proposal for which there must be a clear single option and geography and, as set out in the guidance, we expect this to be for the area as a whole; that is, the whole of the area to which the 5 February invitation was issued, not partial coverage.

Our aim for the feedback on interim plans is to support areas to develop final proposals. This stage is not a decision-making point, and our feedback does not seek to approve or reject any option being considered.

The feedback provided relates to the:

- Interim plan sent on behalf of the district and borough councils concluding that single and two unitary options can meet all the criteria for local government reorganisation; and
- Interim plan sent on behalf of Warwickshire County Council concluding that only a single unitary for the area can meet the criteria.

We have provided feedback on behalf of central government. It takes the form of:

1. A summary of the main feedback points,
2. Our response to the specific barriers and challenges raised in your plans,
3. An annex with more detailed feedback against each of the interim plan asks.

We reference the guidance criteria included in the invitation letter throughout, a copy can be found at [LETTER: WARWICKSHIRE – GOV.UK](#). Our central message is to build on your initial work and ensure that the final proposal(s) address the criteria and

are supported by data and evidence. We recommend that final proposal(s) should use the same assumptions and data sets or be clear where and why there is a difference.

We welcome the work that has been undertaken across proposals to develop local government reorganisation plans for Warwickshire. This feedback does not seek to approve or discount any options or proposals, but provide some feedback designed to assist in the development of final proposal(s). We will assess final proposal(s) against the guidance criteria provided in the invitation letter and have tailored this feedback to identify where additional information may be helpful in enabling that assessment. Please note that this feedback is not exhaustive and should not preclude the inclusion of additional materials or evidence in the final proposal(s). In addition, your named area lead, Jon Scanlan, will be able to provide support and help address any further questions or queries.

Summary of the Feedback:

We have summarised the key elements of the feedback below, with further detail provided in the Annex.

1. In your proposals, you are considering populations that would be above or below 500,000. As set out in the Statutory Invitation guidance and in the English Devolution White Paper, we outlined a population size of 500,000 or more. This is a guiding principle, not a hard target – we understand that there should be flexibility, especially given our ambition to build out devolution and take account of housing growth, alongside local government reorganisation. **All proposals, whether they are at the guided level, above it, or below it, should set out the rationale for the proposed approach clearly.**
2. The criteria ask that 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 (see criterion 3). **For any options where there is disaggregation, further detail will be helpful on how the different options might impact on these services and how risks can be mitigated.**
3. We welcome the steps taken to come together to prepare interim plans, as per criterion 4:
 - a. **Effective collaboration between all councils will be crucial; we would encourage you to continue to build strong relationships and agree ways of working, including around effective data sharing. This will support the development of a robust shared evidence base to underpin final proposal(s).**
 - b. **It would be helpful if final proposal(s) use the same assumptions and data sets or be clear where and why there is a difference.**
 - c. **It would be helpful if your final proposal(s) set out how the data and evidence supports all the outcomes you have included and how well they meet the assessment criteria in the invitation letter.**

d. You may wish to consider an options appraisal that will help demonstrate why your proposed approach in the round best meets the assessment criteria in the invitation letter compared to any alternatives.

4. In final proposal(s) it would be helpful to outline how each option would interact with a Strategic Authority and best benefit the local community, including meeting devolution statutory tests.

Response to specific barriers and challenges raised

Please see below our response to the specific barriers and challenges that were raised in your interim plans.

1. Devolution and Strategic Authority options

One of the plans asks for clarity about what potential Strategic Authority options will be available for Warwickshire to assist your consideration of reorganisation options.

We welcome the acknowledgement in the interim plans that there is a significant opportunity for devolution beyond the current non-mayoral agreement and the options you have set out for potential devolution routes for Warwickshire. In the detailed feedback table below, we have asked for further detail on devolution, but in summary:

- a. **Existing devolved powers:** Proposals should consider the impact of each option for reorganisation on the exercise of the new housing, regeneration, and adult skills powers being conferred by upcoming legislation to Warwickshire County Council as part of the current agreement, and what the options may be for exercising devolved functions once new unitaries are formed under each option.
- b. **Future options for devolution:**
We cannot pre-judge the result or timelines of any future devolution discussions, but we will work with you to progress any ambitions where possible in due course.

2. Early written feedback on area proposal

You asked for early written feedback from Government on the interim plans. This is our feedback to support you to develop your final proposal(s), we are open to providing ongoing support to your work to progress your final plan. Jon Scanlan is your MHCLG lead contact and is ready to engage with the whole area on issues you wish to discuss further.

ANNEX: Detailed feedback on criteria for interim plan

Ask – Interim Plan Criteria	Feedback
<p>Identify the likely options for the size and boundaries of new councils that will offer the best structures for delivery of high-quality and sustainable public services across the area, along with indicative efficiency saving opportunities.</p> <p>Relevant criteria:</p> <p>1c) Proposals should be supported by robust evidence and analysis and include an explanation of the outcomes it is expected to achieve, including evidence of estimated costs/benefits and local engagement.</p> <p>and</p> <p>2a-f) Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.</p> <p>and</p> <p>3a-c) Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.</p>	<p>We welcome the initial thinking on the options for local government reorganisation in Warwickshire and recognise that this is subject to further work. We note the local context and challenges outlined in the plans and the potential benefits that have been identified for the options put forward. Your plans set out your intention to undertake further analysis, and this further detail and evidence, on the outcomes that are expected to be achieved for the whole area of any preferred model would be welcomed.</p> <p>Effective collaboration between all Warwickshire councils will be crucial to reaching final proposal(s). We would encourage you to continue to build strong relationships and agree ways of working, including around effective data sharing.</p> <p>For the final proposal(s), each council can submit a single proposal for which there must be a clear single option and geography and, as set out in the guidance, we expect this to be for the area as a whole; that is, the whole of the area to which the 5 February invitation was issued, not partial coverage.</p> <p>You may wish to consider an options appraisal against the criteria set out in the letter to provide a rationale for the preferred model against alternatives.</p> <p>Proposals should be for a sensible geography which will help to increase housing supply and meet local needs, including future housing growth plans. All proposals should set out the rationale for the proposed approach.</p> <p>We recognise that the options outlined in the interim plans are subject to further development. In final proposal(s) it would be helpful to include a high-level financial assessment which covers transition costs and overall forecast operating costs of the new unitary councils.</p> <p>We will assess your final proposal(s) against the criteria in the invitation letter. Referencing criterion 1 and 2, you may wish to consider the following bullets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high level breakdowns for where any efficiency savings will be made, with clarity of assumptions on

	<p>how estimates have been reached and the data sources used, including differences in assumptions between proposals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how efficiency savings have been considered alongside a sense of local place and identity • information on the counterfactual against which efficiency savings are estimated, with values provided for current levels of spending • a clear statement of what assumptions have been made and if the impacts of inflation are taken into account • a summary covering sources of uncertainty or risks, with modelling, as well as predicted magnitude and impact of any unquantifiable costs or benefits • where possible, quantified impacts on service provision, as well as wider impacts. <p>We recognise that financial assessments are subject to further work. Referencing criteria 1 and 2, the bullets below indicate where further information would be helpful across all options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data and evidence to set out how your final proposal(s) would enable financially viable councils across the whole area, including identifying which option best delivers value for money for council taxpayers • detail on potential finances of new unitaries, for example, funding, operational budgets, potential budget surpluses/shortfalls, total borrowing (General Fund), and debt servicing costs (interest and MRP); and what options may be available for rationalisation of potentially surplus operational assets • clarity on the underlying assumptions underpinning any modelling e.g. assumptions of future funding, demographic growth and pressures, interest costs, Council Tax, savings earmarked in existing councils' MTFs • financial sustainability both through the period to the creation of new unitary councils as well as afterwards. <p>For proposals that would involve disaggregation of services, we would welcome further details on how services can be maintained, for example, for social care, children's services, SEND, homelessness, and for wider public services including public safety</p>
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	<p>Under criterion 3c you may wish to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how each option would deliver high-quality and sustainable public services or efficiency saving opportunities • what are the potential impacts of disaggregating services? • what would the different options mean for local services provision, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • do different options have a different impact on SEND services and distribution of funding and sufficiency planning to ensure children can access appropriate support, and how will services be maintained? • what is the impact on adult and children’s care services? Is there a differential impact on the number of care users and infrastructure to support them from the different options? • what partnership options have you considered for joint working across the new unitaries for the delivery of social care services? • do different options have variable impacts as you transition to the new unitaries, and how will risks to safeguarding be managed? • do different options have variable impacts on schools, support and funding allocation, and sufficiency of places, and how will impacts on schools be managed? • what might be the impact on highway services across the area under the different approaches suggested? • what are the implications for public health, including consideration of socio-demographic challenges and health inequalities within any new boundaries and their implications for current and future health service needs. What are the implications for how residents access services and service delivery for populations most at risk? <p>We would encourage you to provide further details on how your proposals would maximise opportunities for public service reform, so that we can explore how best to support your efforts.</p>
<p>Include indicative costs and arrangements in</p>	<p>As per criterion 2, the final proposal(s) should set out how an area will seek to manage transition costs,</p>

<p>relation to any options including planning for future service transformation opportunities.</p> <p>Relevant criteria:</p> <p>2d) Proposals should set out how an area will seek to manage transition costs, including planning for future service 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.</p>	<p>including planning for future service 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • within this it would be helpful to provide detailed analysis on expected transition and/or disaggregation costs and potential efficiencies of proposal(s). This could include clarity on methodology, assumptions, data used, what year these may apply and why these are appropriate • detail on the potential service transformation opportunities and invest-to-save projects from unitarisation across a range of services e.g. consolidation of waste collection and disposal services and whether different options provide different opportunities for back-office efficiency savings • where it has not been possible to monetise or quantify impacts, you may wish to provide an estimated magnitude and likelihood of impact • summarise any sources of risks, uncertainty and key dependencies related to the modelling and analysis • detail on the estimated financial sustainability of proposed reorganisation and how debt could be managed locally <p>We welcome the joint work you have done to date and recommend that all options and proposals should use the same assumptions and data sets or be clear where and why there is a difference (linked to criterion 1c).</p>
<p>Include early views as to the councillor numbers that will ensure both effective democratic representation for all parts of the area, and also effective governance and decision-making arrangements which will balance the unique needs of your cities, towns, rural and coastal areas, in line with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England guidance.</p>	<p>We welcome the early views you have provided of councillor numbers, which we will be sharing with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). There are no set limits on the number of councillors although the LGBCE guidance indicates that a compelling case would be needed for a council size of more than 100 members.</p> <p>New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.</p> <p>Additional details on how the community will be engaged, specifically how the governance, participation and local voice will be addressed to</p>

<p>Relevant criteria:</p> <p>6) New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.</p> <p>6a) Proposals will need to explain plans to make sure that communities are engaged</p>	<p>strengthen local engagement and democratic decision-making would be helpful.</p> <p>In your final proposal(s) we would welcome detail on your plans for neighbourhood-based governance, the impact on parish councils, and the role of formal neighbourhood partnerships and neighbourhood Area Committees.</p>
<p>Include early views on how new structures will support devolution ambitions.</p> <p>Relevant criteria:</p> <p>5a-c) New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.</p> <p>Specifically 5b) Where no CA or CCA is already established or agreed then the proposal should set out how it will help unlock devolution.</p>	<p>We note you are considering different devolution options and are discussing with wider stakeholders how to develop a clear roadmap for devolution for Warwickshire. MHCLG officials are working with you on these matters separately.</p> <p>Across all local government reorganisation proposal(s), looking towards a potential future Strategic Authority, it would be helpful to outline how each option would interact with a Strategic Authority and best benefit the local community, including meeting the criteria for sensible geography in the White Paper and devolution statutory tests.</p> <p>We cannot pre-judge the result or timelines of any future devolution discussions, but we will work with you to progress your ambitions where possible in due course.</p>
<p>Include a summary of local engagement that has been undertaken and any views expressed, along with your further plans for wide local engagement to help shape your developing proposals.</p> <p>Relevant criteria:</p> <p>6a-b) new unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for</p>	<p>We note your interim update against criterion 6 and recognise the limitations on local engagement it has been possible to undertake to date.</p> <p>It is for you to decide how best to engage locally in a meaningful and constructive way with residents, the voluntary sector, local community groups, neighbourhood boards, public sector providers such as health, police and fire, and local businesses to inform your final proposal(s).</p> <p>For the proposal that involves disaggregation of services, you may wish to engage in particular with those residents who could be affected</p>

<p>neighbourhood empowerment.</p>	<p>It would be helpful to see detail that demonstrates how local ideas and views have been incorporated into your final proposal(s).</p>
<p>Set out indicative costs of preparing proposals and standing up an implementation team as well as any arrangements proposed to coordinate potential capacity funding across the area.</p> <p>Relevant criteria:</p> <p>Linked to 2d) Proposals should set out how an area will seek to manage transition costs, including planning for future service 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.</p>	<p>We note the indicative costs included in the plans. We recognise these are early estimates and would welcome updated costs as the process goes forward, including those related to the costs of consultancy support.</p> <p>£7.6 million will be made available in the form of local government reorganisation proposal development contributions, to be split across the 21 areas. Further information will be provided on this funding shortly.</p> <p>We would welcome further detail in your final proposal(s) over the level of cost and the extent to which the costs are for delivery of the unitary structures or for transformation activity that delivers additional benefits.</p>
<p>Set out any voluntary arrangements that have been agreed to keep all councils involved in discussions as this work moves forward and to help balance the decisions needed now to maintain service delivery and ensure value for money for council taxpayers, with those key decisions that will affect the future success of any new councils in the area.</p> <p>Relevant criteria:</p> <p>4 a-c) Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work</p>	<p>We welcome the ways of working together you have outlined in the interim plans (see criterion 4) and the commitment to the councils across Warwickshire to co-operate fully on local government reorganisation and share data/information etc.</p> <p>Continuing such collaborative working between all the councils of Warwickshire, including agreeing principles for working together, and sharing data, resources and expertise, will be crucial in developing robust final proposals.</p> <p>We recommend that final proposal(s) should use the same assumptions and data sets or be clear where and why there is a difference.</p>

together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.	
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Rob Howard
Leader of Warwickshire County Council

SENT VIA EMAIL

17th June 2025

Dear Rob,

Thank you for sending the letter from the Leaders of Warwickshire's Councils dated 9th June.

My view is clear: the current boundaries of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), aligned with the seven West Midlands Metropolitan Councils, remain the most appropriate structure to meet the needs of our region. This enables the WMCA to focus most effectively on delivering its critical priorities: investment in transport, affordable social housing, skills development, and economic growth.

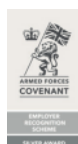
We now need to strengthen and deepen delivery in the existing boundaries of the WMCA – not risk the dilution of impact, at this crucial stage in our economic recovery, through a focus on the expansion of these boundaries.

As Mayor, I am keen to have the WMCA work effectively across these boundaries, allowing us to do more together to deliver housing, employment land, improved transport links, and enhanced economic productivity that will benefit all our communities.

It is important to note that Warwickshire is currently being asked to submit detailed proposals for its unitary model, alongside an expression of intent regarding the most appropriate Strategic Authority for the new council(s) to join.

There is a formal process for admitting new members to a Combined Authority, which would require the consent of the Mayor, the Combined Authority, the Secretary of State, and the applicant councils. While the Government has indicated that preparations could begin in Spring 2026, we would not expect to consider admitting any new council(s) until after the Mayoral elections in May 2028.

West Midlands Combined Authority, 16 Summer Lane, Birmingham, B19 3SD
Tel: 0345 303 6760 | wmca.org.uk

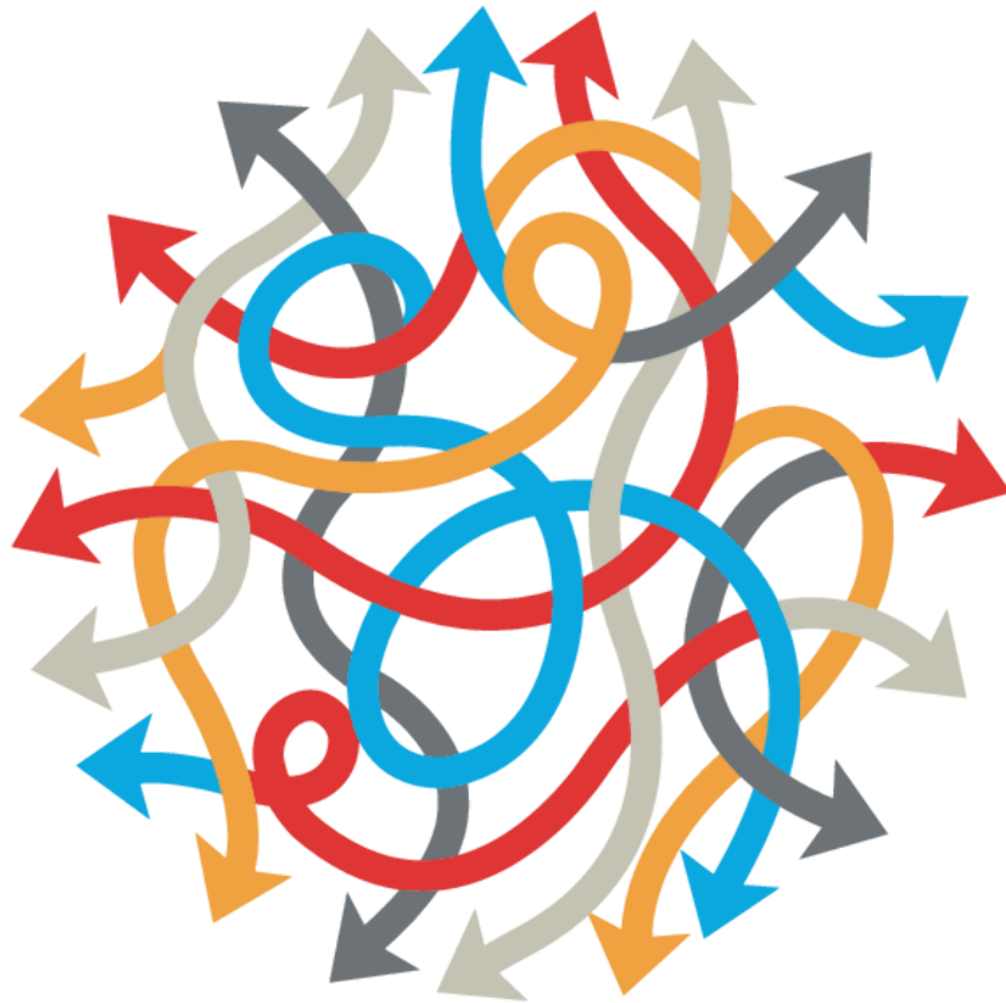


I can ask my office to arrange a meeting, which would focus on effective cross-border cooperation. This meeting would not focus on the expansion of these borders, given the timescale above and my settled position on these borders.

Yours sincerely



Richard Parker
Mayor of the West Midlands



Appraising the options for the future of local government within Warwickshire

June 2025

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Deloitte LLP
Birmingham
June 2025

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this paper

In December 2024, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government released the English Devolution White Paper. The White Paper sets out the Government's ambitions around local government reorganisation in that they are seeking to establish Unitary Councils, in existing two-tier areas. Subsequently, on 5th February 2025, a formal call for unitary solutions has been made by the Government. Each council in Warwickshire was invited to work with the other councils in the area to develop a proposal for local government reorganisation. In this context, the District Councils wished to undertake a piece of work to review all of the options for local government reorganisation and select the option with the most benefits for the people of Warwickshire. Therefore, the District Councils commissioned Deloitte to undertake an appraisal of the options, which could be used to inform the formal submission of plans, requested by Government in November 2025.

This paper represents the output of this work. It undertakes an appraisal of two key options for the future of local government in Warwickshire and selects a preferred option. The paper then goes on to outline potential next steps in the run up to final submission of plans in November 2025.

The Options

Two options for local government reorganisation have been examined as outlined below.

Option 1 – Single unitary model: A single unitary council based on the existing geography of the five Borough and District Councils and the County Council.

Option 2 – Two-unitary model: A two-unitary council model as follows:

- (1) Based on the existing boundaries of North Warwickshire Borough Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Rugby Borough Council
- (2) Based on the existing boundaries of Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwick District Council

The Criteria

These two options have been assessed against the following criteria, as set by the Government in the letter dated 5th February 2025:

1. A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.
2. Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.
3. Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.
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.
5. New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.

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

Ranking the options against the criteria

Each of the options have been given a forced ranking against each of the six criteria, as indicated in the table below (please note that a ranking of one is best and a ranking of two is worst). This process has been undertaken objectively by assessing the relative merits of the evidence as well as the theoretical benefits and disbenefits of each option against each criteria.

The rankings for each option have then been added together and ranked with the lowest score (i.e. the total number of first place rankings) being selected as the preferred option.

Table 1: Rankings of each option against the six criteria.

Criteria	Option 1: Single-Unitary	Option 2: Two-Unitary
1. Establishment of a single tier of local government	2	1
2. Right size to achieve efficiencies, and withstand financial shocks	1	2
3. Public service delivery	2	1
4. Councils working together and local place identity	2	1
5. Support devolution arrangements	2	1
6. Stronger community engagement	2	1
Overall Ranking	2nd Place Score: 11	1st Place Score: 7

There is therefore a strong conclusion from this appraisal that the two-unitary model is best for Warwickshire against the Government's six criteria.

The body of this report contains the evidence and rationale for each of the rankings against the six criteria. However, in summary:

Criteria one: Establishment of a single tier of local government

The two-unitary model creates sensible economic areas for Warwickshire due to its focus on place. The North and South of the county have extremely different economies and challenges. This is clear from the data whether economic, social, health, housing or travel to work issues are observed. This means that local plans are required to meet local needs. Economic growth is a priority for Warwickshire, and given the North / South divide, a two-unitary model is more suitable to drive this agenda for the economies of North and South Warwickshire.

The two-unitary model could also support local government in North and South Warwickshire to deal with the significant economic challenges it faces by creating stronger services such as planning functions specifically for each area with concise local plans that deliver for residents and business.

Finally, the two-unitary model would also create a more powerful voice for the North and South Warwickshire economies that can work within and influence existing partnership organisations. A single county unitary approach does not create a big enough strategic unit to create advantage for

the economy. Put simply, there is not a Warwickshire economy. The county needed to join with Coventry to create a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) that made economic sense. Moreover, while size is important to create strategic focus, this could be better achieved through the Strategic Authority approach. Accordingly, it is easy to envisage an approach that combines two North and South unitaries in Warwickshire with full constituent membership of a Strategic Authority, therefore providing an ideal combination of strategic thinking on issues such as planning and transport, and local focus on the specific challenges that need to be faced in the North and South of the county.

The single county unitary creates a footprint that is too big and has less chance of creating economic growth due to its lack of focus on place. For one local authority to develop individualised plans to address the needs outlined in this report would be very difficult. Instead, local plans are required to address these local needs, based on a real understanding of place and local economy, which is best provided by a greater number of smaller unitaries dedicated to place.

Criteria two: Right size to achieve efficiencies, and withstand financial shocks

A rapid financial assessment has been undertaken as part of this work and while it indicates that the single county unitary is likely to achieve greater financial benefits due to its scale, both the single county unitary and the two-unitary options deliver savings when compared to the status quo. The gap between the two options is not significant when total spend of local government across the county is considered.

Moreover, there are different ways of looking at value for money. Due to the impact of council tax harmonisation, under a single county unitary approach, residents of the Districts in the South could see themselves paying higher council tax rates for services that are run more remotely and are less responsive.

It should also be noted that the financial assessment has only looked at transactional savings from bringing services together. Smaller unitaries may be able to deliver more transformational change by creating more locally designed preventative services. Investing in these preventative measures can generate long-term cost savings. This could bridge the savings gap to the single unitary model.

This has also been a purely theoretical exercise to look at costs and benefits. Savings delivery from this kind of programme is much more difficult in reality. There are certainly several examples of county unitaries that have been formed which have then struggled financially subsequently. Size alone is not an answer to financial sustainability.

It is also worth noting here that the public engagement activity undertaken identified a frequently raised concern that any projected savings from reorganisation would be negated by the cost of implementing it – there is scepticism around whether savings can be delivered.

On the population size question, the single county unitary is the only option that meets the Government's criteria for a minimum population size of 500,000. However, the proposed two unitaries would cover a significant population size and compare favourably to other unitary councils that currently exist in England. By 2048 both proposed councils would have a population of greater than 350,000.

On the basis of the financial assessment and the population size, the single county unitary has been ranked as best against this criterion, but the gap between the options is not big.

Criteria three: Public service delivery

The two-unitary model is the preferred option for Warwickshire as it strikes a strategic balance between achieving efficiency and effectively addressing the diverse needs of its residents.

This model acknowledges the inadequacy of a one-size-fits-all approach to service delivery, empowering two distinct authorities to tailor services to their respective jurisdictions while collaborating on county-wide priorities, such as children's services. This approach ensures both local responsiveness and strategic alignment, fostering greater agility, stronger community relationships, and a more effective allocation of resources compared to a highly centralised single-authority model.

The two-unitary model has more chance of improving services due to its focus on local need. The data shows that there is significant variation between the North and South of the county in areas including the economy, housing market, transport links and health and wellbeing. Residents have very different needs in both places. A two-unitary model can take into account these different local needs, and deliver services that are responsive to them, more easily moving resources to where they are needed most. For services where scale is important, and local need less so, the two unitaries can collaborate.

While the single county unitary can create more economies of scale, avoid disaggregation, and potentially deliver greater performance consistency across the county, diseconomies of scale are also possible when organisations get bigger. Organisational structures and processes can become too complicated and cumbersome. A bigger organisation may find, for example, it more difficult to bring about transformational change by building new sets of relationships with residents and the community and voluntary sector.

There would also be the opportunity for the two unitaries to review areas where different services are provided by the Councils and consider whether expanding services across the footprint may be advantageous. For example, the two unitaries may consider the future position on the Housing Revenue Account and associated housing service, and arts and culture service delivery.

Criteria four: Councils working together and local place identity

The two-unitary model better maintains a sense of real place and community. Any proposed model of local government should be reflective of the way people live their lives, including where they live and where they work. The current county council area of Warwickshire (of course excluding Coventry) is not a coherent single place, but represents an administrative set of boundaries.

By contrast, there is so much variation between the North and South of the county that they should be considered separate places with their own unique challenges and priorities. Residents have very different needs and concerns in both places, and there are relatively consistent needs and concerns within both North and South. A two-unitary model, therefore, ensures that local government in Warwickshire will reflect real places, rather than an artificial one. This model allows for tailored policies and initiatives that respect existing cultural and economic disparities, fostering a stronger sense of local ownership and belonging while enabling closer engagement with communities and their unique needs and priorities.

The two-unitary model also better maintains effective local leadership. There is a significant danger that a county unitary could become too remote from citizens and communities, reduce local decision making, and even perhaps damage the interests of the individual places. Bigger local authorities may be more inclined to give more focus to factors such as value for money at the expense of local need, and have to trade off the different needs of different places, simply due to their size. This can mean that local places lose out.

A two-unitary model could create a very different culture, building on the strengths of the Boroughs and Districts in working with local people, and creating, in the words of Dorset Council, two 'district councils with county council powers'. The two unitaries could speak up for the interests of place and the discrete local communities within each area, creating a stronger, unified voice than currently exists, and ensuring the place voice is heard at a strategic level. It would also maintain local political leadership and accountability which will enable engagement with residents and support local decision making.

Finally, the two-unitary model builds on the Boroughs and Districts' track record of collaborative working. There is much evidence in this regard. The two-unitary model is a better cultural fit. It clearly creates two new entities, removing any sense of 'takeover' by the County of the Boroughs and Districts which may cause problems.

Criteria five: Support devolution arrangements

A two-unitary model is optimal for Warwickshire as it balances strategic scale with a vital focus on local needs.

A single county unitary could potentially join the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) as a full member. However, there would be risks of this approach. In allocation of the financial Integrated Settlement, Warwickshire could lose out to the more deprived areas elsewhere across the WMCA footprint. In addition, if a single county unitary joined WMCA, it would immediately become the second largest Council by some margin, and could unbalance this established Combined Authority. Another option proposed has been for a Warwickshire Strategic Authority. If this were the case, it would preclude a single county unitary, as the two organisations could not be the same size according to guidance.

Perhaps more importantly, it has been reported that the Mayor could veto Warwickshire joining the WMCA as a full member. This significantly limits the potential to create an alternative devolution structure that would make sense for Warwickshire with a single county unitary.

Any other structure may involve two or three other neighbouring county areas; in which case there would not be an effective size ratio between the single county unitary areas and the overall Strategic Authority: the single county unitaries would be too close in size to the potential Strategic Authority. If the single county unitary entered a Strategic Authority alongside other smaller unitaries, again there would be a size and power imbalance within the Strategic Authority between the Warwickshire single unitary and other, smaller unitaries.

Fundamentally, if the WMCA is not an option, there is not a logical devolution solution for a future single county unitary. There may be an option to look towards Leicestershire, or towards Worcestershire and Herefordshire, but in both cases, there are differences of geography and economy between South Warwickshire and Leicestershire, or North Warwickshire and the Worcestershire / Herefordshire footprint.

A two-unitary model provides more opportunity in this regard and makes it easier to deal with other county areas. First, the new unitaries could assess their local geographies and economies and decide to pursue the devolution options most effective for their local places. For example, the North unitary could look to Staffordshire and Leicestershire. The South unitary could look to Worcestershire, Oxfordshire or Northamptonshire. Conversations are already being held by the Boroughs and Districts in this regard. Moreover, the size ratio works more effectively in this scenario – the smaller unitaries can advocate for their local interests without dominating any potential future Strategic Authority as they are too large.

Therefore the two-unitary model has been scored as best against this criterion.

Criteria six: Stronger community engagement

The Councils appointed ORS (Opinion Research Services) in 2020 to conduct an extensive engagement programme to examine the options for local government across Warwickshire.

Divided views were expressed across the focus groups but, on balance, residents and stakeholders were slightly more in favour of two-unitary councils for Warwickshire than a single authority. Residents were particularly in favour of a two-unitary model.

Those who opposed a single council for the whole of Warwickshire did so chiefly on the grounds that the county is too large and too diverse in terms of social and economic need (particularly

between north and south) for it to be a viable consideration. It would also be the most 'remote' option: there was again considerable concern about a loss of local influence and democratic accountability within one large local authority. It could also result in democratic deficit as councillors will be expected to cover far larger areas and populations.

This engagement process provides evidence for scoring the two-unitary model as best.

Moreover, the two-unitary model better maintains effective local engagement moving forward. There is a significant danger that a county unitary could become too remote from citizens and communities, reduce local decision making, and even perhaps damage the interests of the individual places. By contrast, a **two-unitary model could create a very different culture**, building on the strengths of the districts in working with local people. There is lots of evidence of the effectiveness of the local engagement programmes of the Borough and District Councils in Warwickshire.

Conclusion and next steps

Ultimately there is a lack of empirical evidence to support whether a bigger county unitary or smaller unitaries will be more effective in delivering services in any given place. Therefore, an assessment of the preferred option must be based on the specific local context in each place.

In Warwickshire there is clear evidence that the North and the South of the county are fundamentally different places, and as such, require their own local government structures. This is why this report recommends the two-unitary model.

This paper has also suggested, as requested by the Government in its letter of 5th February:

- Thoughts on barriers and challenges,
- Indicative costs in relation to the option,
- Early views as to the councillor numbers,
- Early views on how new structures will support devolution ambitions.
- A summary of local engagement that has been undertaken and further plans
- Indicative costs of preparing proposals and standing up an implementation team
- The voluntary arrangements that have been agreed to keep all councils involved in discussions as this work moves forward.

Introduction

In December 2024, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government released the English Devolution White Paper. The White Paper sets out the Government's ambitions around local government reorganisation in that they are seeking to establish Unitary Councils, in existing two-tier areas.

Subsequently, on 5th February 2025, a formal call for unitary solutions has been made by the Government, with a March 21st deadline for initial plans. Each council in Warwickshire was invited to work with the other councils in the area to develop a proposal for local government reorganisation.

The District Councils commissioned Deloitte to undertake an appraisal of the options, which could then be used to inform final plans in November 2025.

This paper represents the output of this work. It undertakes an appraisal of two key options for the future of local government in Warwickshire and selects a preferred option.

The paper then goes onto outline potential next steps in the run up to final submission of plans in November 2025, as the Government has requested.

The structure of this paper therefore carefully follows the requirements of Government in that it:

- Outlines the barriers and challenges that the Boroughs and Districts have faced and continue to face;
- Identifies the options, undertakes an options appraisal against the criteria for local government reorganisation set by the Government, and selects a preferred option, and
- Outlines potential next steps in the development of this proposal, including indicative costs, possible councillor numbers, early views on how new structures will support devolution ambitions, a summary of local engagement and plans for wide local engagement, and the voluntary arrangements that have been agreed to keep all councils involved in discussions as this work moves forward.

Please note that the work in this paper was undertaken in a very short timeframe and is based primarily on an analysis of data, information and evidence provided.

Barriers and challenges

The development of a new unitary model for Warwickshire presents a complex set of challenges.

The challenges with the current process

The limited timeframe for this process raises concerns. The tight deadlines for creating the proposal have limited the opportunity for engagement with broader key stakeholders, both internally with staff and externally with partners, businesses, and community groups.

In particular, public perception and engagement are crucial for the successful transition into a new structure. As indicated below, some work has been done in this regard, but the Borough and District Councils are keen to further inform and involve residents, businesses, and stakeholders.

Also, the development of the full plan for November with supporting business case will require significant capacity, expertise and dedicated roles to ensure it can be successfully delivered. The Councils will need to secure specialised skills to coordinate restructuring, service integration, and wider change management. The current compressed timeline has limited the ability to assess current staffing levels and identify potential skills gaps in these areas, raising concerns about the capacity to manage the additional workload and complexities associated with this transition.

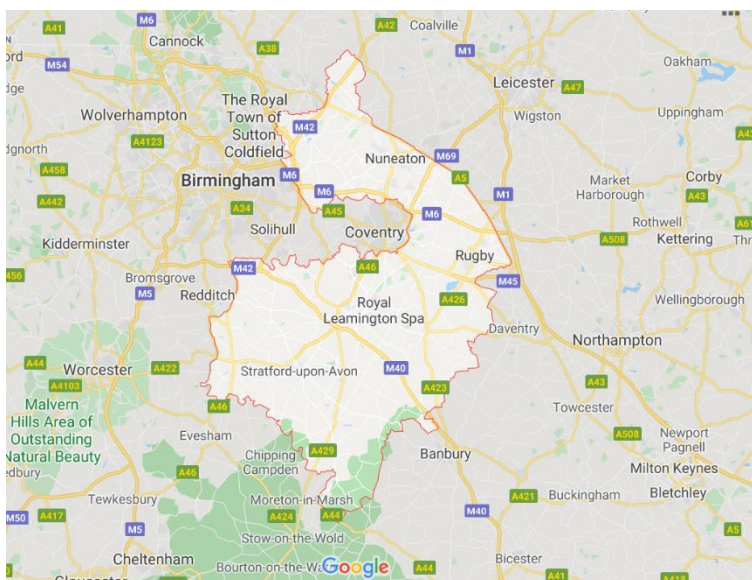
Therefore, securing funding to further develop the case and implementation plans will be essential. This will also facilitate broader engagement with stakeholders in a co-developed manner, as noted above.

Options appraisal

The shortlisted options

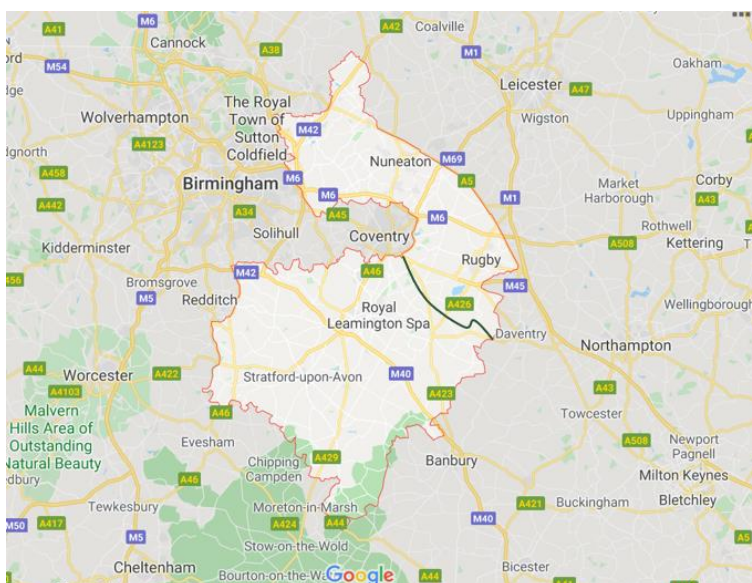
Based on previous work and engagement, two options were shortlisted:

Option 1 – Single County Unitary



Option 2 – Two-unitary Option

- **Unitary 1:** Based on the boundaries of North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth, and Rugby
- **Unitary 2:** Based on the boundaries of Warwick and Stratford-on-Avon



The criteria

These two options have been assessed against the following criteria, as set by the Government in the letter dated 5th February 2025:

1. A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.
2. Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.
3. Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.
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.
5. New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.
6. New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.

Ranking the options against the criteria

Each of these options have been given a forced ranking against each of the six criteria, as indicated in the table below (please note that a ranking of one is best and a ranking of two is worst).

The rankings for each option have then been added together and ranked with the lowest score (i.e. the number of first and second and third place rankings) being selected as the preferred option.

Table 2: Ranking of each option against the six criteria.

Criteria	Option 1: Single-Unitary	Option 2: Two-Unitary
1. Establishment of a single tier of local government	2	1
2. Right size to achieve efficiencies, and withstand financial shocks	1	2
3. Public service delivery	2	1
4. Councils working together and local place identity	2	1
5. Support devolution arrangements	2	1
6. Stronger community engagement	2	1
Overall Ranking	2nd Place Score: 11	1st Place Score: 7

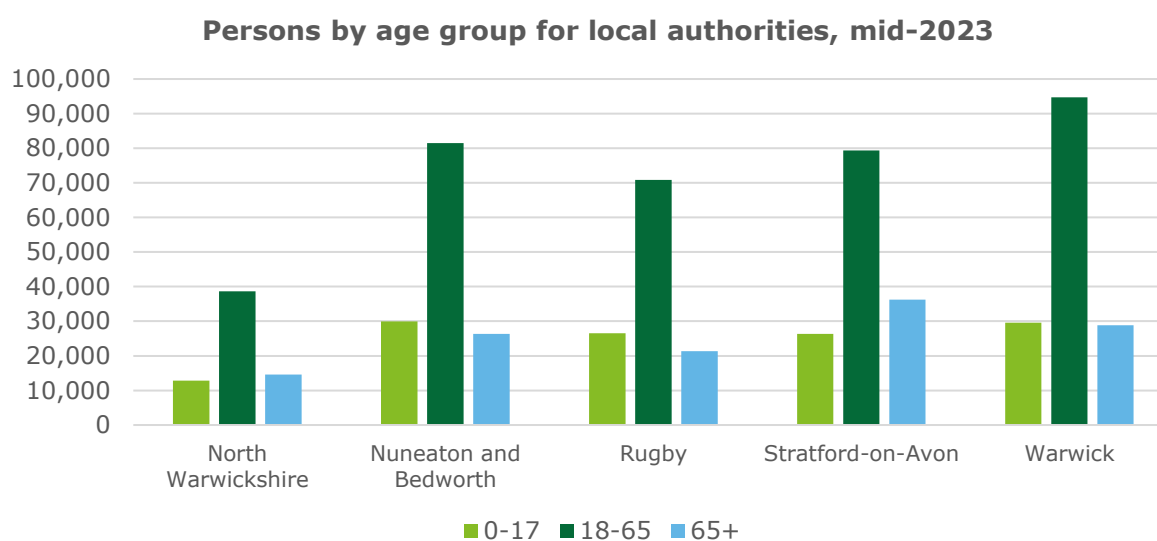
The body of this report contains the evidence and rationale for each of these rankings against the criteria.

Criteria 1 – Achieving a single tier of local government for the whole of the area

This section explores the establishment of a single tier of local government for the entirety of Warwickshire, replacing the existing two-tier system. Against the shortlisted models, it evaluates the benefits of each option to enhance efficiency, accountability, and strategic planning, ultimately delivering better outcomes for residents and businesses across Warwickshire.

Population Base

Chart 1: Population by age group for each local authority.¹



All regions share a dominant 18-64 age group, indicating a generally consistent workforce proportion across Warwickshire.

Stratford-On-Avon and Warwick have a pronounced 65+ population, which creates common needs in the South of the County that must be addressed in any future model.

¹ [Estimates of the population for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

While the overall trends remain largely similar, the Unitary structure options influence the distribution of certain age groups and the division of the tax base across the county – as shown below:

Table 3: Population and tax base for the current structure.²³⁴

	Population			Tax Base		
	2021	2024	2038	2021	2024	2038
North Warwickshire	65,000	66,166	76,056	21,577	21,869	25,138
Nuneaton and Bedworth	134,200	137,794	158,391	39,187	40,085	46,077
Rugby	114,400	118,781	136,536	39,307	40,975	47,100
Stratford-On-Avon	134,700	141,929	163,144	58,229	61,704	70,927
Warwick	148,500	153,153	176,045	56,343	58,280	66,991

It must be noted that 2038 predictions are based on 1% year-on-year increases in population and tax base sizes.

Single Unitary Model

The following table illustrates the consolidated structure resulting from merging all districts into a unified entity, operating under a single unitary model.

Table 4: Population and tax base for proposed single unitary model.

	Population			Tax Base		
	2021	2024	2038	2021	2024	2038
Unitary 1	596,800	617,823	710,172	214,643	222,913	256,233

A single unitary model is the only option that meets the Government's 500,000 population minimum size criteria.

However, the model may also make it more difficult to represent and address the demographic differences within a single county unitary. Smaller councils can more effectively advocate for and represent the interests of different population groups within their areas which create different needs and service requirements.

A single unitary model benefits from a significantly larger tax base compared to multiple, smaller unitary authorities. This provides a more substantial and stable funding foundation for the delivery of public services across the entire county. However, as will be noted below, setting a single council tax rate then becomes very difficult. Although the tax base is bigger, the prospective council's financial commitments are also of course much larger.

Two-Unitary Model

The following table outlines the structure of a two-unitary model, in which two distinct unitary authorities would be established. Unitary 1 would encompass the Boroughs of North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth, and Rugby, merging with part of Warwickshire County Council; with

² [Estimates of the population for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

³ [Council Taxbase 2021 in England - GOV.UK](#)

⁴ [Population and household estimates, England and Wales: Census 2021 - Office for National Statistics](#)

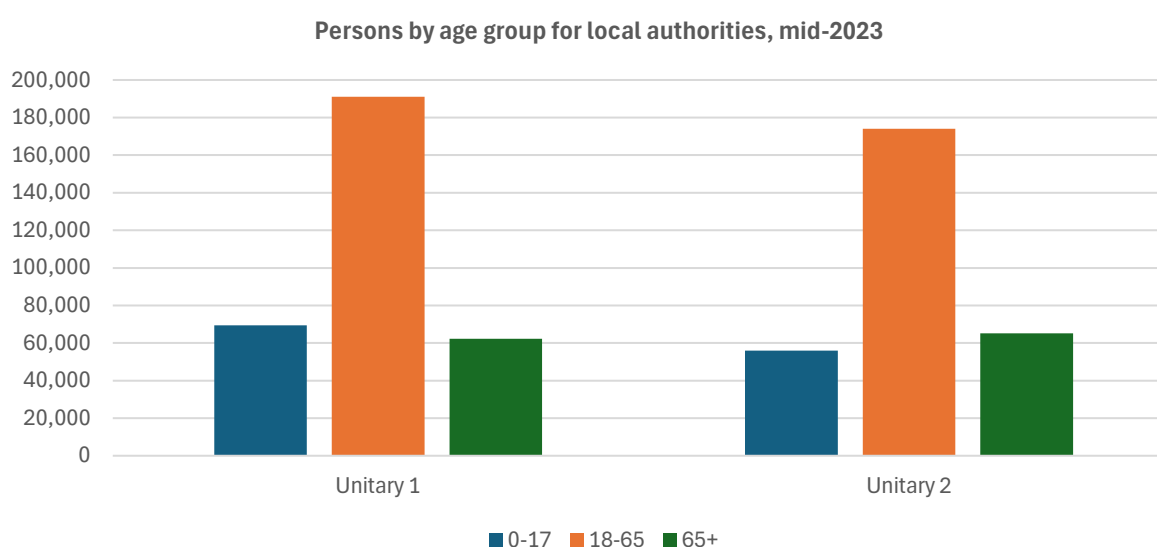
Unitary 2 comprising the Boroughs of Warwick and Stratford-on-Avon, merging with part of Warwickshire County Council.

Table 5: Population and tax base for proposed two-unitary model.^{5 6}

	Population			Tax Base		
	2021	2024	2038	2021	2024	2038
Unitary 1	313,600	322,741	370,983	100,071	102,929	118,314
Unitary 2	283,200	295,082	339,189	114,572	119,984	137,919

Both councils would reach the population level of 350,000 by 2048, and in 2038 one council would meet this criterion, while the other would be close.

Chart 2: Population age groups for the proposed two-unitary model.⁷



Analysis of the projected age distribution for both proposed unitary authorities reveals only marginal differences in demographic composition. Both Unitary 1 and Unitary 2 will require a balanced approach to service provision, recognizing the needs of a diverse population.

While Unitary 1 may have a slightly larger working-age population and a marginally higher proportion of young people, both unitary authorities will need to prioritize education, recreational opportunities, and affordable housing.

Similarly, while Unitary 2 might have a larger proportion of residents aged 65 and above, both entities must ensure robust social care services and health and well-being initiatives for their aging populations. Ultimately, recognizing the relatively balanced demographic profiles is essential for effectively planning and allocating resources across both proposed unitary authorities.

Local Economy and Identity

In evaluating the optimal unitary structure for Warwickshire, understanding the diverse economic needs and opportunities across the county is paramount. This section outlines the economic

⁵ [Local Statistics for Warwickshire \(E10000020\) - Office for National Statistics](#)

⁶ Council Taxbase: Local Authority Level Data for 2024 – Published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 13/11/24 and revised on 13/12/14.

⁷ [Estimates of the population for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

landscape across the Warwickshire region and the potential impact of single or two-unitary models on local economies, considering factors such as investment attraction, strategic planning, resource allocation, and the ability to address region-specific challenges.

The majority of Warwickshire's population live within the south and centre of the county, in areas such as Warwick, Stratford-on-Avon, and Nuneaton and Bedworth. The market towns of northern and eastern Warwickshire which were industrialised in the 19th Century, include Atherstone, Bedworth, Coleshill, Nuneaton, and Rugby. Of these, Atherstone has retained most of its original character. Past major industries included coal mining, textiles, engineering and cement production but heavy industry is in decline and is being gradually replaced by distribution centres and other light-to-medium industry and services.

Of the northern and eastern towns, only Nuneaton and Rugby are well-known outside Warwickshire. The prosperous towns of central and western Warwickshire include Royal Leamington Spa, Warwick, Stratford-upon-Avon, Kenilworth, Alcester, Southam and Wellesbourne.

North Warwickshire

North Warwickshire, a predominantly rural area, bears the legacy of its historical dominance by the mining industry, even after the closure of its last coal mine in 2013. This industrial heritage continues to shape the community's identity. While mining may no longer define its economy, North Warwickshire has adapted, with key sectors driving its present-day economic landscape. In 2020, wholesale and retail, transportation and storage, the manufacture of metals, electrical products, and machinery, along with warehousing and transport, emerged as the dominant economic forces. This shift is evident in the emergence of a major logistics hub, characterized by large distribution centres and warehouses serving as key nodes in the UK's supply chain network. Additionally, North Warwickshire benefits from its integration into the Midlands automotive cluster, further contributing to the region's manufacturing strength.

While the area currently has a modest visitor economy, with Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon often overshadowing local destinations, and limited shopping opportunities leading many residents to seek retail options outside the borough, North Warwickshire anticipates that the rise of remote work and online shopping will reshape these dynamics in the future ⁸.

Nuneaton and Bedworth

Despite being the smallest Borough in Warwickshire by area, Nuneaton and Bedworth holds the third-largest population, reflecting its predominantly urban character. Historically reliant on industries like coal mining and heavy engineering, today, the dominant employment sectors encompass wholesale, retail, and trade; health and social work; and transportation, storage, and communication. These industries are housed within a network of industrial estates, accommodating a mix of small and medium-sized enterprises alongside headquarters of national and global companies. However, a significant portion of Nuneaton and Bedworth residents commute outside of the region to areas, such as Coventry and Leicestershire, for employment, highlighting a continued reliance on manufacturing and a need for greater diversification of employment opportunities within the borough ⁹.

