

Comparison between the business cases for a single Buckinghamshire unitary and separate North/South unitaries

	One Unitary	Two Unitary
Annual savings (net revenue)*	£18.2m (See p5 of Buckinghamshire County Council's [BCC's] business case)	£10.3m
First five years' savings	£45.4m	£17.3m
Fit with partner agencies?	<p>Partners based on county geography:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clinical Commissioning Group Federation (CCG) Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust Amersham & Wycombe and Aylesbury colleges to merge Community Impact Bucks Heart of Bucks Bucks Business First Bucks Advantage. <p>Partners based on even larger geography:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thames Valley Police Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (mental health) South Central Ambulance Service Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire & Rescue Milton Keynes & Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils. <p>(See p15 of BCC business case)</p>	<p>Local policing areas in Buckinghamshire are based on district geography.</p> <p>The districts' business case states the proposal 'would enable closer engagement between the councils and CCGs, the police and local voluntary and community sector organisations'. However, the CCGs have now voted to merge on a Buckinghamshire-wide geography, subject to NHS approval.</p> <p>The districts' business case has limited information on the local voluntary and community sector organisations it aligns with. (See p61 of districts' business case)</p>
Population size within recommended limits?	<p>Yes for Buckinghamshire unitary.</p> <p>(Guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is between 300,000 and 700,000. Source: M. Smulian, 'DCLG to Unitary Bidders: Aim for Minimum Population of 300,000', Local Government Chronicle (16 March 2016). (See also p30 of Buckinghamshire County Council's options appraisal)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes for Southern unitary No for Aylesbury Vale unitary (even with expected population growth).
Local focus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19 community boards for local decision-making with devolved budgets (see p48 of BCC's business case). 19 community hubs offering residents a physical presence for public services (see p59 of BCC business case). 	<p>Eight area panels would be created, meeting when required (see p54 of districts' business case).</p>

*Note that Buckinghamshire County Council's financial case is based on prudent estimates. The districts' business case contains different financial calculations. It states that a single unitary council would save £80m over five years, while a two-unitary would save £66m over the same period. (See p33 of districts' business case)

<p>Councillors (currently there are 49 County Councillors and 187 District Councillors)</p>	<p>98 – saving £1.2m. (See p41 of BCC business case)</p>	<p>139 across the two councils – (59 in Aylesbury Vale, 80 in South). Districts' business case states: 'A reduction in the number of elected members at principal council level would achieve cost-savings.' (See p109 of districts' business case)</p>
<p>Economy</p>	<p>Buckinghamshire is one of the top ten most productive areas in the country.</p> <p>The Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership has secured funding of over £90m since 2014 to support infrastructure, skills and business growth priorities and has been commended by DCLG as a highly rated organisation.</p> <p>A single unitary council would have the influence at a national level to ensure the county's economy continues to thrive.</p>	<p>Districts' business case states Buckinghamshire has two distinct economic areas – although the districts already recognise a single functional economic market area and a single housing market area covering Buckinghamshire as the best fit for preparing Local Plans</p> <p>(Source: Par 1.25, p21, Buckinghamshire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment 2015, Atkins)</p>
<p>Planning</p>	<p>Five area planning committees (Aylesbury, Buckingham, Wycombe; Chiltern and South Bucks) – ensuring greater responsiveness to local needs. (See p53 of BCC business case)</p>	<p>Three area planning committees (one for North and two for the South). (See p114 of districts' business case)</p>
<p>Council tax</p>	<p>A single unitary would deliver a reduction in council tax from day one for Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern and South Bucks residents, bringing it in line with what Wycombe residents will pay. (See p71 of BCC business case)</p>	<p>Districts' business case states that council taxes can be converged within five years with relatively small overall changes in council tax. Council taxpayers in Aylesbury Vale would see no change in council tax. The largest increase in council tax would be for residents of Wycombe who would experience a 1.9% increase in council tax over five years. (See p30 of districts' business case)</p>
<p>Devolution</p>	<p>New devolution offer based on choice and recognising each town and parish council's needs and ambitions. Programme of capacity building support included in business case. (See p49 of BCC business case)</p>	<p>No detailed plans provided. Districts' business case states: 'Ample scope to continue to provide a tailored approach to devolved services.' (See p54 of districts' business case)</p>