Rugby

The Borough of Rugby revolves around its namesake town, which houses approximately two-thirds of the district's population, with the remainder residing in the surrounding rural areas.

Rugby's location means it is well connected to all parts of the UK. The West Coast Mainline connects Rugby to Central London within an hour and Birmingham within half an hour. Rugby also sits within the inner, 'Golden Triangle', on the strategic road network (M6/ M1/M69/A5/A14) which

⁸ [North Warwickshire - Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan](#)

⁹ [Nuneaton and Bedworth - Borough Plan](#)

is considered the prime location for logistics and warehousing as it provides access to 90 per cent of the UK population within 4 hours. Immediately adjacent to Rugby's southwestern boundary is DIRFT (Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal) which provides rail goods links to the deep seaports.

The primary employment sectors are concentrated in wholesale, retail, and trade; motor vehicle repair; and transportation and storage. These industries are largely situated within retail parks predominantly located north of Rugby town centre, complementing the diverse range of retail businesses within the town itself. The largest business sectors in Rugby are logistics (14.7%) and manufacturing (12.9%) with particular strengths in aerospace and automotive. The Borough's businesses base in terms of size is focused on the small (10-49 employees) and microbusiness (0-9 employees).

The Borough also houses significant employers including Jaguar Landover's Specialist Vehicle Operations division at Ryton, which produces around 10,000 specialist and high-performance vehicles each year. The technology centre at Ansty Park is also home major employers such as Meggitt, the London Electric Vehicle Company (which makes the iconic London Taxi), AVL, and the Advanced Manufacturing Technology Centre, making Rugby a hub for advanced manufacturing and manufacturing technologies. Rugby has a track record of being an innovative and entrepreneurial area and currently has a higher than UK average start up rate by small businesses.

Rugby Borough Council has recently agreed an Economic Strategy¹⁰ that focusses on the themes of People, Business and Growth. It sets the long-term outcomes of:

- People: Reduced economic and health inequalities by increasing economic activity, apprenticeship participation and raising skill levels in residents as a proportion of the local workforce.
- Business: A growing and diverse business base and retention of existing Rugby businesses through the provision of employment space to meet demand.

Growth: Increasing prosperity for all, measured through gross disposable income, business rates and visitor spend

Stratford-On-Avon

The largely rural district of Stratford-on-Avon is characterized by a dispersed population, with its largest settlement, Stratford-upon-Avon, accounting for less than 25% of the district's residents¹¹. The remaining population is distributed among smaller market towns and rural areas, contributing to the district's distinct character. Stratford on Avon is the largest district in Warwickshire covering an area of 978 km², almost half the entire geography of Warwickshire.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Stratford-on-Avon was worth an estimated £5.3 billion in 2021, according to figures published by the ONS. Stratford-on-Avon's GDP growth between 2020 and 2021 was 7.4% per year.

Tourism plays an important role in Stratford-upon-Avon's economy, attracting over 6 million visitors in 2023, it is estimated that total tourism spend is in the region of £450m pa.

Beyond tourism, the district's economy is bolstered by strategically located business parks that house manufacturing and distribution facilities. The Manufacturing industry is the largest in Stratford-on-Avon based on the number of jobs, accounting for 17.6% of roles in the area. The Council is home to prestigious employers such as Jaguar Land Rover's research and development

¹⁰ [Economic Strategy - Rugby Borough Council](#)

¹¹ [Stratford-on-Avon District - Core Strategy](#)

facilities, Aston Martin' Headquarters and main assembly plant along with professional services such as NFU Mutual.

Warwick

Warwick's economy ranks among the most prosperous in England, boasting a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of £7.4 billion in 2021, with an impressive 10.6% annual growth rate between 2020 and 2021. The area exhibits a high value and high potential, with a strong entrepreneurial spirit and a diverse range of businesses. The Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles industry is the largest employer, accounting for 13.8% of jobs. In fact, Warwick boasts a job density of 1.03, meaning there are more jobs than working-age residents. While the unemployment rate stands at 5.8%, the area faces challenges, including a reliance on low-paying jobs in retail, hospitality, and tourism, as well as limited access to superfast broadband and good mobile coverage in some rural areas. However, Warwick possesses a highly skilled workforce and a strong business survival rate, presenting opportunities for growth in emerging sectors like low-carbon technology and the digital creative industry. The automotive and future mobility sector also plays a significant role, along with a thriving tourism sector.

Economic Sectors

- **Tourism:** Parts of Warwickshire attract many tourists, primarily in the South of the county, due to Stratford-upon-Avon's links with Shakespeare, as well as the historic castles found in Warwick and Kenilworth. To recognise this, a Destination Management Organisation is in operation for south Warwickshire, recognising it as an entity. This shared strength presents opportunities for joint marketing efforts, developing regional tourism itineraries, and collaborating on initiatives to extend the tourism season and attract new visitor demographics.
- **Access to Knowledge and Innovation:** A key advantage for all Boroughs and Districts is their proximity to renowned research and educational institutions. Warwick University, centrally located within the region, and several Birmingham based Universities, within easy reach, provide access to a wealth of knowledge and expertise. This accessibility attracts a significant influx of students from across the UK and internationally, contributing to the vibrancy and economic growth of the local communities, as well as opportunities for collaboration on research and development, knowledge transfer, and skills development, potentially benefiting businesses in both regions.
- **Manufacturing Base:** the Boroughs and Districts have a strong manufacturing presence, particularly in the automotive sector, which forms a significant part of their economic base.
- **Low Carbon Economy:** Warwickshire Boroughs and Districts are committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions, presenting opportunities for growth in renewable energy, green technologies, and sustainable practices.
- **Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering:** Building on the existing automotive expertise, the county can leverage opportunities in electric vehicle (EV) battery production, hydrogen technology, and future mobility solutions.
- **Digital Creative Industries:** Leamington Spa's "Silicon Spa" cluster provides a strong foundation for growth in video game development, digital technologies, and creative industries.
- **Bioscience, Agri-tech, and Medtech:** With a history of research and innovation in bioscience, Warwickshire can attract investment and foster growth in agri-tech, medtech, and related fields.

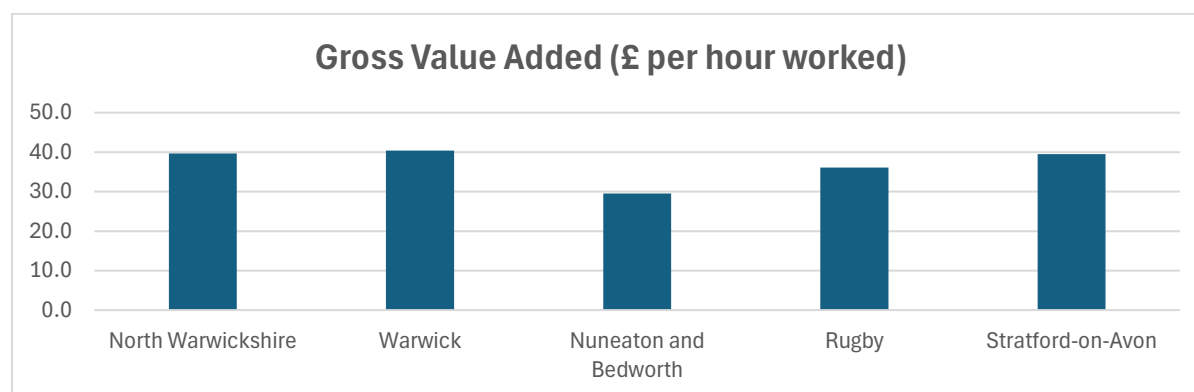
There is significant diversity across the County in sectors.

The economy of the South of the county is largely based on higher value industries, particularly in the fields of professional business services, computing and software, and high-value engineering and manufacturing. Tourism is also important.

By contrast, the economy of the North of the county is based on heavy industry and the legacy of the mining industry. The North continues to have a higher proportion of lower-value manufacturing industries, personal services and public-sector employment than the national average.

Gross Value Added (GVA)

Chart 3: Gross Value Add per work hour



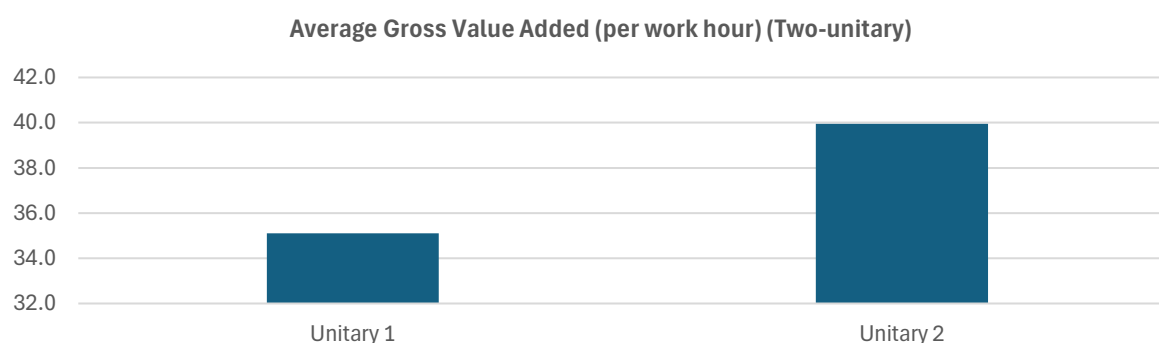
Examining the GVA figures across the region reveals strong performance in the South, as well as North Warwickshire, and weaker performance in the other Boroughs in the North.

This pattern suggests a more moderate level of economic output per worker in these areas, potentially influenced by a greater reliance on lower-value industries or a less skilled workforce.

This is supported by the analysis of GVA split between North and South in the graph below, with unitary two performing over double that seen in unitary one.

This indicates that the North and South have very different economies.

Chart 4: Gross value added per work hour for the proposed two-unitary model.¹²

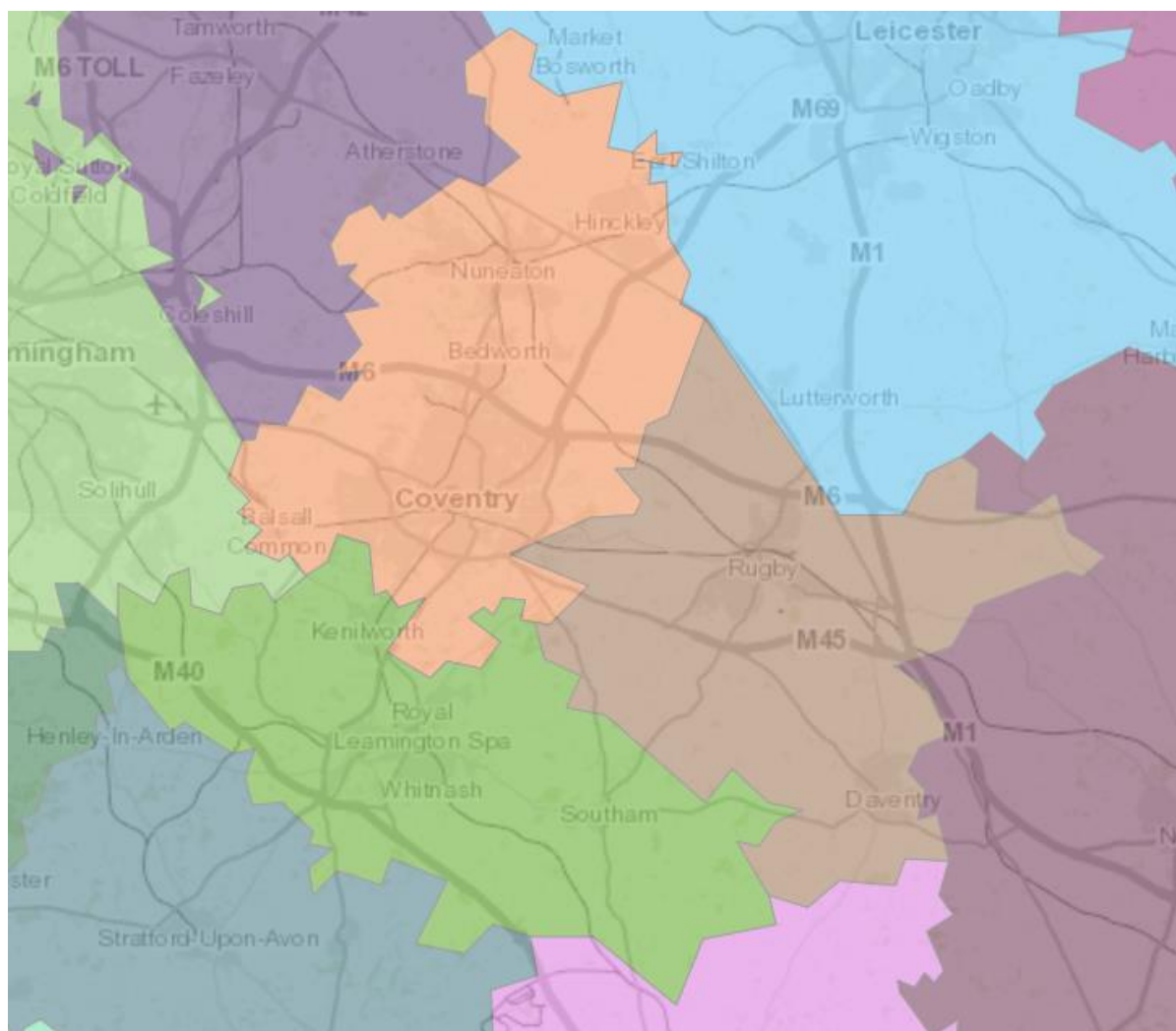


Travel to Work Areas (TTWA):

This section explores the TTWAs across Warwickshire, highlighting key patterns and their implications for the proposed unitary models. Understanding these patterns can inform decisions

¹² [Regional and subregional labour productivity, UK statistical bulletins - Office for National Statistics](#)

regarding transportation planning, economic development strategies, and the overall design of a unitary system that aligns with the daily lives and needs of Warwickshire residents.



The Travel To Work Area (TTWA) map provides valuable insights into the potential advantages and disadvantages of different local governance models for Warwickshire.

A single unitary authority, while potentially offering streamlined administration for interconnected areas like Coventry, Nuneaton, Bedworth, and Kenilworth, might struggle to address the distinct needs of areas like Stratford-upon-Avon and Royal Leamington Spa. This "one-size-fits-all" approach could hinder the ability to capitalize on the unique strengths of different economic hubs within the county.

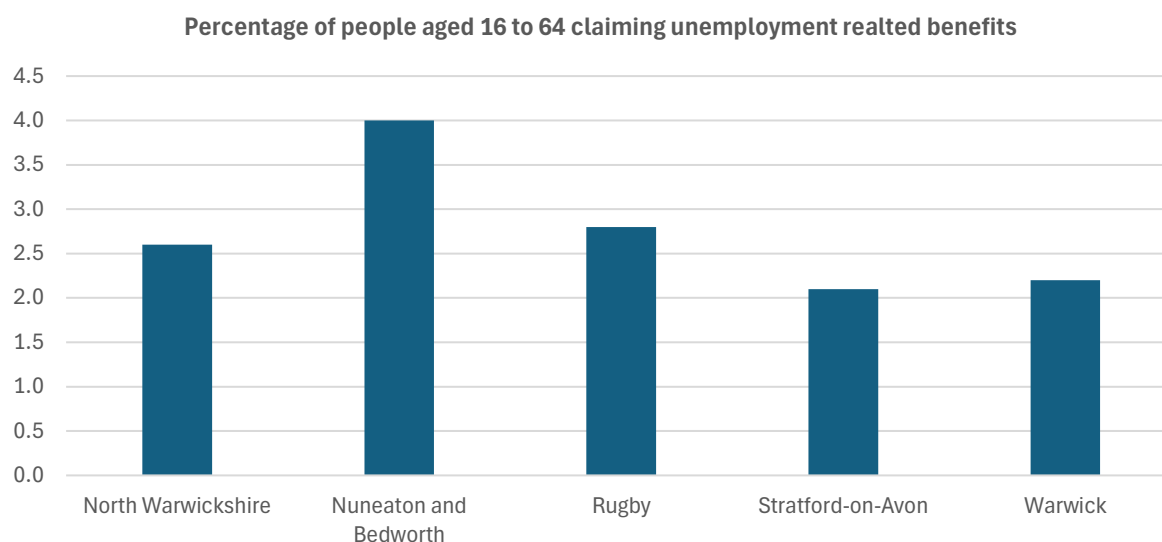
A two-unitary model, potentially dividing Warwickshire along a north-south axis, offers a more tailored approach. The proposed configuration of a northern unitary authority (North Warwickshire, Nuneaton & Bedworth, Rugby, and part of Warwickshire County Council) aligns with the strong interconnectedness around Coventry, potentially facilitating effective management of transport, economic development, and infrastructure.

Conversely, the proposed southern unitary authority (Stratford-on-Avon, Warwick, and part of Warwickshire County Council) aligns with a distinct economic hub, enabling tailored strategies for tourism and heritage management. However, collaboration with the northern unitary authority would be crucial to address cross-boundary issues, particularly along shared transport corridors like the M40.

It should be noted that the majority of major travel routes in Warwickshire run East-West rather than North-South, such as the M40, M6 and M45, and the railway lines.

Economic Inactivity

Chart 5: Percentage of people ages 16-64 who are claiming unemployment-related benefits ¹³.



Data on individuals claiming unemployment-related benefits across Warwickshire provides valuable insights into the distribution of unemployment challenges across the county and its potential implications for the proposed unitary models.

- Nuneaton and Bedworth stands out with the highest percentage of unemployment benefit claimants, reaching 4% of the working-age population, indicating a significant need for employment support and economic development initiatives within this urban centre.
- Stratford and Warwick demonstrate lower percentages, at 2.1% and 2.2% respectively, suggesting relatively lower levels of unemployment in these areas.
- North Warwickshire and Rugby fall in between, with percentages around 2.6% and 2.8% respectively.

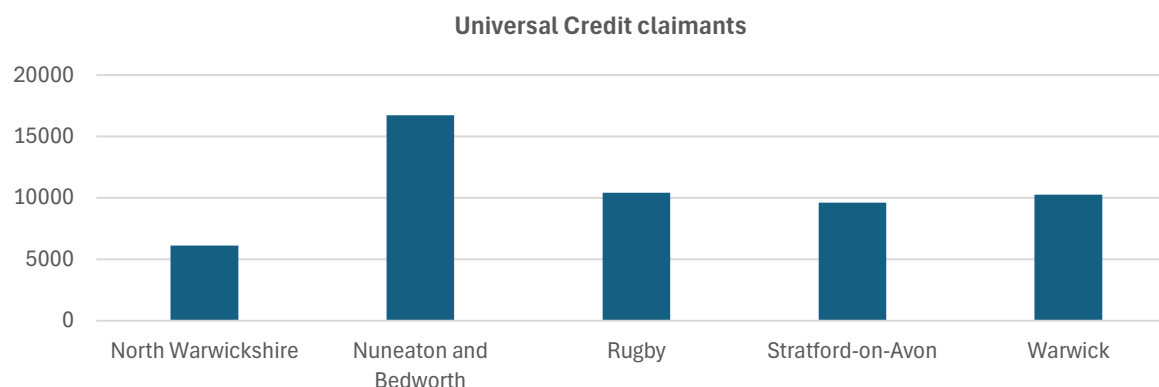
These variations in unemployment rates across districts highlight the importance of a nuanced approach to economic development and employment support within any unitary model.

A multi-unitary model might offer greater flexibility to tailor interventions to the specific needs and circumstances of each unitary area, recognising the diverse economic landscape of Warwickshire.

Data on Universal Credit claimants across Warwickshire districts further reinforces the trends observed in the previous analysis of unemployment benefits.

¹³ [Claimant Count - Office for National Statistics](#)

Chart 6: Universal credit statistics – DWP (Dec-24)¹⁴.



Universal Credit data provides further insights into the economic landscape of Warwickshire, corroborating some trends observed in unemployment benefit figures. Nuneaton and Bedworth stand out with the highest number of Universal Credit claimants, exceeding 16,000, aligning with the previously noted higher percentages of unemployment benefit claimants. This highlights a significant concentration of individuals facing economic hardship and requiring support in these areas.

Similarly, Rugby exhibits comparable levels of Universal Credit claimants to unemployment benefits, indicating a consistent pattern of economic need. Interestingly, North Warwickshire presents a lower claimant count than other districts, contrasting with the unemployment benefit data. This discrepancy underscores the importance of considering multiple indicators when assessing economic conditions.

This analysis highlights the diverse economic landscape of Warwickshire, with each district possessing unique strengths and opportunities. A successful unitary model, whether a single entity or a multi-unitary structure, must balance the flexibility to tailor economic development strategies to each district's specific needs with fostering collaboration and interconnectedness across the region. This balanced approach will promote shared prosperity and sustainable growth for all of Warwickshire.

Housing

Understanding the current housing landscape in Warwickshire is crucial for evaluating the potential impacts of different unitary models on housing provision, affordability, and planning. This section provides an overview of the key housing characteristics, market dynamics, and growth targets across the Warwickshire districts, highlighting the diverse needs and challenges that must be addressed.

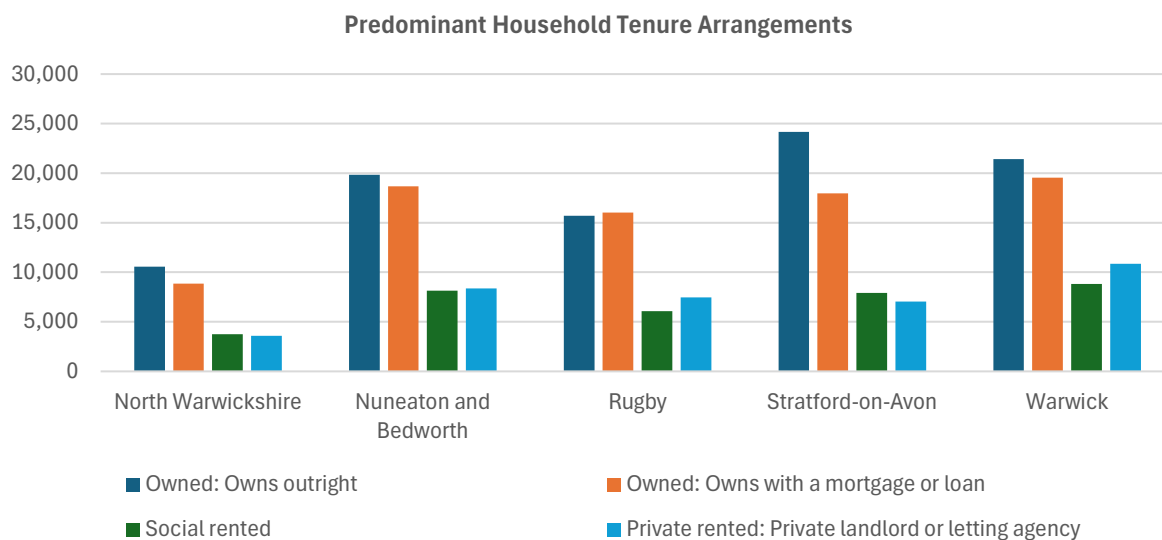
Examining these factors will provide a foundation for assessing how different unitary structures might influence housing development, resource allocation, and the ability to meet the housing needs of Warwickshire's diverse communities.

¹⁴ [Universal Credit Statistics - Department for Work and Pensions](#)

Housing Tenure:

Analysis of housing tenure patterns across Warwickshire districts reveals distinct variations that highlight the varied market dynamics within the county.

Chart 7: Household tenure agreements by local authority.¹⁵



Housing patterns across Warwickshire's districts reveal distinct characteristics influenced by local economies, demographics, and housing markets. Stratford-on-Avon boasts the highest rate of outright homeownership in the county, reflecting its affluent resident base and desirable location.

In contrast, North Warwickshire and Nuneaton and Bedworth exhibit a more balanced distribution between social rented and private rented housing sectors, suggesting a greater diversity of housing needs and socioeconomic backgrounds within these districts.

Meanwhile, Warwick stands out with a notably large private rental population, likely driven by the significant student population associated with the University of Warwick.

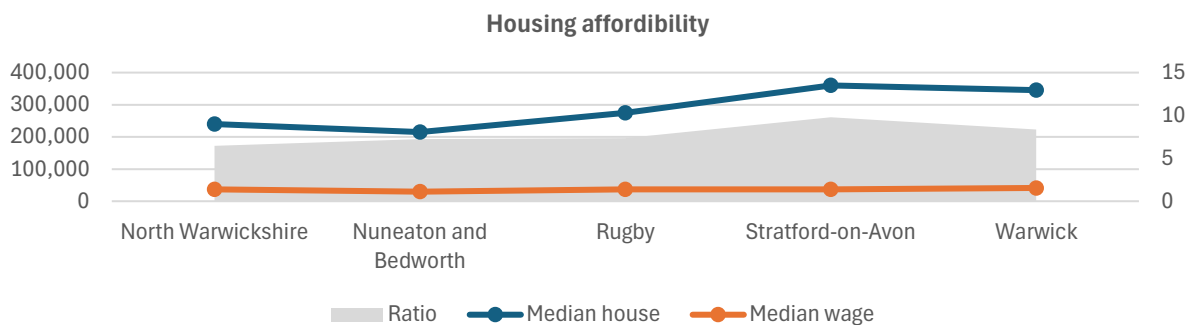
It is crucial to consider that North Warwickshire has a considerably smaller population compared to other districts, which inherently influences the scale of its housing market and overall representation in county-wide statistics. Understanding these nuances is essential when planning for a potential unitary structure, ensuring that housing policies are tailored to the specific needs and characteristics of each district.

¹⁵ [Household characteristics by tenure, England and Wales: Census 2021 - Office for National Statistics](#)

Affordable Housing Provision:

By examining affordability, we can gain insights into the housing across the county and assess how different unitary structures might impact this position moving forward. Housing affordability across the Warwickshire districts is illustrated below.

Chart 8: Median house price, earnings and affordability ratio for each local authority.¹⁶

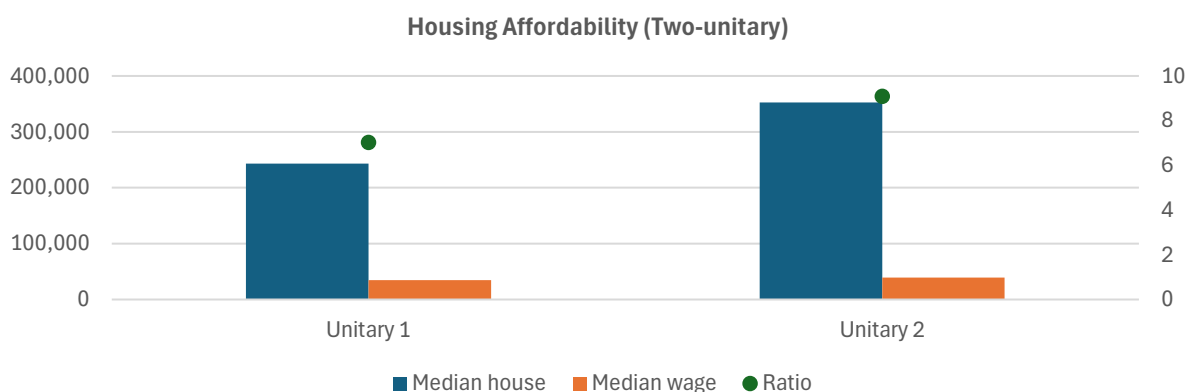


There is a wide spectrum in house affordability in Warwickshire County, with many house prices increasing at a rate far above salary increases and inflation. There is a wide disparity in house prices between North and South.

While the average house price in Nuneaton and Bedworth stands at £234,000, Stratford-on-Avon sees a considerably higher average of £387,000.¹⁷ This price gap exacerbates affordability issues, particularly as house price increases significantly outpace salary growth and inflation.

Furthermore, rental prices across the region have experienced a dramatic surge. Between January 2024 and January 2025, average monthly rent in Nuneaton escalated by 15.8%, while North Warwickshire witnessed an 11.9% increase.¹⁸ This rapid rise in rental costs further compounds the affordability crisis, as it is not reflective of wage growth or inflation, placing additional financial strain on residents.

Chart 9: Median house price compared to earnings and affordability ratio for the proposed two-unitary model.



¹⁶ [House price to residence-based earnings ratio - Office for National Statistics](#)

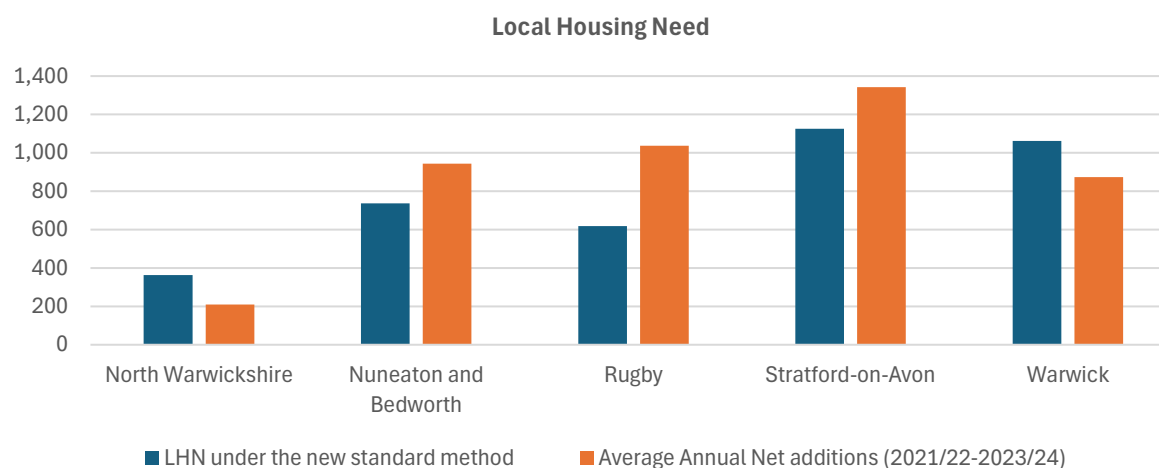
¹⁷ [Housing prices in Nuneaton and Bedworth](#)

¹⁸ [Housing prices in Nuneaton and Bedworth](#)

The chart above again shows the differences in challenges between North and South in terms of house prices, wages, and affordability ratios.

Local Housing Need:

Chart 10: Local housing need for each local authority. ¹⁹



By analysing the gap between housing delivery and projected needs, we can explore how different unitary structures might influence the ability to meet housing targets and ensure sufficient housing provision across the county.

Across Warwickshire, the average annual net additions of housing generally exceed that of Local Housing Need targets set by the new standard method. This is particularly pronounced in Stratford-On-Avon and Rugby. However, shortfalls are observed in North Warwickshire and Warwick.

North Warwickshire and Warwick, which each are underperforming in meeting their prescribed housing targets, will sit in different unitaries, mitigating the risk of any one cluster being disproportionately impacted by the combined position.

Expected Outcomes

Exploring potential unitary models for Warwickshire reveals a range of possible outcomes, each with its own set of advantages and considerations.

Single Unitary Model:

A single unitary model for Warwickshire presents the potential for enhanced efficiency and streamlined service delivery. Centralising functions like procurement and administration could lead to cost savings, potentially allowing for reinvestment in public services or a reduction in the tax burden. This model also promotes county-wide equity by ensuring consistent service levels across Warwickshire. Areas like environmental protection, transport, and public health could benefit from a unified strategic approach.

Two-Unitary Model:

The two-unitary model aims to strike a balance between county-wide coordination and local responsiveness. By dividing Warwickshire into two distinct entities, this model allows for greater

¹⁹ [LHN outcome of the new method](#)

tailoring of services to the specific needs of each area. This localised approach can foster stronger community engagement and a heightened sense of local identity. Areas like social housing, education, and community safety could benefit from this model's ability to blend strategic alignment with local sensitivity.

Finally, the two-unitary model could also enhance relationships to the voluntary sector and local communities, building community resilience and independence, and focusing on preventative solutions such as social prescribing, taking a whole population health approach to the health and social care needs of the population.

Estimated Costs

This section presents a high-level comparative analysis of the estimated costs associated with each proposed unitary model for Warwickshire. These estimated costs, along with expected efficiency benefits are outlined in more detail as part of the Criteria 2 financial assessment. Please note that an estimate of this type is by its nature very driven by the assumptions made.

The assumptions made so far are based on previous experience of undertaking similar exercises with further adjustments for the Warwickshire context. However, such assumptions will need to be adjusted further as the planning process develops.

Therefore, these figures cannot be relied upon at this stage by the local authorities concerned as accurate estimates. More work would be required to establish this. This is an exercise to show relative costs and benefits, which can then give an indication of which option may be the most financially advantageous.

Finally, please note that further work will have to be undertaken on how these costs will be funded, but it is likely that they can be funded from the benefits achieved if up front funding can be found from areas such as reserves.

The council tax harmonisation number is income forgone rather than a real cost. The other costs could be phased over a period, depending on the pace of implementation plans and the degree of change that the new authorities wish to implement.

Table 6: Indicative costs across the proposed two-unitary models.

	Single-Unitary	Two-Unitary
Redundancy Costs	£1.6m	£1.2m
Integration PMO	£1.1m	£1.3m
Digital/IT	£5.0m	£6.0m
Estates	£0.6m	£0.5m
Council tax harmonisation	£4.0m	£8.2m
Total Costs	£12.3m	£17.2m

Criteria 1 – force-ranked assessment

Option 1: Single Unitary	Option 2: Two-Unitary
2 nd Place	1 st Place

While a single county-wide unitary model for Warwickshire might appear advantageous in terms of efficiency and strategic focus, a compelling argument exists for prioritising a two-unitary structure. This argument centres on the benefits of strong local identity and tailored economic development, which can be better fostered under a more localised model.

Warwickshire is comprised of diverse communities, each with its own unique identity, history, and priorities. A two-unitary model acknowledges and embraces this diversity, empowering communities to shape their own future and tailor solutions that resonate with local values. This localised approach fosters greater citizen engagement, a sense of ownership over local decision-making, and more effective governance that reflects the specific needs and aspirations of each area. Furthermore, it allows for the preservation of unique heritage, character, and natural environments through tailored planning and development policies that respect local distinctiveness.

From an economic perspective, the North and South of the county have extremely different economies, challenges and needs.

The economy of the South of the county is largely based on higher value industries, particularly in the fields of professional business services, computing and software, and high-value engineering and manufacturing. Tourism is also important. By contrast, the economy of the North of the county is based on heavy industry and the legacy of the mining industry. The North continues to have a higher proportion of lower-value manufacturing industries, personal services and public-sector employment than the national average.

A single county unitary may have to dilute the priorities of individual places and focus on the overall strategic position, simply due to its size.

In contrast, two distinct unitary authorities can develop specialised strategies that leverage the unique strengths and opportunities of their respective regions. This targeted approach fosters innovation, attracts investment aligned with local strengths, and creates a more diverse and resilient county-wide economy. Smaller authorities are often more agile and responsive to the needs of local businesses, fostering a supportive environment for entrepreneurship and job creation. This structure also allows each authority to tailor solutions to the specific economic challenges faced by their communities, whether supporting rural tourism, revitalising towns, or attracting investment in key growth sectors.

For example, a Northern future unitary could place a strong emphasis on regeneration. One policy move could involve relocating the place of work of local government staff to the towns in the North, which could have a significant impact on local regeneration of town centres.

There is a logical counter-argument that aggregation and larger local government structures are more likely to produce economic growth and productivity because of the ability to focus strategically on major issues including transport, skills and housing. It could be argued a single county unitary would be beneficial as it would provide a single voice for Warwickshire.

While it is agreed that size is important to create strategic focus, this could be better achieved through the Strategic Authority approach and adopting a collaborative approach, which focuses on Transport, Skills and Economic Development.

Therefore, the two-unitary model is ranked highest due to its ability to provide better place leadership and local decision making across economic geographies, which supports the different need profiles across North and South.

To mitigate potential challenges associated with fragmentation and limited economies of scale, the two-unitary authorities would need to establish robust mechanisms for collaboration on strategic issues such as infrastructure, transport, and skills development. This ensures county-wide coordination and avoids duplication of efforts. Additionally, exploring opportunities for shared services, joint procurement, and strategic partnerships can help maximize resource utilisation and mitigate the financial disadvantages of smaller authorities.

Criteria 2 – Achieving efficiencies, improving capacity and withstanding financial shock

This section evaluates the shortlisted Unitary Models for Warwickshire against Criteria 2, ensuring that any proposed unitary structure is optimally sized to deliver efficiencies, bolster capacity, and ensure long-term financial resilience.

To facilitate this assessment, a high-level financial analysis has been conducted for each shortlisted model. This analysis estimates potential savings, costs, and income implications. It is important to note that these figures are preliminary estimates, and further in-depth financial modelling will be conducted as part of subsequent planning phases. While the ultimate financial outcomes will be determined by detailed decisions made throughout the implementation process, this analysis provides a valuable comparative assessment of the relative financial sustainability and resilience offered by each model.

Current Financial Outlook

A comprehensive assessment of the proposed Unitary Models necessitates a thorough understanding of the current financial landscape of Warwickshire's existing councils. As a first step in the financial analysis, a review of each council's financial position was conducted.

A summary of the current financial position for each Warwickshire council is provided below. The data in the table below shows the financial position at the end of FY 2023/24 as this was the latest full financial year at the time of writing this report.

Table 7: A summary of the current financial position for each council.

	North Warwickshire ²⁰	Nuneaton and Bedworth ²¹	Rugby ²²	Stratford-On-Avon ²³	Warwick ²⁴	Warwickshire CC ²⁵
Gross expenditure (£'000)	£44,295	£101,875	£62,321	£65,684	£115,490	£1,181,400
Gross Income (£'000)	£39,800	£67,217	£43,449	£41,202	£76,280	£543,800
Net Expenditure (£'000)	£4,495	£34,658	£18,872	£24,482	£39,210	£637,600
Surplus / Deficit on the provision of services (£'000)	£13,873	-£2,920	£6,026	£8,304	-£2,987	-£29,900
Useable Reserves (£'000)	£36,536	£44,116	£74,249	£56,110	£78,772	£229,000
Debt (Public Works Loan Board borrowing) (£'000)	£46,229	£70,705	£70,016	£0	£238,157	£279,400

Please note that these numbers need to be treated with caution as a reflection of the financial positions of each council. For example, the District Councils referred to above as running deficits on the provision of services have plans to deal with these deficits in their Medium-Term Financial Strategies and return to balance on the provision of services. In the meantime these councils are still delivering balanced budgets as required.

²⁰ North Warwickshire: [financial-statements-2023-2024-audited](#)

²¹ Nuneaton and Bedworth: [audited-statement-of-accounts-2023-to-2024](#)

²² Rugby: [Statement of Accounts 2023-24.pdf](#)

²³ Stratford-on-Avon: [CONTENTS](#)

²⁴ Warwick District: [Statement of Accounts 2023.24.pdf](#)

²⁵ Warwickshire CC: [Statement](#)

Secondly, some of the reserves quoted above will relate to the councils' Housing Revenue Accounts. These reserves can only be used for HRA activity, and not to plug wider gaps, and so are not necessarily an indicator of financial health.

Thirdly, the type of debt must be considered. The key point here is sustainability – there is nothing inherently wrong with debt if it can be repaid in a sustainable way based upon income. For example, Warwick DC has debt, but this is linked to their Housing Revenue Account as the Council still owns its own stock. If this is the case, the debt will not present a significant risk as the income within the HRA from the rental yields from the housing stock will enable repayment.

The Warwickshire County Council debt must be greater understood to establish the genuine risk level here.

A common concern shared by all councils is the anticipation of future funding gaps. This shared challenge underscores the timeliness of exploring the potential benefits of local government reorganisation as a means to address financial sustainability in the long term.

Warwickshire County Council

Warwickshire County Council had a deficit on the provision of services of £29.9m at 2023/24 year end. It also had PWLB debt of £279.4m, but £229.0m of usable reserves.

To fund budget allocations in 2025/26, Warwickshire County Council will utilise £4.8m from its reserves. The Council has outlined a budget reduction strategy of £21.8m in 2025/26, reaching £79.6m by 2030, giving an indication of the increasing financial pressure due to demand increases for key services.

Warwickshire County Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)²⁶ for 2025/26 to 2029/30, was approved in February 2025 and gives further insight into this problem of demand increases.

The MTFS includes addressing pressures in the provision of adult social care by providing investment of £46.8m over the coming five years. The existing 2% social care precept on council tax currently generates £7.9m of funds per year. The strategy also commits £8.1m to meet the rising costs and demand for children's social care services and a further £7.4m to enhance home-to-school transport services.

These demand pressures are key risks for the County Council. For example, its Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs block has a significant deficit against it, like many upper tier councils. Currently the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has, since 2020, allowed local authorities to exclude DSG deficits from their main revenue budgets as part of what is known as a statutory override. But this override due to expire in March 2026. Should this happen, a section 114 notice may need to be issued²⁷.

North Warwickshire Borough Council

North Warwickshire Borough Council had a surplus of £13.9m at 2023/24 year end. It also had PWLB debt of £46.2m, but £36.5m of usable reserves. North Warwickshire Borough Council's 2025/26 budget (approved in February 2025)²⁸ forecasts a breakeven position.

North Warwickshire's MTFS outlines a phased budget reduction plan of £500k in both 2025/26 and 2026/27 and £1m in 2027/28²⁹. The strategy balances service investments with necessary budget reductions to ensure long-term financial sustainability.

²⁶ [Warwickshire County Council approves budget for 2025/26 to support vulnerable residents amid financial challenges](#)

²⁷ [2025/26 Revenue Budget Resolution - Warwickshire County Council](#)

²⁸ [Council sets budget with significant investment in Leisure, Planning enforcement, Community Grants and VE Day celebrations, street cleaning and town centres – North Warwickshire Borough Council](#)

²⁹ [2025/26 Financial Budget Summary - North Warwickshire Borough Council](#)

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council had a deficit of £2.9m on services at 2023/24 year end. It also had PWLB debt of £70.7m, and £44.1m of usable reserves. The Council's draft budget for 2025/26 was approved in December 2024. However, it was noted that difficult decisions will need to be made regarding services and fees, due to uncertainty around future financial settlements and sustainability of reserves.

Rugby Borough Council

Rugby Borough Council had a surplus of £6.0m at 2023/24 year end. It also had PWLB debt of £70.0m, and £74.2m of usable reserves.

Rugby Borough Council's updated Medium-Term Financial Plan (2025-2030), presented to the Cabinet in February 2025, sets forth a cumulative savings and transformation target of £6.5m by 2029/30³⁰. The 2025/26 budget reflects a commitment to service enhancement and strategic investment, allocating £3.9m towards aligning resources with projected service demands.³¹

Stratford-on-Avon District Council

Stratford-on-Avon District Council had a surplus of £8.3m at 2023/24 year end. It also has £56.1m of usable reserves.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council adopted its latest Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFS), spanning the period from 2025/26 to 2029/30, in February 2025³².

The Chief Financial Officer has confirmed a balanced budget for the next five years, however the Council acknowledges the challenging financial landscape and anticipates a growing reliance on reserves in future years to mitigate the uncertainty surrounding government funding.

Warwick District Council

Warwick District Council had a deficit of £3.0m on services at 2023/24 year end. It also had PWLB debt of £238.2m, and £78.8m of usable reserves. It is worth noting in addition that the Council, while reporting a deficit on services, was able to top up a number of other reserves in-year.

Warwick District Council approved its latest Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in February 2024. The MTFS acknowledged a projected budget deficit of £2.5m for the 2025/26 financial year. To address this deficit and present a balanced budget as required, the Council plans to utilise funds from its General Fund Volatility Reserve, which held a balance of £5.2m as at April 2025.³³

Furthermore, the MTFS presented a balanced budget (and surplus) by 2027/28, supported by a change programme with robust plans to achieve this.

Single Unitary Model

A single unitary structure for Warwickshire would pool the financial resources of all councils, creating a single entity with a larger overall reserve base. This model could provide greater flexibility in addressing the immediate budgetary challenges faced. The combined reserves could offer a financial cushion while longer-term solutions are developed and implemented and while economies of scale are achieved. However, careful consideration would be needed to ensure equitable and transparent allocation of these shared resources to avoid disadvantaging financially stable boroughs.

³⁰ [Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 - 2029/30 - Rugby Borough Council](#)

³¹ [Rugby Council budget to focus on significant investment across all areas of the Borough](#)

³² [Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 - 2029/30 - Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)

³³ [Meeting of the Cabinet 06/02/24- Warwick District Council](#)

Table 8: The potential financial position of a single unitary model.

Single Unitary Model (£'000)	Gross expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Surplus / Deficit on Provision of Services	Useable Reserves	Debt (long term borrowing)
Unitary 1	£1,571,065	£811,748	£759,317	-£7,604	£518,783	£704,507

Two-Unitary Model

Please note that in the analysis below it has been assumed that each unitary would inherit 50% of Warwickshire County Council's current financial position.

In the two-unitary model, both unitaries would possess a relatively strong reserve position collectively. However, Unitary 2 would have a higher level of debt, and potentially a deficit on the provision of services. This deficit would be of a similar size to the single county unitary outlined above, but held by a smaller council. This could potentially make it more difficult to tackle. However, it should be remembered that councils did have plans as individual organisations to manage these deficits on the provision of services, and so this may not be a significant issue.

The County Council deficit may be of greater concern, as it is exposed to increasing demand pressures across social care and SEND services. As will be discussed below, it may be that a two unitary model, with a greater focus on local place-based preventative services, may be in a better position to tackle this demand and therefore the potential deficit in the future.

The government's proposal to allow councils to retain and ring-fence planning fees presents an additional opportunity for significant savings within the General Fund. While precise figures are not yet available, this change could positively impact council finances across the county, particularly by offsetting existing deficits and reducing reliance on borrowing. This potential revenue stream should be considered when evaluating the long-term financial sustainability of different unitary models.

Table 9: The potential financial position of a two-unitary model.

Two-unitary Model (£'000)	Gross expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Surplus / Deficit on Provision of Services	Useable Reserves	Debt (long term borrowing)
Unitary 1	£799,191	£422,466	£377,025	£2,029	£269,401	£318,644
Unitary 2	£771,874	£389,482	£382,692	-£9,633	£249,382	£377,857

Financial Assessment

As part of the preparation of a report on the options for future local government structures in Warwickshire, a financial assessment has been undertaken of the potential savings, costs and income foregone of the two options currently being considered.

This section outlines the initial draft results from the financial assessment undertaken, plus, importantly, the associated assumptions behind each element of the calculations.

Please note that an exercise of this type is by its nature very driven by the assumptions made.

The assumptions made so far are based on previous experience of undertaking similar exercises. Therefore these figures cannot be relied upon at this stage by the local authorities concerned as accurate estimates. Much further work would be required to establish this. This is an exercise to show relative costs and benefits, which can then give an indication of which option may be the most financially advantageous.

First the potential savings are explained, and then the costs.

Potential Savings

While the prospect of financial efficiencies serves as a key driver for local government reorganisation, it is essential to quantify these potential savings and assess their impact. This section explores the restructuring of senior leadership teams, the streamlining of democratic representation through a reduction in the overall number of councillors, and council tax harmonisation.

By analysing current staffing levels, estimated costs, and potential structural changes, this section aims to provide a clearer picture of the tangible efficiencies achievable under each proposed unitary model.

Senior Leadership

The estimated size and cost of the new leadership structures across each unitary model, utilising a comparative analysis based on the current size and estimated cost of existing senior leadership teams, is illustrated below. This analysis draws on average salary rates to ensure consistency.

Table 10: Size and estimated cost of current leadership structures across each council using average salaries.

Council	L0		L1	
	Posts	Costs	Posts	Costs
North Warwickshire	1	£145,739	2	£197,800
Nuneaton and Bedworth	1	£144,365	4	£448,820
Rugby	1	£136,525	1	£94,822
Stratford-On-Avon	1	£151,359	1	£120,272
Warwick	1	£171,635	2	£239,578
Warwickshire County Council	1	£251,065	4	£741,631
Total	6	£1,000,688	14	£1,842,923

Please note that this analysis, which is based on the senior leadership teams set out in the annual statements of accounts across the existing councils, revealed varying configurations in L1 grades, highlighting different models of leadership and delegation (for example, some of the councils above have a chief executive and a deputy, and then directors, while others just have a chief executive and then a set of directors – which explains the variation indicated in L1 posts between 1 and 4).

In terms of the methodology, these structures have then been compared to projected structures for senior leadership teams within the proposed unitary models.

It is important to note that this represents a high-level analysis for comparative purposes. As part of the next phase of planning, a more thorough and detailed modelling exercise will be undertaken to refine these projections and ensure optimal staffing structures for each proposed unitary model.

Democratic Representation

Understanding the current landscape of democratic representation is crucial when evaluating the potential impact of transitioning to a unitary system.

The following table provides key data points for each council, including the number of councillors, their basic allowance, the leader's allowance, and the total number of electors within their jurisdiction.

Table 11: Demographic representation and expenditure.

	No. of Cllrs	Basic Allowance	Leader Allowance	Current Democratic Spend	Electors per councillor	Total Electors
North Warwickshire	35	£4,647	£9,381	£237,084	1,446	50,625
Nuneaton and Bedworth	38	£5,134	£11,300	£252,598	2,703	102,714
Rugby	42	£7,132	£13,543	£291,691	2,051	86,144
Stratford-On-Avon	41	£6,332	£12,638	£360,898	2,808	110,837
Warwick	44	£6,341	£18,388	£272,028	2,519	115,148
Warwickshire County Council	57	£11,395	£29,618	£474,023	7,875	448,861

Determining the appropriate number of councillors for each proposed unitary model is crucial, balancing democratic representation with financial considerations. While definitive councillor ratios will be subject to further analysis and consultation, this section explores potential scenarios based on current elector counts and provides indicative allowance cost projections.

For the purpose of this report and the financial estimates, a range of councillor-to-electors ratios commonly observed in unitary authorities nationally have been explored for benchmarking purposes. Indicative allowance costs are calculated using the average basic allowance across existing Warwickshire councils. It's important to note that these are preliminary estimates, and actual allowance rates will be determined as part of future planning.

Single Unitary Model

Using the North Yorkshire Council model as a comparator (1 councillor per 5,374 electors), a single unitary authority in Warwickshire, with approximately 449,000 electors, would likely require a council size of around 84 councillors. The costs of this model have been compared to existing costs to create an estimate of savings. This has been done by taking an average cost of allowances based on the table above and multiplying out by the number of electors in the new model, and comparing to current costs.

There would be concerns here around a democratic deficit. A number of councillors would be removed, and there would be fewer individuals to whom ward concerns could be submitted.

It should also be noted that a single country unitary would have to have a boundary review before being implemented, because there is no single boundary at present that could be used that creates voter equity; the variation across the county would be too great. Using County Council Division boundaries would create a number of wards outside of the 15% target ratio of elector to councillor including two of more than 30%, which triggers an automatic review.

One solution mooted to tackle the democratic deficit would be to transfer powers to parish and town councils and build on their existing role. However, such a move would generate more costs, as parts of the county do not have any parishes currently, and a further precept on council tax would be required.

Concerns have also been raised about the transfer of services to Parish Town Councils and the variance in service that may arise. Parish Councils may need to increase their precept to enable service delivery. Furthermore, strong governance would be required. This may lead to a discussion on the potential merger of Parish Councils, which could impact the democratic deficit.

Two-Unitary Model

Using Cheshire East Council as a benchmark (1 councillor per 3,475 electors), a two-unitary model for Warwickshire would result in the following:

- **Unitary 1:** With roughly 239,000 electors, this unitary would need approximately 69 councillors.
- **Unitary 2:** This unitary, with around 226,000 electors, would require about 65 councillors.

The costs of this model have been compared to existing costs to create an estimate of savings. This has been done by taking an average cost of allowances based on the table above and multiplying out by the number of electors in the new model, and comparing to current costs.

Please note that there has been some indicative work by District officers looking at a different option for the electoral boundaries and councillor numbers. At present it would be possible for a two unitary model to use the electoral boundaries in place for Warwick District Council and Stratford-on-Avon District Council and achieve electoral equality with a ratio of 2647 electors per councillor. All the wards within this model would be within 15% of the target ratio of elector to councillor and only 9 of 56 wards would be greater than 10%. This would create 85 councillors, the same number of councillors as the Districts have currently, but this would represent a reduction as some County Councillors would be lost.

A similar ratio for the Northern unitary would provide 89 councillors. This may be particularly important for areas where no town or parish councils exist at present. The greater number of councillors creates greater democratic engagement. This would see a significant reduction in councillor numbers. There would, however, be a need for a full ward boundary review before a new council came into effect to allow these boundaries. Three possible wards would approach the ratio of 30% of target ratio of elector to councillor, which triggers an automatic review.

Operational Efficiencies

Another key benefit of reorganisation is the potential to achieve greater efficiency and cost savings in operational expenditures. Back-office services can achieve considerable efficiencies through consolidation into a shared-services model.

Procurement and contract management, IT infrastructure consolidation and HR functions all could be managed in a collaborative manner. A single unitary authority would benefit from substantial economies of scale, leveraging its combined purchasing power to negotiate more favourable contracts for goods and services. While a two-unitary model offers a smaller scale of savings, it could still achieve efficiencies through joint procurement initiatives and standardised contract management practices, shared HR services or a coordinated approach to payroll management.

A more granular assessment of these areas will be carried out as part of subsequent implementation planning, in which operational costs, service delivery models, and potential areas for consolidation or streamlining will be refined.

Savings estimates have been made in the areas of corporate services (including wider digital transformation), property (estates) rationalisation and service optimisation. These savings represent the transactional benefits that might be possible from reorganisation and rationalisation. They do not include potential transformation opportunities.

Council Tax

Transitioning to a unitary system for Warwickshire necessitates a careful examination of the existing Council Tax landscape and its implications for each proposed model. Currently, significant disparities in Council Tax rates across the county present both challenges and opportunities.

Addressing these disparities will be essential to ensure fairness and transparency in local taxation under a new unitary structure. Harmonizing rates will likely involve a multi-year approach, with some areas experiencing a freeze in Council Tax while others see gradual, manageable increases to avoid placing undue financial burden on residents.

This section appraises the existing Council Tax base for each District Council, highlighting the disparities that must be addressed. It explores the potential implications of harmonisation for each unitary model, considering factors such as revenue generation, affordability for residents, and the need for a phased implementation approach.

Please note that this is a modelling exercise based on assumptions and therefore numbers should not be treated as accurate forecasts, but rather to show the relative benefits and drawbacks of each model.

Table 13: Council Tax Base for 24/25

Local Authority	Council Tax Base for 2024/25
North Warwickshire	21,869
Nuneaton & Bedworth	40,085
Rugby	40,975
Stratford-on-Avon	61,704
Warwick	58,280

While a larger tax base offers greater financial capacity, it's crucial to consider the complexities of harmonizing Council Tax rates and ensuring equitable resource distribution across the county. A thorough assessment of these factors is shown overleaf to determine the most viable and sustainable unitary structure for Warwickshire.

To understand the potential implications of Council Tax harmonisation, the analysis explores one distinct scenario, based on average rates across each dwelling, across the different unitary models. This scenario is called **Low-to-Max**: Raising lower tax rates to match the highest existing rate.

Single Unitary Model

A single unitary authority model for Warwickshire offers the advantage of a larger, unified tax base, leading to enhanced financial resilience and flexibility compared to the existing fragmented system. This consolidated revenue stream could potentially streamline the transition to a harmonized Council Tax rate across the entire county.

To aid in evaluating the financial implications of harmonizing Council Tax rates, an analysis has been conducted, considering the scenario over 5-year and 10-year periods. The following table presents the estimated costs associated with each scenario, providing decision-makers with a clear understanding of the short-term and long-term financial implications. This data is crucial for assessing the affordability and feasibility of each harmonization approach within the context of broader financial constraints and strategic priorities.

³⁴ Council Taxbase: Local Authority Level Data for 2024 – Published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 13/11/24 and revised on 13/12/14.

Table 15: Estimated cost of harmonising Council Tax rates under the single unitary model.

Single Unitary Model	Low-to-Max (£'000)
5 years	4,033
10 years	31,840

A single unitary model, combined with a low-to-max Council Tax harmonization strategy, emerges as the most financially advantageous approach for Warwickshire, despite an estimated opportunity cost of £4.0m over 5 years.

This strategy involves freezing Council Tax rates in the North of the county, which currently has higher rates, while gradually increasing rates in the lower-rate South until rates align. This may be politically difficult for a new county unitary to undertake as a council tax rise would be unpopular to implement.

By implementing standardised annual increases of 3% in the lower-rate districts, full Council Tax harmonization is projected to be achieved by 2034.

Two-Unitary Model

The table presents the estimated cost of harmonising Council Tax rates within each unitary authority under the two-unitary model, considering both a 5-year and 10-year timeframe.

Table 16: Estimated cost of harmonising Council Tax rates under the two-unitary model.

Two-Unitary Model	Low-to-Max £'000
5 years	8,233
10 years	54,511

A two-unitary model requires income foregone of £8.2m over five years, which is more expensive than the single county unitary. However, such an approach would be less difficult to implement, and would potentially be more popular with residents, as big council tax increases in the South would not be required.

It should also be noted that there may be extra implications for council tax of potentially creating parish councils for the whole of the county, a proposal which has been mooted if a single county unitary was created. This would involve additional charges to the council taxpayer.

Transition Costs

Transitioning to any new organisational structure inevitably involves costs associated with the change process itself. This section provides an initial financial analysis of the estimated change costs associated with each proposed unitary model for Warwickshire. This analysis aims to provide a high-level understanding of the financial implications associated with each model, enabling informed and responsible decision-making.

To provide a robust and transparent basis for estimating the costs and savings associated with each unitary model, this analysis utilises a set of clearly defined assumptions. These assumptions are based on industry best practices, benchmarking data, and insights from previous local government reorganisations.

Results of the financial assessment

By comparing the assumptions made around costs with the assumptions made around benefits, the financial assessment seeks to provide high-level financial insights necessary to evaluate the feasibility of each option against the Government's criteria.

Table 17: Costs and savings for each option.

	Area	Option 1: Single-Unitary	Option 2: Two- Unitary
Costs	Redundancy Costs	£1.6m	£1.2m
	Integration PMO	£1.1m	£1.3m
	Digital/IT	£5.0m	£6.0m
	Estates	£0.6m	£0.5m
	Council tax harmonisation	£4.0m	£8.2m
	Total Non-Recurrent Costs	£12.3m	£17.2m
Savings	Leadership savings	£1.4m	£0.9m
	Corporate Services	£10.1m	£9.1m
	Property Rationalisation	£1.7m	£1.5m
	Service Optimisation	£6.3m	£5.7m
	Democratic Savings	£0.8m	£0.6m
	Total Recurrent Savings	£20.3m	£17.8m

As demonstrated above, a single unitary authority could make an estimated total annual recurrent saving of £20.3m.

This is in contrast to the two-unitary model, which could make an estimated total annual recurrent saving of £17.8m.

To achieve these savings, non-recurrent costs of £12.3m and £17.2m may be required.

The single county unitary is less costly to implement, and will yield greater savings.

Please note that any costs arising from disaggregation are considered to be captured in the reduced savings figures for the two-unitary option above, in that they arise from additional staff and members required, which is part of the above calculation.

Criteria 2 – Force-ranked assessment

Option 1: Single Unitary	Option 2: Two-Unitary
1 st Place	2 nd Place

When evaluating proposed unitary models for Warwickshire based on financial sustainability, efficiency gains, and long-term cost-effectiveness, a clear link emerges between the number of unitary authorities and the potential for achieving economies of scale.

1st Place - Option 1: Single Unitary Model

From a purely financial standpoint, a single county-wide unitary structure for Warwickshire emerges as the most advantageous. The long-term savings achieved through streamlined operations, reduced administrative burden, and maximized economies of scale outweigh the initial costs.

2nd Place - Option 2: Two-Unitary Model

Although this model offers a lower savings potential compared to the single unitary model, and requires higher costs, it may still yield substantial efficiencies compared to the current structure.

There would be a possible route to maximising efficiencies and reducing disaggregation costs by undertaking a careful service by service analysis of the appropriate model for each service. For example, the future unitaries could adopt a shared service model for county-level services such as social care, while aggregating district and borough-level services to make efficiencies.

Criteria 3 – Delivering high-quality public services

This section critically evaluates the single unitary and two-unitary options through the lens of public service delivery. The evaluation will consider quality, sustainability, and opportunities for reform within public facing services, and will delve into the potential benefits and drawbacks of each model. In evaluating these options, it is imperative to consider the unique characteristics and needs of the corresponding districts in order to understand the impacts of implementing each model.

Health and Social Care

Warwickshire benefits from good geographic distribution of acute care services, with three acute trusts serving the population: George Elliot Hospital NHS Trust in Nuneaton for Northern Warwickshire, University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust serving Coventry and Rugby, and South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust serving the South. Furthermore, Warwickshire shows a slightly better patient-to-GP ratio (1,461:1)³⁵ compared to the average in England, suggesting relatively good access to primary care.

However, Warwickshire presents a mixed picture in terms of population health. While some areas show positive indicators, others highlight future challenges. There are extremely different health needs in the North and South of the county, with substantial differences in health inequalities that need to be addressed. There is greater health inequality and deprivation in the North, while there is a more affluent but aging population in the South.

The Public Health Annual report reveals stark differences across the region in terms of health indicators. Notably, Nuneaton and Bedworth has significantly worse population health compared to other areas, as demonstrated by life expectancy, preventable deaths and reports of two or more long term conditions, highlighting the presence of health inequalities within the region.

The data also exposes concerning trends in lifestyle choices within the region. With a majority of districts exceeding the national average for adult overweight and obesity rates, there is a clear need for initiatives promoting healthier lifestyles. Furthermore, the high rates of hospital admissions for alcohol misuse among children under 18 in three districts raise serious concerns. This alarming trend necessitates targeted interventions at local levels to address underage drinking and provide appropriate support services. These findings highlight the importance of a multi-faceted approach to public health, addressing both individual choices and systemic factors that contribute to these health outcomes.

Overall, the data shows a range of local issues that can be better tackled by local services focusing on prevention.

³⁵ [Constituency data: GPs and GP practices](#)

Table 18: Working for Wellbeing in Warwickshire: Director of Public Health Annual Report 2022 / 2024

	Below England Average
	In line with England Average
	Above England Average

Health data	England	Warwickshire	North Warwickshire	Nuneaton and Bedworth	Rugby	Stratford-on-Avon	Warwick
Life expectancy males (age)	78.9	79.4	78.1	77.5	79.4	81.0	80.1
Life expectancy females (age)	82.8	83.1	82.2	81.5	83.0	84.7	83.5
Adults reporting at least 2 long terms conditions with at least one being Musculo-skeletal (%)	13.4	13.6	16.7	16.3	10.0	14.9	11.5
Children living in low income households (%)	19.8	14.9	18.2	21.1	13.6	11.8	10.9
Mortality rate of adults under 75 that could have been preventable (per 100,000)	142.2	151.9	160.3	196.1	154.4	127.7	138.4
Alcohol related admissions to hospital (under 18) (per 100,000)	29.3	41.1	-	59.0	27.1	34.1	54.4
Adults overweight or obese (%)	63.5	65.6	69.4	69.1	68.5	64.2	62.3

Adult Social Care

Warwickshire faces significant challenges related to its aging population and the provision of adequate care. In particular, with 26% of Stratford-upon-Avon's population already over 65, exceeding the regional average of 21%, the demand for care services is pronounced.

Across the region, 18% of Warwickshire's care homes require improvement³⁶, which raises concerns about the quality of care available to this growing demographic. This is compounded by the high demand for long-term care, with over 8,845 individuals relying on social care support. Projections indicating a further increase in the over-65 population to 24% by 2033³⁷ highlight the urgency for Warwickshire to address these challenges and ensure the provision of high-quality health and social care services to meet the needs of its aging residents.

³⁶ [Care Homes in Warwickshire | AgeWell](#)

³⁷ [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – Warwickshire County Council](#)

Table 19: Based on 65+ Population (estimates 2023)³⁸

Name	65+ population as a % of total population
Warwickshire	21%
North Warwickshire	22%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	19%
Rugby	18%
Stratford-on-Avon	26%
Warwick	19%

Children's Services

Based on population data, approximately 20% of the population of Warwickshire are aged 0-17.

A positive overall rating of "Good" was provided by the 2021 Ofsted review of children's services. Any local government reorganisation plan needs to not destabilise current performance.

Single Unitary

The Single Unitary Model offers the benefit of streamlined decision-making and resource allocation across all health and social care services at the county level. This model leverages existing relationships with health partners and the ICB, ensuring smoother collaboration and continuity for services already run by Warwickshire County Council, such as adult social care and children's services.

However, this model carries the risk of over-centralising services, potentially neglecting the specific needs and priorities of different localities within Warwickshire.

Two-unitary

A two-unitary model allows for more tailored strategic planning, with each unitary area able to address the specific needs and demographics of each corresponding population. It presents a greater opportunity to emphasise community-based care and implement local prevention strategies, which is particularly beneficial considering Warwickshire's aging population, demand for adult social care and health inequalities. By focusing on local health inequalities in this way, a two-unitary model allows for more targeted interventions.

A two-unitary structure for Warwickshire, separating areas with differing health and social care needs, presents a significant opportunity to bolster the voluntary sector and community-based interventions. This model would allow for targeted resource allocation, ensuring funding reaches organisations working within specific socioeconomic contexts. Furthermore, smaller, more focused unitaries can foster stronger community engagement, leading to more relevant and impactful service delivery. By adopting a place-based approach, this model enables the development of tailored preventative measures and health initiatives that resonate with the local population and address their unique challenges.

There is a risk of disaggregation of County Council services under the two-unitary model. However, this can be mitigated. County teams may be aligned on geographic footprints that could be split between new councils relatively easily. There may only be a handful of posts that may need to be duplicated. The potential benefits of the more local approach would outweigh this extra investment.

³⁸ [Estimates of the population for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

In terms of third party contracts, IT systems and such factors – it is considered that these could be shared between councils on a partnership basis if required. Indeed, a social care partnership could be formed across both Councils if this was felt appropriate, and if functions such as social care commissioning and market management were considered to be better placed at the county level.

Transport

Warwickshire faces a unique set of challenges in supporting the UK's net-zero ambitions due to its distinct geographical characteristics. As a largely rural county dotted with densely populated historic towns, transportation patterns are heavily reliant on private vehicles. Miles of countryside separate these towns, connected primarily by A and B roads, making sustainable travel options limited. While Warwickshire has good transport links to major cities like London and Birmingham, inter-town connectivity remains a challenge. Barriers to accessing local public transport include inadequate bus shelters, availability and reliability of services and lack of direct connectivity.³⁹ To address this, the County Council is committed to supporting community rail initiatives, such as the Heart of England CRP, which aims to improve connectivity between Warwickshire, Coventry, and Solihull, promoting more sustainable transport options within the region.

Over the past decade, the number of passenger journeys per head of the population has fallen from 35 trips per person in 2014, to 15.4 trips per person in 2023. 60.7% of people travelling by alternative means of transport when there was a local bus available said that the bus "does not go directly to the places I need to get to."⁴⁰ Similar feedback revealed that people travelling by alternative means of transport said that the bus isn't available at the times that they need.

Warwickshire County Council has outlined its commitment to transforming public transport and supporting the UK's net-zero goal by 2030 through its fourth Local Transport Plan (LT4P). This plan centres around four key themes: environment, wellbeing, place, and economy.

- Environmentally, the LT4P focuses on enhancing travel sustainability by reducing pollution and building resilience against challenges such as floods and energy supply disruptions. Improved public transport forms a cornerstone of this strategy.
- The wellbeing aspect emphasizes the benefits of a well-connected public transport system. By encouraging active travel and providing accessible transportation options, the plan aims to improve access to employment, essential services like healthcare, local amenities, and social opportunities.
- Recognizing the interplay of transport and urban development, the "place" theme focuses on influencing planning strategies to create more people-centred environments. Enhanced connectivity is seen as a catalyst for investment and economic growth.
- Economically, the LT4P aims to break down barriers to opportunity by improving transport links between towns. This enhanced connectivity will facilitate access to jobs, education, and training, while also boosting the use of leisure facilities. Ultimately, these efforts are geared towards reducing economic disparities across the region.

The policies outlined in the Local Transport Plan prioritize strengthening collaboration between key stakeholders such as Network Rail, the Department for Transport (DfT), and West Midlands Rail. This collaborative approach seeks to drive improvements in rail services across the Warwickshire region. Complementing these efforts, the BSIP sets ambitious targets to enhance the frequency and reliability of local bus services, further enhancing public transport options for residents.

The BSIP was updated in 2024 with the hope that an updated plan would support the Council in obtaining the BSIP Plus revenue grant funding from the Department for Transport, which would support their aims in improving and promoting bus travel across the region. The Council also hoped to secure capital funding to deliver infrastructure priorities to facilitate bus travel.

³⁹ <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/localtransportplan>

⁴⁰ <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/directory-record/6878/warwickshire-bus-service-improvement-plan>

Single-Unitary Model

A Single Unitary Model offers the advantage of continuity for existing transportation plans and strategies already in place in Warwickshire. By centralizing resources and decision-making, a single unitary authority would have the scale and capacity to consolidate and expand upon initiatives like the Enhanced Partnership Plan and the wider travel plan. This approach could be particularly effective in addressing gaps in service and creating a more integrated transport network that better connects Warwickshire's districts, especially for those in rural areas who rely heavily on public transportation.

Two-Unitary Model

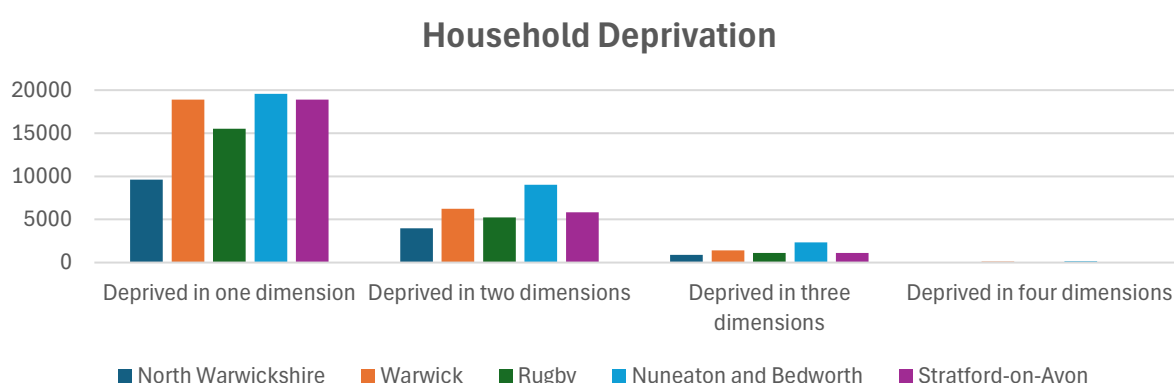
Opting for a Two-unitary Model presents the opportunity to develop more tailored transportation strategies based on the specific needs and geographies of each unitary area.

This model could facilitate strategic planning focused on creating efficient transport links between districts, potentially fostering economic growth by connecting residents with employment opportunities in neighbouring areas. By aligning transportation development with local job markets and area planning, a two-unitary model could lead to a more nuanced and locally responsive approach to addressing transportation needs.

Deprivation and Homelessness

Deprivation and homelessness pose significant challenges in Warwickshire, particularly in the North of the county in Nuneaton and Bedworth and North Warwickshire. Nuneaton and Bedworth exhibit high deprivation levels, with over 9,000 people experiencing deprivation across two dimensions (employment, health, education, and housing) and 2,300 across three. While North Warwickshire's figures appear lower in comparison, accounting for population size reveals that approximately 15% experience deprivation in at least one dimension, highlighting a substantial issue. Furthermore, Nuneaton and Bedworth face a disproportionately high number of families (144) living in temporary accommodation as of June 2024, significantly exceeding the national median of 101. This underscores the urgent need for addressing housing insecurity and the underlying factors contributing to deprivation in these areas.

Table 20: Households by deprivation dimension⁴¹



It is crucial to acknowledge that while the available data provides valuable insights into housing support needs and deprivation levels in Warwickshire, it does not capture the full extent of homelessness in the region. Many individuals and families experiencing homelessness may not seek support from the council or be captured in official statistics. Therefore, it is essential to

⁴¹ [Households by deprivation dimensions - Office for National Statistics](#)

approach these figures with an understanding that they represent a minimum estimate, and the actual number of individuals affected by homelessness is likely higher.

Single-Unitary Model

The single county unitary clearly has the benefit of size, creating more economies of scale and offering potential for efficiency, strategic planning, and cost savings.

Despite these benefits, a single unitary model may face challenges in ensuring adequate local delivery. Furthermore, the stark regional disparities within Warwickshire, evident in the contrasting socioeconomic landscapes of areas like Nuneaton and Bedworth and Stratford, present a significant challenge to addressing housing and homelessness. A one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to be effective given the differing needs and challenges faced by diverse populations. Tailored interventions that consider the specific socioeconomic factors, demographics, and support systems available within each region are crucial for creating equitable and impactful solutions to housing and homelessness across Warwickshire. This has been demonstrated through the implementation of district specific levelling up plans in Stratford-on-Avon and Nuneaton and Bedworth. These plans focus on implementing locally led solutions to local issues.

Two-Unitary Model

Grouping Warwickshire's local authorities based on economic indicators, separating the more affluent areas from those facing higher levels of deprivation, presents a strategic opportunity for addressing regional disparities. This approach allows for the development of targeted interventions and resource allocation tailored to the specific needs and challenges faced by each unitary, particularly the combined unitary of Nuneaton and Bedworth, Rugby and North Warwickshire. While collaboration between these groups remains essential for sharing best practices and fostering regional cohesion, acknowledging the distinct economic realities and tailoring strategies accordingly will likely yield more effective and equitable outcomes in tackling shared challenges like housing and homelessness.

SEND

Warwickshire County Council currently oversees the provision of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services within the region. As of the 2023/24 academic year, 18.0% of Warwickshire students were identified as having special educational needs, aligning with the national average of 18.1%⁴². Among these 16,217 students, 4.2% receive support through Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), slightly below the England average of 4.7%. The most prevalent needs in Warwickshire fall under the categories of social, emotional and mental health needs; moderate learning difficulties; speech, language, and communication needs; and autism spectrum disorder. These four areas collectively represent 76% of all pupils with SEND in Warwickshire. Given the significant demand for SEND provision, it is imperative that any proposed unitary model ensures sufficient resources and budget allocation to effectively meet the needs of every child requiring support.

Following a joint Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection of SEND provision, Warwickshire County Council, Coventry and Warwickshire Clinical Commissioning Group, and Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice collaborated to publish a Written Statement of Action⁴³. This document outlines a strategic plan to drive improvements and sustainable change across SEND services. The statement focuses on five key themes: reducing waiting times for autism spectrum disorder diagnoses; enhancing communication and co-production with parents and carers; ensuring appropriate placement of children with EHCPs in mainstream or specialist settings; increasing SEND training uptake among mainstream school staff; and improving the quality of the

⁴² [Pupils in all schools, by type of SEN provision](#)

⁴³ [Joint local area SEND \(Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities\) Written Statement of Action published](#)

online Local Offer. By prioritising these areas, the council aims to foster ongoing collaborative efforts and elevate the quality of SEND provision in Warwickshire.

Single-Unitary Model

Under a single unitary model for Warwickshire, the existing SEND provision would likely transition with minimal disruption, ensuring continuity of current programs and initiatives. The centralised structure could streamline decision-making processes and resource allocation, potentially leading to more efficient and consistent implementation of SEND strategies across the county. However, it is important to acknowledge potential concerns regarding a standardised approach. A single unitary model must remain sensitive to the diverse needs of different communities within Warwickshire, ensuring that SEND provision remains responsive and adaptable at a local level.

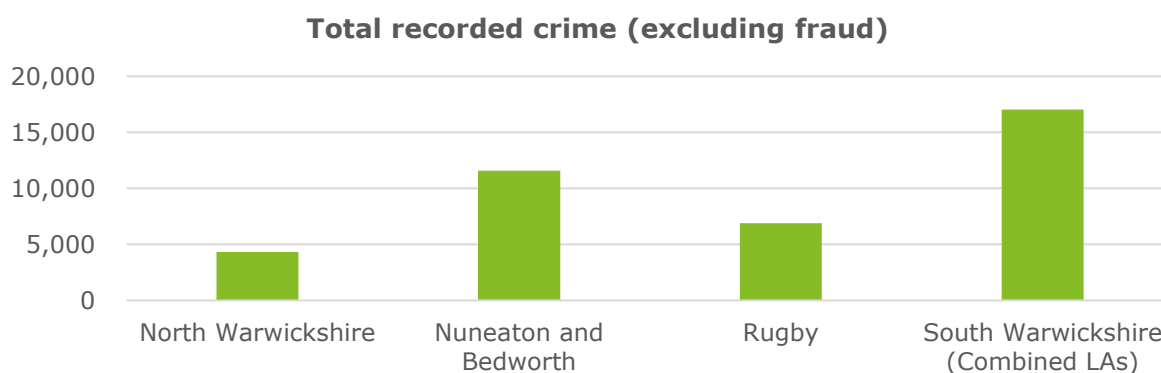
Two-Unitary Model

A two-unitary model for Warwickshire offers the potential for a more localised and tailored approach to SEND provision. Each unitary authority would have the flexibility to design and implement services that specifically address the needs and priorities of their respective communities. This could lead to greater responsiveness, innovation, and adaptability in meeting the diverse needs of children with SEND. Moreover, a two-unitary structure could encourage collaboration and resource-sharing between the authorities, facilitating the exchange of best practices and potentially leading to enhanced outcomes for all children with SEND in Warwickshire.

Public Safety

Analysis of crime data from September 2023 to September 2024 reveals distinct trends across Warwickshire's four Community Safety Partnership areas. South Warwickshire recorded the highest total number of crimes (17,026), followed by Nuneaton and Bedworth (11,569).

Table 21: Number of police recorded crimes for headline offences by Community Safety Partnership area, year ending September 2024.⁴⁴

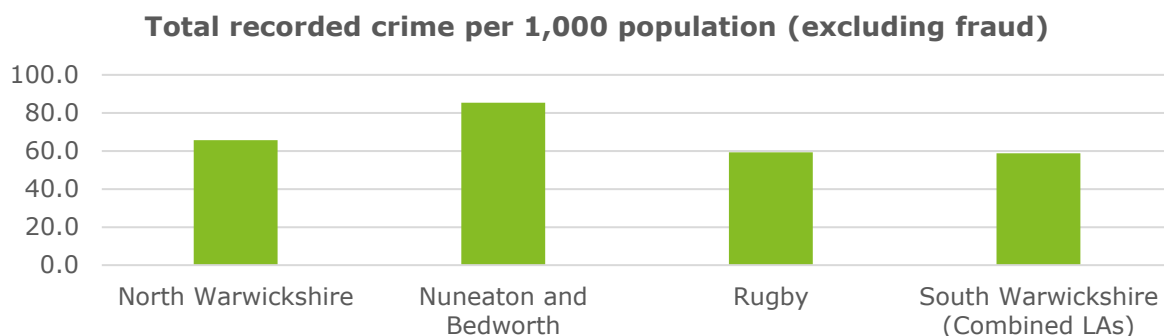


However, when considering population density, Nuneaton and Bedworth emerges with a significantly higher crime rate per 1,000 residents (85.4), exceeding all other areas in Warwickshire. This trend is primarily driven by offences involving violence against the person and theft, a pattern observed throughout the county.

Table 22: Number of police recorded crimes for headline offences by Community Safety Partnership area, year ending September 2024.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ [Crime in England and Wales: Police Force Area data tables - Office for National Statistics](#)

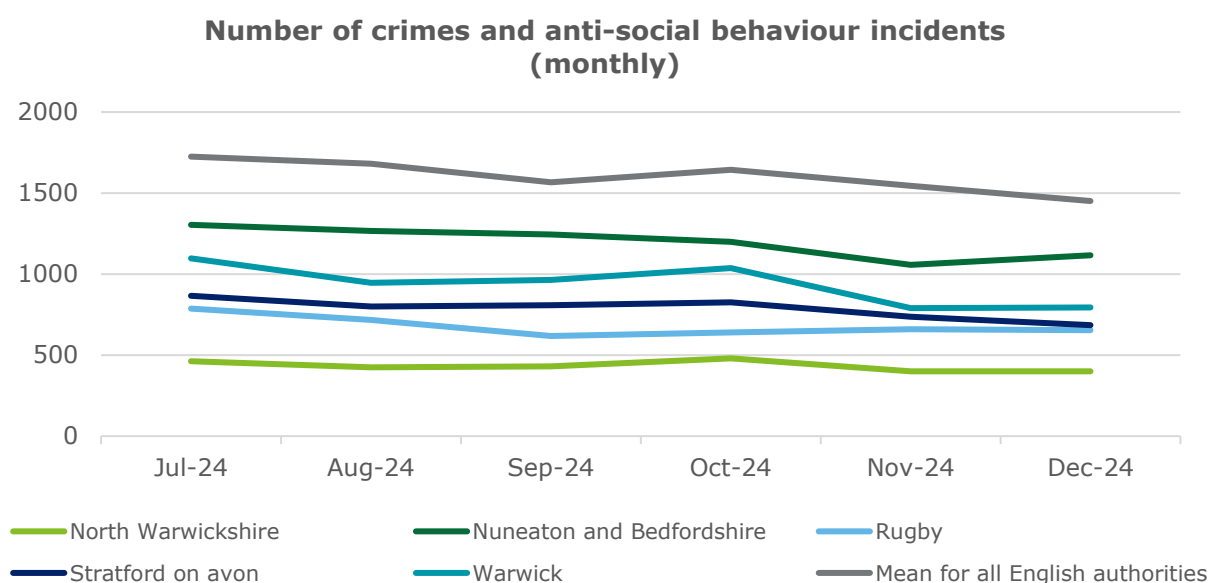
⁴⁵ [Crime in England and Wales: Police Force Area data tables - Office for National Statistics](#)



Overall, Warwickshire experienced a 1% reduction in total recorded crime (excluding fraud) during this period. This decrease is evident in all Community Safety Partnership areas except for Nuneaton and Bedworth, which saw a 3% increase. Recent concerns include a notable rise in shoplifting (31%) and sexual offences (11%), with all areas of Warwickshire experiencing increases in these crime categories. Conversely, the same period witnessed a 30% decrease in theft from the person and a 15% decrease in criminal damage and arson, with reductions observed across all areas.

Despite these fluctuations, it's important to note that between July 2024 and December 2024, all Warwickshire districts remained significantly below the national average for recorded crime and anti-social behaviour incidents.

Table 23: Number of police recorded crimes for headline offences by Community Safety Partnership area, year ending September 2024.⁴⁶



Single-Unitary Model

A single unitary model for Warwickshire could streamline the oversight of policing and crime prevention strategies at the county level. This centralised approach could facilitate more consistent policy implementation and resource allocation. However, a potential drawback is that it might dilute focus on specific areas with disproportionately high crime rates, as resources are distributed across the entire county.

⁴⁶ [Number of crimes and anti-social behaviour incidents recorded in an area \(monthly\)](#)

Two-Unitary Model

A two-unitary model presents a compelling opportunity for targeted intervention. This model could enable the strategic reallocation of resources to areas with greater need, ensuring that crime prevention efforts are concentrated where they are most impactful. Additionally, a two-unitary structure could still benefit from economies of scale, minimising duplication of effort and potentially creating a larger pool of resources to address specific challenges within each unitary area.

To maximise the effectiveness of crime prevention efforts, a unitary model that prioritises strong community engagement and a collaborative approach to public safety is essential. This involves implementing tailored community-driven initiatives such as mentoring programmes, neighbourhood watch programmes, and regular forums for dialogue between law enforcement and residents. This collaborative approach can identify crime hotspots, inform targeted interventions, and foster shared responsibility for safety. There is already in place a South Warwickshire Community Partnership in the South of the county that the two-unitary model could build on.

Criteria 3 – Force-ranked assessment

Option 1: Single Unitary	Option 2: Two-Unitary
2 nd	1 st

There is not much hard evidence on whether the size of a unitary authority makes a difference to service performance. There has been a great deal of longstanding debate on this issue and many arguments and counter arguments.

That being said, a two-unitary model presents a compelling option for Warwickshire, effectively balancing the need for efficiency with the imperative to address the diverse needs of its residents. This model acknowledges that a one-size-fits-all approach to service delivery is not optimal for a county as diverse as Warwickshire and that a more nuanced approach is required to ensure services are tailored to local needs and priorities.

Evidence clearly demonstrates that residents across Warwickshire have distinct needs and face varying challenges. This is apparent in areas such as skills and education, unemployment rates, aging population and social care needs, and health and well-being indicators. A two-unitary model, with its focus on creating two distinct authorities with a deeper understanding of local circumstances, can more effectively respond to these diverse needs. This structure allows for greater flexibility in resource allocation, enabling each unitary authority to prioritize services and investments that address the specific challenges and opportunities within its jurisdiction.

While emphasizing local responsiveness, the two-unitary model also recognizes the benefits of scale for certain services. For areas where a county-wide approach is more effective, such as social care, the two-unitary authorities can collaborate and establish joint governance structures and shared services. This collaborative approach allows for the pooling of resources and expertise while maintaining a focus on the unique needs of children and families across Warwickshire.

This approach also mitigates any costs of disaggregating County Council services. Some functions and contracts and systems could be shared between councils on a partnership basis if required. Indeed, a social care partnership could be formed across both Councils if this was felt appropriate, and if functions such as social care commissioning and market management were considered to be better placed at the county level.

Furthermore, the two-unitary model avoids the potential pitfalls of excessive centralization associated with a single county unitary. While a single authority may offer greater potential for economies of scale and performance consistency, it also risks creating an overly bureaucratic and inflexible system. Larger organizations can struggle to adapt to local needs, build strong relationships with communities, and implement transformative change effectively. The two-unitary model, by striking a balance between scale and localization, offers a more agile and responsive approach to governance.

Criteria 4 – How councils in the area have sought to work together

This section highlights how the Warwickshire Borough and District Councils embrace collaboration as a means to enhance service delivery and achieve shared goals, all while recognising and valuing the distinct local identities and rich cultural heritage that make each district unique.

The collaborative spirit between Warwickshire's districts is evident in several key initiatives.

Examples in the north of the county include:

- Shared services between North Warwickshire Borough Council and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council for independent living support initiative and Private Sector Housing;
- A joint building control service that started with collaboration between North Warwickshire and Nuneaton and Bedworth, and has now expanded to include Staffordshire areas, showing that collaboration outside of the county is possible, and shows the importance of market forces from outside the county for the North of the county;
- Shared procurement, GDPR and IT system support services between Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and Rugby Borough Council;
- Shared management of service areas between North Warwickshire Borough Council and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (including Head of Service, Revenues Manager, Systems Manager and Financial Inclusion Manager) as well as Revenues & Benefits and an IT system hosted by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council; and
- Further collaborations including dual-use leisure centre partnerships with Coleshill School, Polesworth School, QE Academy in Atherstone and Etone College Nuneaton, the LEADER agreement with DEFRA and Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, the management agreement with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust for local nature reserves and the Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership.

Examples in the South of the county include the shared information governance team across Warwick and Stratford-on-Avon District Councils, which started in 2018, and has developed over time with greater investment from both Councils. There are further examples provided below.

South Warwickshire Local Plan:

Since 2021, Warwick and Stratford-on-Avon District Councils have been jointly developing a Local Plan, demonstrating a shared vision for the region's future. This collaborative approach ensures cohesive planning and development, addressing the interconnectedness of South Warwickshire while considering the unique needs of each district. The ongoing consultation on the Preferred Options document highlights the commitment to transparency and public engagement in this process. This, particularly evident in their shaping of draft policies and policy directions as well the emerging spatial growth strategy ensuring a fully co-develop approach.

The joint development of a shared Local Plan between Warwick and Stratford-on-Avon District Councils presents a range of benefits for South Warwickshire, leveraging the strengths of collaboration to address strategic planning challenges and unlock new opportunities:

- **Streamline Processes and Reduce Duplication:** Collaboration allowed for the streamlining of planning processes, reducing duplication of effort, and ensuring greater consistency in decision-making across the region.
- **Enhance Responsiveness to Local Needs:** While benefiting from a shared strategic vision, the joint plan allowed each district to retain a focus on its unique local needs and

priorities, ensuring that planning decisions are tailored to the specific circumstances of each community.

- **Improved Strategic Alignment:** The shared plan provided a framework for addressing cross-boundary issues, such as infrastructure provision, economic development, and environmental protection, in a coordinated and strategic manner.
- **Effective Governance and Resource Allocation:** The councils could maximise efficiency by utilising existing governance structures and officer groups across both districts, ensuring clear lines of accountability and decision-making authority. The partnership also allowed for the allocation of dedicated resources, including a programme manager, to oversee the process and ensure its success.
- **Best Practice Exchange:** The councils benefited from the experiences of the other authority, sharing best practices and lessons learned.

Most significantly, the emerging overall benefit of this collaborative work was its ability to:

- **Address Strategic Challenges:** The shared plan provided a platform for tackling key cross-boundary challenges, such as climate change, economic recovery, and infrastructure provision, in a coordinated and strategic manner.
- **Unlock Growth Potential:** By presenting a unified vision for growth, the shared plan can attract investment, support sustainable development, and enhance the region's overall competitiveness.

The above, therefore, stands as a testament to the power of collaboration and the ability of the Councils to work together effectively to deliver high-quality, cost-effective services that benefit all residents. This challenges the notion that a single-unitary model is necessary for effective service delivery at scale.

Stratford and Warwick Joint Waste Contract:

Stratford-on-Avon District and Warwick District have a single refuse and recycling collection contract and service. The new service is delivered to both Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District residents through a joint waste contract with Biffa Waste Services Ltd serving around 130,000 households across South Warwickshire.

As part of the waste service the Councils' implemented a weekly food waste collection service ahead of this becoming a statutory responsibility. Food waste recycling stops this material going for incineration. Instead, it is taken to a specialist facility for Anaerobic Digestion where it is recycled. The waste is treated in specialist facilities to produce a biogas which can be used to generate a renewable, low-carbon electricity. The gas can also be put into the gas grid to help decarbonise the gas grid. The treatment method also produces a liquid which can be used to fertilise local farmland.

This service has been so successful that the councils have some of the highest recycling rates in England (Stratford on Avon DC now third with a household recycling rate of 61% and Warwick 20th with 57.2% out of 294 collection authorities). The joint contract has allowed for significant efficiencies in the delivery of the service and enabling the contractor to design the most practical routes for collecting housing waste and recycling.

Stratford-On-Avon Internal Audit:

Stratford-On-Avon Council receives internal audit and payroll services through a shared service partnership agreement with Warwickshire County Council. The Internal Audit Team of Warwickshire County Council delivers Internal Audit, the Audit Charter and the Council's Risk Management Policy.

HEART Partnership

The HEART (Home Environment Assessment & Response Team) Partnership is a collaboration between Warwickshire councils which provides advice and assistance to introduce home improvements and disabled adaptations to resident's homes. HEART arranges for adaptations based on the needs of residents such as stair lifts and small ramps, they also work to identify safety and hygiene risks in the home and helps resident's to get help and support to rectify them⁴⁷.

Shakespeare's England:

Tourism plays a vital role in the region's economy, and Warwick District Council's active involvement in Shakespeare's England highlights the importance of a unified approach to destination management. As major funders and board members, the councils demonstrate their commitment to promoting Warwickshire's rich cultural heritage and attracting visitors to experience its unique offerings.

This collaborative approach to tourism promotion, with active involvement from multiple district councils, yields significant benefits for the region and contributes positively to the wider country:

- **Regional Brand:** A collective approach creates a strong, unified brand for Warwickshire as a tourist destination, enhancing its visibility and appeal in a competitive market. This allows for more effective and efficient marketing campaigns, maximizing reach and impact.
- **Visitor Experience:** Collaboration ensures a more seamless and enjoyable experience for visitors, who can easily navigate the region and access information, services, and attractions across district boundaries.
- **Spreading Economic Benefits:** A coordinated approach to tourism helps to distribute economic benefits more widely across Warwickshire, supporting businesses and creating jobs in multiple districts.
- **Funding Opportunities:** A unified front strengthens the region's position when bidding for tourism-related funding from national bodies, potentially unlocking greater investment in infrastructure, marketing, and destination development.

This thriving tourism sector also contributes to the overall success of the UK tourism industry, attracting international visitors and generating economic benefits for the country. Warwickshire's rich cultural heritage, which is of national and international significance, attracts visitors to Warwickshire, This focus on tourism beyond major cities, supports a more balanced and sustainable distribution of the visitor economy across the UK.

The aforementioned partnerships offer compelling examples of successful collaboration in Warwickshire, but they represent just a glimpse into a much broader landscape. Beneath the surface lies a vast and intricate network of collaborative initiatives, encompassing a wide range of themes and engaging a diverse array of stakeholders across the county.

The numerous and varied examples of collaboration across Warwickshire highlight a crucial aspect of local governance:

- **Collaboration is Woven into the Fabric of Warwickshire:** It's not a reactive measure but a proactive and ingrained approach to serving the community. This commitment to partnership, evident across Warwickshire, underscores a deep-seated belief in achieving more by working together.
- **Borough and District Councils: Active Partners, Not Isolated Entities:** The collaborative efforts demonstrate that Warwickshire's Councils are not insular entities.

⁴⁷ [HEART Partnership](#)

They actively engage in partnerships, leading and participating in initiatives that extend beyond their boundaries, reflecting a commitment to the collective well-being of the county.

- **Effective Collaboration: Not Reliant on Structural Overhaul:** The success of existing partnerships within the current system challenges the notion that a single unitary authority is essential for effective collaboration. Warwickshire demonstrates that positive outcomes can be achieved through a willingness to partner and share resources, regardless of structural models.

Warwickshire's local governance landscape is characterised by a pervasive spirit of collaboration, evident in the breadth and depth of partnerships across the county. This collaborative foundation positions Warwickshire for a future where devolution and local empowerment can thrive, regardless of any potential shifts in local government structures.

Criteria 4 – Force-ranked assessment

Option 1: Single Unitary	Option 2: Two-Unitary
2 nd Place	1 st Place

Based on a thorough analysis of the options and considering the unique characteristics of Warwickshire, a two-unitary model emerges as the most advantageous structure, effectively balancing the preservation of local identities with the need for efficient and responsive governance.

1st Place - Option 2: Two-unitary Model

A two-unitary model emerges as the most advantageous structure for Warwickshire, effectively balancing the preservation of local identities with the need for efficient and responsive governance. This model holds significant potential for recognizing and respecting the distinct identities that characterize the county.

Dividing Warwickshire into two-unitary authorities, broadly reflecting the distinct characteristics of North and South Warwickshire, acknowledges the existing cultural and economic disparities and allows for tailored policies and initiatives. This localized approach fosters a stronger sense of local ownership and belonging. Furthermore, two smaller unitary authorities would be closer to the communities they serve, facilitating a greater understanding of local issues and providing more accessible channels for citizen engagement. This proximity fosters a heightened sense of accountability to local needs and priorities.

Preserving and celebrating Warwickshire's diverse cultural heritage is another key advantage. Each unitary authority would be better positioned to allocate resources and develop strategies tailored to the specific historical assets and cultural landscapes within their respective areas. Moreover, by empowering communities with a greater voice in local decision-making, a two-unitary model can strengthen civic pride and encourage active participation in civic life.

2nd Place - Option 1: Single-Unitary Model

While the notion of a single unitary authority for Warwickshire might appear to offer administrative efficiencies, a closer examination reveals potential risks to the distinct local identities, cultural heritage, and civic pride that are fundamental to the county's character.

A single unitary structure risks overlooking the unique needs and priorities of Warwickshire's diverse communities, leading to a homogenized approach that fails to capture the distinct character of individual communities. This could lead to a sense of disconnect between decision-makers and communities, potentially diminishing civic pride and undermining existing collaborative initiatives. A single, county-wide authority, while offering streamlined governance, may struggle to adequately address the diverse needs and priorities of a county as multifaceted as Warwickshire.

Criteria 5 – How new unitary structures will support devolution arrangements

The UK Government's Devolution White Paper outlines a clear vision for empowering local areas through Strategic Authorities. However, the success of this model hinges on establishing a strong and effective foundation at the unitary level within Warwickshire.

A two-unitary model is optimal for Warwickshire as it balances strategic scale with a vital focus on local needs.

A single county unitary could potentially join the West Midlands Combined Authority. However, there would be risks of this approach. In allocation of the financial Integrated Settlement, Warwickshire could lose out to the more deprived areas elsewhere across the WMCA footprint.

Perhaps more importantly, it is reported that the Mayor could veto Warwickshire joining the Combined Authority as a full member. This significantly limits the potential to create an alternative devolution structure that would make sense for Warwickshire.

Any other structure may involve two or three other neighbouring county areas; in which case there would not be an effective size ratio between the single county unitary areas and the overall Strategic Authority. The single county unitaries would be too close in size to the potential Strategic Authority. If the single county unitary entered a Strategic Authority alongside other smaller unitaries, again there would be a size and power imbalance within the Strategic Authority between the Warwickshire single unitary and other, smaller unitaries.

Fundamentally, if the WMCA is not an option, there is not a logical devolution solution for a future single county unitary. There may be an option to look towards Leicestershire, or towards Worcestershire and Herefordshire, but in both cases, there are differences of geography and economy between South Warwickshire and Leicestershire, or North Warwickshire and the Worcestershire / Herefordshire footprint.

A two-unitary model provides more opportunity in this regard and makes it easier to deal with other county areas. First, the new unitaries could assess their local geographies and economies and decide to pursue the devolution options most effective for their local places.

For example, the North unitary could look to Staffordshire and Leicestershire. The South unitary could look to Worcestershire, Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire. Conversations are already being held by the Boroughs and Districts in this regard.

Moreover, the size ratio works more effectively in this scenario – the smaller unitaries can advocate for their local interests without dominating any potential future Strategic Authority as they are too large.

Indeed, there would also be the option for a single Warwickshire Strategic Authority if a two-unitary model was pursued, given there would be a size differential between the unitaries and the Strategic Authority. This option would not exist with a single county unitary, as the Strategic Authority and unitary local authority would be the same size.

Single Unitary Model

Although a single unitary authority for Warwickshire might initially seem to offer a more streamlined approach to local administration, it poses significant obstacles to the successful implementation and enduring effectiveness of devolution.

A single unitary authority for Warwickshire could diminish the influence of individual communities. Subsuming a large and diverse area under a single entity risks reducing accountability and responsiveness to the specific concerns of local communities. Centralising decision-making within a

large unitary structure runs counter to the White Paper's emphasis on devolving power to the most appropriate level, potentially hindering the effectiveness of devolution in addressing local priorities.

A single unitary authority for Warwickshire, encompassing a diverse range of communities and priorities, might struggle to provide the necessary local insight and agility required for effective collaboration. Concentrating power and decision-making within a single entity risks stifling the development of strong local leadership across Warwickshire, ultimately limiting the effectiveness of the Strategic Authority. A large, single unitary authority might be less responsive to the needs of individual communities, as decision-making becomes more centralised and removed from those directly affected. This reduced accountability could undermine trust in the devolution process and hinder the long-term success of the Strategic Authority.

In conclusion, a single unitary authority for Warwickshire presents significant challenges to the principles and objectives of devolution outlined in the White Paper.

A two-unitary structure for Warwickshire, with its emphasis on balance, local focus, and collaborative governance, provides a far more suitable foundation for unlocking the full potential of devolution.

Two-Unitary Model

A two-unitary model for Warwickshire presents a promising approach to supporting devolution arrangements and fostering a balanced and effective partnership within a potential Strategic Authority.

Dividing Warwickshire into two-unitary authorities, reflecting the distinct characteristics of the north and south, creates a more balanced power dynamic within a larger Strategic Authority. This structure aligns with the Devolution White Paper's emphasis on partnerships between multiple local authorities, ensuring that no single entity dominates.

It would provide a stronger platform for local voices to be heard within the Strategic Authority. Each unitary would be more directly accountable to its residents, fostering greater responsiveness to local needs and priorities, a key principle of effective devolution.

While necessitating coordination, a two-unitary structure can facilitate better alignment between strategic priorities and local needs. Each unitary, with its more focused geographical area, can develop a deeper understanding of its communities' specific challenges and opportunities. This local expertise can then inform decision-making within the Strategic Authority, ensuring that strategies are grounded in local realities. This would empower local leaders to develop tailored solutions to challenges that are best addressed at a more localised level, fostering innovation and responsiveness.

A two-unitary model for Warwickshire would foster the development of strong local leadership, empowering communities to take ownership of their future. This aligns with the White Paper's vision of capable and responsive local governance as a prerequisite for successful devolution. By distributing power and decision-making, this model encourages greater accountability and responsiveness to local needs. It would also provide the necessary foundation for a potential transition to an Established Mayoral Strategic Authority, ensuring Warwickshire is well-positioned to benefit from further devolution.

In conclusion, a two-unitary model for Warwickshire offers a balanced and collaborative framework for devolution and local governance. This structure prioritises local representation, enables tailored solutions, and fosters strong local leadership, aligning effectively with the principles and objectives of the Devolution White Paper.

Criteria 5 – Force-ranked assessment

Option 1: Single Unitary	Option 2: Two-Unitary
2 nd Place	1 st Place

Based on a thorough analysis of the options and considering the unique characteristics of Warwickshire, a two-unitary model emerges as the most advantageous structure, effectively balancing the need for strategic coordination with the importance of local focus, particularly within the context of a potential West Midlands Strategic Authority.

1st Place - Option 2: Two-Unitary Model

A two-unitary model for Warwickshire offers a compelling framework for achieving both strategic scale and local focus. A two-unitary model ensures that local economic development strategies are tailored to the specific needs and opportunities of each unitary authority within Warwickshire. This localised approach allows for greater flexibility, innovation, and responsiveness to the unique challenges faced by different areas.

It is also more practical. The new unitaries could assess their local geographies and economies and decide to pursue the devolution options most effective for their local places. For example, the North unitary could look to Staffordshire and Leicestershire. The South unitary could look to Worcestershire, Oxfordshire or Northamptonshire. Conversations are already being held by the Boroughs and Districts in this regard. Moreover, the size ratio works more effectively in this scenario – the smaller unitaries can advocate for their local interests without dominating any potential future Strategic Authority as they are too large.

2nd Place - Option 1: Single-Unitary Model

The single unitary model, with its county-wide scope, presents a significant challenge in relation to a broader Strategic Authority. A single unitary authority risks overlooking the diverse economic needs and opportunities within Warwickshire, limiting the potential for tailored economic development strategies.

Practically, a single county unitary could potentially join the West Midlands Combined Authority. However, there would be risks of this approach. In allocation of the financial Integrated Settlement, Warwickshire could lose out to the more deprived areas elsewhere across the WMCA footprint.

Perhaps more importantly, it is reported that the Mayor could veto Warwickshire joining the Combined Authority. This significantly limits the potential to create an alternative devolution structure that would make sense for Warwickshire. Any other structure may involve two or three other neighbouring county areas; in which case there would not be an effective size ratio between the single county unitary areas and the overall Strategic Authority. The single county unitaries would be too close in size to the potential Strategic Authority. If the single county unitary entered a Strategic Authority alongside other smaller unitaries, again there would be a size and power imbalance within the Strategic Authority between the Warwickshire single unitary and other, smaller unitaries.

Criteria 6 – How new unitary structures will enable stronger community engagement

The transition to a unitary council structure in Warwickshire presents a valuable opportunity to reimagine and strengthen community engagement. By streamlining local governance, a unitary model can empower communities by providing clearer lines of communication, increased local decision-making power, and a stronger sense of shared ownership over local issues. This presents a significant opportunity to foster collaboration between the council and its residents, cultivating a shared vision for the future of Warwickshire. The following section examines how the proposed unitary options for Warwickshire can facilitate stronger community engagement, ensuring local government remains responsive to the needs of its residents.

Engagement work already undertaken

The Councils appointed ORS (Opinion Research Services) in 2020 to conduct an extensive engagement programme to examine the options for local government across Warwickshire. ORS is a spin-out company from Swansea University with a UK-wide reputation for social research and major statutory consultations (including for recent local government reorganisations in Dorset, Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire).

The engagement programme included a wide range of meetings and interviews with members of the public, businesspeople, town & parish councillors, voluntary & community sector representatives and key partners from the healthcare sector.

In summary, ORS independently facilitated/undertook:

- Five focus groups with randomly selected members of the public, one in each local authority area (with a total of 46 participants);
- An online focus group with 11 town and parish councillors from across Warwickshire;
- An online focus group with 13 voluntary and community sector representatives from across Warwickshire;
- An online focus group with two healthcare sector representatives, plus a further two depth interviews; and
- 15 in depth interviews with local business sector representatives from across Warwickshire.

The findings were very interesting.

Divided views were expressed across the focus groups but, on balance, residents and stakeholders were slightly more in favour of two-unitary councils for Warwickshire than a single authority. Residents were particularly in favour of a two-unitary model.

Those who opposed a single council for the whole of Warwickshire did so chiefly on the grounds that the county is too large and too diverse in terms of social and economic need (particularly between north and south) for it to be a viable consideration. It would also be the most 'remote' option: there was again considerable concern about a loss of local influence and democratic accountability within one large local authority. It could also result in democratic deficit as councillors will be expected to cover far larger areas and populations.

This engagement process provides evidence for scoring the two-unitary model as best.

Furthermore, the engagement found that the complexity of existing local government structures in Warwickshire is likely to be acknowledged by a good proportion of residents and should therefore form part of any case for moving to a unitary system. It is also likely, however, that there will be concerns about proposed alternative approaches – driven in part by preference for the ‘familiar’ and fear of the unknown. Indeed, familiarity with and loyalty to existing local services are likely to play a significant role in residents’ and stakeholders’ responses to any suggested changes to local government and their willingness to engage in dialogue on the topic. The arguments in favour of alternatives must thus be strong and robustly evidenced in order to overcome this.

The case for changing local government structures presented by the Councils was accepted by many residents and stakeholders. In particular, the need to have a less complex and therefore less confusing local government system and a single point of contact was appealing, as was the prospect of consistent county-wide service provision.

However, while the ‘simplicity’ argument is easily made, the areas of finance and devolution are potentially more problematic. It is clear that, while widely accepted, neither of these arguments will win hearts and minds; people will also need convincing that change will bring benefits for service provision, will not worsen access, inequality and democratic representation/accountability, and will accommodate the local voice.

Given the frequently raised concern that any projected savings from reorganisation would be negated by the cost of implementing it, it will be important to stress that the projections represent ongoing savings following a five-year transitional period, and that all associated costs have been factored in.

Deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment

Warwickshire’s transition to a new unitary structure must be underpinned by a commitment to empowering communities and local engagement. It is crucial that the model genuinely empowers communities rather than inadvertently diminishing their voice.

The Single Unitary Risk

While the transition to a unitary authority presents compelling opportunities for enhanced community engagement, it is crucial to acknowledge potential challenges that a single unitary authority presents:

- **Disconnect Between Residents and Decision-Makers:** Consolidating power within a larger geographical area could make it more challenging for residents to engage directly with decision-makers and voice their concerns. This may lead to a reduction in opportunities and appetite for meaningful community input.
- **Overlooking the Needs of Individual Neighbourhoods:** A single unitary authority might struggle to adequately understand and address the unique needs and priorities of diverse neighbourhoods within its jurisdiction. This could result in the prioritisation of county-wide agendas only, leading to a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Broader, county-wide, and regional priorities should be picked up by the Strategic Authority.
- **Undermining Existing Local Structures:** The establishment of a single, county-wide unitary authority could lead to overlap with the roles and responsibilities of existing parish and town councils, potentially diminishing their influence and effectiveness in engaging residents.

Multiple Unitaries

In contrast to a single, large unitary authority, a model comprising multiple smaller unitary authorities within Warwickshire offers a potentially more conducive structure for neighbourhood empowerment:

- **Closer Relationships and Enhanced Accountability:** Smaller geographical units can facilitate closer relationships between residents and their local government representatives. This proximity allows for more direct communication, greater accessibility, and enhanced accountability to community concerns.
- **Local Decision-Making and Community Participation:** A multiple-unitary model allows for the devolution of decision-making power to the most appropriate level. This could maintain the function of parish and town councils or lead to the establishment of new mechanisms and forums for direct community participation in local governance.
- **Tailored Services and Responsive Policies:** With a more localised focus, smaller unitary authorities are better positioned to understand and respond to the specific needs and priorities of their communities. This could involve tailoring policies and services to address unique local challenges, investing in community-identified priorities, and adapting service delivery models to best suit the characteristics, challenges and needs of each neighbourhood or area.

Delivering genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment requires a unitary structure that prioritises local focus, devolves decision-making power, and actively encourages community participation. While a single unitary authority offers potential benefits in terms of streamlined services and economies of scale, a model embracing multiple smaller unitary councils may provide a more localised, community-centric approach. Careful consideration of Warwickshire's unique characteristics, community identities, and long-term aspirations is essential.

Make sure that communities are engaged

A successful transition to a new unitary structure in Warwickshire necessitates an approach that actively seeks the perspectives of residents, businesses, and community groups. By incorporating their feedback into the design and implementation of the new system, the transition process can ensure that the new unitary structure truly reflects the needs and aspirations of the community.

The single unitary challenge

While a single large unitary authority for Warwickshire offers potential benefits in terms of streamlined governance, it also presents a significant challenge in effectively engaging communities across a geographically diverse county.

Creating sufficient opportunities for meaningful engagement with residents across the entire county could prove logistically complex. Furthermore, tailoring engagement strategies to the unique needs and characteristics of Warwickshire's diverse communities, from rural villages to larger towns, would require significant resources and nuanced understanding. A centralised approach also risks creating a perception of top-down decision-making, potentially leaving residents feeling unheard and disconnected from the decision-making process. This, in turn, could lead to the recreation of localised forums, potentially adding unnecessary complexity and fragmentation to the engagement landscape.

Multiple unitaries

In contrast to a single large authority, a model comprising multiple smaller unitary authorities in Warwickshire offers a more conducive structure for effective community engagement. These smaller entities, by virtue of their size, are naturally closer to the communities they serve. This proximity translates into greater accessibility with the potential for local offices and service points, as well as dedicated local teams responsible for community engagement within their designated areas.

Multiple unitaries enable engagement methods to be precisely tailored to the unique context of each community. This could involve leveraging existing networks and partnerships within a specific

area or employing a diverse range of communication channels—from traditional newspapers and public meetings to online platforms and social media—to ensure that all demographics are effectively reached. This localised approach also fosters a culture of co-production, where residents are actively involved in shaping and designing local services that meet their specific needs.

Ultimately, community engagement should be the bedrock upon which a new unitary structure is built. A model that embraces multiple unitary authorities, with their inherent emphasis on local connection and responsiveness, is better positioned to embed meaningful community engagement into the fabric of local governance. By empowering communities to contribute their knowledge and insights, multiple unitary authorities can ensure that services are truly responsive and relevant.

Where there are already arrangements in place it should be explained how these will enable strong community engagement

During the transition to a new unitary structure, it is crucial to make use of the existing network of community engagement partnerships while establishing new initiatives. By building upon partnerships which already demonstrate a commitment to resident involvement the unitary model will continue to strengthen community involvement. Following the implementation of the new structure, a community engagement strategy should be promptly developed. This will ensure continued momentum in achieving shared goals and aspirations.

Existing partnerships: A foundation for engagement

Engaging neighbourhoods:

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council prioritises tenant engagement and actively seeks the input of its residents in shaping housing services⁴⁸. Recognising the importance of direct engagement, the Council empowers tenant groups to influence and shape service delivery.

Furthermore, the Council employs a proactive and multi-faceted approach to reach tenants across the borough. A mobile tenant engagement service visits neighbourhoods, providing a convenient platform for residents to share their views. Complementing this, the Council organises neighbourhood walkabouts and dedicated tenant engagement days, fostering open dialogue and collaboration on issues of importance to the community. This commitment to tenant engagement ensures that housing services are responsive to the evolving needs and priorities of residents.

Informing the Council's decisions on climate issues:

Rugby Borough Council actively integrates community engagement into its decision-making processes, ensuring that its strategies reflect the priorities and concerns of its residents. The "Climate Adaptation World Café" event held in November 2024 exemplifies this commitment⁴⁹. This interactive event provided a platform for residents to engage directly with the Council's draft climate change adaptation plan. Attendees shared their insights and expressed their views on the proposed approach.

The Council, demonstrating its commitment to incorporating community feedback, has since utilised the report generated from the event to inform its approach to climate adaptation. Further demonstrating the importance of community engagement in addressing climate change, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwick District Council have also undertaken initiatives in this area. In collaboration with the Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils, these councils formed a steering group to empower community groups and town/parish councils in

⁴⁸ [Tenant Engagement - Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council](#)

⁴⁹ [Have your say on climate change - Rugby Borough Council invites residents to first Climate Adaptation World Café Event](#)

developing projects that promote the inclusion of typically under-represented voices in climate change discussions⁵⁰.

This collaborative effort underscores a shared commitment to fostering broader community engagement and collaboration in tackling climate change.

Leveraging existing strengths for a unitary future

The success of existing community engagement partnerships in Warwickshire provides a strong foundation upon which to build a framework for engagement within a new unitary structure. These partnerships can inform the development of effective engagement strategies for the future.

- **Leveraging Existing Relationships:** The new unitary authorities can tap into the established relationships and trust built through these partnerships to facilitate communication and collaboration with residents.
- **Adapting Successful Engagement Methods:** The diverse range of engagement methods employed by these partnerships, from community forums to digital platforms, can be integrated into the new unitary structure's engagement plan and adapted to suit the needs of the communities.
- **Embedding a Culture of Collaboration:** The collaborative ethos fostered within existing partnerships can serve as a model for the new authority, ensuring that community engagement is not a one-off event but an ongoing and integral aspect of local governance.

By learning from and building upon these existing successes in community engagement, Warwickshire's new unitary structure can establish a robust framework for community engagement that is both effective and sustainable.

⁵⁰ [Local Climate Engagement Programme](#)

Criteria 6 – Force-ranked assessment

Option 1: Single Unitary	Option 2: Two-Unitary
2 nd Place	1 st Place

Maintaining strong local engagement and preserving the vital connection between local government and the communities it serves are paramount considerations in the design of any new model.

While a single unitary model for Warwickshire might offer potential efficiencies, the analysis indicates a significant risk of diluting local engagement and diminishing community voice. A single county-wide authority could inadvertently create a more centralised and bureaucratic system, where local concerns might be overshadowed by broader strategic priorities.

The two-unitary model strikes a more effective balance between achieving economies of scale and preserving a strong local focus. By creating two entities with distinct identities and a deeper understanding of their respective communities' needs, this model fosters greater accountability and responsiveness to local concerns.

The two-unitary structure provides a platform for more direct and meaningful citizen participation. It enables the development of tailored solutions that reflect the unique challenges and opportunities within each unitary area. This localised approach is essential for ensuring that services are designed and delivered in a way that resonates with the specific needs of each community.

Next steps

Following the options appraisal, which identified a two-unitary model as the preferred option, the Districts and Boroughs would like to collaboratively develop a comprehensive case for this model. This process aims to ensure the delivery of meaningful and sustainable change for the benefit of our residents.

Indicative costs

Creating new councils is a complex undertaking extending beyond the transaction date. While the options appraisal provides a starting point, we recognise the need for a detailed exploration of both the short-term and long-term costs:

- **Short-Term:** Resources will be allocated by way of funding the key capacity to develop a robust Full Proposal and accompanying implementation plans. This will involve detailed analysis, stakeholder engagement, and implementation planning.
- **Long-Term:** A dedicated team will be crucial to ensure the smooth integration of multiple councils with varying working practices, cultures, and values – which can be managed through a set of key workstreams. Investment in this team will be essential for a cohesive and successful transition.

While initial cost estimates have been produced based on previous experience, it is crucial to understand these are preliminary and subject to change. Detailed work is required to establish accurate cost projections that reflect the specific circumstances of Warwickshire. A comprehensive funding strategy will be developed, exploring various options and potential phasing of costs in line with the agreed-upon implementation plans.

Table 24: Estimation of costs of developing a full plan

Area	Description	Cost
Proposal Development, Financial Modelling, and Implementation planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of an implementation team. • Development of Full Proposal, Long-Term Financial Modelling (LTFM), and Implementation planning. • Development of Target Operating Model and approach to workforce integration. 	£0.8m
Stakeholder Communications and Engagement	Appointing external communications support to help manage overall communications and engagement leading up to and beyond implementation of the restructure process.	£0.2m
Total		£1.0m

Table 25: Estimation of enabling costs for delivery of the preferred option.

Area	Description	Cost
Redundancies	Redundancies to facilitate restructuring, to reduce long term management costs.	£1.2m
Integration PMO	Costs of major PMO workstreams to drive rapid and effective integration of services needed to deliver benefits.	£1.3m
Digital/IT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Centre and data migration • IT Networks • Telephony • Financial Ledgers • Payroll systems • Procurement systems 	£6.0m
Estates	Costs to consolidate the estate as part of restructure.	£0.5m
Council Tax Harmonisation	Costs to harmonize council tax rates as part of restructure.	£8.2m
Total		£17.2m

As described above, these costs are required to make a step change in the efficiency of the integrated districts as part of the two-unitary model and deliver the recurrent benefits we seek to achieve.

Numbers of Councillors

The specific councillor-to-elector ratios for each unitary authority will be determined through a detailed analysis of factors such as population density, geographic size, and the need to ensure effective representation across diverse communities.

Please note that there has been some indicative work by District officers looking at a different option for the electoral boundaries and councillor numbers. At present it would be possible for a two unitary model to use the electoral boundaries in place for Warwick District Council and Stratford-on-Avon District Council and achieve electoral equality with a ratio of 2647 electors per councillor. All the wards within this model would be within 15% of the target ratio of elector to councillor and only 9 of 56 wards would be greater than 10%. This would create 85 councillors, the same number of councillors as the Districts have currently, but this would represent a reduction as some County Councillors would be lost.

A similar ratio for the Northern unitary would provide 89 councillors. This may be particularly important for areas where no town or parish councils exist at present. The greater number of councillors creates greater democratic engagement. This would see a significant reduction in councillor numbers. There would, however, be a need for a full ward boundary review before a new council came into effect to allow these boundaries. Three possible wards would approach the ratio of 30% of target ratio of elector to councillor, which triggers an automatic review.

How a two-unitary model supports devolution

Practically speaking, the two new unitaries could assess their local geographies and economies and decide to pursue the devolution options most effective for their local places. For example, the North unitary could look to Staffordshire and Leicestershire. The South unitary could look to Worcestershire, Oxfordshire or Northamptonshire. Conversations are already being held by the Boroughs and Districts in this regard.

Moreover, the size ratio works more effectively in this scenario – the smaller unitaries can advocate for their local interests without dominating any potential future Strategic Authority as they are too large. By creating two entities with distinct identities and priorities, this model ensures a more balanced power dynamic within any future Strategic Authority, preventing dominance by a single entity and promoting equitable representation for all involved.

A two-unitary model for Warwickshire also supports devolution in the following ways:

Strengthening Local Voices:

Dividing Warwickshire into two unitaries provides a stronger platform for local communities to have their voices heard. Each unitary, directly accountable to its residents, can be more responsive to local needs and priorities. This structure empowers communities and ensures decisions are made at the most appropriate level, aligning with the principles of devolution.

Enhancing Collaboration and Local Focus:

While necessitating coordination, a two-unitary model can facilitate better alignment between strategic priorities and local needs. Each unitary, with its focused geographical area, can develop a deeper understanding of its communities' unique challenges and opportunities. This local expertise, brought to the Strategic Authority, ensures that decisions are grounded in local realities and reflect the diverse needs of the region.

Unlocking Devolution's Potential:

A two-unitary model fosters strong local leadership by empowering communities to take ownership of their futures. This aligns with the White Paper's vision of capable and responsive local governance as a cornerstone of successful devolution. By distributing power and decision-making, this model encourages greater accountability and responsiveness to local needs.

In conclusion, a two-unitary model for Warwickshire holds the potential to effectively support the principles and objectives of devolution. By promoting balanced representation, enhancing local focus, and fostering strong local leadership, this model can pave the way for a more prosperous and equitable future for the region.

Local engagement

The Borough and District Councils have already undertaken local engagement on these issues. They appointed ORS (Opinion Research Services) in 2020 to conduct an extensive engagement programme to examine the options for local government across Warwickshire.

Divided views were expressed across the focus groups but, on balance, residents and stakeholders were slightly more in favour of two-unitary councils for Warwickshire than a single authority. Residents were particularly in favour of a two-unitary model.

Those who opposed a single council for the whole of Warwickshire did so chiefly on the grounds that the county is too large and too diverse in terms of social and economic need (particularly between north and south) for it to be a viable consideration. It would also be the most 'remote' option: there was again considerable concern about a loss of local influence and democratic accountability within one large local authority. It could also result in democratic deficit as councillors will be expected to cover far larger areas and populations.

The Councils will continue to engage their communities in a similar way moving forward.

Public perception and active engagement are crucial for a successful transition to any new local government structure. The Councils' commitment is to ensure residents, businesses, and staff are informed and involved throughout the process.

The Districts and Boroughs will leverage existing networks, collaborating closely with:

- **Community Groups:** Partnering with established groups ensures residents are reached through trusted channels.
- **Parish and Town Councils:** Regular briefings and consultations will facilitate ongoing dialogue and address local concerns.
- **Key Stakeholders:** Engaging with organisations such as the NHS, emergency services, educational institutions, and the voluntary sector to understand their perspectives and priorities.

The communication strategy will employ a diverse range of channels, including:

- **Digital Platforms:** Utilising social media, online forums, and council websites to disseminate information and gather feedback.
- **Traditional Media:** Engaging local newspapers and radio to reach a wider audience.
- **Direct Engagement:** Organising public meetings, workshops, and focus groups to facilitate in-person dialogue and address specific concerns.

The Districts and Boroughs will draw upon best practices in local government engagement, exploring innovative approaches to reach diverse communities and demographics. This may include:

- **Targeted Digital Engagement:** Utilising digital platforms to reach specific geographic areas or demographic groups.
- **In-Depth Focus Groups:** Facilitating focused discussions to gather qualitative data and understand resident and staff perspectives in greater detail.
- **Business Engagement:** Hosting business forums and providing regular updates to ensure the local economy's needs are considered.

Voluntary arrangements to keep all councils involved

A range of regular meetings have been set up to enable the councils involved to keep working on these proposals. These meetings are supported by a programme team with membership taken from all the districts. There are also regular touchpoints between the Boroughs and Districts and the County Council.



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Warwickshire LGR Support ASC and Children Services Analysis to Inform the Two Unitary Decision

June 2025

Content:

Two Unitary Proposal

- 1) Warwickshire Demographics
- 2) Warwickshire CC Current Performance
- 3) The Local Market
- 4) The Financial Case
- 5) The Opportunity
- 6) Appendix A – Data Sources and Definitions

Two Unitary Proposal

The case for two unitaries in Warwickshire as opposed to one is strong. Whilst the demographics between the south and north of the county cannot be ignored, and are a major factor in considering the establishment of two unitaries, there is also huge variation in the capacity, cost and quality of commissioned services, supporting the most vulnerable citizens across the County.

As highlighted in the financial opportunities, the savings along with improved outcomes that can be achieved through establishing closer relationships with the local market, targeting intervention and ensuring services commissioned support the needs of the local community, are significant, modelled for the purposes of this report annually at £74.8m cost avoidance and £63.5m cashable savings.

National benchmark data indicates that unitary authorities with a population of 350k and below, perform better in terms of key areas of expenditure across Adult Social Care and Children’s Social care, as depicted in the table below. The proposed geography for the two new unitaries will be the North with a population of approx. 313,600 and South 283,200. Warwickshire County has a population according to ONS figures 2022, of 607,604, which would place the proposed one unitary model in the upper bracket for expenditure.

Average unit costs	S251 LAC unit cost	S251 residential unit cost	S251 SEN unit cost	Nursing unit cost	Residential unit cost	Residential & Nursing unit cost
Population 500-750k	£1,949	£7,406	£123	£1,087	£1,160	£1,138
Population 350-500k	£1,946	£8,465	£118	£1,151	£1,209	£1,166
Population 250-350k	£1,718	£6,772	£96	£1,006	£1,028	£1,023
Population <250k	£1,759	£7,220	£100	£1,044	£1,059	£1,048

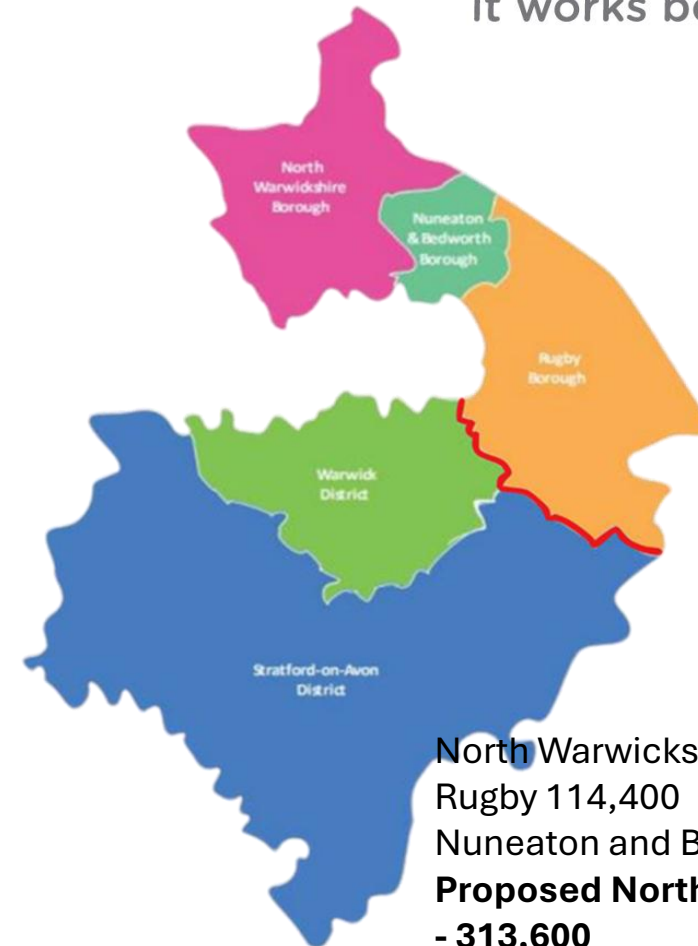
*Data source 2023/24 LAIT (Local Authority Interactive Tool) and ASCFR (Adult Social Care Financial Returns refer to Appendix A)

Two Unitary Proposal

But it is not just the financial case. We know from the data supplied by the County Council, that currently there are major challenges in areas such as SEND (special educational needs and disabilities). According to the written Statement of Action following its Joint Area SEND inspection in Sept '21, there is a real need to rebuild the trust of parents/ carers and schools. With expenditure on high needs in significant deficit and growing, it is essential that the right provision and services exist locally to keep Warwickshire's young people within their communities. This is a similar case for the County's looked after children, if you consider 44% (according to data provided by the County Council), are placed outside of the County.

In relation to adult social care (ASC), we know from benchmark data that the County Council are higher users of residential services in comparison to their nearest NHS neighbours (ASCFR recognised benchmark grouping), and that there appear to be capacity issues in relation to the provision of domiciliary care and extra care services, both crucial to keeping vulnerable older people within their own homes and communities.

The risk with one unitary, is that adults and children's services continue as they are. The system needs real transformation, which only the establishment of two new unitary authorities can provide.



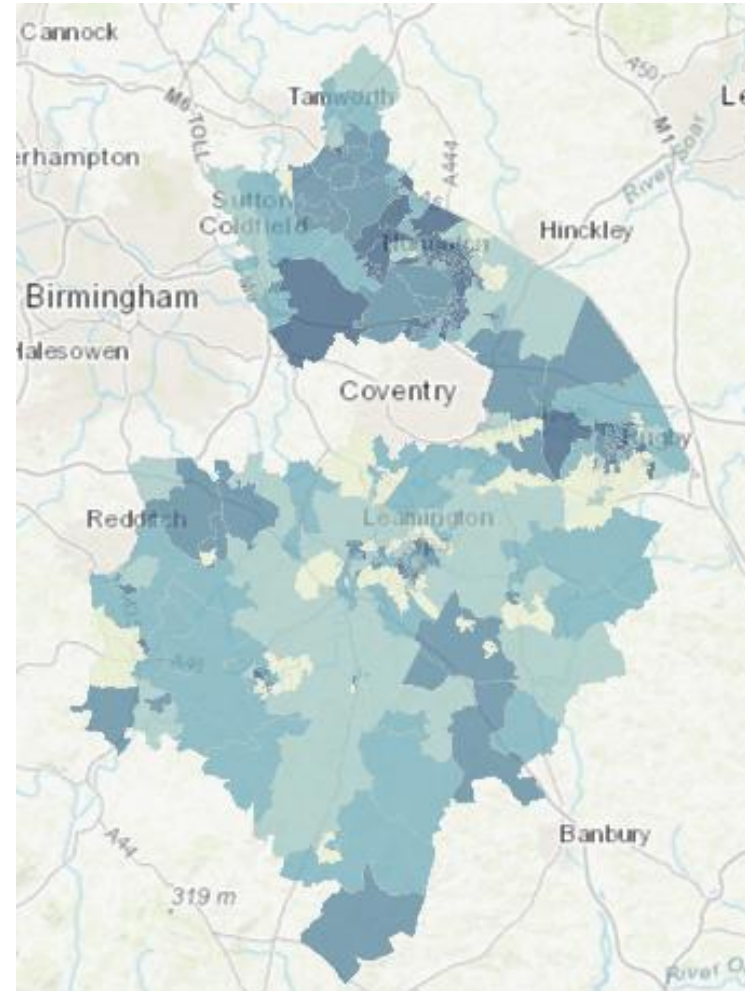
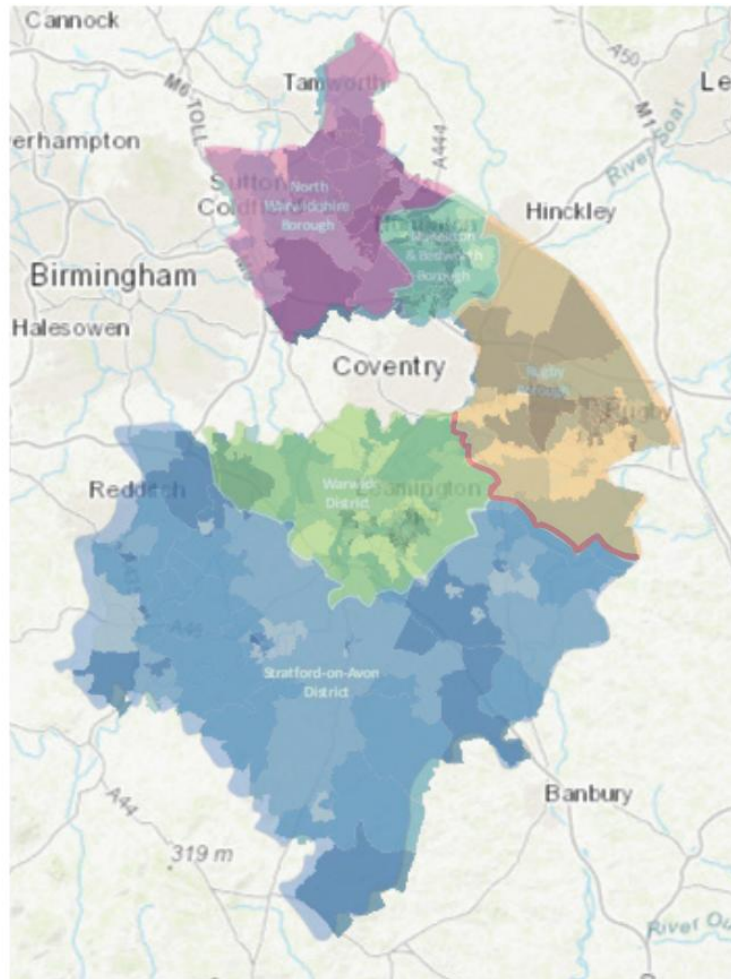
North Warwickshire 65,000
Rugby 114,400
Nuneaton and Bedworth 134,200
**Proposed North Unitary population
- 313,600**

Warwick 148,500
Stratford 134,700
**Proposed South Unitary population
- 283,200**

1) Warwickshire Demographics

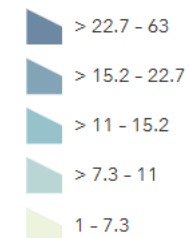
Deprivation in Warwickshire

The map to the left combines the county boundaries map to visualise where areas of deprivation are concentrated across Warwickshire. These are more prevalent in North Warwickshire, Nuneaton, Rugby, and in Eastern areas of South Warwickshire.



LSOA

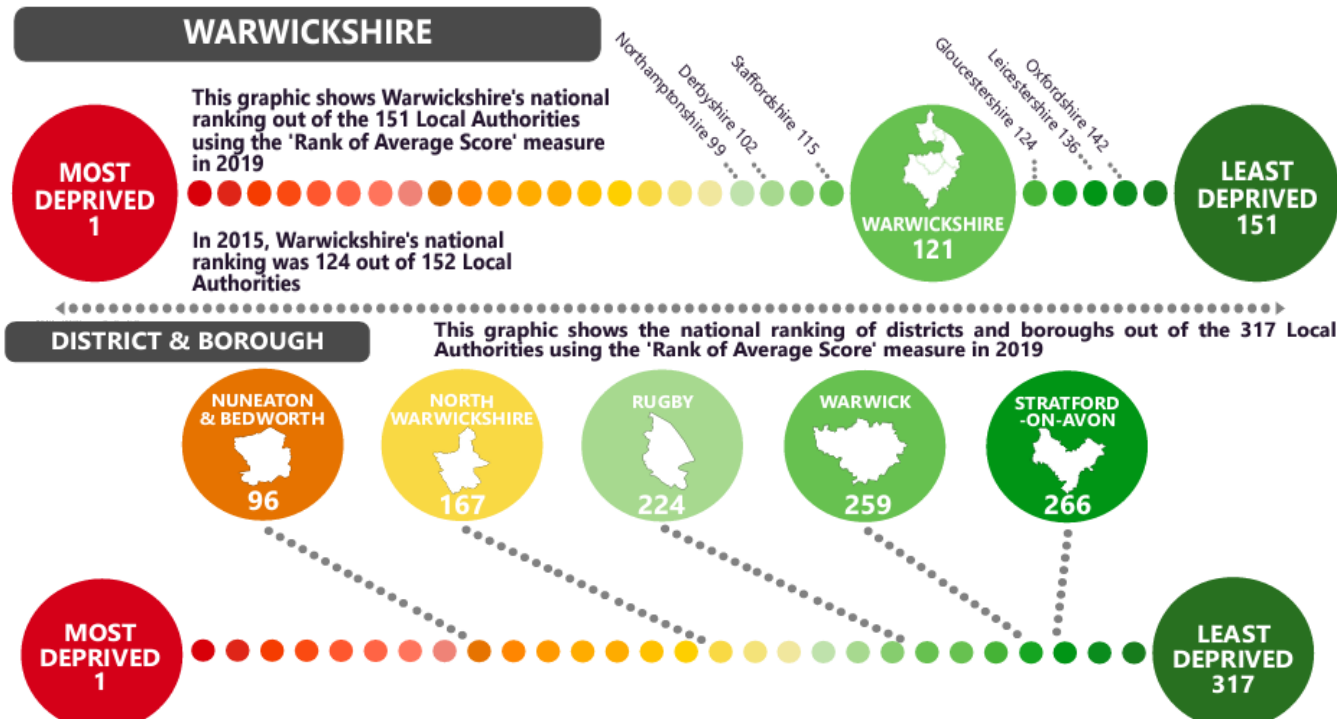
Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)
Score|2019



Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are small geographical units created for statistical purposes, primarily for the Census. They are designed to provide consistent and comparable data across the country, making them valuable for analysing social, economic, and demographic information.

Warwickshire Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019

- In 2019, Warwickshire ranked 121 out of 151, placing as one of the less deprived councils in England. In terms of individual domains of deprivation, the county ranked 126 in income deprivation and 123 in income deprivation affecting children. The lowest scores were with regards to barriers to housing and services where it ranked 74 and living environment deprivation where it ranked 87.
- Further, while Warwickshire had two fewer Lower layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the 10% most deprived nationally compared to 2015, these numbers increased for both 20% and 30% most deprived deciles.
- The least deprived districts and boroughs in Warwickshire were Stratford-on-Avon (266), Warwick (259) and Rugby (224), while among the more deprived areas were North Warwickshire (167) and Nuneaton and Bedworth (96).
- It should be noted that these figures are all from 2019 and current data may provide a different picture of deprivation in Warwickshire.



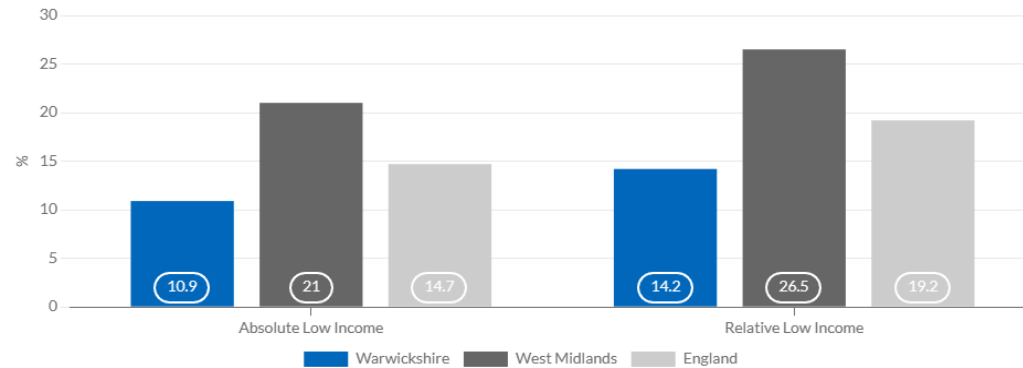
Index of Multiple Deprivation
Number of LSOAs in Warwickshire by deprivation decile over time

Decile	2019	2015	Change
10% most deprived nationally	6	8	-2
20% most deprived nationally	16	10	6
30% most deprived nationally	26	24	2
Sum of 10% - 30%	48	42	6
40%-100%	291	297	-6

Warwickshire Number of Children Living in Families with Absolute Low-Income Map 2019-2020

The map on the right pinpoints the areas that have the greatest number of children living in families with absolute low income, being Tamworth, Sutton Coldfield, Nuneaton, Rugby, and Leamington Spa.

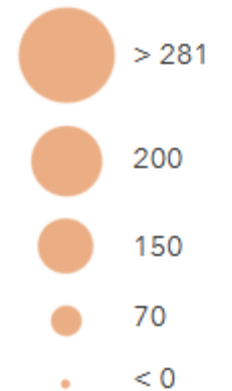
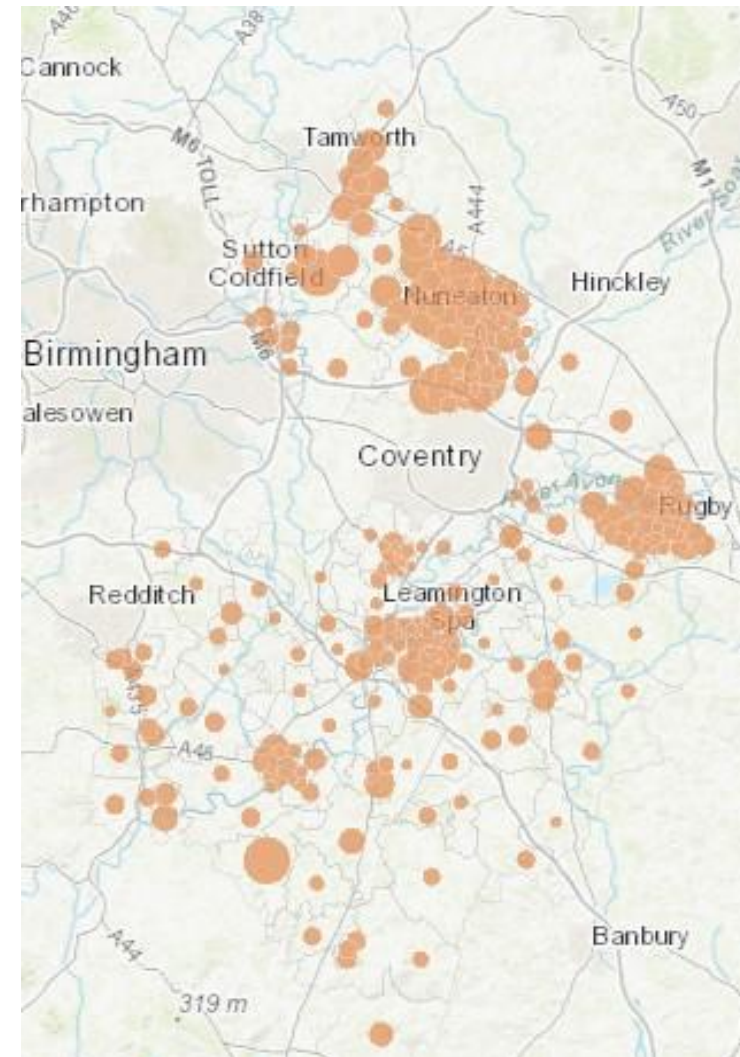
Percentage of children under 16 living in families with low income (2021/22)



Source: DWP

	Warwickshire	West Midlands	England
Number of children under 16 living in families with Absolute Low Income	11,670	245,978	1,599,579
Percentage of children under 16 living in families with Absolute Low Income	10.9	21	14.7
Number of children under 16 living in families with Relative Low Income	15,141	310,243	2,087,495
Percentage of children under 16 living in families with Relative Low Income	14.2	26.5	19.2

Date: 2021/22 Source: DWP



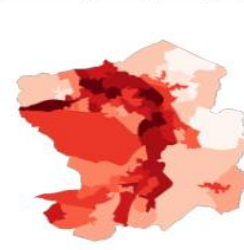
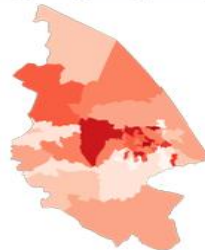
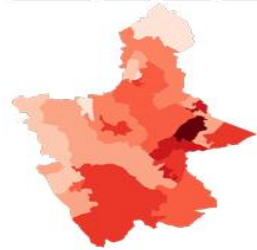
Warwickshire LSOAs by District

LSOAs within districts and boroughs in Warwickshire can also be broken down by their national deprivation decile. Areas shaded dark red are the most deprived neighbourhoods (Top 10-30% most deprived nationally). The tables below show the number of LSOAs in each district and borough by their deprivation decile.

North Warwickshire Number of LSOAs			
Decile	2019	2015	Change
Top 10%	1	1	0
Top 20%	1	1	0
Top 30%	3	2	1
40%-100%	33	34	-1

Rugby Number of LSOAs			
Decile	2019	2015	Change
Top 10%	0	0	0
Top 20%	2	1	1
Top 30%	5	4	1
40%-100%	54	56	-2

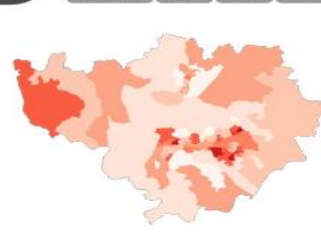
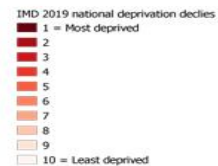
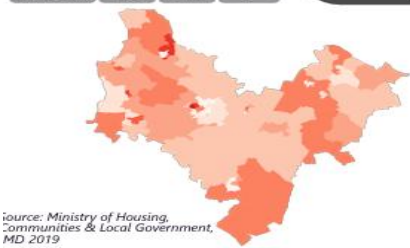
Nuneaton & Bedworth Number of LSOAs			
Decile	2019	2015	Change
Top 10%	5	6	-1
Top 20%	12	8	4
Top 30%	13	13	0
40%-100%	51	54	-3



Stratford-on-Avon Number of LSOAs			
Decile	2019	2015	Change
Top 10%	0	0	0
Top 20%	0	0	0
Top 30%	1	0	1
40%-100%	72	73	-1

KEY MESSAGES
In 2019, five LSOAs in Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough (one fewer than 2015) and one in North Warwickshire Borough are in the 10% most deprived nationally
Stratford-on-Avon District in 2019 has one LSOA in the 30% most deprived nationally while it had none in 2015
Only Warwick District in 2019 has fewer LSOAs in the 10-30% most deprived nationally compared to 2015

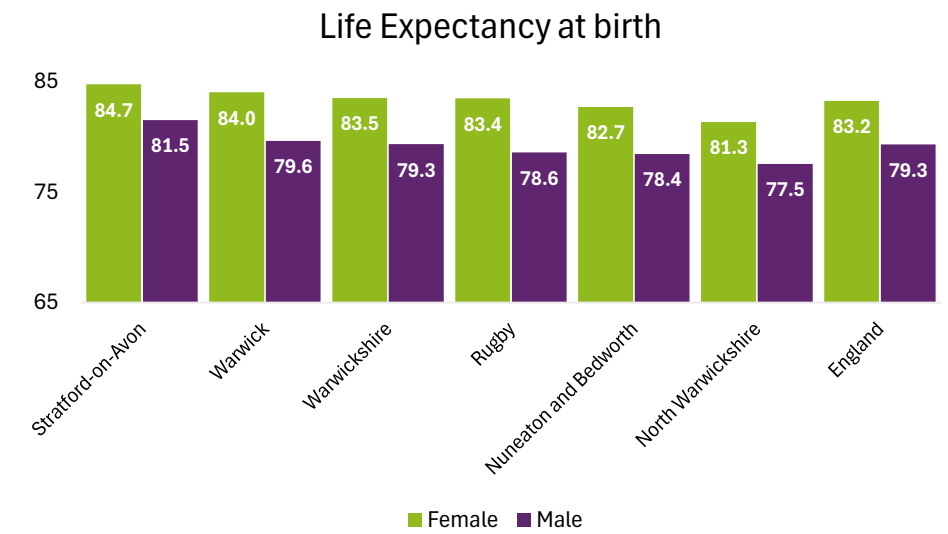
Warwick Number of LSOAs			
Decile	2019	2015	Change
Top 10%	0	1	-1
Top 20%	1	0	1
Top 30%	4	5	-1
40%-100%	81	80	1



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, IMD 2019

Produced by Business Intelligence, October 2019. For further information contact insight@warwickshire.gov.uk

- Unsurprisingly life expectancy at birth is higher in the lesser deprived areas of Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick, than in the more deprived areas of Nuneaton and Bedworth and North Warwickshire

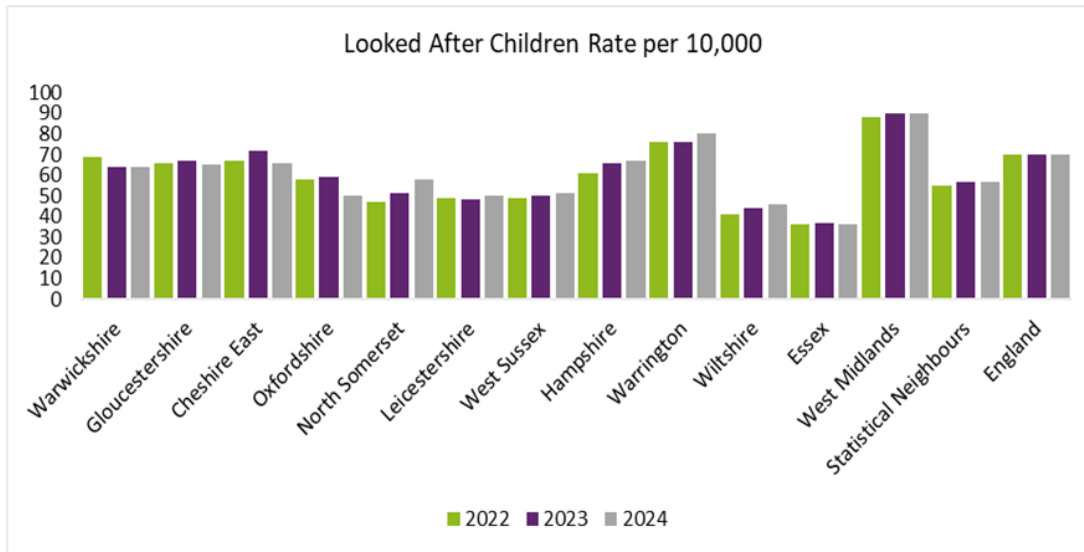


- In 2019, research done by Business Intelligence shows that the LSOAs with higher levels of deprivation align with the areas where children are living in families with absolute low income. These areas include; North Warwickshire, Rugby, Nuneaton & Bedworth, and parts of Warwick.

2) Current Performance – Warwickshire CC

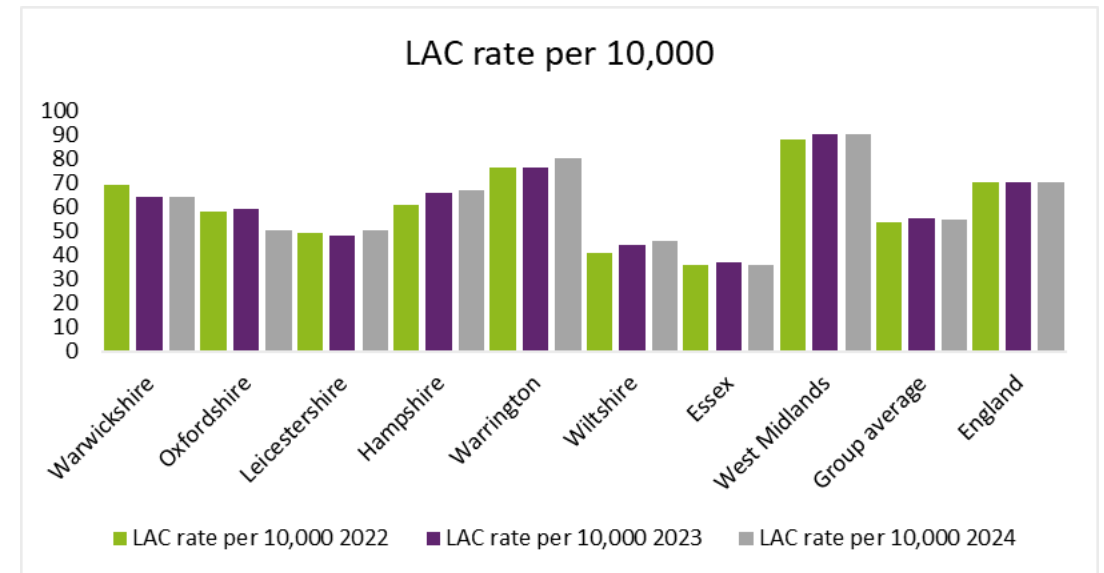
Children's Social Care

Children's Social Care has an Ofsted rating of "Good" following a full inspection Feb '22 and further endorsed at Focused Visit May '23.



Looked After Children (LAC) Rates are above Statistical Neighbours (SN) at 64 per 10,000 (actual number 805 a rise from 778 in '23), in WCC compared to 57 SN average.

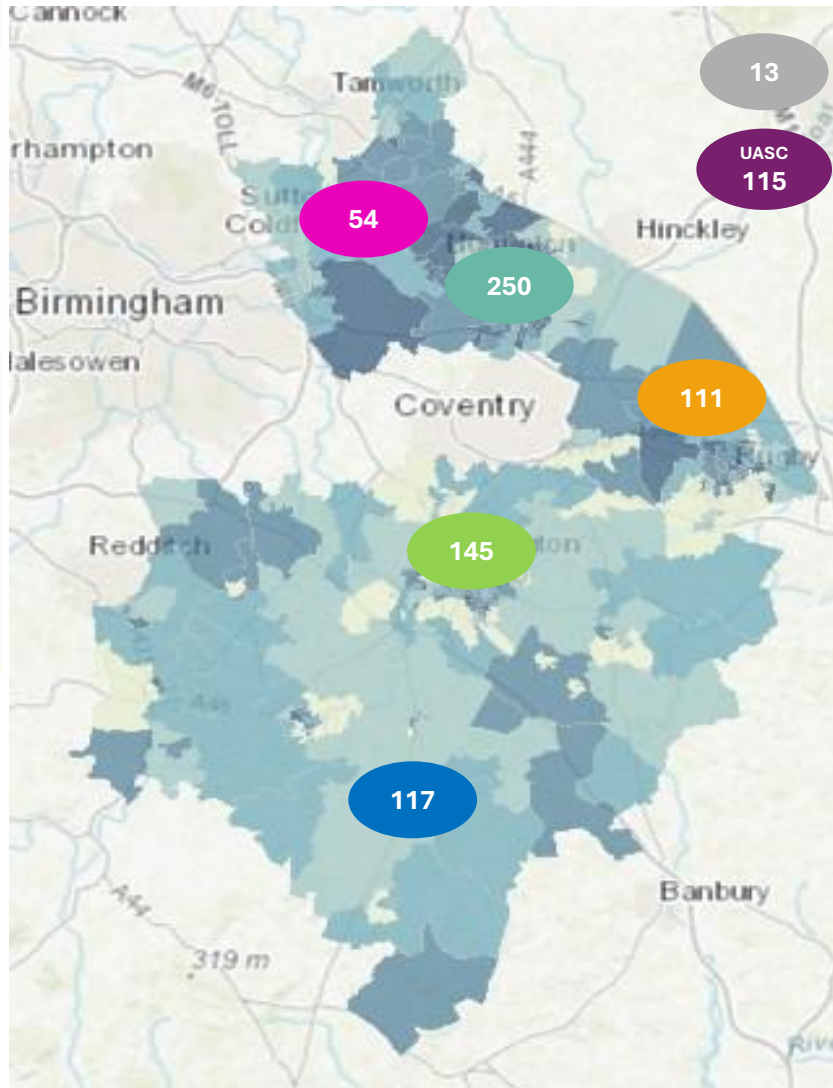
If we analyse the LAs within the SN group rated as either Good or Outstanding, Warwickshire CC (WCC) are at 64 and the average of the group is 55 per 10,000.



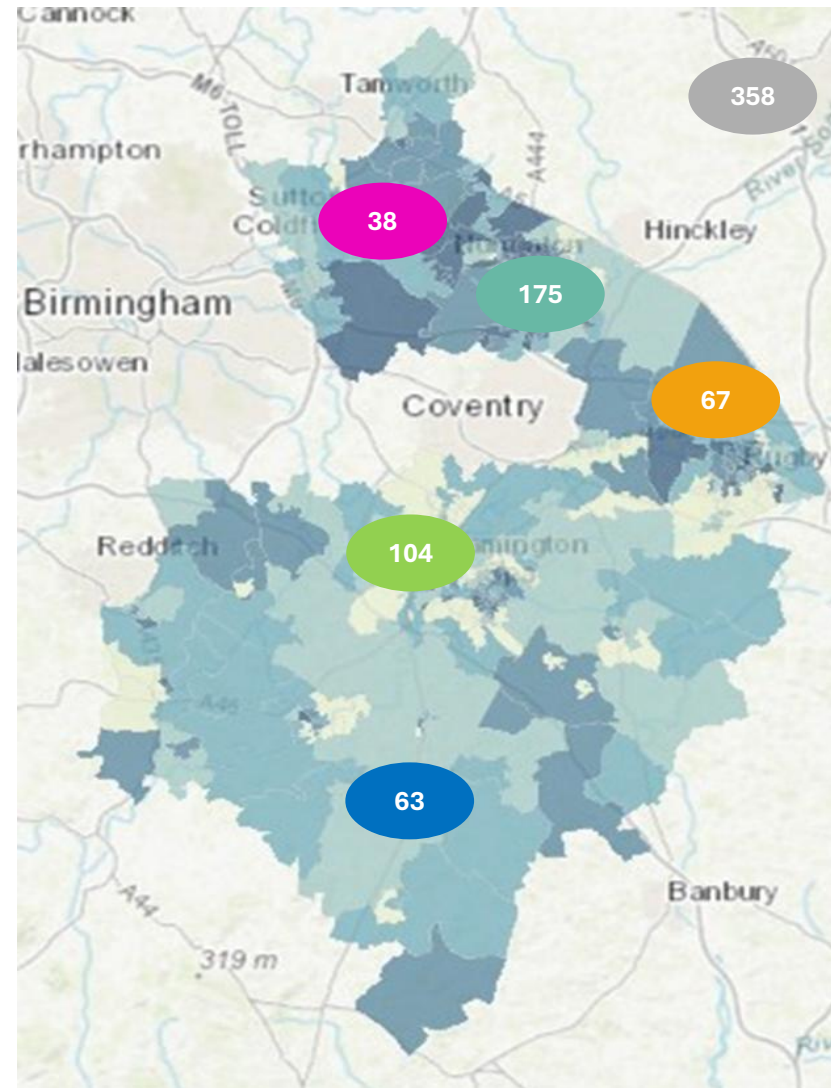
*Data source 2023/24 LAIT (Local Authority Interactive Tool) for children's services, built on local authority financial returns, refer to Appendix A.

Children in Care

Children in care 2023-24 by originating postcode



Children in care 2023-24 by placement postcode

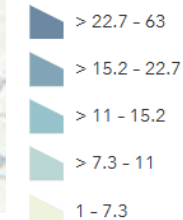


The darker areas are those with higher levels of deprivation

- In 2023-24 there were 805 children in care
- 31% originated in Nuneaton and Bedworth
- 2% originated out of county and at end of year 44% of placements were out of county

*data provided by WCC

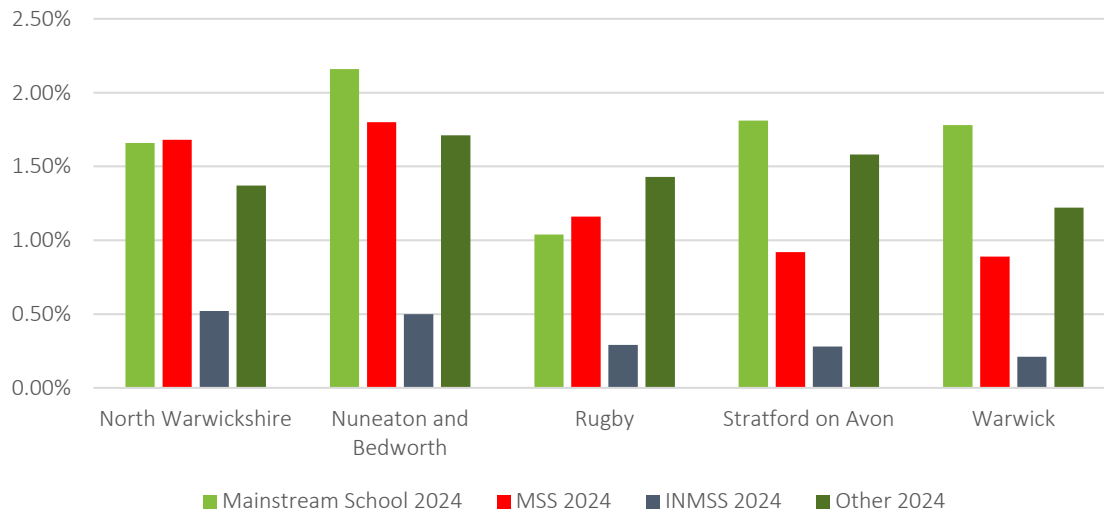
	Area	Originating area	Placement area at end of year
	North Warwickshire	7%	5%
	Nuneaton and Bedworth	31%	22%
	Rugby	14%	8%
	Warwick	18%	13%
	Stratford-on-Avon	15%	8%
	Out of County	2%	44%
	UASC	14%	



Children's Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Demand

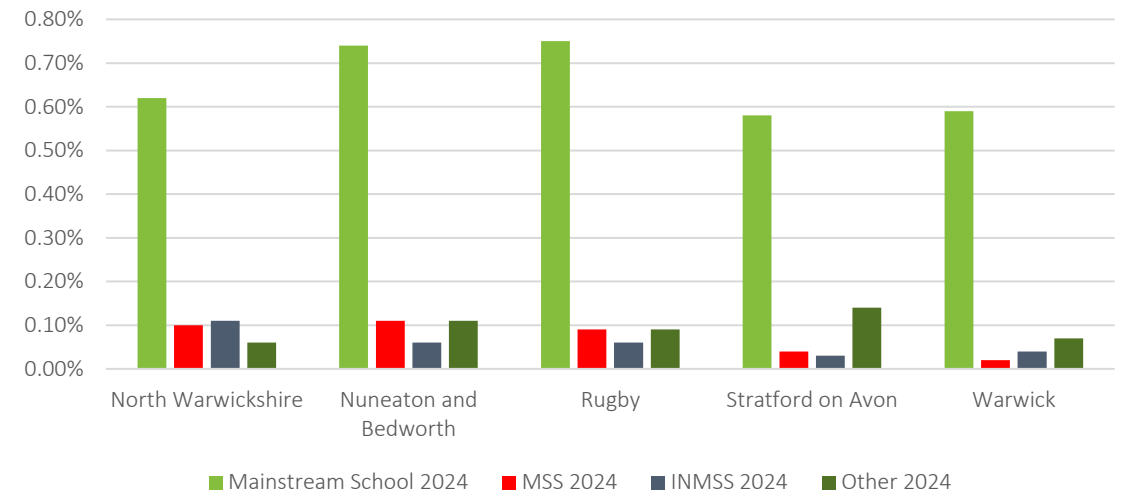
Total & New Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) as % of 0-19 Population per District/Borough

Number of total EHCPs as % of 0-19 population per District/Borough



- The highest percentage of total EHCPs by district/borough population were typically for Mainstream schools or MSS (maintained special school), with the lowest EHCP percentages being for INMSS (independent non maintained special school).

Number of new EHCPs as % of 0-19 population per District/Borough

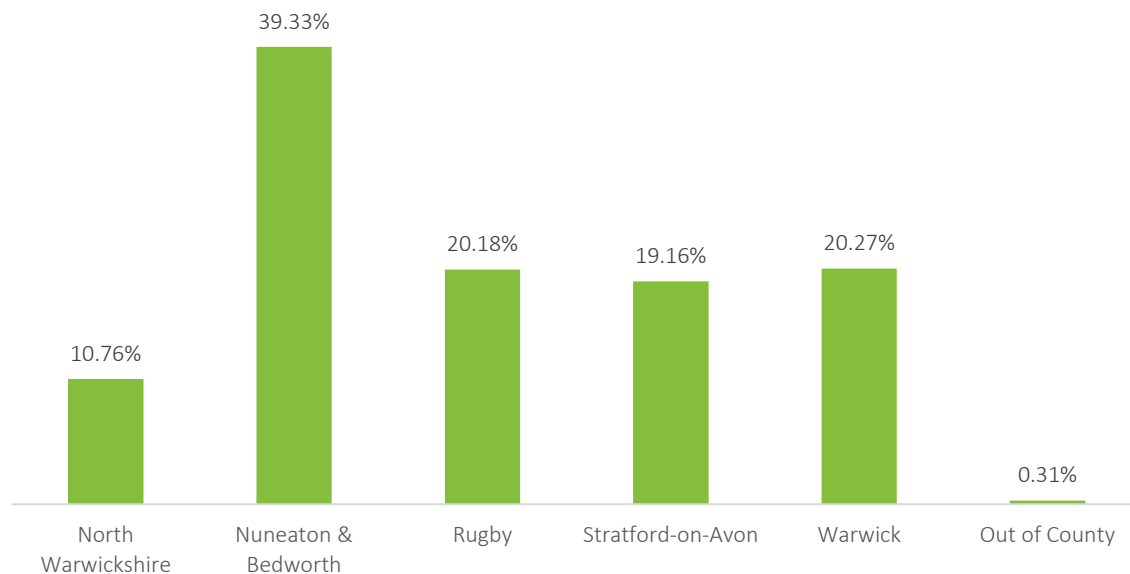


- Encouragingly the highest percentage of new EHCPs by district/borough population were for Mainstream schools, with the lowest EHCP percentages varying across areas and type of provision. Nuneaton & Bedworth and Rugby had the highest percentages of new EHCPs, while Warwick had the lowest.

Children's SEND Demand

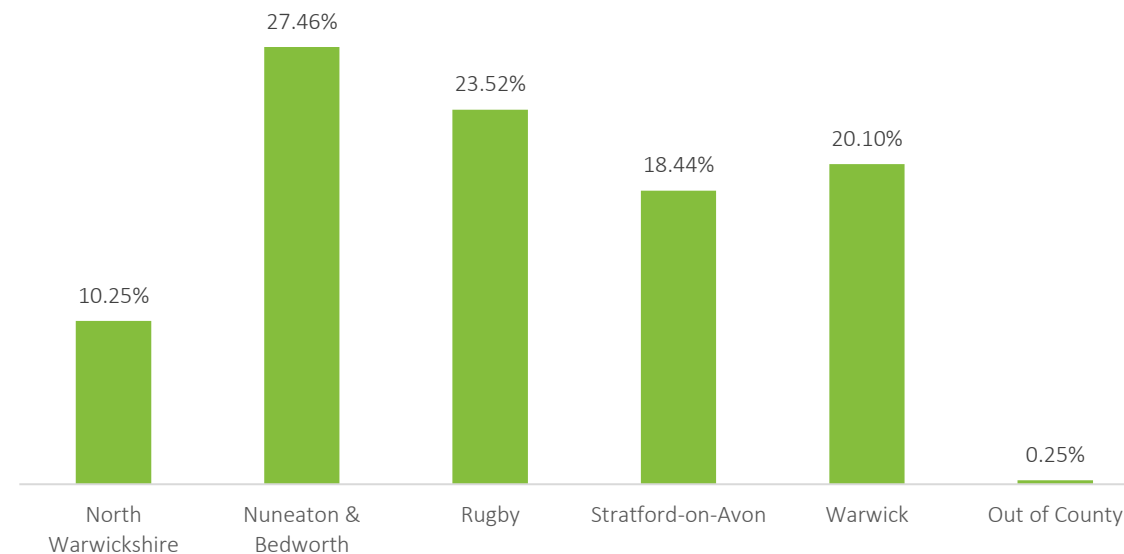
Total & New EHCPs as % of all per District & Borough

Total number of EHCPs per district & borough (2024)



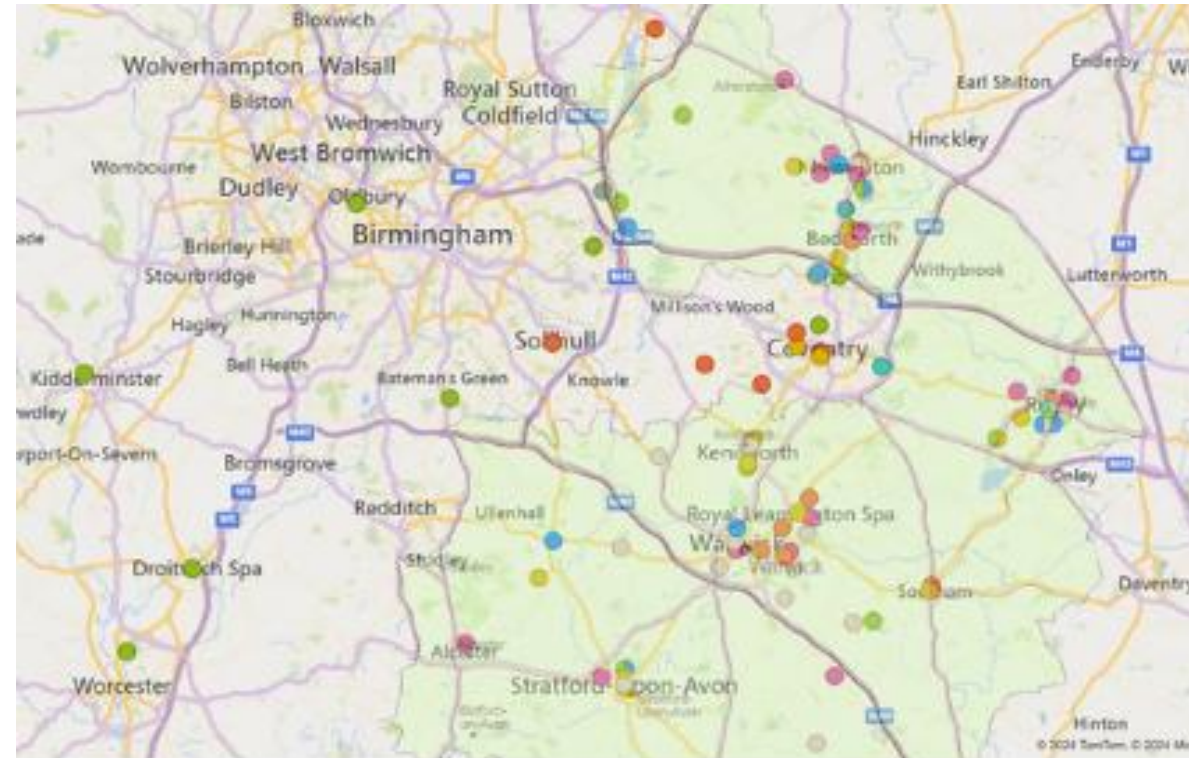
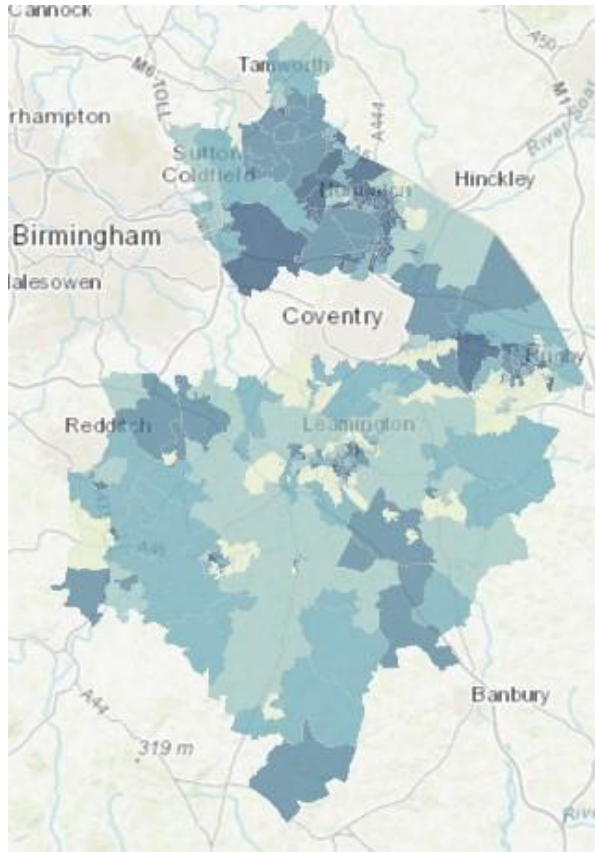
- The highest number of total EHCPs were in Nuneaton & Bedworth with nearly double the numbers seen in other areas. The numbers are consistently around 20% for Rugby, Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick.

Total number of new EHCPs in calendar year per district & borough (2024)



- The highest number of new EHCPs in 2024 were again in Nuneaton & Bedworth, however, numbers were more consistent in comparison to other areas. Rugby, Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick were again quite similar around the 20% mark.

Warwickshire SEND Services Map



The map on the left-hand side depicts the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score of different areas within Warwickshire (2019). The darker areas are those with higher levels of deprivation. The map on the right-hand side depicts a variety of SEND services available for children across Warwickshire. It is interesting to note that quite a few of the SEND services available are outside of Warwickshire county in and around Coventry. Furthermore, services appear to concentrate around cities such as Warwick, Rugby, Bedworth and Stratford-upon-Avon, with few options in between for families in rural areas of the county. Areas that appear to be more deprived but benefit from fewer services include North Warwickshire, towns surrounding Warwick, and South Warwickshire. The map on the right-hand side cuts off as there are no further services below the ones pinpointed on the map.

Warwickshire CC SEND Service

In summary it would appear that **SEND is failing currently in Warwickshire CC**, although they are due for another inspection, the previous inspection was quite challenging in terms of headlines.

Warwickshire CC, written Statement of Action following its Joint Area SEND inspection in Sept '21 Ofsted headlines:

- The inspection raises significant concerns about the effectiveness of the local area.
- The local area is required to produce and submit a Written Statement of Action to Ofsted that explains how the local area will tackle the following areas of significant weakness:
 - The waiting times for ASD assessments, and weaknesses in the support for children and young people awaiting assessment and following diagnosis of ASD
 - The fractured relationships with parents and carers and lack of clear communication and co-production at a strategic level
 - The incorrect placement of some children and young people with EHC plans in specialist settings, and mainstream school leaders' understanding of why this needs to be addressed
 - The lack of uptake of staff training for mainstream primary and secondary school staff to help them understand and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND
 - The quality of the online local offer.

We also know that the Dedicated Schools Grant is in deficit. Extract from April '25 Cabinet Report.....*The 2024/25 in-year deficit is now forecast at £48.245m which is an increase of £3.028m since Q3, giving a forecast cumulative High Needs DSG deficit of £87.733m at the end of this financial year. Financial projections per the 2025 30 MTFS anticipate further rapid increases to the in-year deficit in 2025/26, growing to £64.0m (73.6% higher than the 2025/26 High Needs Block DSG Grant allocation) giving a forecast cumulative deficit by 31 March 2026 (the currently scheduled end of the DSG Statutory Override) of £151.733m.*

Schools in Warwickshire

Overview

- There are a total of 266 state-funded schools in Warwickshire, comprising 196 primary schools, 37 secondary schools, and 4 sixth form schools. Warwickshire currently has no Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) places and no schools offering specific provision for teenage mothers. There are 2 schools in the county under Special Measures.
- The total pupil population across all schools is 85,318, with a median pupil-to-teacher ratio of 20.62, which is *the highest in the West Midlands and third highest in England*. The median *percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is 16%, which ranks Warwickshire as 18th lowest in England for this measure*.

Primary Schools

- There are 196 primary schools in the county. Of these, 10% have been rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, and 68% are rated 'Good'. Attainment across primary schools is mixed, with 19% considered low and 16% considered good, though attainment data is missing for around 28% of primary schools. The most common pupil-teacher ratio in primary settings is considered very high.
- Primary schools represent the largest proportion of schools in Warwickshire. Despite a high number of 'Good' ratings, a relatively small percentage are rated 'Outstanding'. The high pupil-teacher ratios may be putting pressure on teaching resources and could contribute to the relatively mixed attainment levels seen across the county.

It should be noted that the data available for CS was limited and the following source was used for the information above: [Schools and Education in Warwickshire | SchoolRun](#)

Geographic Distribution

The towns with the most schools in Warwickshire are:

- **Nuneaton:** 36 schools (22 primary, 6 secondary, 2 sixth forms)
- **Rugby:** 33 schools (23 primary, 7 secondary)
- **Royal Leamington Spa:** 16 schools (13 primary, 1 secondary, 1 sixth form)
- **Bedworth:** 13 schools
- **Stratford-upon-Avon and Warwick:** 12 schools each

Nuneaton and Rugby are the two most significant hubs for education in the county, reflecting their larger populations and urban profiles. Smaller towns typically have one or two primary schools, with very limited or no secondary or sixth form provision.

Secondary Schools

- Warwickshire has 37 secondary schools, 19% of which have achieved 'Outstanding' ratings, while 54% are rated 'Good'. Attainment levels are split quite evenly between high (22%) and low (19%), with 14% of schools lacking attainment data. Secondary schools in Warwickshire generally have a low pupil-to-teacher ratio, indicating smaller class sizes compared to primary schools.
- Secondary schools in Warwickshire are performing slightly better than primary schools in terms of 'Outstanding' ratings. The lower pupil-teacher ratio suggests more manageable class sizes, which may support the stronger attainment distribution observed in this sector.

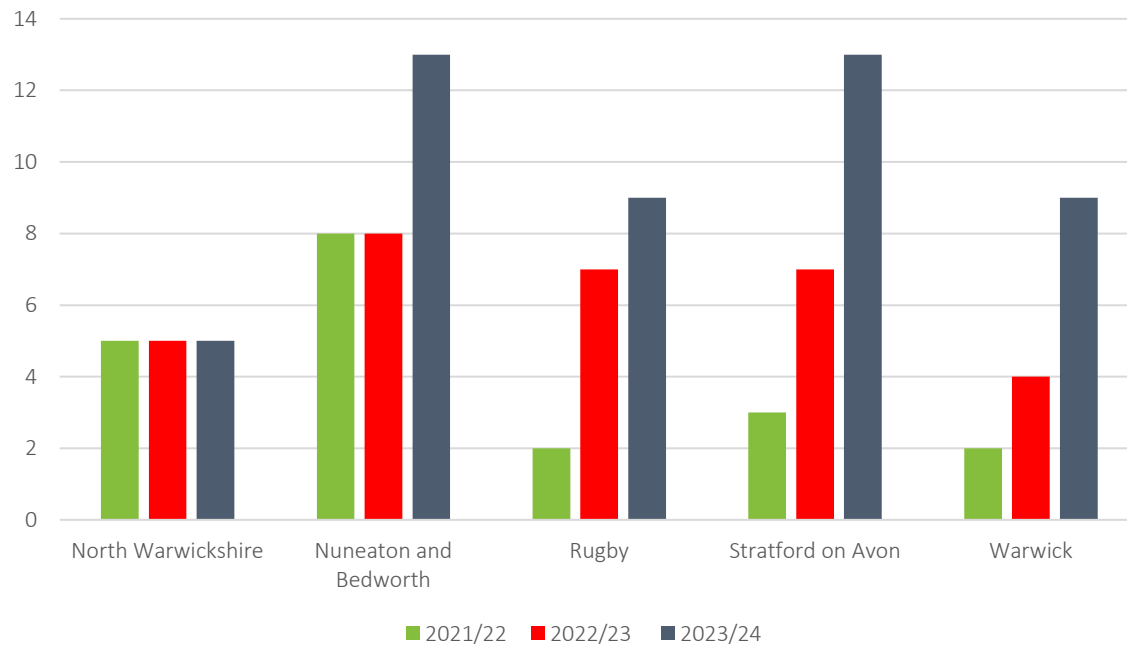
Sixth Form Schools

- There are 4 schools serving sixth-form education in Warwickshire. All four are rated 'Good', with 0% rated 'Outstanding'. In terms of attainment, data is quite limited with only 1 school being classified as good and data is missing for the other 3 schools. Sixth form schools typically have a low pupil-teacher ratio.
- While the sixth form provision is limited in number, it is consistent in quality, with all institutions rated Good by Ofsted. The small class sizes are a strength, though the lack of comprehensive attainment data makes it difficult to assess performance trends fully.

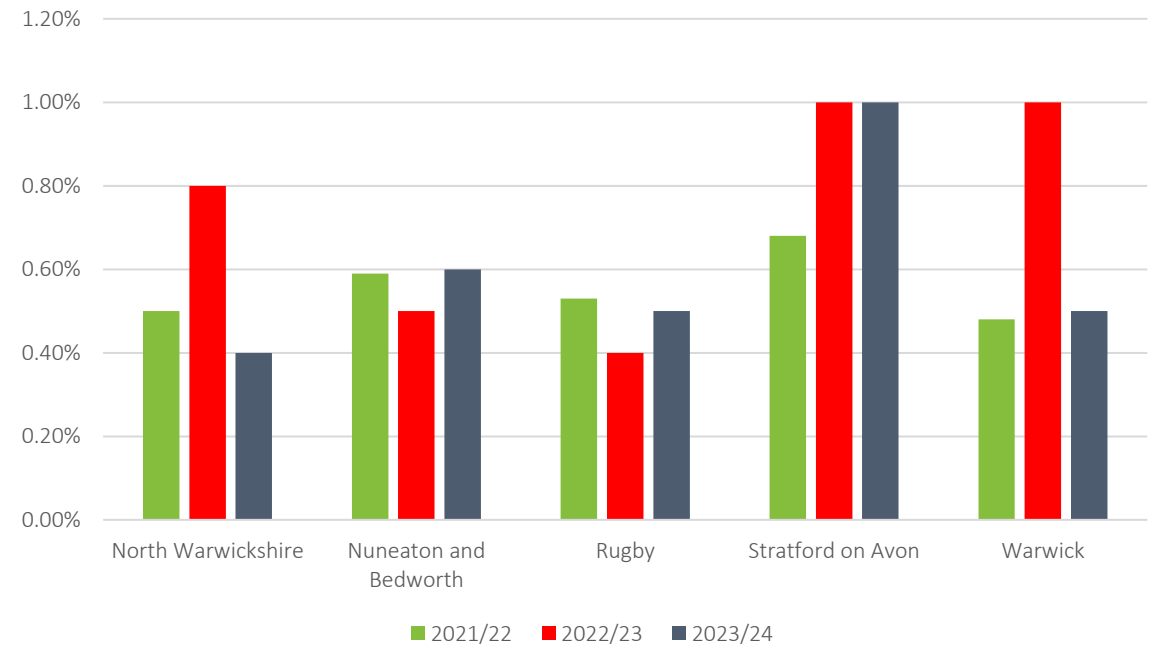
Schools in Warwickshire

Permanent Exclusions in Primary

Total Number of Permanent Exclusions in Primary Schools
(Recorded on Synergy)



Permanent exclusion rate via Synergy in Primary Schools (as a % of pupils on roll)

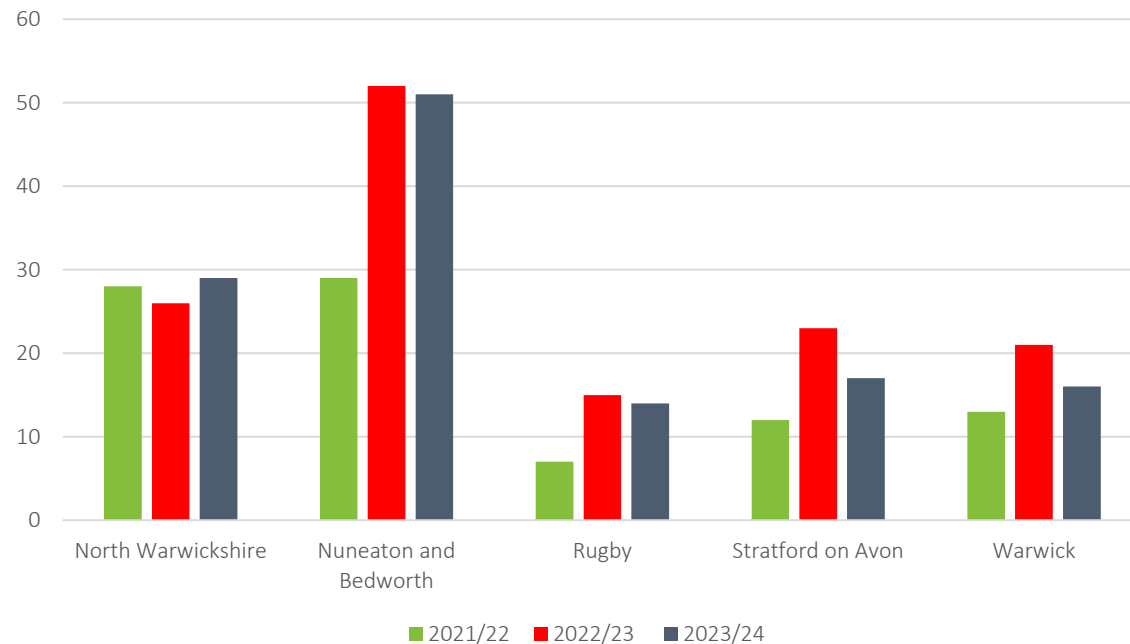


- The percentage of permanent exclusions in primary schools whilst low are increasing, having doubled in Stratford on Avon and Warwick Primary Schools.

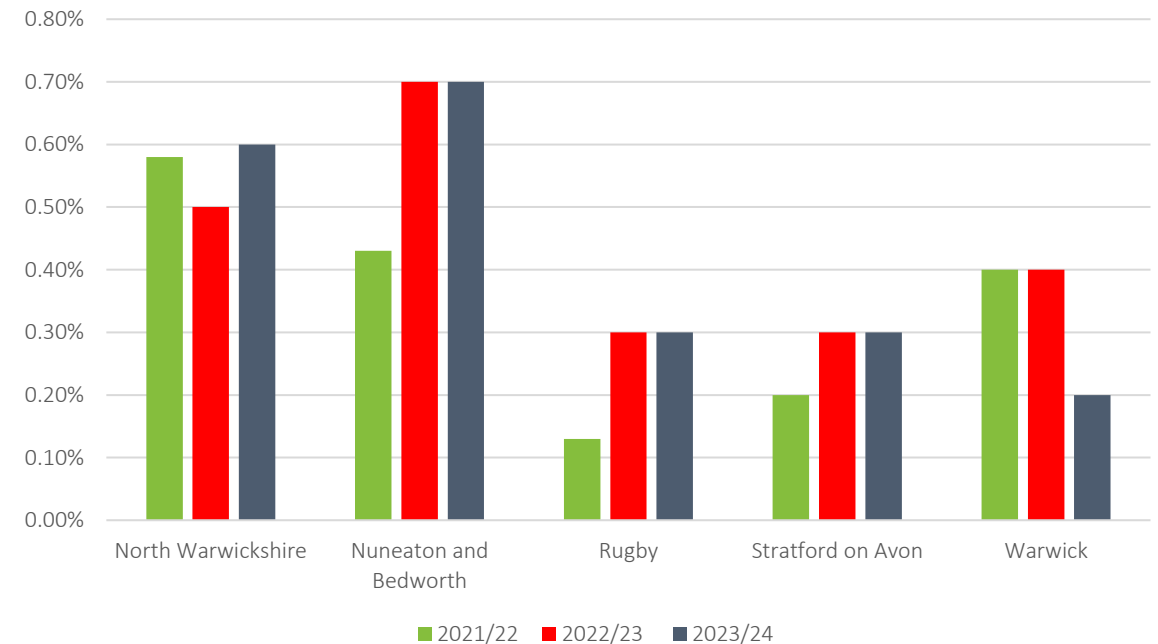
Schools in Warwickshire

Permanent Exclusions in Secondary

Total Number of Permanent Exclusions in Secondary Schools
(Recorded on Synergy)

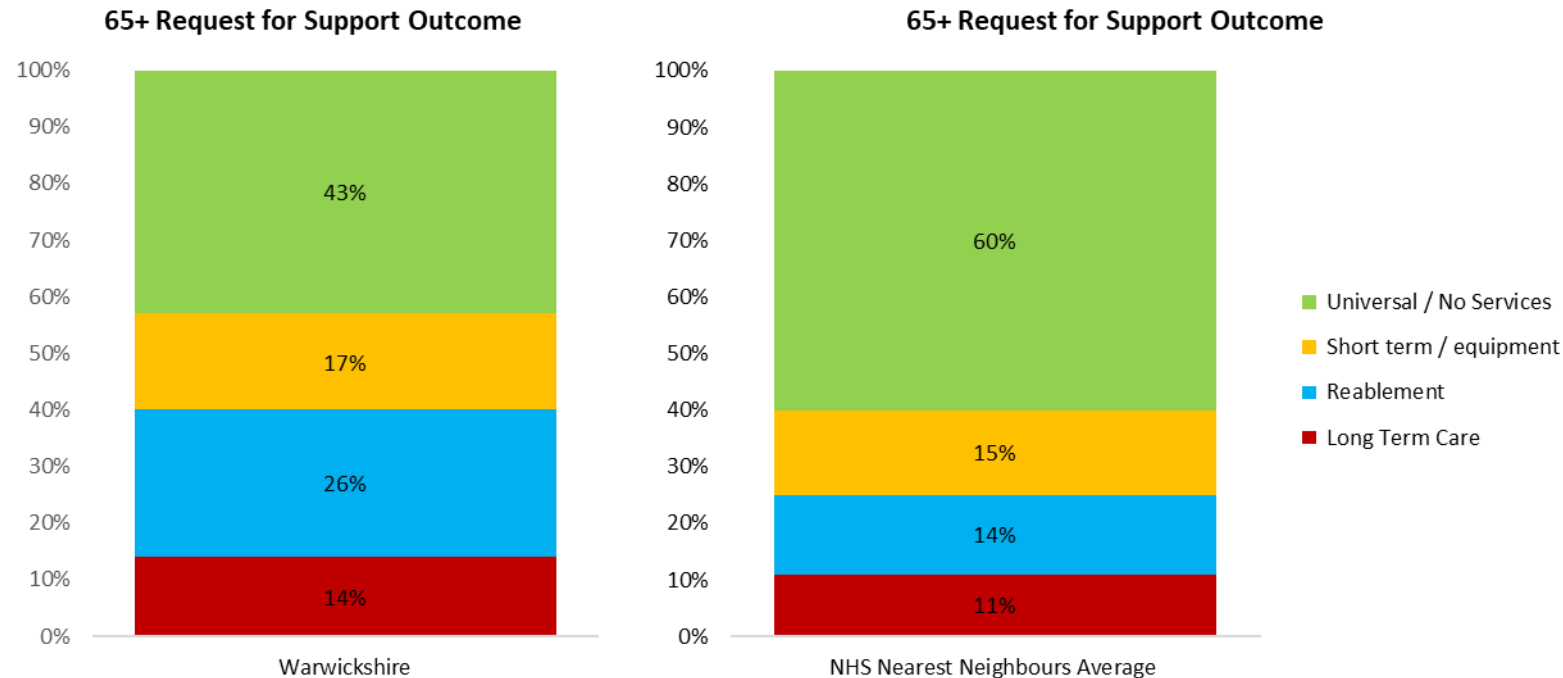


Permanent exclusion rate via Synergy in Secondary Schools
(as a % of pupils on roll)



- Encouragingly permanent exclusions are static or reducing across Warwickshire's secondary schools, although Nuneaton & Bedworth saw a significant increase in 2022/23.

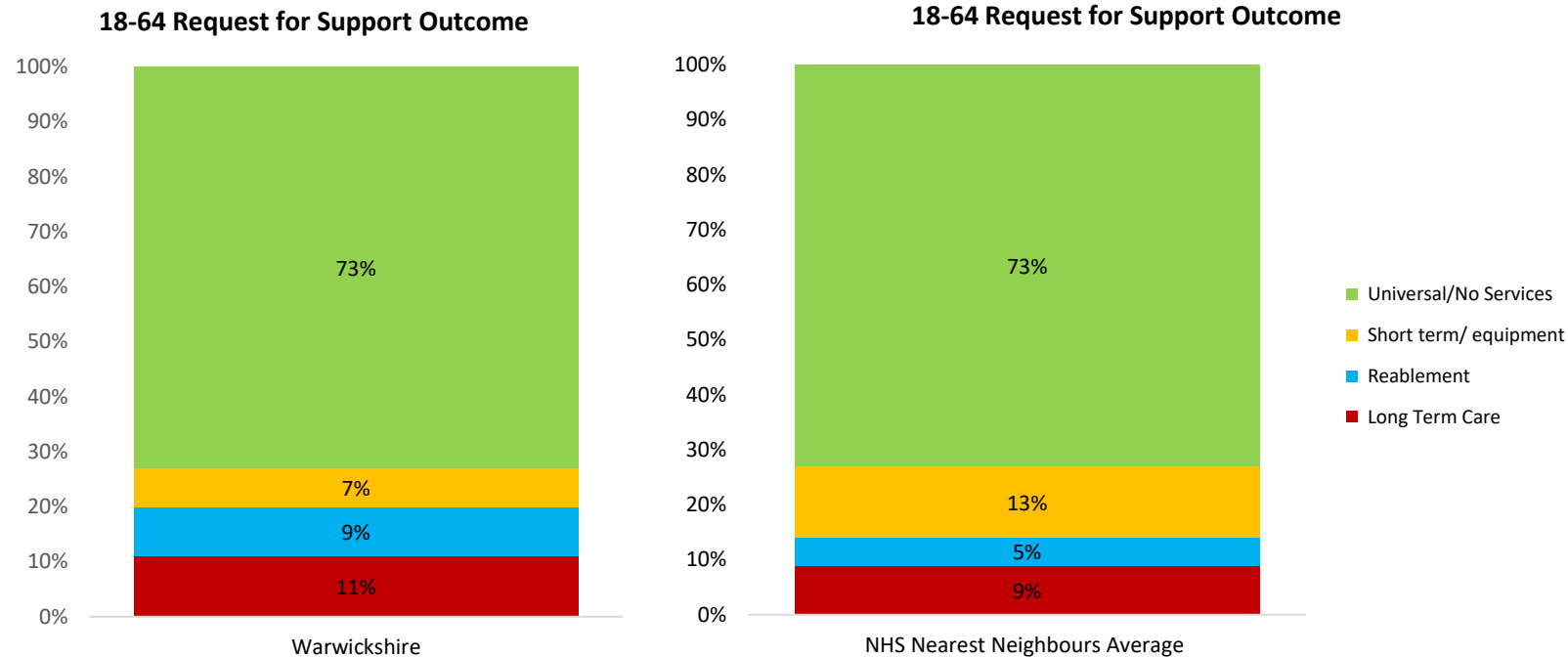
Adult Social Care Demand – Older People 65+



**Data source 2023/24 ASCFR*

- A lower number are diverted away at the front door to ASC compared to WCC’s NHS Nearest Neighbour. However, Peopletoo best practice would strive for 80% diverted to universal services or information and advice.
- WCC is offering a higher number of short term intervention services including Reablement which is positive, but questionable whether an intense Reablement service would have always been required or could people have been signposted to other short term community support.
- WCC do have a higher number in Long Term Support.

Adult Social Care Demand – Working Age Adults

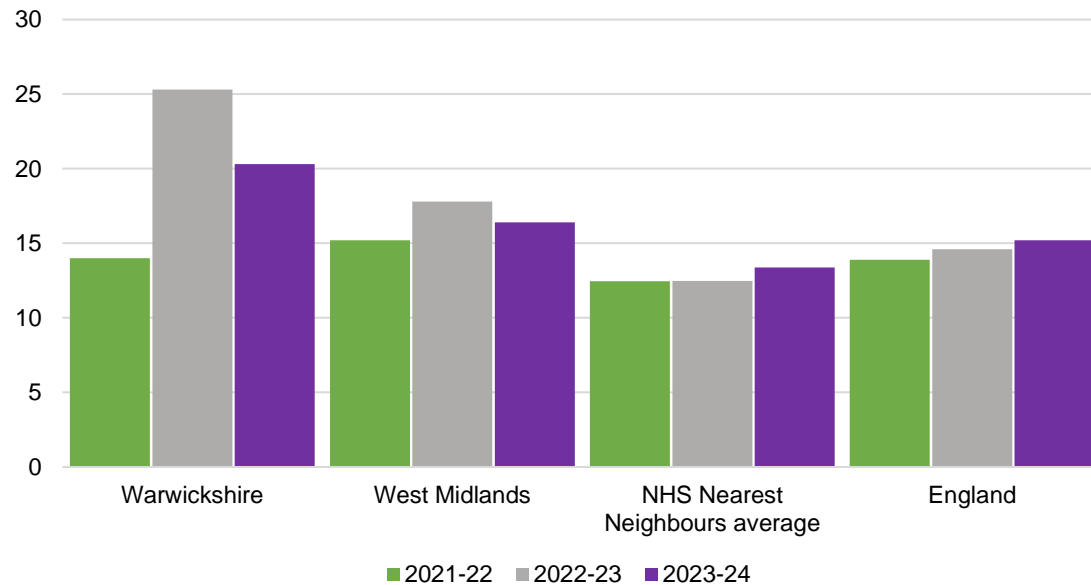


- WCC are in line with its NHS nearest neighbours in relation to numbers diverted away at the front door to ASC. However, Peopletoo best practice would strive for 80% diverted to universal services or information and advice.
- WCC is offering a lower number of short term intervention services including Reablement.
- WCC do have a higher number in Long Term Support.

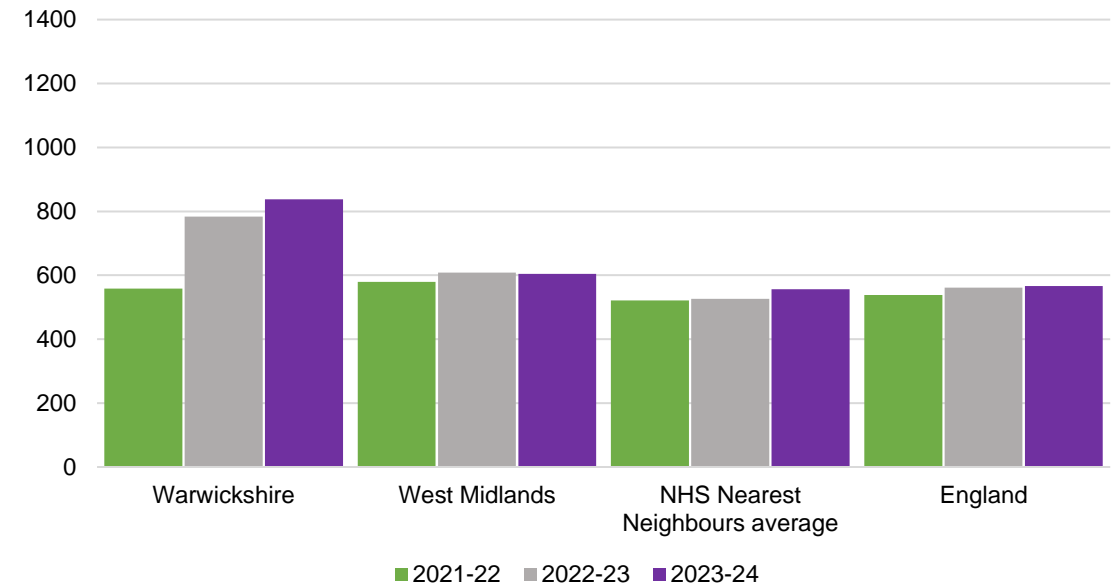
**data source 2023/24 ASCFR*

Adult Social Care Outcomes

Long-term support needs of younger adults (aged 18-64) met by admission to residential and nursing care homes, per 100,000 population

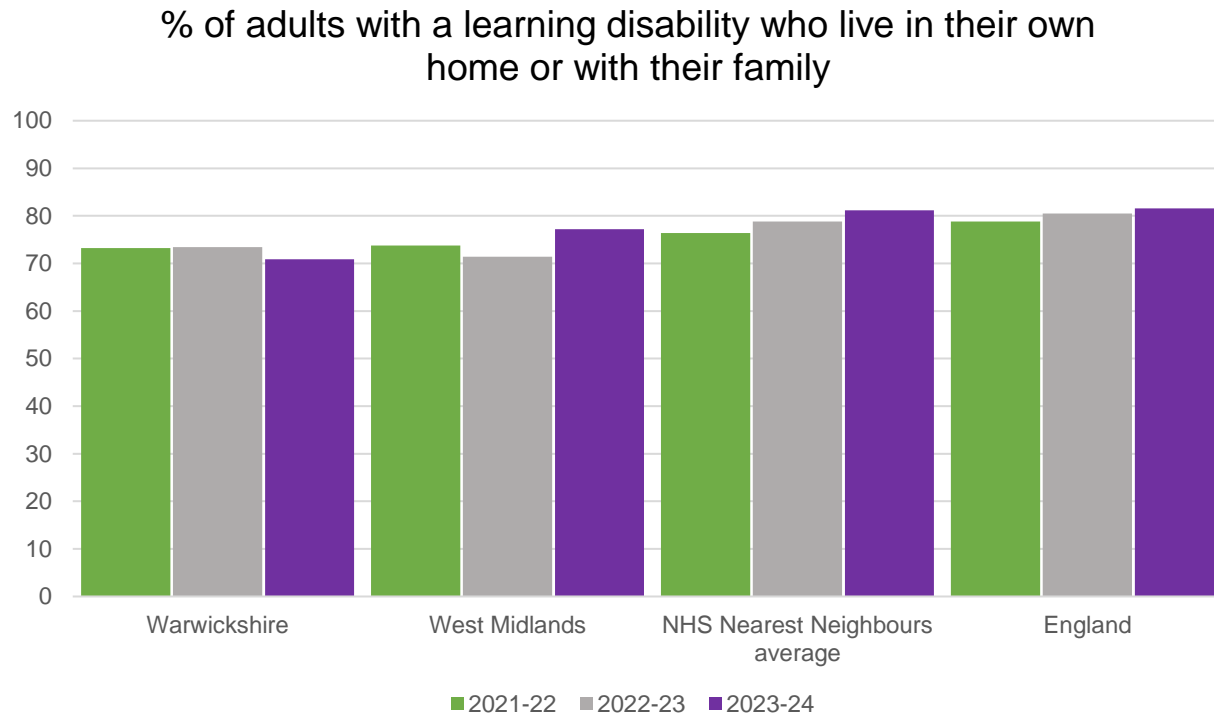


Long-term support needs of older adults (aged 65 and over) met by admission to residential and nursing care homes, per 100,000 population



- In 2023-24 at 20.3 per 100,000 population, a larger proportion of younger adults' long-term support needs were met by admission to residential and nursing care homes in Warwickshire than regional (16.4), NHS Nearest Neighbours (13.4) and England (15.2).
- In 2023-24 at 838.1 per 100,000 population, a far larger proportion of older adults' long-term support needs were met by admission to residential and nursing care homes in Warwickshire than regional (603.8), NHS Nearest Neighbours (555.9) and England (566).

Adult Social Care Outcomes



- In 2023-24 a lower proportion of adults (70.9%) in Warwickshire with a learning disability lived in their own home or with family than regional (77.2%), NHS Nearest Neighbours (recognised benchmarking group) (81.2%) and England (81.6%). This correlates with the previous slide showing Warwickshire CC having a larger proportion than comparators of adults in residential and nursing placements.

3) The Local Market

Warwickshire County Map



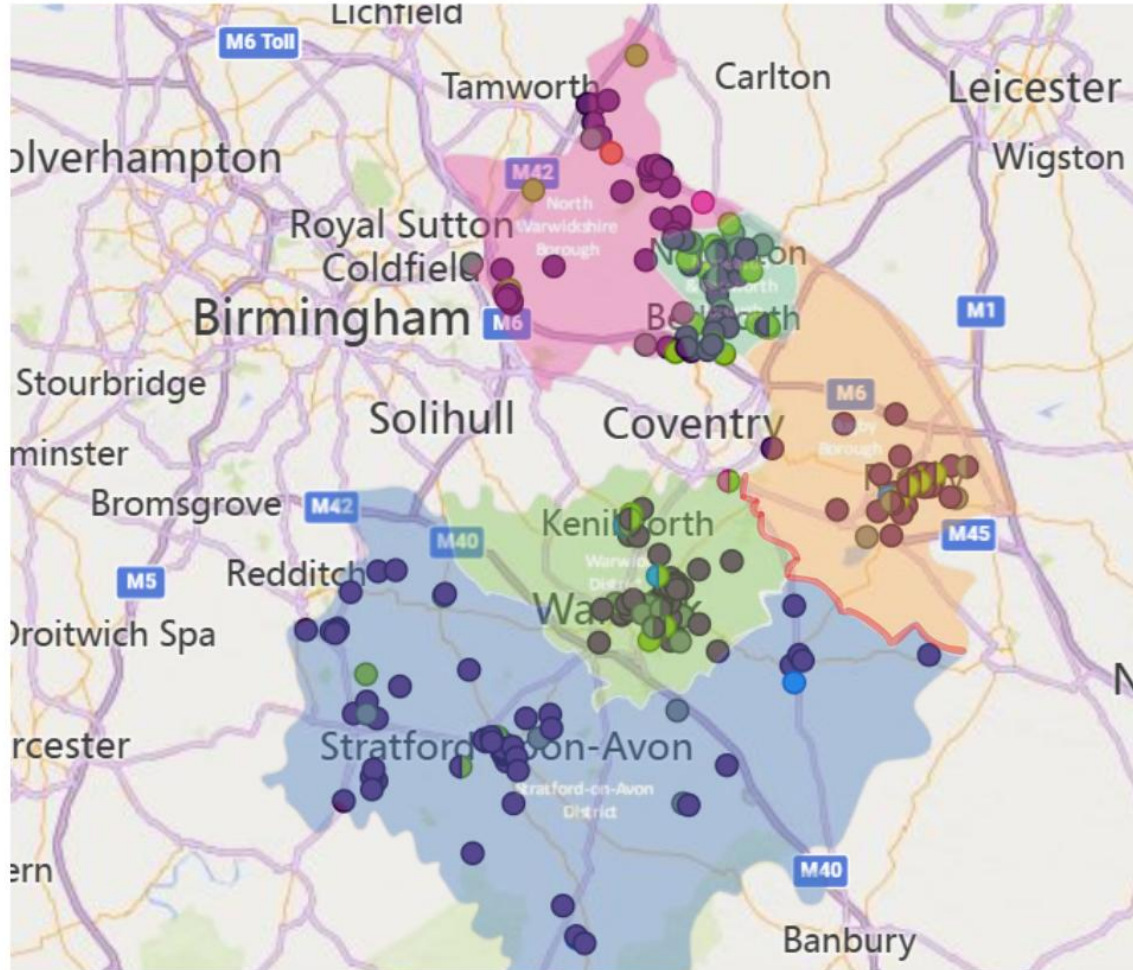
This map of county boundaries in Warwickshire was utilised to visualise the number of providers across counties which have been rated by Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The 5 areas comprising Warwickshire include:

- North Warwickshire Borough
- Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough
- Rugby Borough
- Warwick District
- Stratford-on-Avon District

The red line across the map indicates the proposed split in a 2-unitary model.

Warwickshire-Wide Providers & CQC Ratings

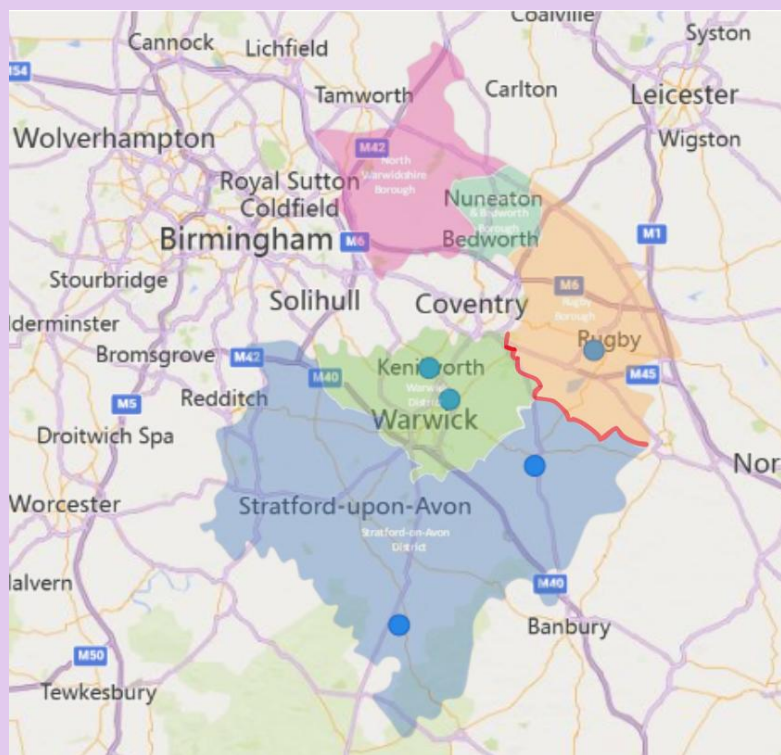


Location Latest Overall Rating ● (Blank) ● Good ● Inadequate ● Not Rated ● Outstanding ● Requires improvement

- This map depicts the CQC rated providers across Warwickshire, with ratings being colour coordinated. This map also visualises where providers can be accessed by residents.
- There is a clear cluster of providers around certain cities and towns, including Nuneaton, Bedworth, Rugby, Kenilworth, Warwick and Stratford-on-Avon.
- While there are dispersions of providers throughout Warwickshire, there do seem to be fewer providers in more rural areas. These include parts of Rugby Borough, Stratford-on-Avon District and North Warwickshire Borough. It should also be noted that the providers in Warwick District seem quite concentrated near larger population areas, with few in the Northwest of the district.
- This distribution of providers can present opportunities to potentially develop the micro provider market, to support areas where capacity/ access is an issue.

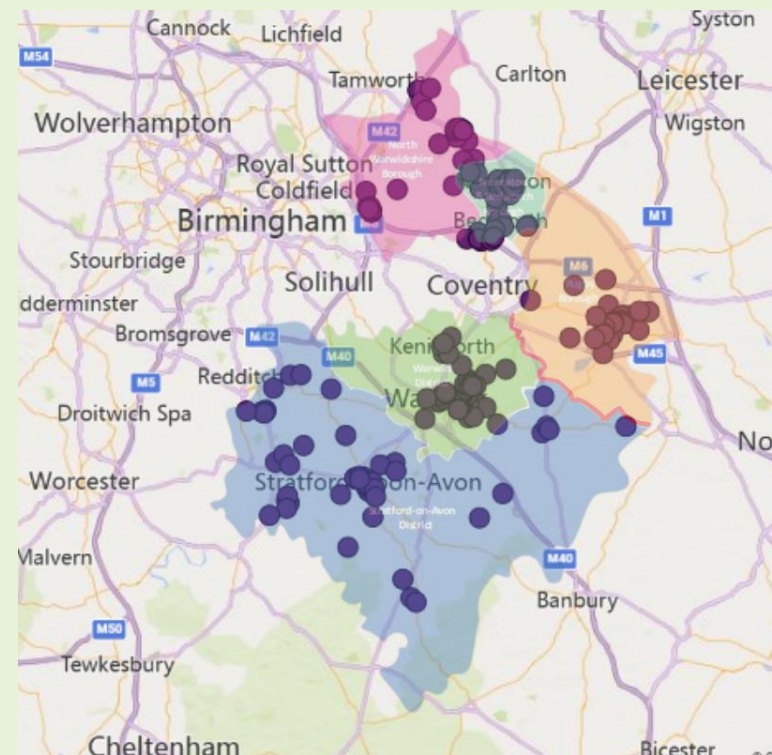
CQC Rated 'Outstanding' & 'Good' Providers

'Outstanding' Providers



The 'outstanding' rated providers in Warwickshire are concentrated in Mid-Warwickshire, with only one situated in the South. North-Warwickshire seems to have no 'outstanding' providers.

'Good' Providers



'Good' CQC rated providers are well-dispersed across the districts and boroughs, with each containing multiple to choose from and making access easier for residents. It should be noted that the South does seem to have fewer providers, potentially making it harder for residents to access services in the South/Southeast.

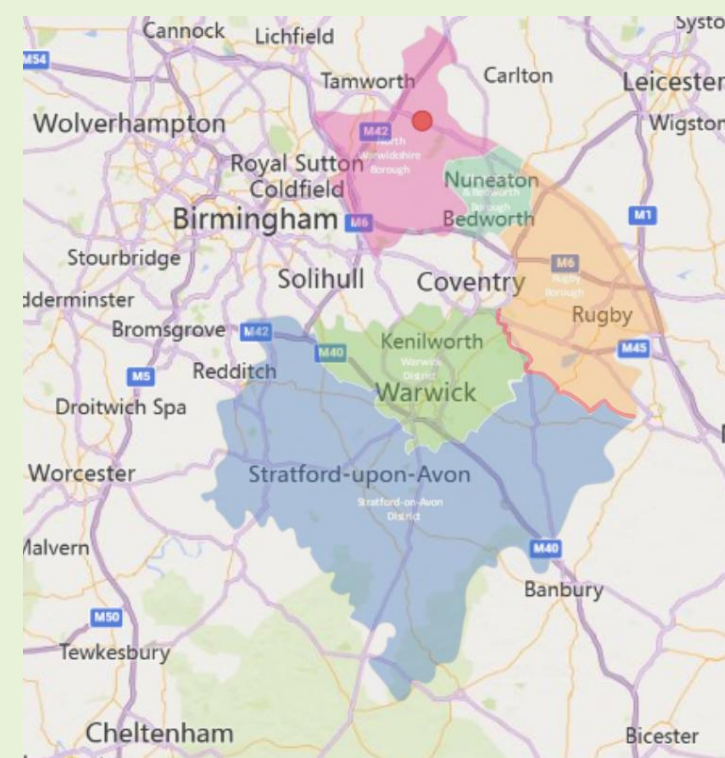
CQC Rated 'Requires Improvement' & 'Inadequate' Providers

'Requires Improvement' Providers



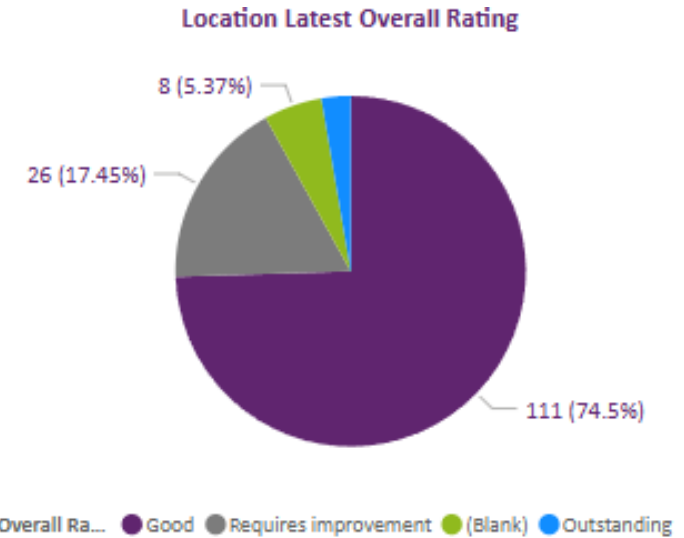
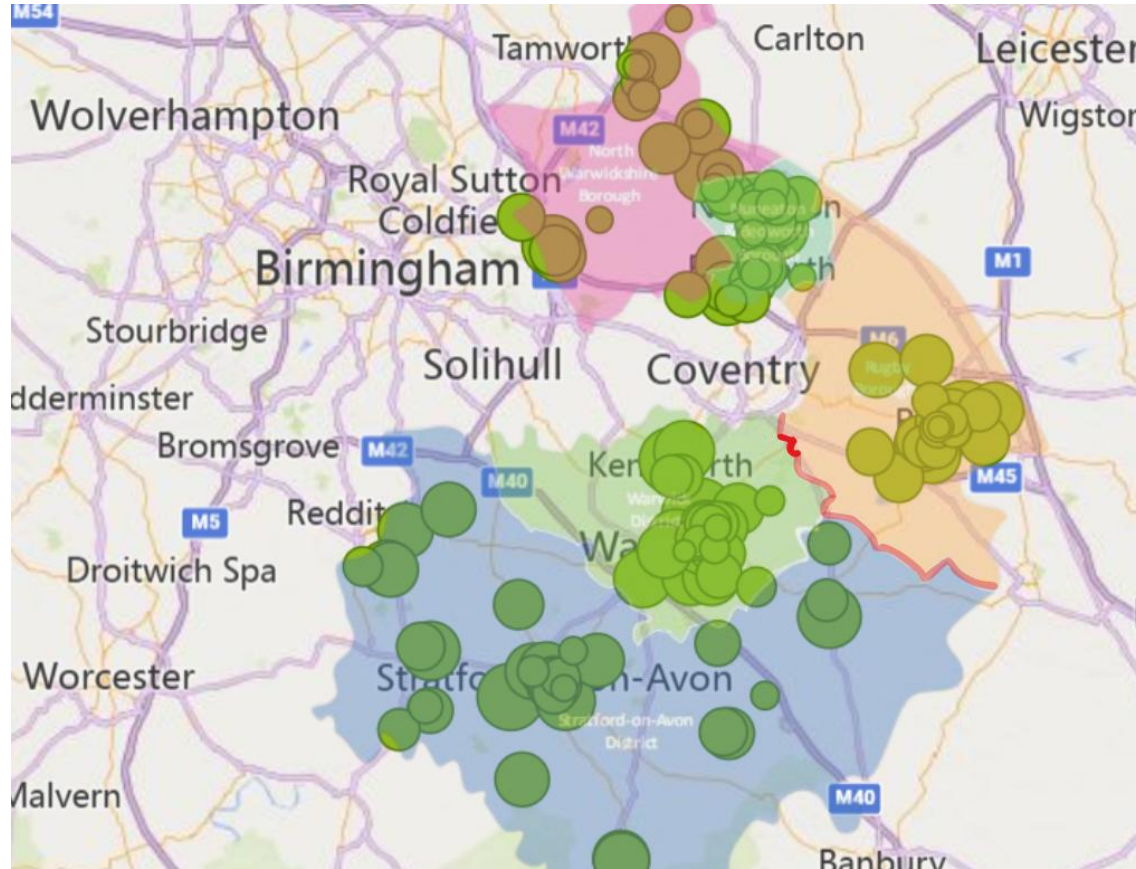
Providers rated as 'requiring improvement' appear to be concentrated in Nuneaton & Bedworth, Warwick and Rugby. These are also the areas that have received higher scores for deprivation, particularly in North Warwickshire. This presents an opportunity to work with local providers to improve outcomes.

'Inadequate' Providers



There is only one 'inadequate' rated provider in Warwickshire which is situated in North Warwickshire Borough. There are also two RI rated providers in this area with no 'outstanding' providers in the nearby boroughs. There are some 'good' rated providers, however, this does limit the quality of services accessible to residents in a more deprived area.

Residential Care Providers Older People (65+)

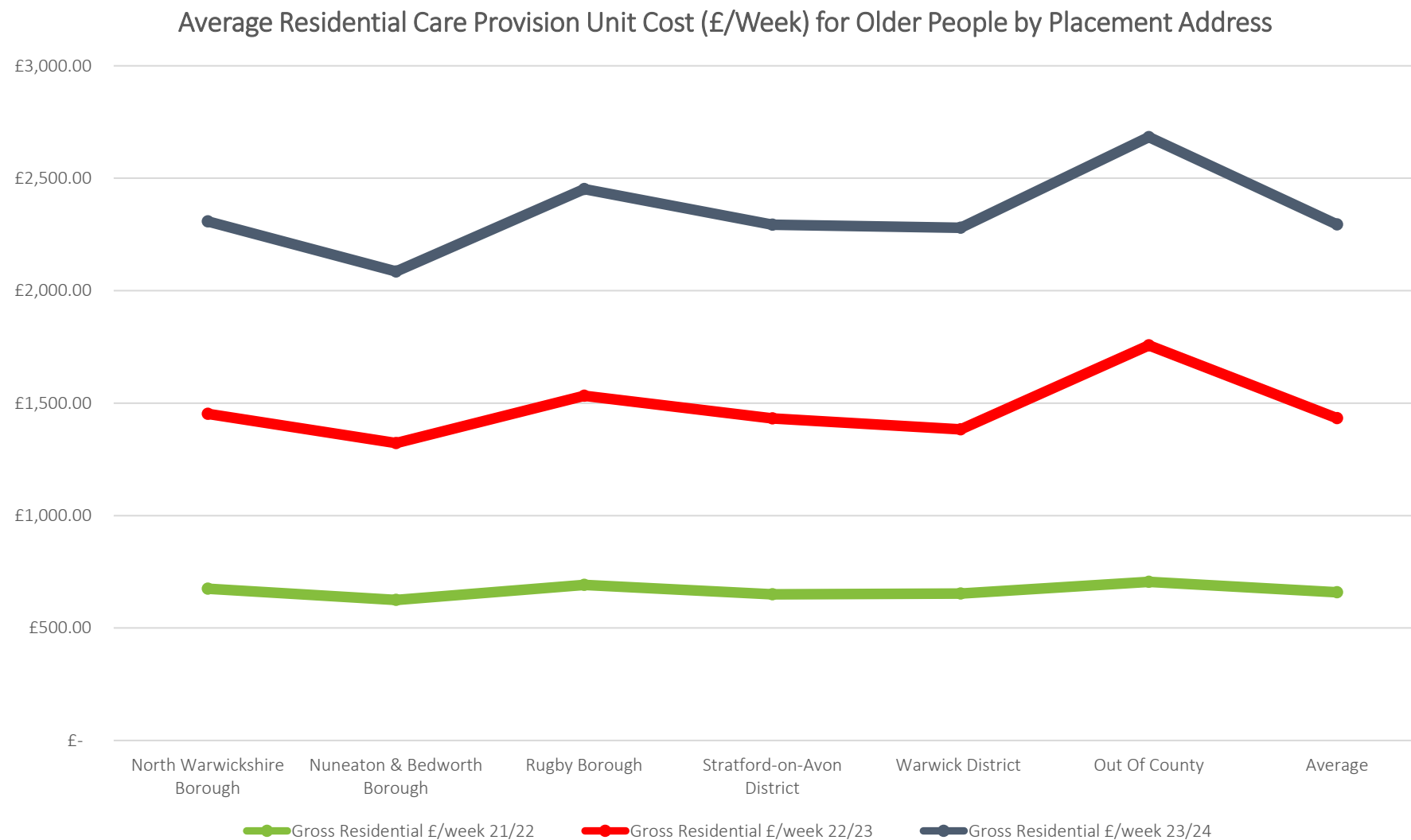


Older People:

- There are 87 providers registered with CQC as providing residential care for older people in 149 locations across Warwickshire, 74% of which are rated as Good and only 3% Outstanding.

Average Residential Care Unit Costs (2021/22 – 2023/24)

Older People (by Placement Address)

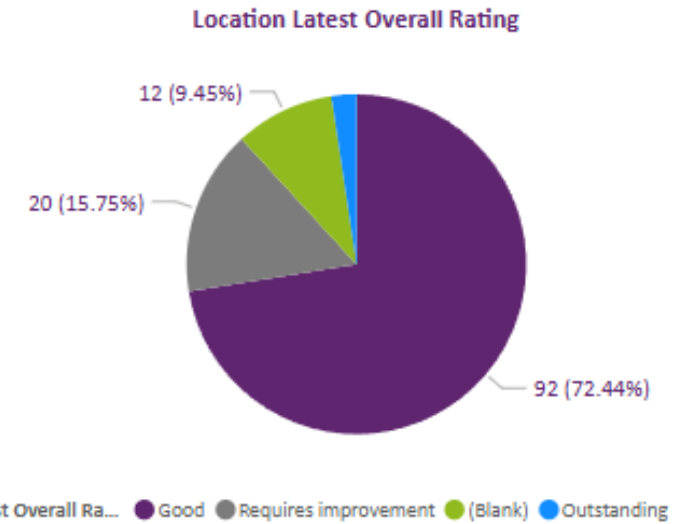
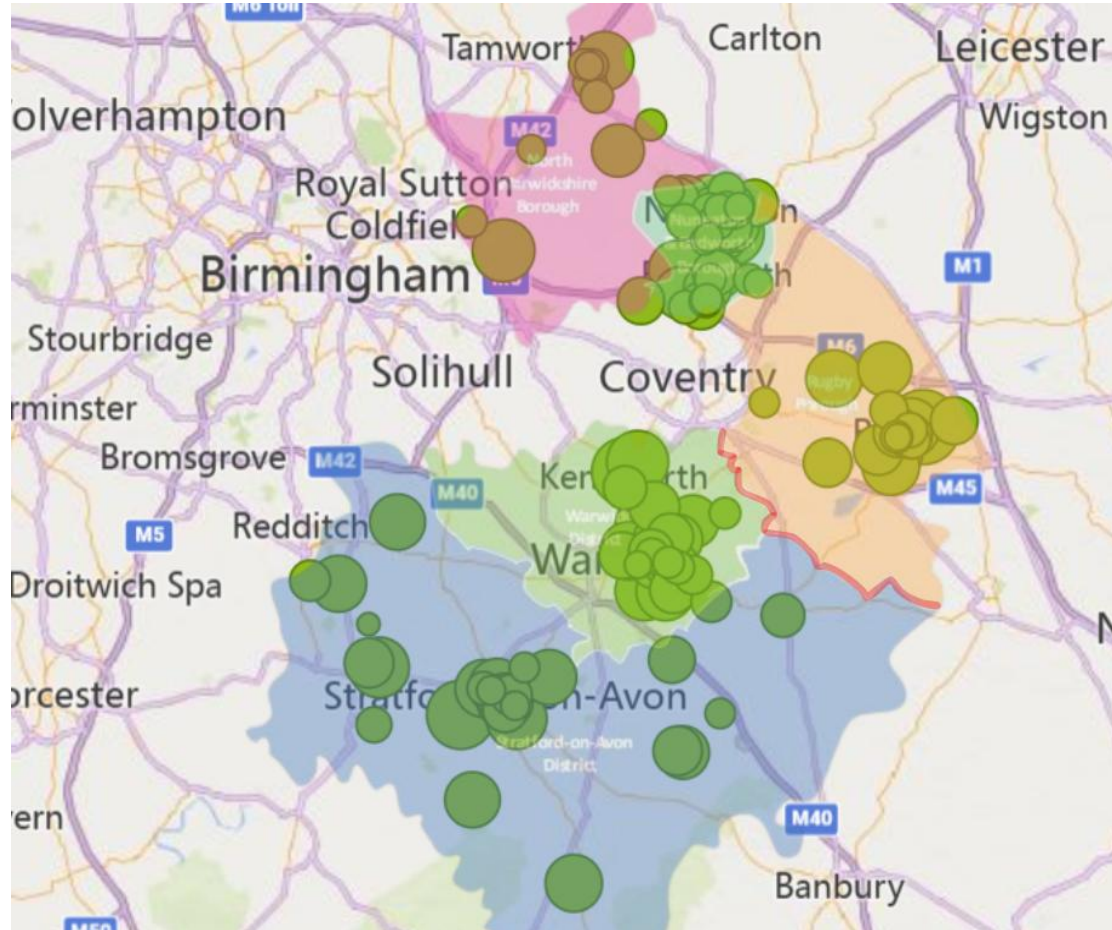


Older People Residential Care:

- Unit costs are higher in Rugby and out of county.
- The data also shows that weekly unit costs have been rising significantly year on year across the County, with the largest increases in 2023/24.

Residential Care Providers

Working Age Adults (18-64)



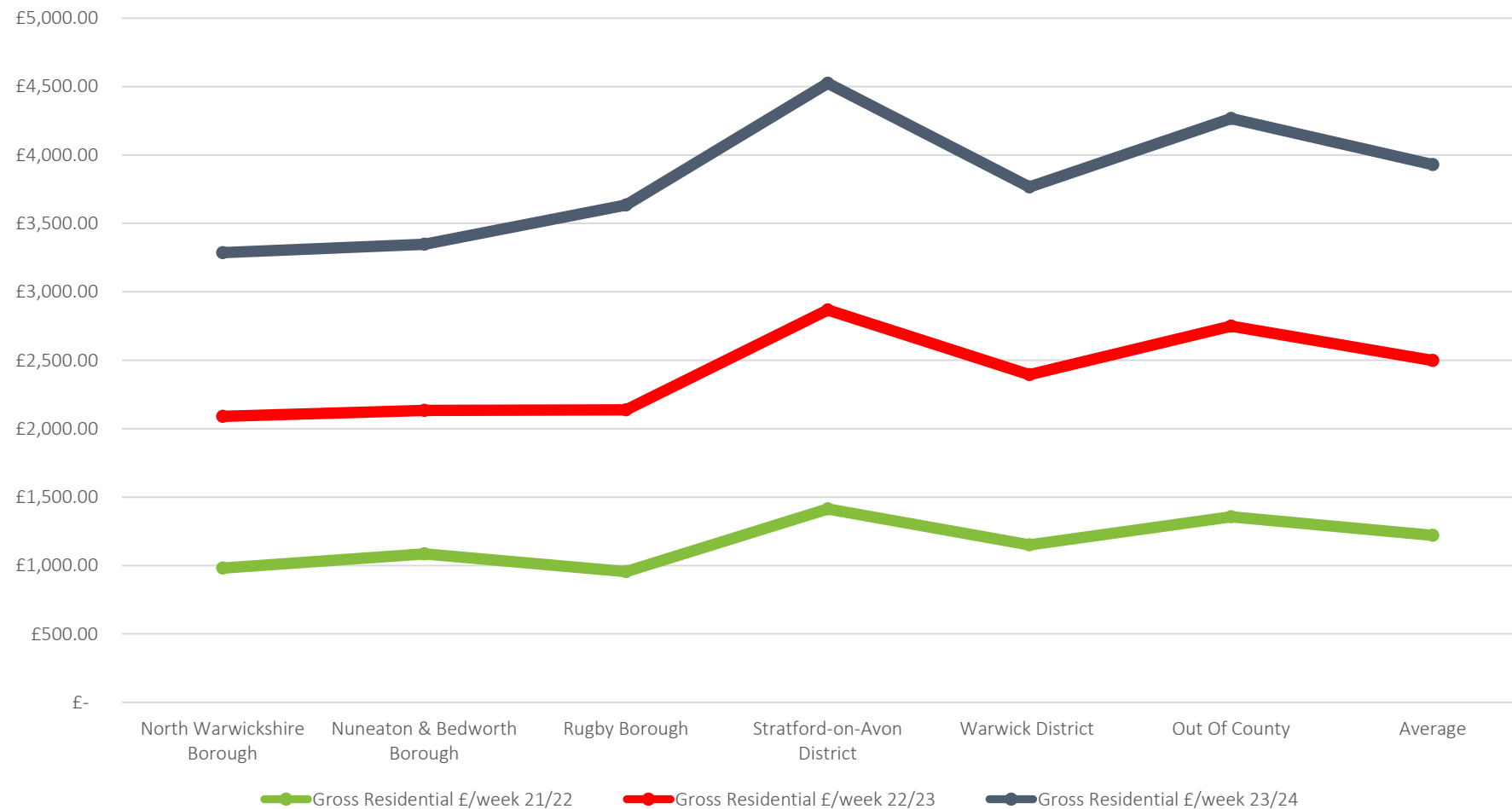
Working Age Adults

- There are 74 providers registered with CQC as providing residential care for working age adults in 127 locations across Warwickshire. 72% of which are rated as Good with only 2.5% Outstanding.

Average Residential Care Unit Costs (2021/22 – 2023/24)

Working Age Adults (by Placement Address)

Average Residential Care Provision Unit Cost (£/Week) for Working Age Adults by Placement Address



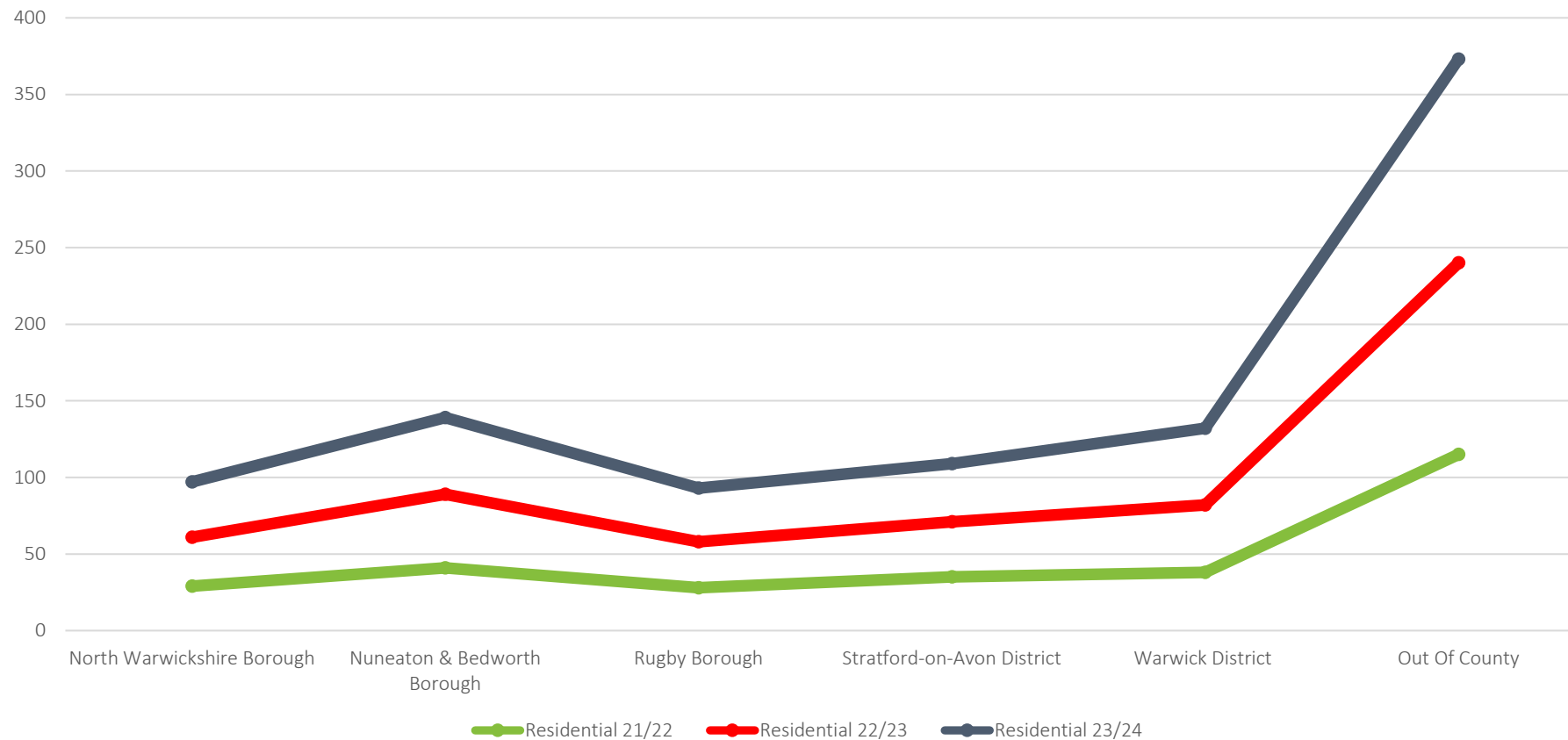
Working Age Adults Residential Care:

- Unit costs vary, the highest being in Stratford on Avon and Out of County.
- The data shows that weekly unit costs have been rising significantly year on year across the County, but with higher increases in 2023/24.

* Data provided by WCC

Clients Accessing Long-Term Residential Care at EOY (2021/22 – 2023/24) – Working Age Adults (by Placement Address)

of Long-Term Residential Care Clients at EOY for Working Age Adults by Placement Address



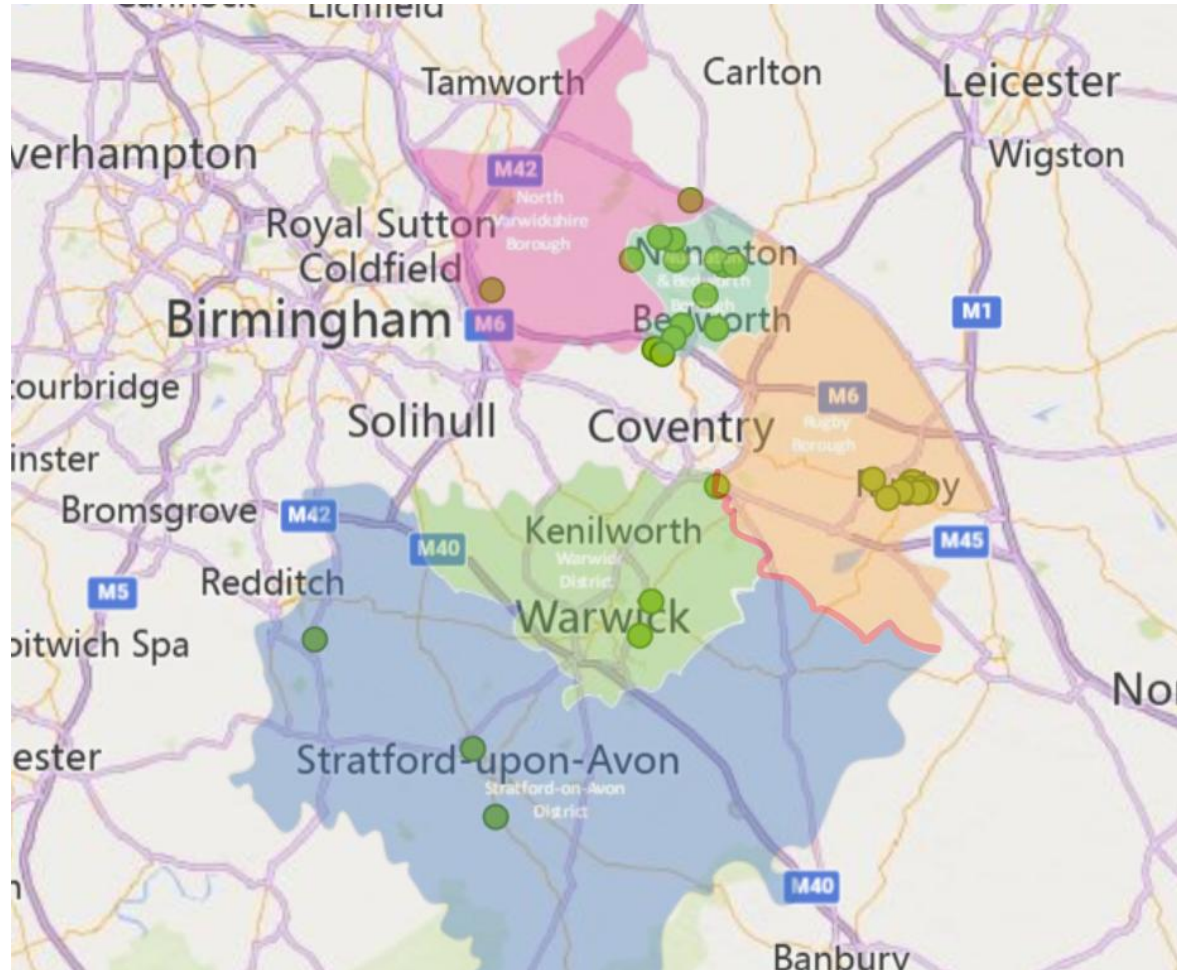
Working Age Adults Residential Care Placements:

- The highest number of working age residential placements are “out of county”, which given there would appear to be capacity in the County, and these are on average higher unit costs than placements in the County, would indicate that currently commissioning of the right quality provision in the County may be challenging.

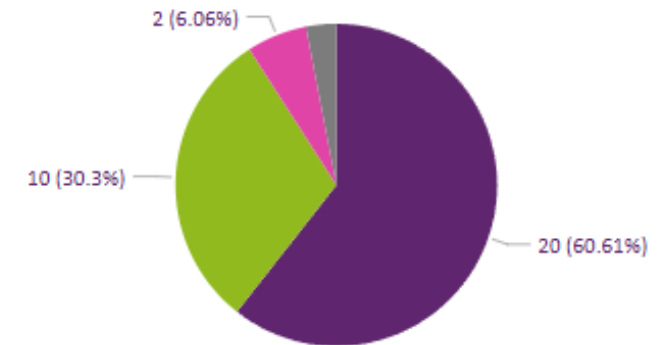
* Data provided by WCC

Supported Living Providers

Working Age Adults (18-64)



Supported Living Location Latest Overall Rating



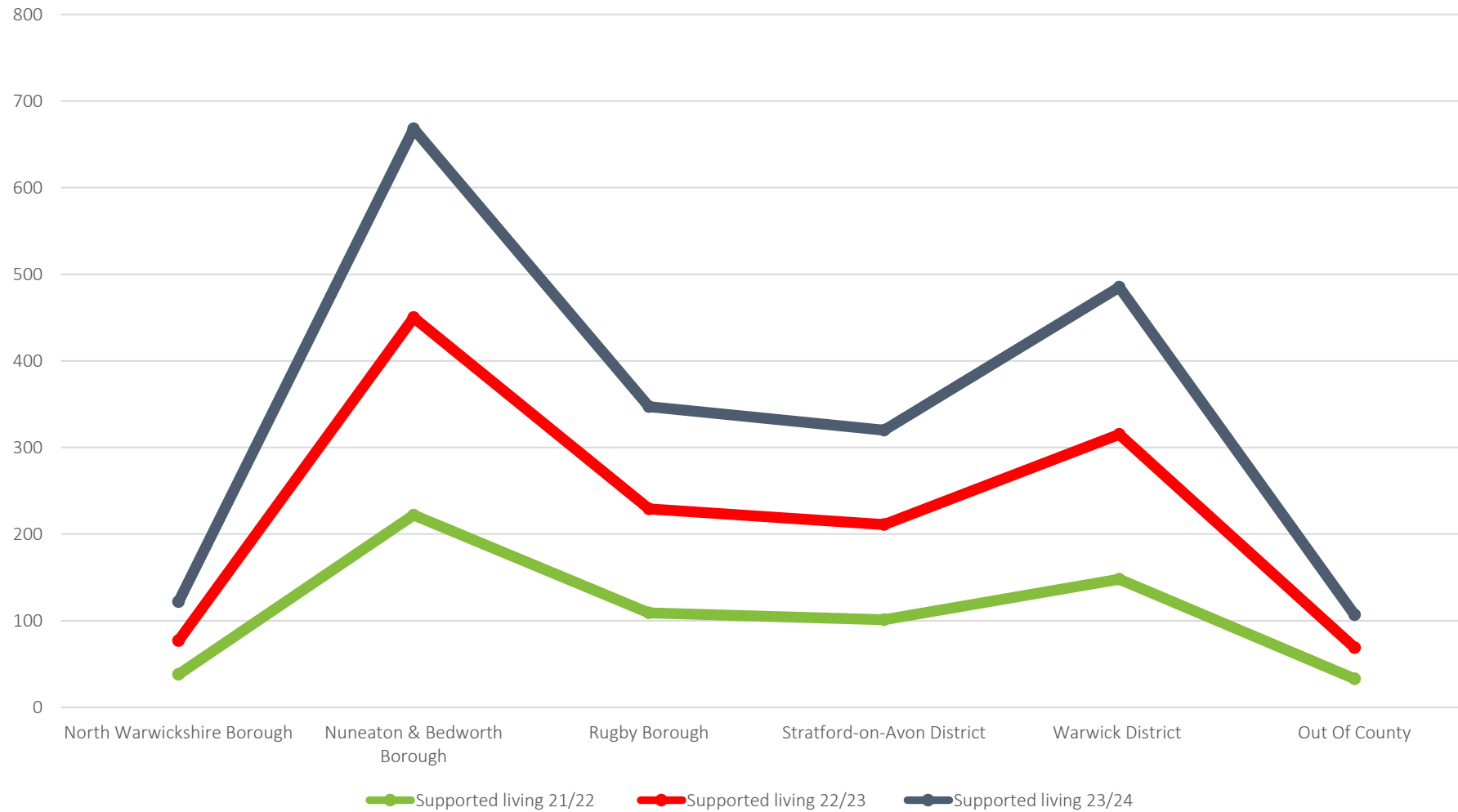
Location Latest Overall Ra... ● Good ● (Blank) ● Not Rated ● Requires improvement

Working Age Adults:

- In relation to Supported Living, there are 30 providers across 33 locations in Warwickshire, the majority of which are located in Nuneaton and Bedworth, with very little provision located in Stratford or Warwick.

Clients Accessing Long-Term Supported Living at EOY (2021/22 – 2023/24) – Working Age Adults (by Home Address)

of Long-Term Supported Living Clients at EOY for Working Age Adults by Home Address



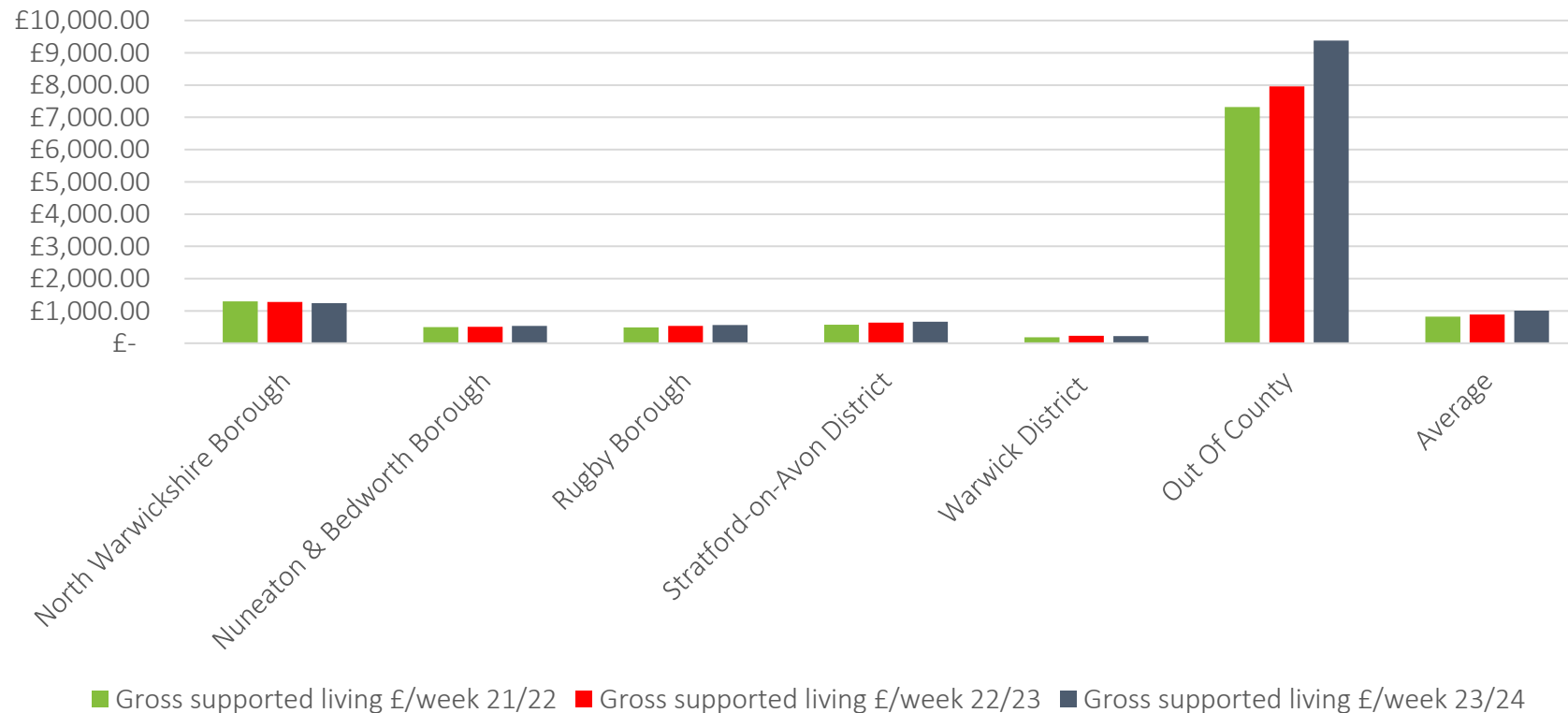
Working Age Adults:

- The highest areas of demand for supported living are Nuneaton & Bedworth and Warwick.

* Data provided by WCC

Average Supported Living Unit Costs (2021/22 – 2023/24) Working Age Adults (by Placement Address)

Average Supported Living Provision Unit Cost (£/Week) for Working Age Adults by Placement Address



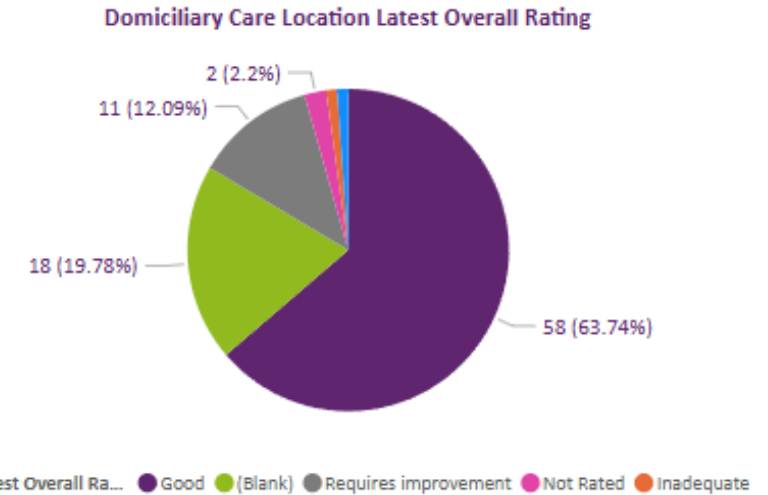
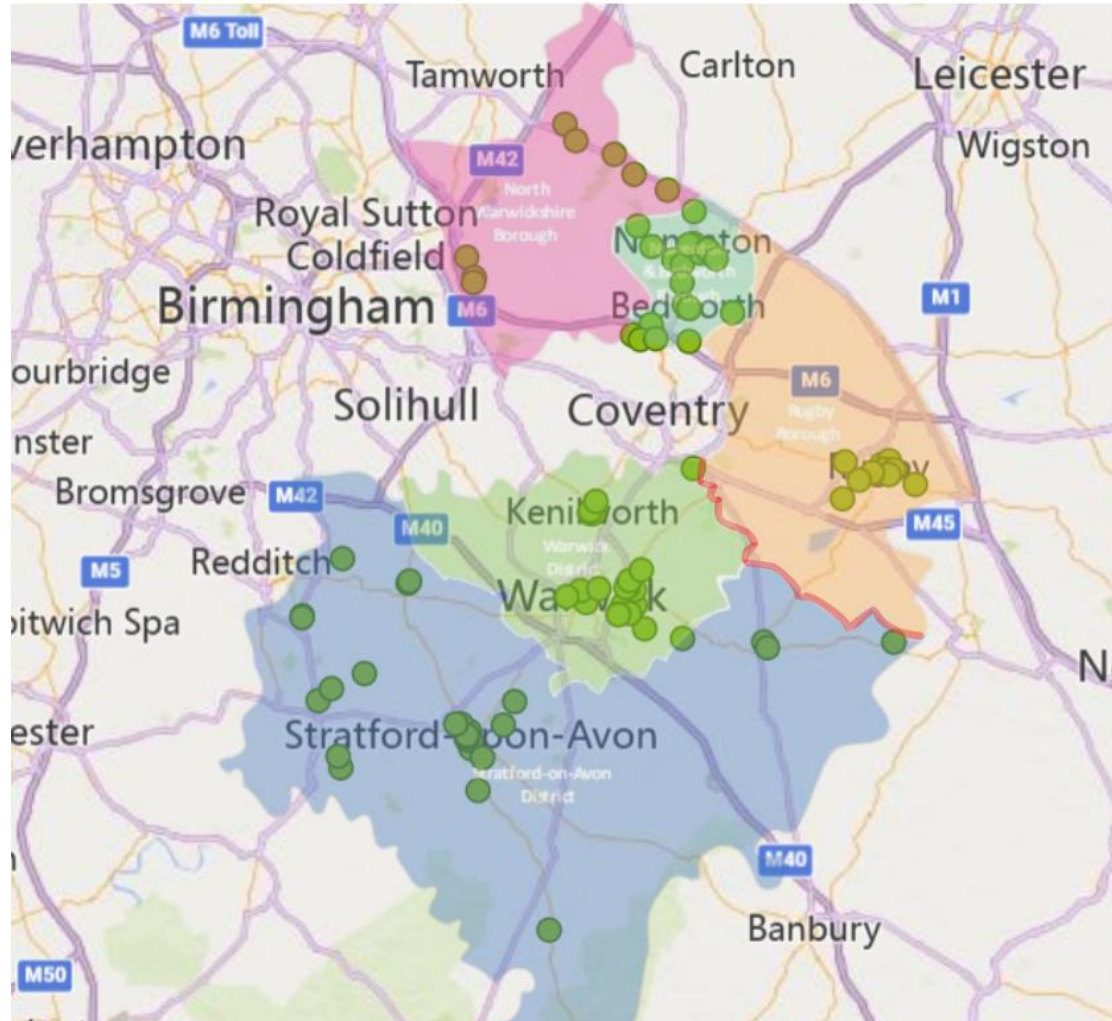
Working Age Adults:

- Unit costs are variable, with the highest rates being out of county, and within county being North Warwickshire. Higher rates in the North are no doubt linked to capacity, with the CQC data identifying only one provider in North Warwickshire.

* Data provided by WCC

Domiciliary Care

Domiciliary Care Providers Older People (65+)

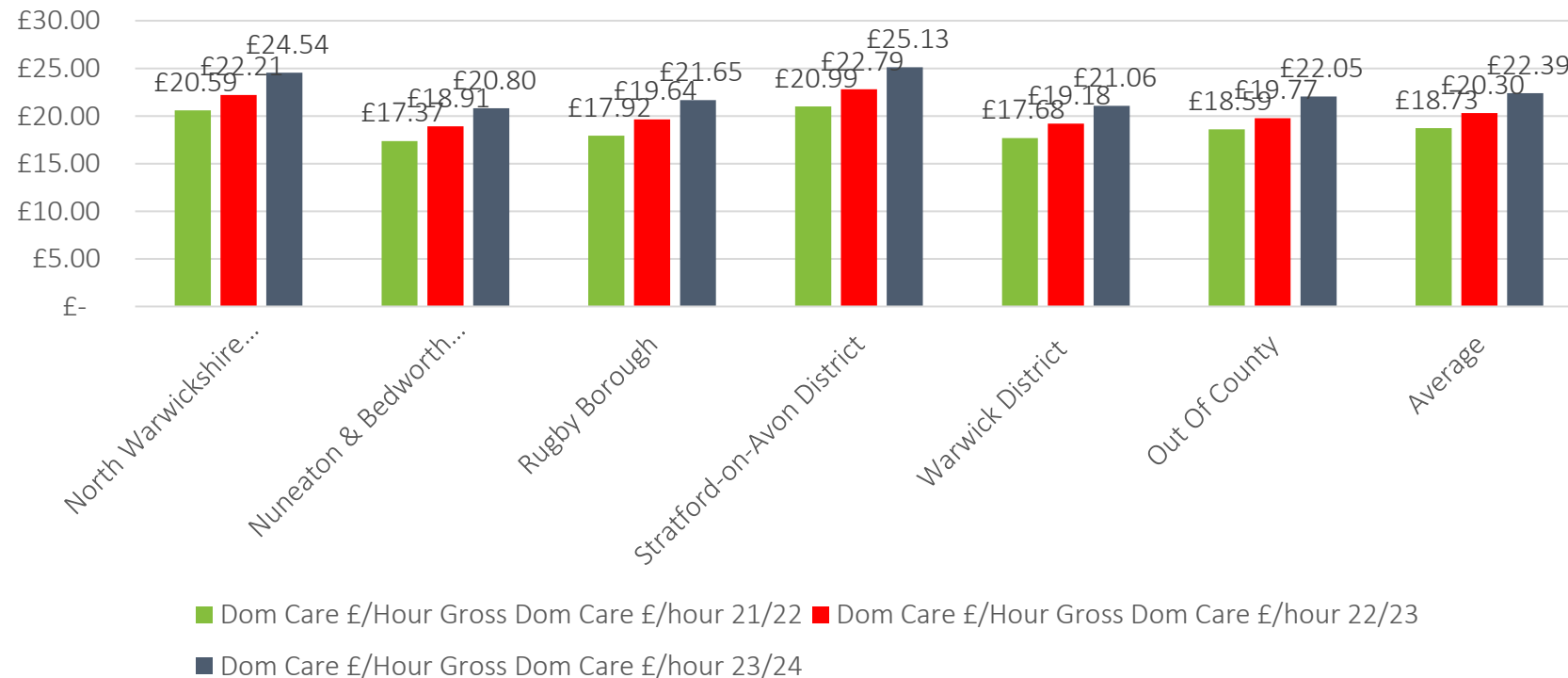


Older People

- There are 84 providers registered with CQC as providing domiciliary care for older people, based in 96 locations across Warwickshire, 64% of which are rated as Good, with very few Outstanding.
- The map indicates that there are fewer providers with office locations in North Warwickshire and Stratford upon Avon, which may impact capacity.

Average Domiciliary Care Unit Costs £ per Hour (2021/22 – 2023/24) – Older People (by Home Address)

Average Domiciliary Care Provision Unit Cost (£/Hour) for Older People by Home Address

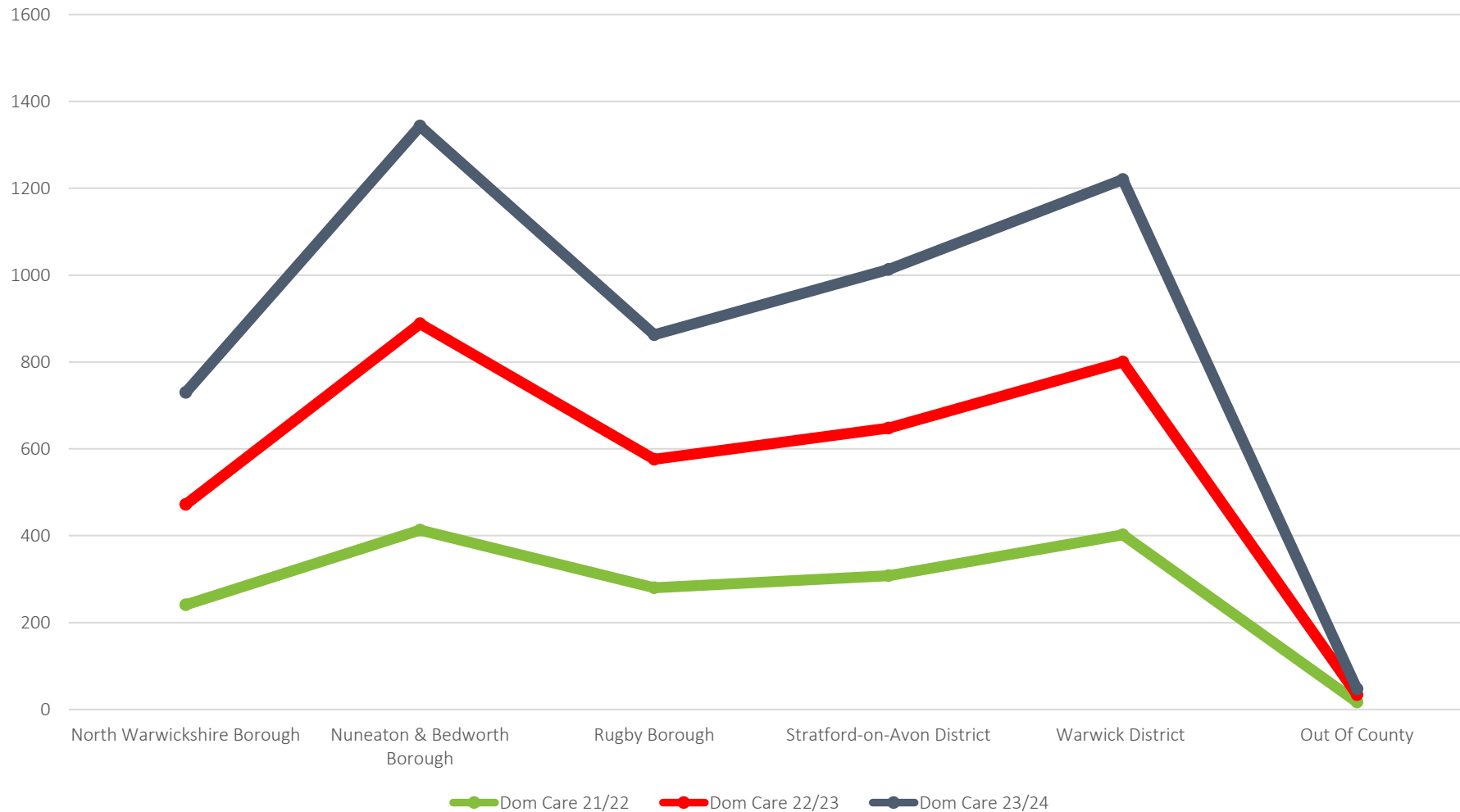


- Rates seem to vary across the County. Unsurprisingly given the amount of potential self funders and challenges with capacity, the highest rate is in Stratford on Avon, which has also seen the steepest increase. The next highest average rate is in North Warwickshire, which again may be due to issues with capacity, but also less demand.

** Data provided by WCC*

Clients Accessing Long-Term Domiciliary Care at End of Year (EOY) (2021/22 – 2023/24) – Older People (by Home Address)

of Long-Term Domiciliary Care Clients at EOY for Older People by Home Address



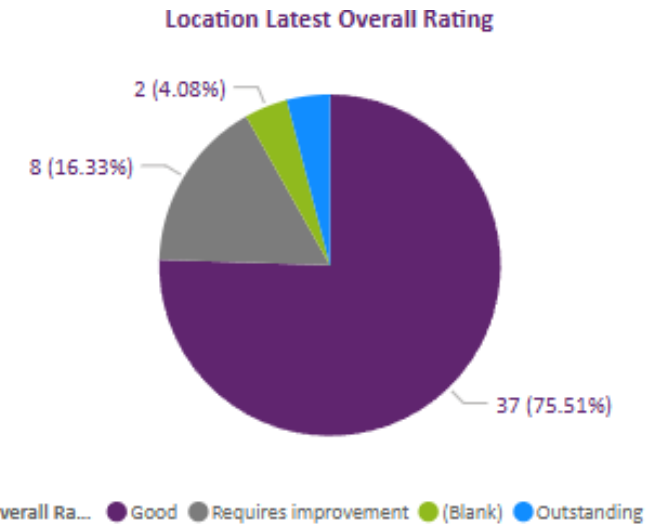
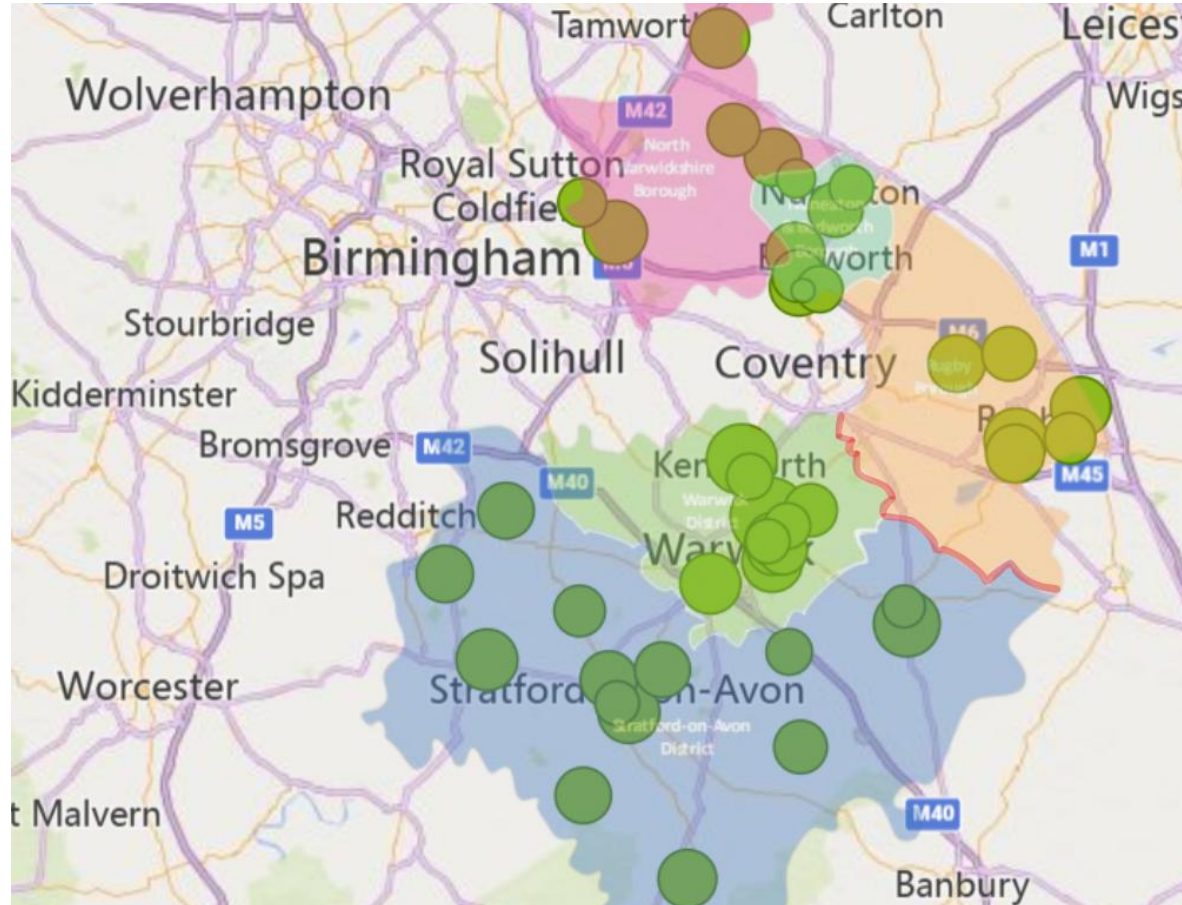
- Given populations sizes and demographics, unsurprisingly the area with the most demand for social care commissioned domiciliary care is Nuneaton & Bedworth, although closely followed by Warwick.

* Data provided by WCC

Nursing Care

Nursing Care Providers

Older People (65+)



Nursing Care Older People

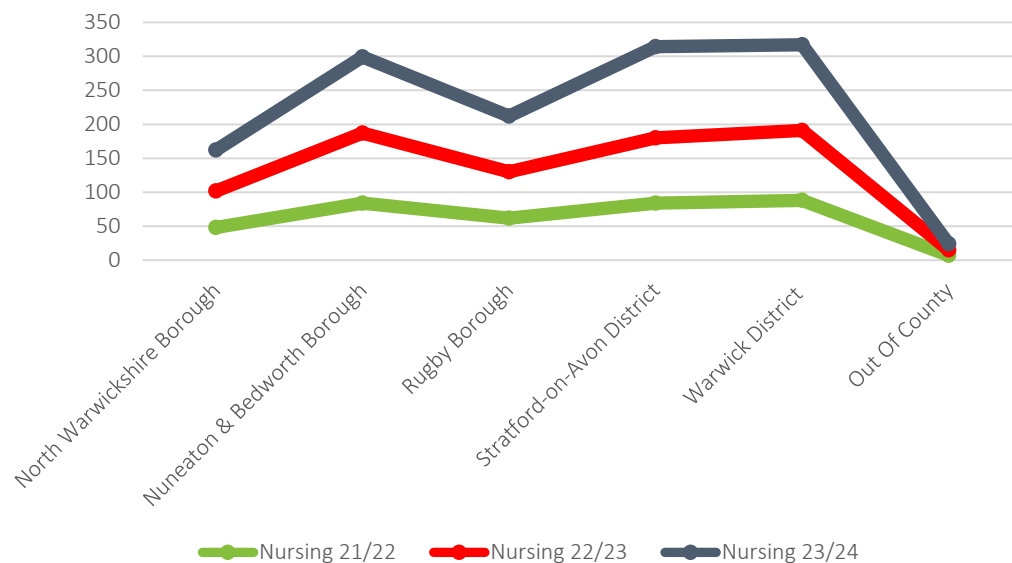
- There are 42 providers registered with CQC as providing nursing care for older people, in 49 locations across Warwickshire, 75% of which are rated as Good.

of Clients Accessing Long-Term Nursing Care at EOY (2021/22 – 2023/24) – Older People (by Home & Placement Address)

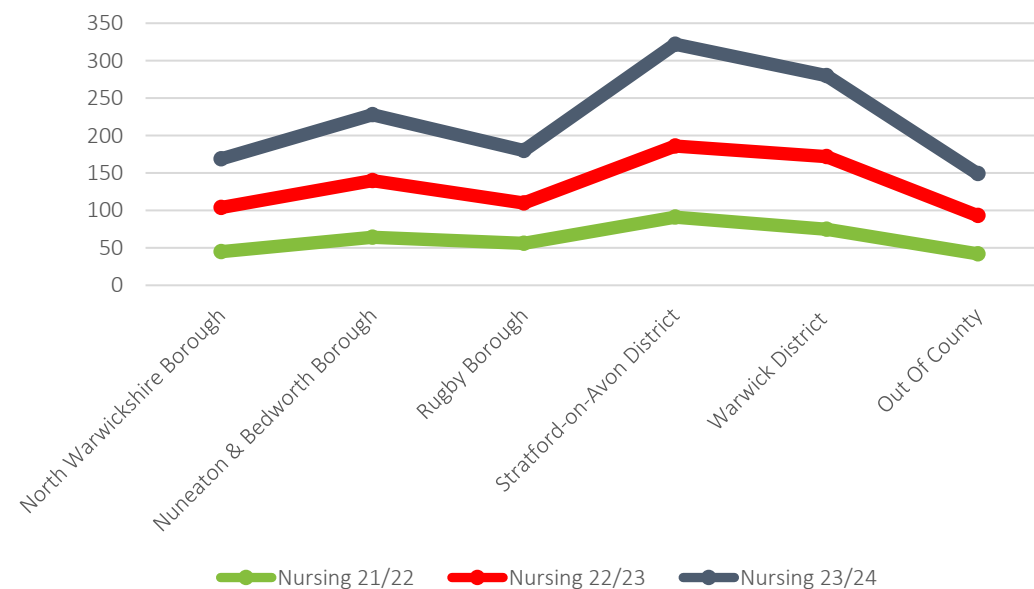
Nursing Care Older People

- Looking at where the demand is for nursing in Warwickshire this would seem to match placements, which would indicate that most people are being placed near to where they live.

of Long-Term Nursing Care Clients at EOY for Older People by Home Address



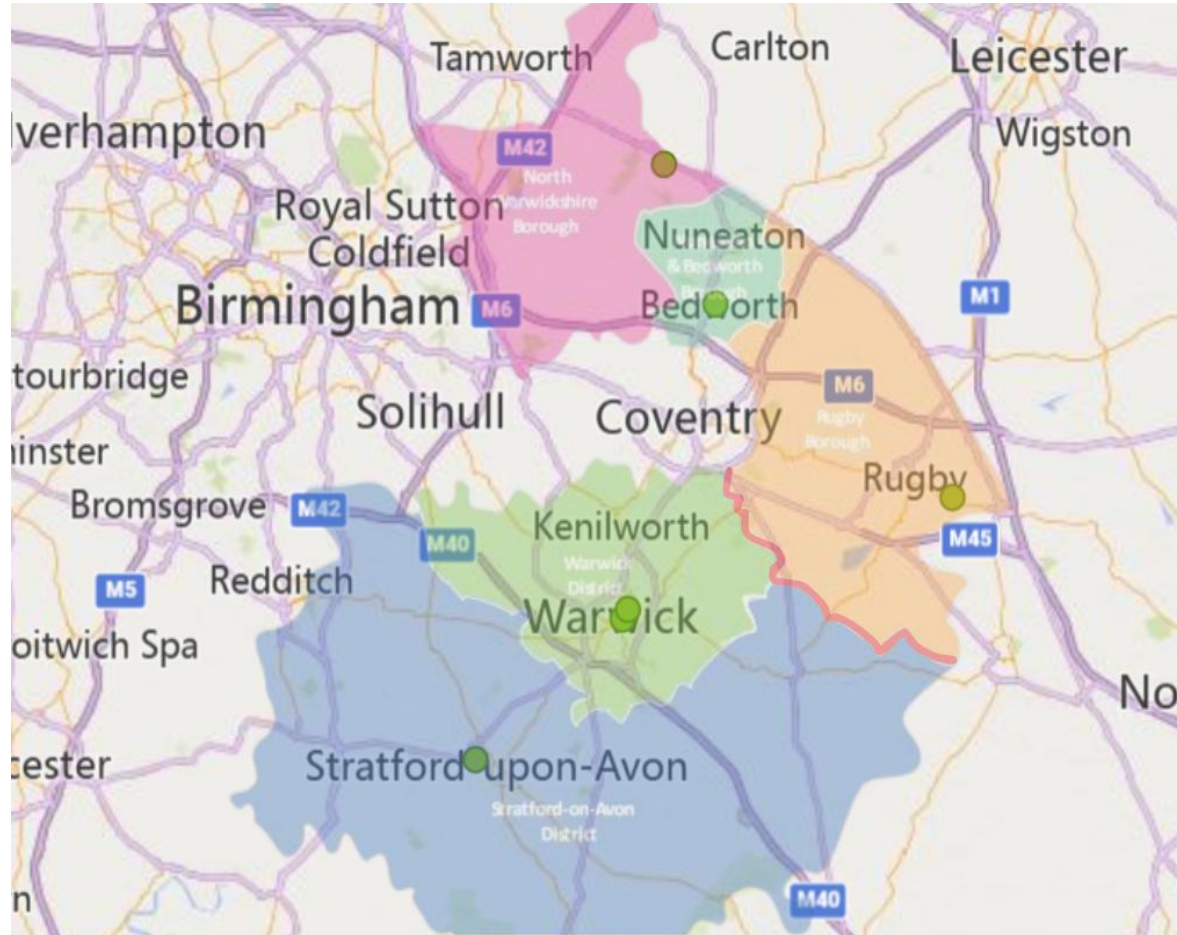
of Long-Term Nursing Care Clients at EOY for Older People by Placement Address



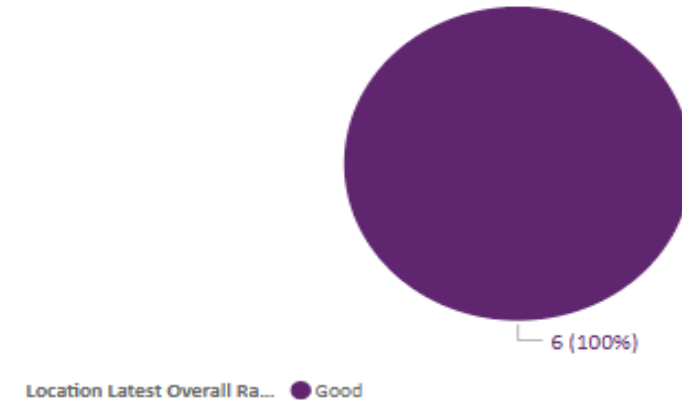
* Data provided by WCC

Extra Care

Extra Care Providers



Extra Care Location Latest Overall Rating



- CQC data would indicate that there is limited Extra Care Provision, across Warwickshire, with only 2 providers across 6 locations registered.
- Extra Care when commissioned and utilised correctly can prevent or delay an older person having to go into residential care, enabling them to remain in their own tenancy, living with their partner, within a community ideally near where they were living.
- This is not only a better outcome for the individual and their families, but also a lower cost, important given the pressure on residential care rates depicted in the previous slide.

4) Financial Case – Achieving Financial Sustainability

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

[Warwickshire County Council approves budget for 2025/26 to support vulnerable residents amid financial challenges – Warwickshire County Council](#)

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy includes significant investment over the next five years in key areas such as:

- £46.8m to support vulnerable adults and elderly citizens, meeting increasing demand and managing placement costs while progressing with the integration of health and social care. Such are the pressures on social care, this allocation is nearly six times higher than the £7.9m funds generated by taking the 2% adult social care precept.
- £8.1m for children's social care services, including £5.5m to address rising costs and demand for children's placements.
- £7.4m in home-to-school transport, ensuring services meet demand, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Permanent Revenue Allocations 2025/26 to 2029/30

Description	2025/26 £'000	Indicative Extra Allocation in Future Years				Total £'000
		2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000	
Price inflation - An allocation to meet the cost of price increases across the Service.	3,308	3,375	3,442	3,511	3,580	17,216
Cost of care (General) - An allocation to manage the additional cost of care.	1,700	1,693	1,799	1,835	0	7,027
Cost of care (National Living Wage) - An allocation to manage the additional cost of inflation, mainly reflecting the impact of the increase in the National Living Wage.	9,442	422	430	439	448	11,181
Cost of care (Employer NICs) - An allocation to manage the additional cost of inflation, mainly reflecting the impact of the increase in the Employer National Insurance Contributions.	6,023	0	0	0	0	6,023
Ongoing impact of Adult Social Care Demand from 24/25 - An allocation to rightsize the recurring Adult Social Care budget as a result of pressures arising in 2024/25 which are expected to continue into future years.	15,067	0	0	0	0	15,067
Future Adult Social Care demand - An allocation to meet the cost of increased demand due to population growth, the length and intensity of care need as a result of increased life expectancy and the estimated reduction in people who can fund their own care.	11,309	13,164	13,987	14,854	15,764	69,078
Social Care and Support sub-total	46,849	18,654	19,658	20,639	19,792	125,592
Social Care & Health Directorate	47,794	19,210	20,225	21,217	20,381	128,827

/26 to 2029/30

Description	Type	Annual Saving					Total Saving £'000
		2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000	
Further decommissioning of the housing related support service offer.	Service Reduction	(1,000)	0	0	0	0	(1,000)
of additional 5% vacancy factor/turnover allowance and increasing commissioning roles.	Right-sizing	(175)	0	(160)	(160)	(75)	(570)
ment Partnership - Increase income through the approach to development offer.	Income Generation	0	0	(55)	0	0	(55)
ment Partnership - reduction in the contribution from WCC to this service.	Right-sizing	0	(40)	0	0	0	(40)
Director's budget - restructure of responsibilities within commissioning, which has released savings within the budget during 2024/25.	Right-sizing	(83)	0	0	0	0	(83)
Health and Care Commissioning for People sub-total		(1,308)	(80)	(265)	(220)	(75)	(1,948)
Management of cost of adults service provision - Management of the budgeted cost increases of externally commissioned care.	Demand Management	(1,000)	(1,064)	0	0	0	(2,064)
Prevention and self-care - Deliver a prevention and self care strategy implementing the service change and transformation activities underway across adult social care, including an improved early intervention and prevention offer, further refinement of the in-house reablement offer, further development of assistive technology and investment in programmes, projects and services that reduce people's reliance on care and support.	Demand Management	(935)	0	0	0	0	(935)
Integrated commissioning with Health - Efficiencies through joint working and increased purchasing power for externally commissioned care. Arrangements will form part of the Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Health and Care Partnership and associated system plan.	Service redesign	(267)	0	0	0	0	(267)
Management of care demand - Rephasing the demand and cost pressures for adults social care based on expected growth as informed by national and local data.	Demand Management	(1,622)	(2,072)	(5,222)	(5,756)	0	(14,672)
Income to offset against Adult Social Care demand 25/26 - Increase in customer contributions through the increase in inflation and growth in the number of people supported, the calculation is based on 28.9% of additional spend	Income Generation	(8,694)	(4,902)	(5,161)	(5,434)	(5,720)	(29,911)
Social Care and Support sub-total		(12,518)	(8,038)	(10,383)	(11,190)	(5,720)	(47,849)
Social Care and Health Directorate		(14,185)	(8,573)	(11,131)	(11,564)	(5,891)	(51,344)
Vacancy factor - Application of a 2% vacancy factor/turnover allowance where not already applied.	Right-sizing	(25)	0	0	0	0	(25)

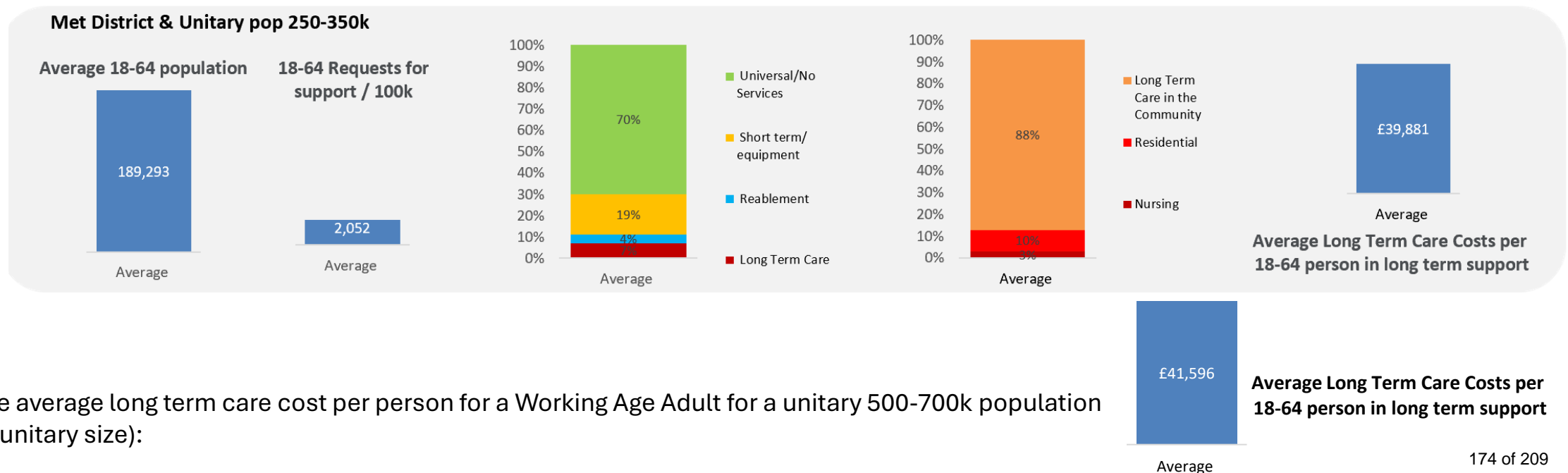
- If further transformation work is not undertaken to reduce both demand and cost over an above that already identified of which £29m is based on increased client contributions, the budget gap in ASC and Support will be £77.4m by 2030.

Adult Social Care Expenditure – Working Age Adults

In summary **ASC does present some real opportunities** to drive down cost and demand from a more localised approach. The long term cost per person for those in receipt of ASC services are higher than their nearest NHS neighbour for 18-64 year olds, and considerably higher than the average unitary and those with a population of 250-350k, which would be the population banding for the two proposed unitaries in Warwickshire, North Unitary - 313,600 and South Unitary – 283,200.

Source of data ASCFR '23/'24:

18-64 long term care cost per person for Warwickshire CC £49,802 (nearest NHS neighbour £45,750) average unitary population 250k-350k £39,881, numbers in receipt of LTS at the end of the year in Warwickshire CC (1895 x £9921 (difference WCC £49,802 and average unitary 250-350 £39,881) = **£18.8m gross cost reduction if expenditure was brought in line with an average unitary with a population of 250k to 350k**



*Note average long term care cost per person for a Working Age Adult for a unitary 500-700k population (one unitary size):

* Gross Current Expenditure on long term care (ASCFR tables 43 and 44: Gross Current Expenditure on long term care for clients by support setting, 2023-24)

Adult Social Care Expenditure - Older People

Older People 65+ long term care cost per person £33,996 (NHS nearest neighbour £32,065) average unitary population 250k-350k £27,144, numbers in receipt at the end of the year 3765 x £6852 (difference WCC £33,996 and average unitary 250k-350k £27,144) = **£25.8m gross cost reduction if expenditure was brought in line with an average unitary with a population of 250k to 350k**

Met District & Unitary pop 250-350k

Average 65+ population

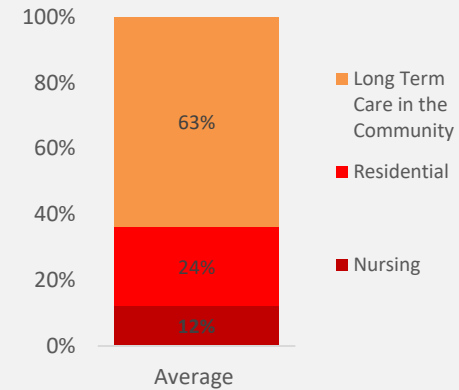
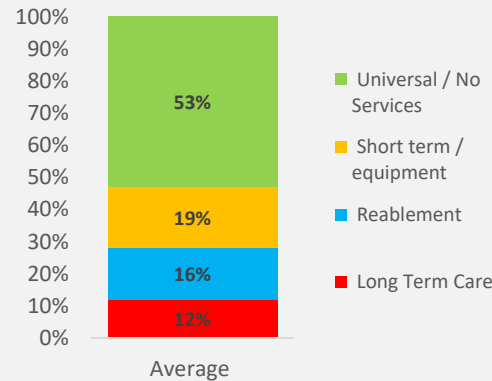


Average

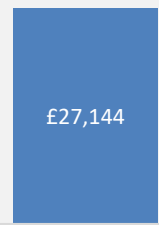
65+ Requests for support / 100k



Average



Average Long Term Care Costs per 65+ person in long term support



Average

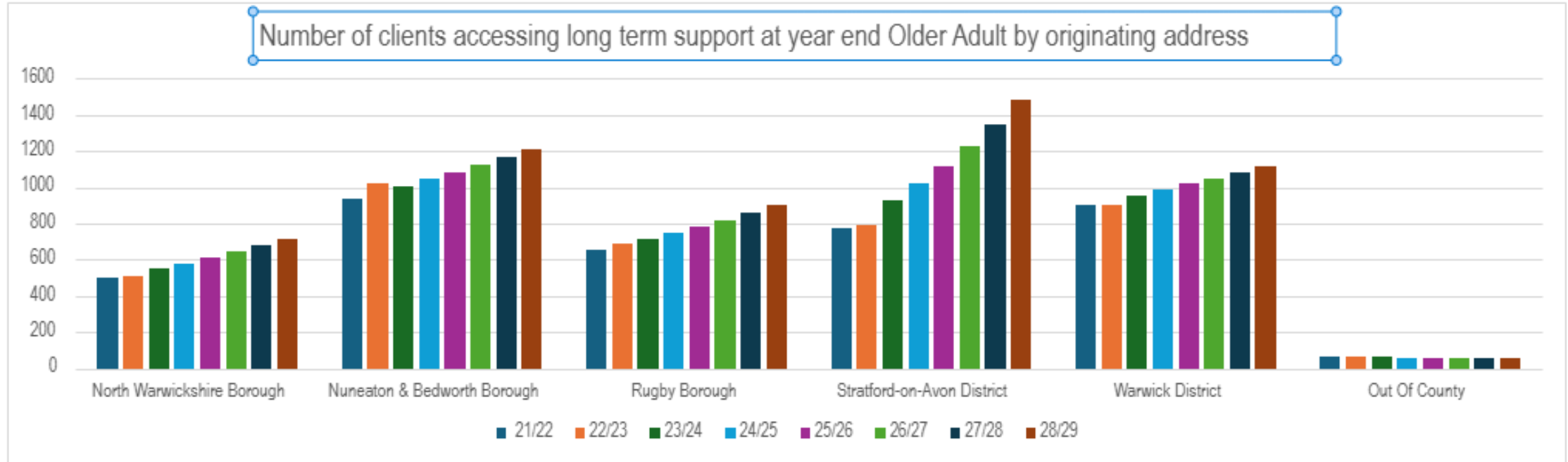
*Note average long term care cost per person OP 65+ for a unitary 500-700k population one unitary size:



Average

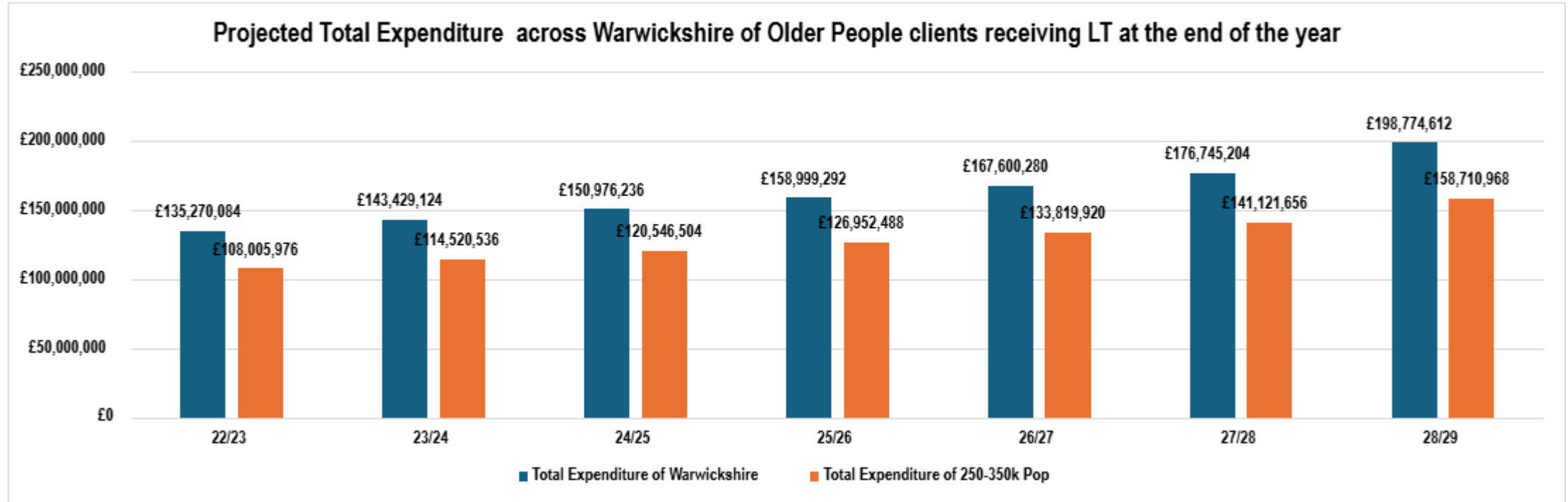
Average Long Term Care Costs per 65+ person in long term support

Older People Demand Projections – ASC by District



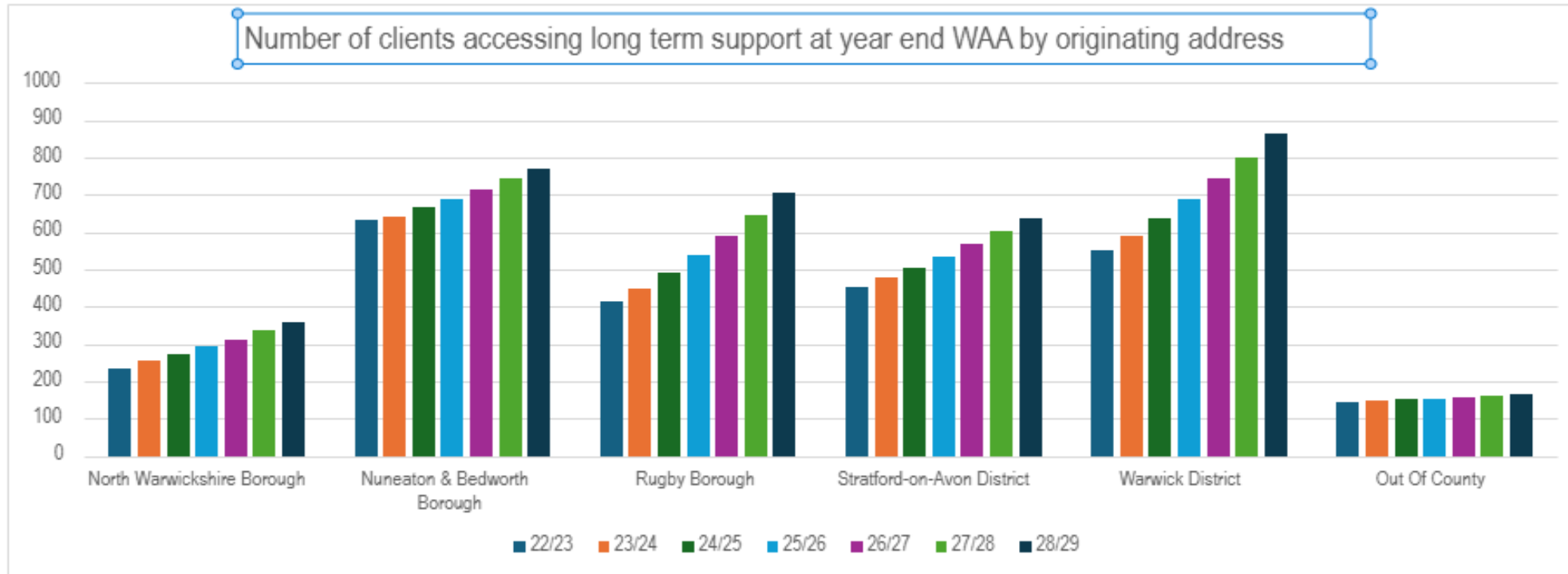
- Peopletoo have used historic data provided by WCC to model demand for Older People (OP) accessing Long Term Support (LTS) through to 2028-29.

Projected Total Expenditure on Older People Long Term Support



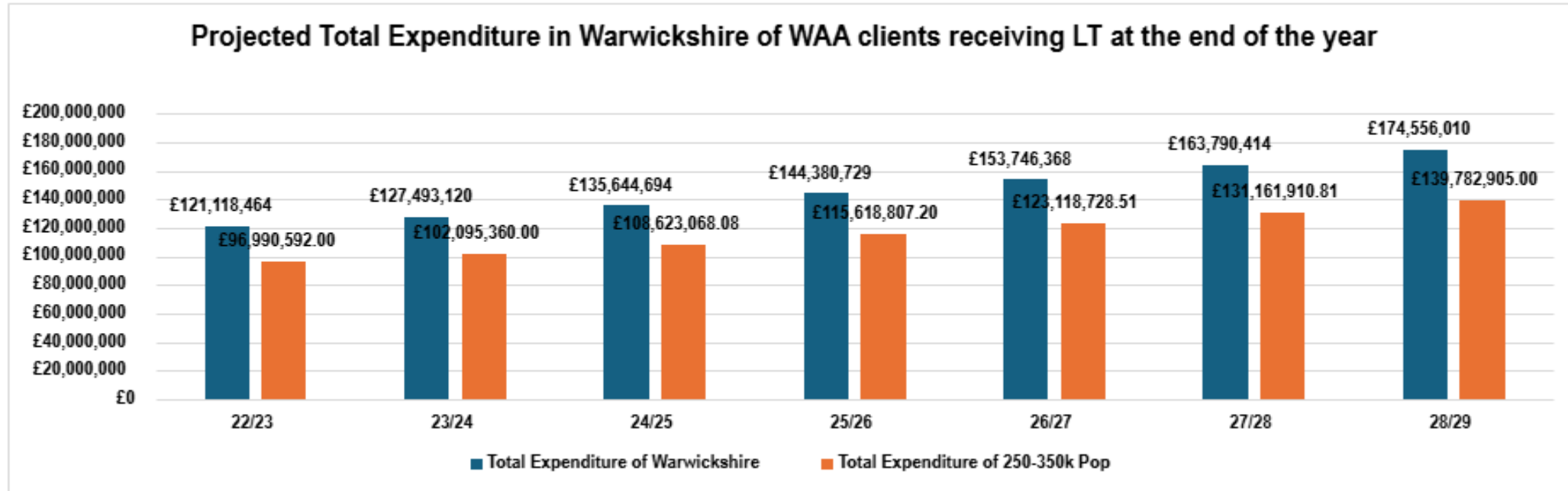
- Using the projections from the previous slide, Peopletoo have calculated the annual expenditure on Long Term Support (LTS) not allowing for inflation, using current WCC average spend on LTS for Older People (OP), compared to the average expenditure on LTS for OP for a unitary with a population of 250-350k.
- By the time the new unitaries potentially go Live in April 2028, WCC (excl. increases in inflation and significant changes in demand), will potentially be spending £198.7m on LTS for OP. Whilst a new unitary which has undertaken key activities in line with those outlined in this report in preparation for go live, would be look to be spending £158.7m, **a difference of £40m** for that financial year.

Working Age Adults Demand Projections – ASC by District



- Peopletoo have used historic data provided by WCC to model demand for Working Age Adults accessing Long Term Support through to 2028-29.

Projected Total Expenditure on Older People Long Term Support



- Using the projections from the previous slide, Peopletoo have calculated the annual expenditure on LTS (not allowing for inflation), using current WCC average spend on LTS for Working Age Adults (WAA), compared to the average expenditure on LTS for WAA for a unitary with a population of 250-350k.
- By the time the new unitaries potentially go Live in April 2028, WCC (excl increases in inflation and significant changes in demand), will potentially be spending £174.5m on LTS for WAA. Whilst a new unitary which has undertaken key activities in line with those outlined in this report in preparation for go live, would be look to be spending £139.7m, **a difference of £34.8m** for that financial year.

Warwickshire CC Medium Term Financial Plan Children's Social Care



Budget Reductions 2025/26 to 2029/30

Description	Type	Annual Saving					Total
		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	Saving
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Reduce spend on residential care - Reduce the cost of care/services including the increased use of our internal children's homes, boarding schools, increasing number of internal foster carers and residential schools, to achieve better outcomes while reducing cost through more local and cost-effective placements.	Better Procurement	(1,000)	(100)	(1,381)	(1,831)	(1,642)	(5,954)
Grant income - More effective use of grant income to support the core activity of the service and contribute to the service overheads.	Income Generation	(100)	0	0	0	0	(100)
Third-party contributions - Maximise contributions from other agencies for care packages for children in care.	Income Generation	(300)	(200)	0	0	0	(500)
House project - Reduce the cost of 16 plus supported accommodation through the expansion of the House project, delivering financial benefits through this innovative approach.	Service redesign	0	(100)	0	(200)	0	(300)
Reduction in staff costs - Reduction in workforce costs following the implementation of the Families First Programme, including staffing, training and development costs over a three year period.	Service redesign	(53)	(1,126)	(656)	0	0	(1,835)
Youth and Community Centres - Increase income from third party use of centres.	Income Generation	0	(20)	(50)	(50)	0	(120)
Children & Families Building Maintenance - Zero base the budget after meeting current commitments.	Right-sizing	0	(103)	0	0	0	(103)
Director Budget - Rightsizing of budget following zero-based review and reset of Director's budget.	Right-sizing	(139)	0	0	0	0	(139)
Children & Family Centres - strategic review and repurposing of provision of Children and Families centres including through synergies with libraries and other council services/buildings where appropriate.	Service Reduction	0	0	0	(900)	0	(900)
Children and Families sub-total		(1,592)	(1,649)	(2,087)	(2,981)	(1,642)	(9,951)

- The current Medium Term Financial Plan identifies efficiencies within Children's Social Care (CSC) of £10.2m, the majority of which is modelled around savings on residential costs and staffing reductions.

		Annual Saving					Total
		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	Saving
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	ment	(10)	0	0	0	0	(10)
	izing	(50)	0	0	0	0	(50)
	Service redesign	(14)	(35)	0	0	0	(49)
	Better procurement	0	(70)	0	0	0	(70)
	Better procurement	(49)	0	0	0	0	(49)
	Service redesign	(96)	0	0	0	0	(96)
	Right-sizing	(10)	0	0	0	0	(10)
	Education sub-total	(229)	(105)	0	0	0	(334)
	Children and Young People Directorate	(1,821)	(1,754)	(2,087)	(2,981)	(1,642)	(10,285)

Team Restructure - Permanent Saving within the Education Sufficiency and Capital Team	Service redesign	(14)	(35)	0	0	0	(49)
Savings to third party contract - Improved Value for Money through benefits of re-procurement with a reduction in contract value	Better procurement	0	(70)	0	0	0	(70)
SEND Mediation - Retender of mediation to reduce costs	Better procurement	(49)	0	0	0	0	(49)
Director Budget - Rightsizing of budget following zero-based review and reset of Director's budget.	Service redesign	(96)	0	0	0	0	(96)
Legal Fees - Overall reduction in use of internal Legal services.	Right-sizing	(10)	0	0	0	0	(10)
	Education sub-total	(229)	(105)	0	0	0	(334)
	Children and Young People Directorate	(1,821)	(1,754)	(2,087)	(2,981)	(1,642)	(10,285)

MTFP Children's Social Care

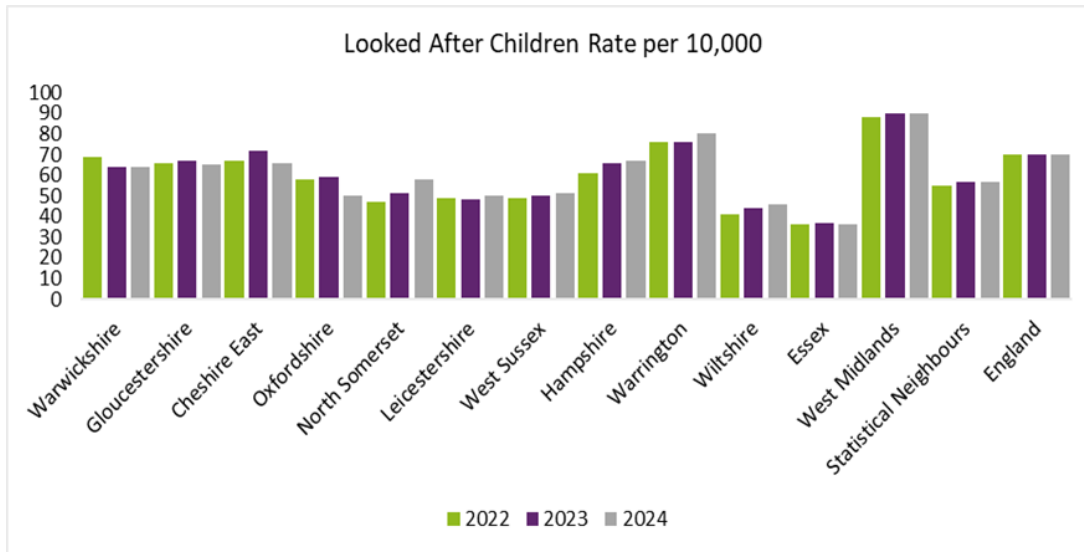
Permanent Revenue Allocations 2025/26 to 2029/30

Description	Indicative Extra Allocation in Future Years					Total £'000
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Price inflation - An allocation to meet the cost of net price inflation across the Service.	1,356	1,383	1,411	1,440	1,469	7,059
Child allowances demand - An allocation to meet the increased demand for specialist care orders to support children to leave or avoid care through allowances for extended family members caring for children.	38	69	40	58	44	249
Children's placements (exc. children with disabilities) - An allocation to meet the impact of fostering/placements framework contracts and changes to the placement mix on costs.	5,478	155	159	944	974	7,710
Direct Payments - Increase above the normal 2% pay inflation to account for the increase in Employer National Insurance and the National Living Wage	122	0	0	0	0	122
Third Party Providers - Increase in costs of care due to impact of National Living Wage and Employer National Insurance on third party providers	740	0	0	0	0	740
Children and family centres - An allocation to meet the shortfall in funding to deliver the current service offer as a result of inflationary increases in costs	400	0	0	0	0	400
Children and Families sub-total	8,134	1,607	1,610	2,442	2,487	16,280
Price inflation - An allocation to meet the cost of net price inflation across the Service.	36	37	38	39	40	190
Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review Service (SENDAR) - Staffing - Additional permanent cost due to inflation over and above corporate inflation provision	685	229	0	0	0	914
Education sub-total	721	266	38	39	40	1,104
Children & Young People Directorate	8,855	1,873	1,648	2,481	2,527	17,384

- If further transformation work is not undertaken to reduce both demand and cost over an above that already identified, the budget gap in CSC and Support will be £7m over the 5 years.
- This is coupled with the DSG forecast cumulative deficit by 31 March 2026 of £151.7m.

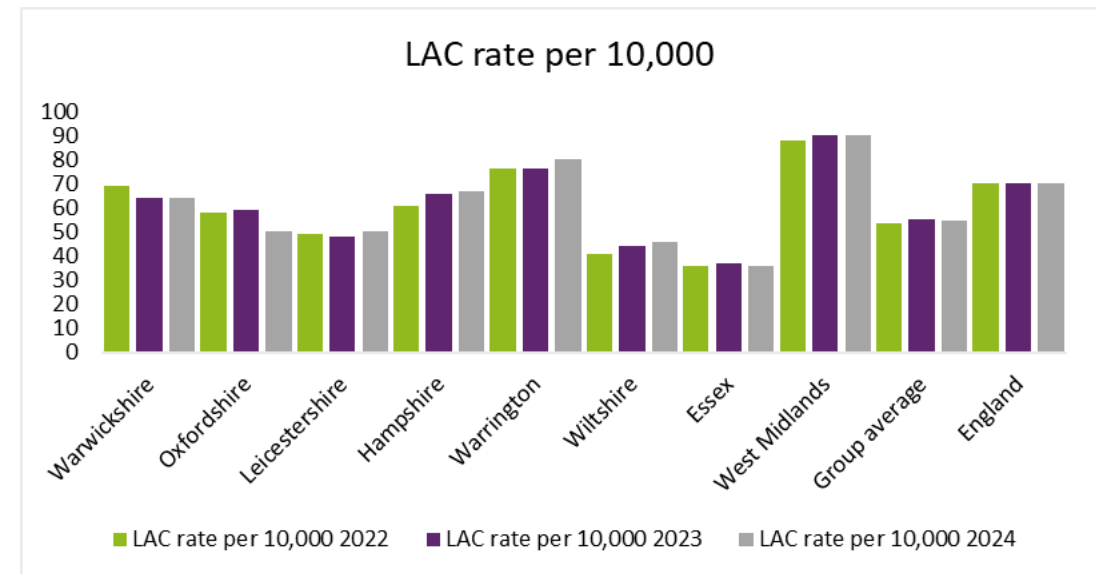
Children's Social Care

Children's Social Care has an Ofsted rating of "Good" following a full inspection Feb '22 and further endorsed at Focused Visit May '23.



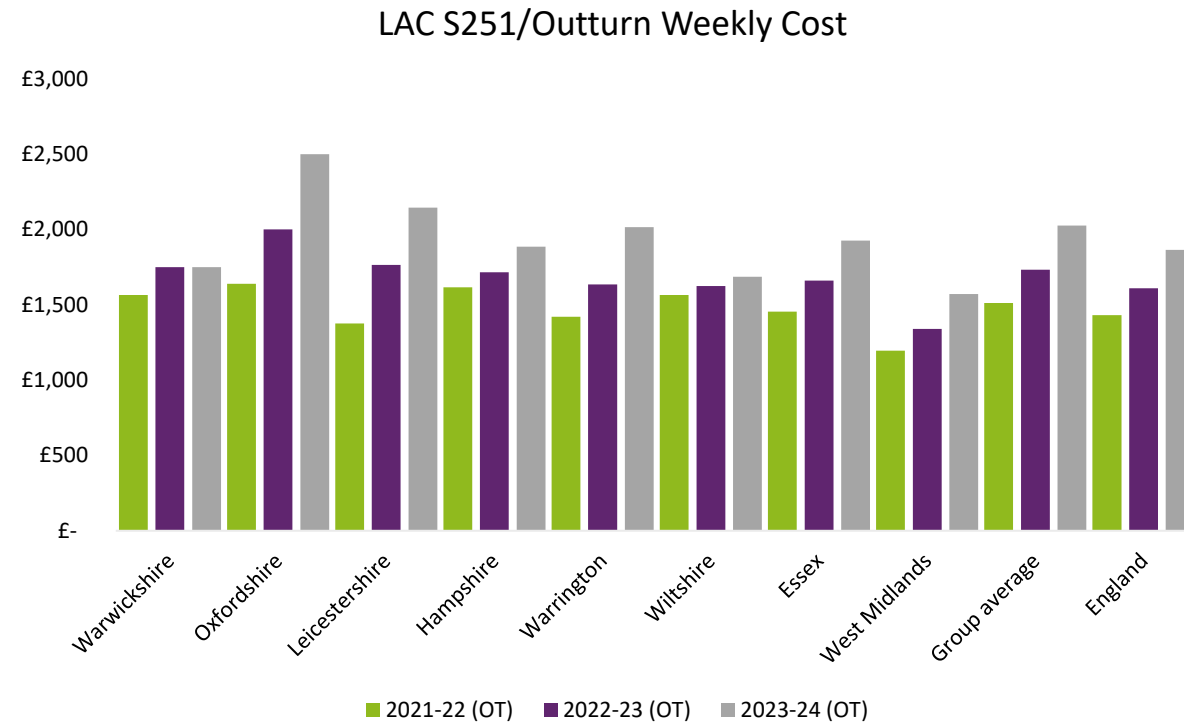
- However, Looked After Children (LAC) Rates are above Statistical Neighbours (SN) at 64 per 10,000 (actual number 805 a rise from 778 in '23), in WCC compared to 57 SN average.
- **Reducing the LAC rate in line with SN (717) would deliver a reduction in expenditure of £8m per annum, based on S251 weekly outturn costs for LAC '23 £1750**

- If we analyse the LAs within the SN group rated as either Good or Outstanding, WCC are at 64 and the average of the group is 55 per 10,000.
- **Reducing the LAC rate in line with ILAC Outstanding or Good SN would deliver a reduction in expenditure of £11.4m per annum.**



*Data source 2023/24 LAIT (Local Authority Interactive Tool) for children's services built on local authority financial returns, refer to Appendix A.

Children's Social Care



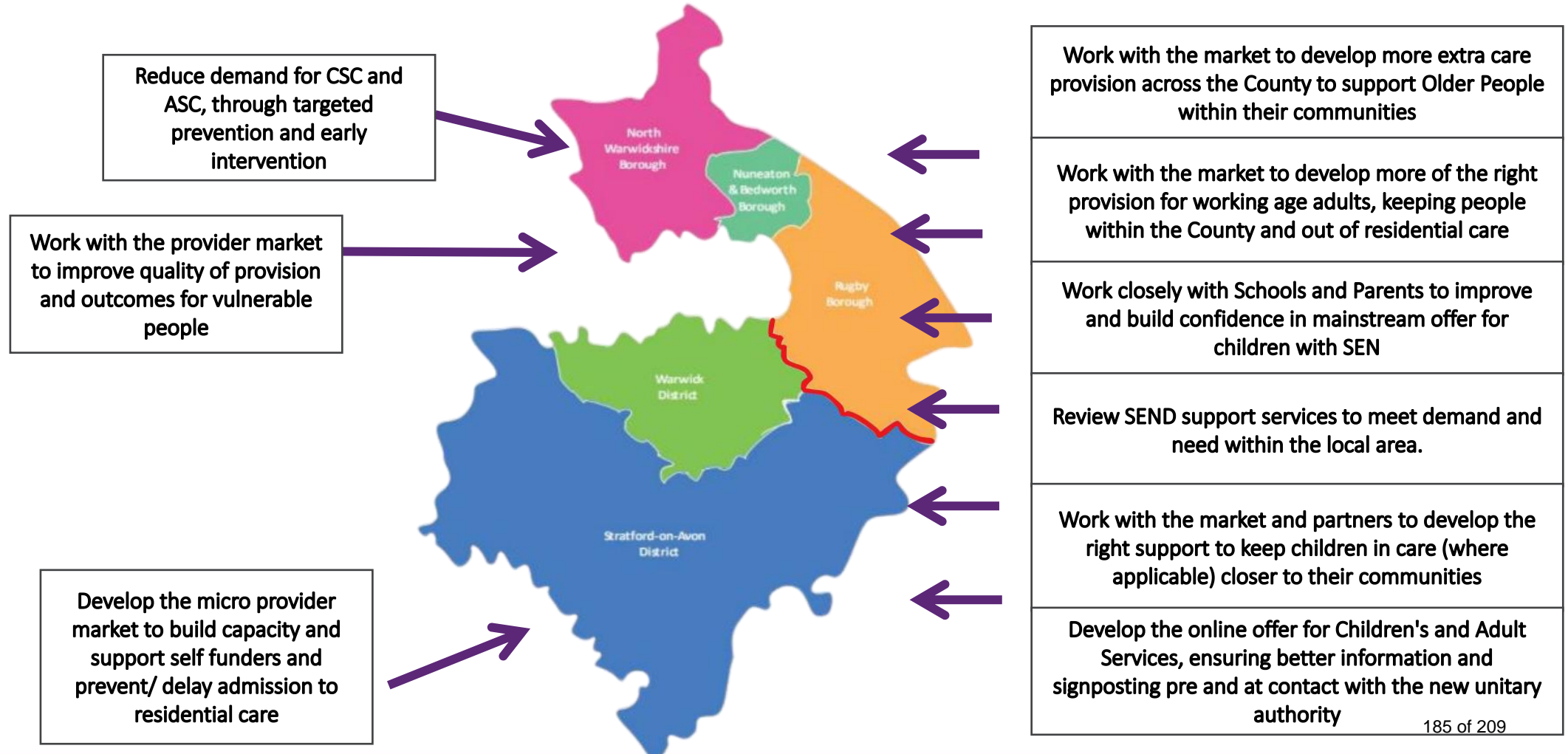
- In addition to reducing demand, whilst LAC S251 outturn weekly costs are lower than Statistical Neighbours, if we consider the West Midlands average of £1,570 per week compared to current WCC figure of £1,750 per week, bringing this more in line with other LAs in the region **would deliver an annual saving of £7.53m.**
- The opportunity from establishing 2 smaller sized unitaries provides opportunity to get closer to the local market and the needs of the local community and commission accordingly.

**Data source 2023/24 LAIT (Local Authority Interactive Tool) for children's services built on local authority financial returns, refer to Appendix A.*

5) The Opportunity

Opportunity to Better Manage Demand, Cost and Improve Outcomes - Targeted Prevention & Intervention

What do the two new unitaries need to do differently to deliver £63.5m annual savings and £74.8m cost avoidance year one, ensuring financial sustainability along with improved outcome for citizens in Warwickshire.



The Business Case for Two Unitaries

- In line with the primary objectives of the devolution paper – the 2UA business case needs to build on local identity and agility to deliver change at pace – **achieving financial stability through transformation – reducing the demand and cost for People services in parallel to improving outcomes.**
- A strong emphasis on reducing demand through **localised targeting of prevention and early intervention, working closely with the voluntary and community sector**
- The benefit of **building closer relationships with schools and developing the local offer to ensure inclusion in mainstream schools**, reducing the expenditure on independent schools and the costs of transitions, ensuring young people remain in their communities through to adulthood
- **Ability to develop the local market and build micro providers, ensuring the right capacity at the right price and the right quality**
- Bringing together key services such as Housing, Public Health, Leisure, Green Spaces and Social Care to ensure **maximisation of community assets and a place-based approach to prevention and early intervention**
- Using rich data sources from across revenues, benefits, social care and health, to develop predictive analytics, **targeting intervention activity to prevent escalation across social care and health**
- **Reducing Demand/ Cost and Improving Outcomes for citizens**



Appendix A – Data Sources for Financial Modelling

S251 LAC Outturn (taken directly from LAIT): **Statistics: local authority and school finance** last published September 2024)

Description - Funding line includes:

- 1) Special guardianship support - financial support paid to Special Guardianship families under the Special Guardianship Regulations 2005 and other staff and overhead costs associated with Special Guardianship Orders.
- 2) Other children in looked after services - support to looked after young people
- 3) Short breaks (respite) for looked after disabled children - all provision for short-breaks (respite) services for disabled children who are deemed "looked after". Data excludes any break exceeding 28 days continuous care and costs associated with providing disabled children's access to residential universal services.
- 4) Children placed with family and friends - Where looked after children do not live with their birth parents, it is not uncommon for them to be placed with family and friend foster carers. This Includes expenditure on the authority's functions in relation to looked after children placed with family and friends foster carers under the Children Act 1989.
- 5) Education of looked after children. This includes expenditure on the services provided to promote the education of the children looked after by your local authority (e.g. looked after children education service teams and training for designated teachers). This excludes any spend delegated to schools for looked after children.
- 6) Leaving care support services - This Includes local authority's "leaving care" support services functions under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

Methodology:

$(x/y)/365 * 7$ where:

x = Total funding on Looked after children recorded on outturn

y = Total number of Looked after children as at 31 March

ASCFR LTS

Gross Current Expenditure on long term care (ASCFR tables 43 and 44: Gross Current Expenditure on long term care for clients by support setting, 2023-24) includes:

- Nursing
- Residential
- Supported Accommodation
- Community: Direct Payments
- Community: Home Care
- Community: Supported Living
- Community: Other Long Term care

Our methodology is to then divide the GCE on long term care by the '**Total number of clients accessing long term support at the end of the year**' (ASCFR table 37)

Agenda Item No 9

Executive Board

16 July 2025

Report of Head of Legal Services

Whistleblowing Policy

1 Summary

The Report seeks to approve the Whistleblowing Policy.

Recommendation to Executive Board

To approve and formally adopt the Whistleblowing Policy at Appendix A.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that the Residents and Employees can have complete confidence that the affairs of the council are conducted in accordance with the highest Standards of probity and accountability.
- 2.2 Whistleblowing is one of the key means for identifying potential fraud, irregularity or wrongdoing and is a vital element of the Council's governance arrangements. Having clear arrangements in place and promoting good use of these policies will ensure the risk of fraud and wrongdoing is minimised.
- 2.3 Whistleblowing is an important method of communication that allows employees to highlight any possible wrongdoing. It is therefore essential that this policy also exists to protect the people reporting concerns. The proposed refresh of the policy provides clarity on issues raised by employees. This will ensure the correct protection is afforded to them in keeping with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Legal Considerations

- 3.1.1 The statutory basis for whistleblowing is contained in the Employment Rights Act 1996 (as amended by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998). It provides the right for the worker to take a case to an employment tribunal if they have been victimised at work or they have lost their job because they have 'blown the whistle'.

3.1.2 The law does not require employers to have a whistleblowing policy but it is accepted good practice for the Council, as an employer, to create an open, transparent and safe working environment where workers feel able to speak up. Government guidance, in the form of the Whistleblowing Code of Practice, states that it is best practice to have a whistleblowing policy or appropriate written procedures in place.

3.1.3 The current whistleblowing arrangements confirm the employee's statutory rights and aim to create an organisational culture where employees feel safe to raise a concern in the knowledge that they will not be victimised in doing so.

3.2 Financial considerations

3.2.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report.

3.3 Equalities Considerations

3.3.1 There are no Equality considerations.

The Contact Officer for this report is Sofia Ali (719251)

Background Papers

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE CREST BOROUGH COUNCIL

Whistleblowing Policy “Confidential Reporting”

1. Introduction

North Warwickshire Borough Council (“The Council”) is committed to the highest possible standards of honesty, openness and accountability and will not tolerate malpractice or wrongdoing.

The Council’s Whistleblowing Policy is a vital element of our governance arrangements and is designed to allow those employed by the Council to raise both disclosures and serious allegations of wrongdoing involving the actions of the Council’s employees, its Councillors, contractors, or any aspect of the Council’s activities.

As such the Council is committed to a policy which seeks to protect those individuals who make certain disclosures with regard to any instance of malpractice or wrongdoing and to investigate them in the public interest.

Whistleblowing is generally the term used when someone who is employed in an organisation reports a concern about suspected wrongdoing, malpractice, illegality or risk in the workplace.

This policy is designed to comply with the Council’s legal and regulatory responsibilities. These can include:

- Criminal offences;
- Failure to comply with a legal duty;
- Miscarriages of justice;

- Fraud or corruption;
- Abuse of authority;
- Serious breaches of Council policy or procedure;
- Unethical conduct and actions deemed unprofessional or inappropriate;
- The health and safety of any individual has been, or is likely to be, endangered; the environment has been, is being or is likely to be, damaged (as a result of the Council's actions or inactions); and
- Information about any of the above has been, is being, or is likely to be, deliberately concealed. This policy seeks to set out how the Council will handle and respond to serious allegations of perceived wrongdoing irrespective of whether the individual raising the concern is employed by the Council or not.

2. Aim and Scope

Our Whistleblowing Policy seeks to cover all disclosures and allegations made by employees of the Council, including temporary and agency staff. It also extends to any other individual who wants to raise an allegation of perceived wrongdoing. This could include consultants, contractors, sub-contractors who are engaged in work for the Council or anyone who uses the Council's services or any member of the public.

This policy has specific sections to advise those employed by the Council of the process to be followed when raising a disclosure or allegation and how the Council will respond.

The policy seeks to:

- Provide for a culture of zero tolerance toward fraud and corruption and deter wrongdoing; encourage employees and others with serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work to feel confident to come forward and voice those concerns;
- Raise concerns at an early stage and in the right way ensuring that critical information gets to the people who need to know and who are able to take action;
- Provide safeguards to reassure those who raise concerns in the public interest and not maliciously or for personal gain, that they can do so without fear of reprisals or victimisation or disciplinary action, regardless of whether these are subsequently proven;
- Set out how the Council will respond to allegations made and enable them to get feedback on any action taken; ensure that employees know what to do if they are not satisfied with actions taken.

The Whistleblowing Policy is intended to be used where the concerns fall outside other existing Council procedures. There are existing Council procedures which enable employees to lodge a grievance relating to their conditions of employment, raise matters of harassment or to make a general complaint, which by contrast, generally have no additional public interest dimension.

This Whistleblowing Policy covers concerns that fall outside the scope of those existing internal procedures. Equally, where allegations are made through the above procedures which raise serious concerns over wrongdoing, the Council will address these under the whistleblowing process. Further, where a whistleblowing disclosure overlaps with or includes HR/employment issues or policies, the Monitoring Officer will determine during their initial assessment whether it is appropriate for the relevant part of the complaint to be referred to HR for investigation.

Any individuals who are raising concerns relating to money laundering offences or Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 are required to report these concerns directly to the Money Laundering Reporting Officer (MLRO). Policy. The Council's MLRO is the s151 Officer.

3. What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the confidential disclosure by an individual of any concerns relating to a perceived wrongdoing involved any aspect of the Council's work or those who work for the Council. The whistleblowing process assists individuals, who believe they have discovered malpractice, impropriety or wrongdoing, to raise a concern, in order that this can be addressed.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 ("PIDA") is known as the Whistleblowing law and is designed to encourage and enable employees to "speak out" and to report suspected wrongdoing at work. This is commonly known as "blowing the whistle".

PIDA legislation legally protects employees (including those employed in schools maintained by the Council, temporary workers and agency staff), from any detriment from their employer or colleagues that arises as a result of making a "protected disclosure" (a qualifying disclosure) in the public interest. This includes protection from harassment, victimisation or dismissal by their employer.

A qualifying disclosure means any disclosure of information made to the Council or other prescribed person, which in the reasonable belief of the worker making

the disclosure, is made in the public interest and tends to show one or more of the following;

- That a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely be committed;
- That a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which he is subject;
- That a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur;
- That the health or safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered;
- That the environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged; or
- That information tending to show any matter falling within any one of the preceding paragraphs has been, is being, or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

A disclosure of information is not a qualifying disclosure if the person making the disclosure commits an offence by making it.

A prescribed person is someone independent of the employee's organisation, but usually has an authoritative relationship with the organisation, such as a regulatory or legislative body.

Whilst protection under PIDA covers most workers it is not extended to partners, contractors, non-Executive Directors, volunteers or the self-employed. However, the principles outlined in this policy, as far as they can be, will be applied to whistleblowing allegations received from sources other than employees of the Council. As with internally reported cases, particular consideration needs to be given to matters of confidentiality.

4. Making a disclosure or raising a concern

Once an employee has decided to raise a concern, then wherever possible, it should be expressed either verbally or in writing. This should set out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places where possible, and the reason why the Employee is particularly concerned about the situation.

Although Employees raising concerns are not expected to have supporting evidence to prove the truth of an allegation before reporting, he or she must reasonably believe that the information is substantially true to enable the matter to be taken forward.

Details of all reports received by Managers should be logged and reported to the Council's Monitoring Officer to allow a central record of whistleblowing cases to be maintained.

5. Whistleblowing by Employees

It is the hope and intention of the Council that any employee with a concern about any aspect of the Council's operations or its conduct, feels able to first raise those concerns internally with line management or with one or more of the officers listed below. This includes where an employee wants to make a protected disclosure to their manager.

- The Chief Executive
- Monitoring Officer
- The Corporate Director
- Head of Human Resources

However, under the terms of PIDA, if an employee does not feel comfortable making a disclosure internally within the Council they have the right to take their concerns outside the Council to certain 'prescribed regulators'.

Before making a disclosure, an employee may first wish to discuss the concern on a confidential basis with a work colleague, Trade Union representative, solicitor or professional body and seek advice on how to proceed. These discussions may help assess how justified their concern is and, if they then wish to proceed, the most appropriate and effective way to report it. This is important because the report should be made so as to allow the most effective investigation, whilst affording the whistleblower protection under the PIDA.

Employees are protected when they make a disclosure. In making a protected disclosure the employee must:

- Reasonably believe that the disclosure they are making is in the public interest;
- Reasonably believe that the information detailed and any allegation in it are substantially true; and
- The matter disclosed must fall within the matters prescribed for that regulator.

The earlier an employee expresses a concern, the easier it will be to take action. Employees should raise a concern as soon they have a reasonable suspicion and are not expected to investigate the concern themselves to prove their suspicions are well founded.

6. Whistleblowing by members of the Public

If you are not a Council employee, you can still contact the Council to report any concerns or disclosures over wrongdoing and these will be treated in the same through the Council's Complaints procedure. Unlike disclosures made by employees, protection under PIDA law does not extend to disclosures made by members of the public.

7. How to report a Whistleblowing concern

Anybody who has a whistleblowing concern relating to the Council can use our whistleblowing reporting procedure. A person who wishes to report a concern or suspected serious wrongdoing (a disclosure) should contact the Council in one of the following ways:

- E-mail your concerns to the Monitoring Officer at: monitoringofficer@northwarks.gov.uk
- Contact us by telephone (confidentially): 01827 715341

Concerns can also be reported in writing confidentially to any of the following:

- Chief Executive
- Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer
- Corporate Directors

Council employees can report a concern through their manager if they feel confident to do so. The manager must follow the obligation of confidentiality and reporting procedures in accordance with this policy.

For monitoring purposes, all whistleblowing cases referred to managers must be reported on receipt to the Monitoring Officer. This may be done by the person themselves or the receiving manager. The Monitoring Officer may offer advice and support to the appointed investigator. Any person reporting a concern should provide as much information as possible, including:

- Who the allegations are against;
- Full details of the nature of the alleged wrongdoing;
- Any evidence they have in support of the allegation;
- Whether the person making the disclosure is an employee of the Council;
- Whether the person is a service user or member of the public; and
- Name and contact details to allow clarification of information (unless they wish to remain anonymous).

If contact details are provided we may get in touch to seek further information

8. How the Council will respond

If the person has provided contact details, the Monitoring Officer will aim to formally respond to you to acknowledge receipt of a disclosure within 5 working days of the concern being received.

A further acknowledgement will normally be sent within 10 working days to indicate:

- How the Council proposes to deal with the matter; and the policy under which it will be investigated;
- Whether the Council considers it to be a protected disclosure;
- Contact details for the officer handling the investigation;
- Arrangements for confidentiality;
- An estimate of how long it will take to provide a response on the outcome;
- Any initial enquiries which may have been made; and
- If no action is planned, why not.

All proposed actions should be decided upon by the Monitoring Officer in consultation, where appropriate, with the Head of Corporate Services.

All allegations will be handled confidentially and discreetly by those individuals who are directly involved in the investigating process. The ongoing point of contact for the whistleblower will be given in the acknowledgement letter.

If necessary, further information will be sought from the whistleblower. This will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved in conducting an investigation and the clarity of the information provided.

At any meeting arranged to discuss an employee's concerns the employee has the right, if they so wish, to be accompanied by their Trade Union representative or a friend who is not involved in the area to which the concern relates.

The Council will do what it lawfully can to minimise any difficulties that an employee may experience as a result of raising a concern. For example, if an employee is required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the Council will advise you about the procedures in terms of what will happen and what will be expected of you.

9. Anonymous allegations

The Council recognises that there may be circumstances where individuals are worried about being identified when they report concerns about their employer.

If you have come to us anonymously and not provided your contact details we will treat your allegations just as seriously. However, this policy encourages individuals to put their name to an allegation wherever possible as we believe that open or confidential whistleblowing is the best means of addressing the concerns and protecting individuals.

Concerns expressed anonymously are more difficult to investigate, and harder to substantiate, and further liaison with the whistleblower is not possible. Nevertheless, anonymous allegations will always be individually considered, and action taken at the discretion of the Monitoring Officer depending upon:

- The seriousness of the issues raised;
- The credibility of the concern; and
- The likelihood of confirming the allegations from attributable sources.

10. Outcomes

The Council will, subject to legal constraints, seek to advise the whistleblower on the outcomes of the investigation in order to assure them that that the matter has been properly addressed. Some concerns raised may be resolved by agreed action, once the whistleblower's concerns have been explained, without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required, this will be taken before any investigation is concluded.

Reports will be required in all cases where an investigation has been directed by the Monitoring Officer. These will usually be issued by the Investigating Officer to the Monitoring Officer who will then share the same, where appropriate, with the Chief Executive, and the Corporate Director of the department involved.

The Monitoring Officer will periodically report an overview of whistleblowing complaint outcomes to the Standards Committee.

11. Safeguards

In order to ensure that allegations are investigated in the right spirit with the right outcome, the following safeguards or principles should be applied in all cases.

Confidentiality and Anonymity - The Council's Whistleblowing Policy seeks to protect the identity of the individual making a disclosure, meaning that your name will not be revealed without your explicit consent, even if the disclosure is not considered to be a qualifying disclosure under the PIDA. Your name will initially be logged at the outset and will be visible at times when data monitoring is taking place.

However, in alleged cases of serious wrongdoing, it must be appreciated that the Council cannot guarantee that this will be maintained particularly if external legal action results from the disclosure. In some cases, an employee's concern may require further action and they may have to act as a witness and/or provide evidence, for example serious criminal offences which are referred to the Police.

If your disclosure relates to a child at risk or abuse of a vulnerable adult then the Council is required to investigate this under separate procedures, and this takes priority over any request for anonymity. If you have provided your contact details, the Council will of course advise you of the action being taking.

Harassment and Victimisation - The Council acknowledges that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult decision for an employee to take, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. Any employee who makes a 'qualifying disclosure' which meets the requirements of the PIDA is legally protected against victimisation or harassment for whistleblowing.

The Council will not tolerate harassment or victimisation against an employee who has raised a genuine concern under the whistleblowing policy. Any Council employee who victimises a whistleblower will be subject to a disciplinary action which may lead to dismissal.

Where Corporate Directors and Heads of Service are aware of the identity of a whistleblower they should monitor how those employees are subsequently treated after raising a matter of concern. They should ensure that any harassment or victimisation is dealt with under disciplinary arrangements.

Any employee who believes they have been victimised as a result of making a disclosure or blowing the whistle should report their concerns to the Monitoring Officer

12. False and malicious allegations

While encouraging employees to bring forward matters of concern, the Council must guard against claims which are untrue. This is because of the risk of claims made to deliberately damage the reputation of other employees or the Council as a whole and not least because the cost of investigation is high.

If an employee makes an allegation, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, then no action will be considered or taken against them. However, if an employee makes false, malicious or vexatious allegations this will be treated as

a serious disciplinary matter and disciplinary action will be taken. The PIDA only offers protection from dismissal or detriment if the employee reasonably believes their disclosure was made in the public interest.

13. Misuse of the Policy

This Whistleblowing Policy is designed to promote and encourage reporting genuine concerns. The policy is not designed to allow:

- Individuals who have acted inappropriately to escape punishment by highlighting any malpractices they were involved in;
- Employment protection in relation a redundancy situation or pre-existing disciplinary issues as a result of reporting a wrongdoing; or
- An individual to raise a concern for some private motive and not to prevent or correct the wrongdoing.

14. Data Protection and Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities. As such the Council often receives requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act.

The Council has a legal obligation to provide the information unless it falls under one of the exemptions of the Act.

The Freedom of Information Act contains exemptions which may be applicable to permit the withholding of information identifying the whistleblower, including:

- Section 40 Personal Data;
- Section 41 Information which, if disclosed, would give rise to an actionable breach of confidence.

Individuals making a disclosure to the Council will wish to protect their identity and the Council will always seek to protect the identity of individuals during the course of progressing an investigation. If the Council receives a request for information identifying a whistleblower, the Council will contact the whistleblower to seek their views beforehand and will, wherever possible, seek to comply with those views.

The principle of maintaining confidentiality should also be applied to the identity of any individual who may be the subject of a disclosure.

The Council will ensure that our handling of concerns meets the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulations 2016, Data Use and Access Act 2025 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

15. Monitoring of Whistleblowing Complaints

The Monitoring Officer will maintain a central record of all whistleblowing referrals made under this policy and monitor the outcome of these cases. The collection, monitoring, review and storage of these records will at all times be carried out within the safeguarding principles set in this policy.

As such, details of any allegation should be reported to the Monitoring Officer by the receiving manager on receipt. The Monitoring Officer will log and allocate each case a reference number whether or not the matter is to be investigated. A report detailing the findings made during an investigation must be notified to the Monitoring Officer by the Investigating officer.

Statistical information taken from the Monitoring Officer's whistleblowing case records, and from HR records where appropriate, will be used for monitoring purposes and for periodic assurance reports provided to the Standards Committee. This will enable the Monitoring Officer and the Standards Committee to monitor the effectiveness of the whistleblowing procedures and may help identify any trends in whistleblowing complaints received.

The Monitoring Officer and the Chief Executive retain responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy and process. The Standards Committee has an overview of the Whistleblowing Policy.

A Whistleblowing record sheet should be used by the Monitoring Officer to record a summary for each case.

16. Training and Awareness

Corporate Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that their employees are aware of the Whistleblowing Policy and process and that any training needs are addressed which may arise from the application of the policy. Raising awareness of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy should form part of the induction training for all employees and should be addressed as refresher training for all employees.

Employees have a responsibility to ensure that they are aware of and understand the Council's policy in relation to whistleblowing.

17. Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between whistleblowing and making a complaint or a grievance?

In general terms, whistleblowing occurs when an employee raises a concern about danger or illegality that affects others, and which has a public interest dimension to it. The person blowing the whistle is usually not directly, personally affected by the danger or illegality. Consequently, the whistleblower rarely has a personal interest in the outcome of any investigation into their concerns. As a result, the whistleblower should not be expected to prove their case; rather he or she raises the concern so others can address it.

A grievance or private complaint is, by contrast, a dispute about the employee's own employment position and has no additional public interest dimension. When someone complains, they are saying that they have personally been poorly treated. This poor treatment could involve a breach of their individual employment rights or bullying, and the individual is seeking redress or justice for themselves. The person making the complaint therefore has a vested interest in the outcome of the complaint, and, for this reason, is expected to be able to prove their case.

For example – bullying and discrimination issues should be dealt with under the Council's existing HR policies.

Can concerns be raised confidentially or anonymously?

Individuals are able to raise concerns anonymously. However, the Council encourages whistleblowers to identify themselves and report matters openly. Openness makes it easier for the Council to assess the issue, work out how to investigate the matter, understand any motive and get more information. The effectiveness of any whistleblowing investigation may be limited where an individual chooses not to be identified.

An individual raises a concern confidentially if they give their name on the condition that it is not revealed without their consent or if he or she does not give his or her name at all.

If the Council is unaware of the identity of the individual it will not be possible to provide them any reassurance or protection.

Does the Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) require an employer to keep a whistleblower's identity secret?

The simple answer is no – the PIDA contains no specific provision on confidentiality. The protections within the Act can be deemed to encourage employees to raise issues openly. A good Whistleblowing Policy will provide a confidential port of call for a worried employee and employers should respect any promise of confidentiality they make. However, in some cases it will be impossible to take action on the concern without the open testimony of a whistleblower. Further it may later become necessary to waive anonymity because of the course of the investigation, for example, if the matter has had to be referred to the police.

Am I protected from dismissal if I blow the whistle?

An employee cannot be dismissed because they blow the whistle. If they are, they can claim unfair dismissal - they'll be protected by PIDA law as long as certain criteria are met. Types of whistleblowing eligible for protection. These are called 'qualifying disclosures'. They include when someone reports:

- That someone's health and safety is in danger
- Damage to the environment
- A criminal offence
- That the company is not obeying the law (like not having the right insurance)
- That someone's covering up wrongdoing
- There has been or is likely to be a miscarriage of justice.

Who is protected?

The following people are protected:

- Employees
- Agency workers
- People that are training with an employer, but not employed
- Self-employed workers, if supervised or working off-site

A worker will be eligible for protection if:

- They honestly think what they're reporting is true
- They are telling the right person
- They believe that their disclosure is in the public interest.

Who is not protected?

- Individuals who break the law when they report something, for example because they signed the Official Secrets Act
- They were part of the wrongdoing
- They found out about the wrongdoing when someone wanted legal advice ('legal professional privilege'), for example if they are a solicitor.

Workers who are not employees cannot claim unfair dismissal because of whistleblowing, but they are protected and can claim 'detrimental treatment'.

What information should a whistleblower provide?

Supporting evidence for the allegations, if available, is clearly helpful. However, PIDA does not require individuals to have evidence before reporting the matter, but it does say that the individual must reasonably believe the information is substantially true.

Individuals should report concerns to Line Management or any of the officers listed at section 7 at the earliest opportunity rather than wait to collate any evidence. Whistleblowers are encouraged to provide their contact details to allow the Council to seek further information, where necessary and advise on outcomes.

Document author	Sofia Ali- Head of Legal Services
Document owner	Sofia Ali- Head of Legal Services
Legal advice	Yes
Consultation	NA
Approved by	Executive Board-
Review Date	
Equality Assessment	NA
Key changes made	Updated

APPENDIX A

CONFIDENTIAL

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL CASE RECORD

The date the concern / allegation / disclosure was received by the Council	
Directorate Involved	
How the report was received (verbal or written)?	
Name and job title of the person with whom the concerns were raised	
Name and job title of employee making complaint/allegation: (unless anonymity was requested).	
Was confidentiality requested / explained or promised?	
A summary of the concern / allegation raised:	
Details of any feedback given and any response from the employee	
Matter reported to	
If not report, please give reason(s)	Date referred

Has formal acknowledgement been provided to employee in line with the policy? (Acknowledgement of receipt within 5 working days) (give date)	
Further acknowledgement on sent within 10 working days? (give date)	
Name of Investigator Date investigator was instructed	
Date investigator's report was provided to Monitoring Officer	
Summary outcome of investigation: (Proved not proved, action plans and recommendations)	
Date notification of outcome given to whistleblower	
Date outcome reported to Standards Committee	
By whom is the file/paperwork to be retained	
Date the outcome/actions identified are to be reviewed and by whom	

APPENDIX B

NOLAN PRINCIPLES

The following are the Seven Nolan Principles underpinning standards for Public Life: The principles of public life apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the civil service, local government, the police, courts and probation services and in the health, education, social and care services. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public services. The principles also have application to all those in other sectors delivering public services.

1. Selflessness: Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
2. Integrity: Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
3. Objectivity: Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
4. Accountability: Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must admit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
5. Openness: Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
6. Honesty: Holders of public office should be truthful.
7. Leadership: Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE SAFER COMMUNITIES SUB-COMMITTEE

30 June 2025

Present: Councillor Bates in the Chair

Councillors Barnett, Bell, Davey, Guilmant Humphreys, Jackson, Osborne, O Phillips, Ridley, Ririe, Smith, M Watson and A Wright.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Watson (Substitute Councillor Guilmant) and Jarvis (Substitute Councillor Bell).

Also in attendance was Councillor Katie Hobleby.

1 **Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

None were declared at the meeting.

2 **Minutes of the Meeting of the Safer Communities held on 25 March 2025**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2025, copies having been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The decision was made to move the presentation by Warwickshire County Council and Refuge on domestic abuse to the exempt part of the meeting due to the sensitive information discussed.

3 **Warwickshire Community Safety Agreement**

The Chief Executive updated Members on the Warwickshire Community Safety Agreement which set out the priorities of the Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board, designed to deliver the Warwickshire vision: 'Working together to keep you safe'.

Resolved:

That the draft 2025-29 Warwickshire Community Safety Agreement be noted.

4 **North Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership Update**

The Chief Executive provided Members with an update on recent activities with the North Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership (CSP). It covered the CSP's performance, progress on priorities from the 2025-9 Strategic Assessment, presented the latest crime statistics, and outlined the new priorities.

Resolved:

- a That the updates are considered and any areas for further scrutiny are identified;**
- b That the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) monthly performance and progress be noted; and**
- c That the awarded funding be noted.**

5 Warwickshire Community Safety Information Sharing Protocol

The Chief Executive updated Members on the Warwickshire Community Safety Protocol.

Resolved:

That the updated Warwickshire Community Safety Information Sharing Protocol, sign in sheets and agency request forms be noted.

6 Exclusion of the Public and Press To consider, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, whether it is in the public interest that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act

7 Presentation by WCC and Refuge on Domestic Abuse

Following a Motion to Council on 19 February 2025, a presentation was given to Members focussing on the work being carried out on Domestic Abuse and identifying further actions that can be taken to work with partners to bring support to all victims of domestic abuse.

Councillor Bates
CHAIR

Agenda Item No 11

Executive Board

16 July 2025

**Report of the
Chief Executive**

Exclusion of the Public and Press

Recommendation to the Board

To consider whether, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act.

Agenda Item No 12

Staffing Matter – Report of the Chief Executive

Paragraph 1 – By reason of the report containing information relating to an individual.

Agenda Item No 13

Exempt Extract of the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board held on 10 June 2025

Paragraph 3 – By reason of the report containing information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

In relation to the items listed above members should only exclude the public if the public interest in doing so outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, giving their reasons as to why that is the case.

The Contact Officer for this report is Marina Wallace (719226).