Local Government Reorganisation

Appendices

September 2025

Future³ Norfolk

PEOPLE PLACE PROGRESS

CONTENTS

1. Appendix A – Options Appraisal

This appendix provides a more detailed rationale for our scoring of each of the LGR options against the government criteria. We set out our scoring for each option and the factors we have considered in assigning that score in the tables below.

We have scored each of the options using the six government criteria that has been published and shared with all councils.

We have used a 0 – 3 scale, where 0 doesn't meet government criteria at all, and 3 is a complete match. This aligns with the scoring system that we used for our interim plan that was submitted earlier this year.

1.1 Single unitary

The table below sets out our scoring for the single unitary option whereby the current two-tier, eight authority system amalgamated into a single council covering all of Norfolk. We have based this appraisal on the provisional LGR business case that has been developed by the county council, in isolation of other authorities[1].

LGR Criteria	Score	Rationale
Proposal establishes a single tier of government that covers all local government functions and has a realistic delivery plan	1	This option would see a single unitary covering a diverse area of over 2,000 square miles and a total population of around 918,000. A single unitary would serve a population of around 918,000 which would make it the largest in England outside of a city. It would be far bigger (by population) than any unitaries that had been recently established such as North Yorkshire or Somerset, and second only to North Yorkshire by geographical area. Although this would represent the 'simplest' option for a single tier of local government, it does not account for

[1] Interim Plan, Norfolk County Council 17 March 2025: https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/media/40522/Local-Government---Reorganisation-in-Norfolk/pdf/52Interim_Plan_2025-03-17.pdf?m=1742469031500

LGR Criteria	Score	Rationale
		the complexities of what is a very large and varied region. It would span the very different areas including the urban, economic engine of Norwich, the energy and tourism coast of East Norfolk, and deep rural West Norfolk. Each of these areas have very different geographical, demographic, social, economic and housing circumstances. For example: Geography – East Norfolk, West Norfolk and Greater Norwich have radically different geographies. East Norfolk comprises coastal communities and deep rural countryside with a network of market towns. West Norfolk is also a deeply rural area with market towns, however it also has better connectivity with the rest of the UK. Greater Norwich is very different, and shares a lot more in common with other UK city regions. However, each has a primary urban centre in Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn and Norwich. Demography – as an example, both West and East Norfolk have substantially older populations than Greater Norwich (25.6% and 28.2% compared to 19.1%) which brings very specific challenges around supporting residents to age well and manage demand for social care services. Social – each area has very distinct social challenges and opportunities. Greater Norwich faces specific challenges around deprivation with over a fifth of neighbourhoods in the top 20% most deprived nationally, and associated issues of access to affordable housing and poor health outcomes. West Norfolk faces also faces some challenges around deprivation but also low levels of qualifications and higher levels of economic activity. East Norfolk faces challenges around low

LGR Criteria	Score	Rationale
		household incomes, high prevalence of poor health, and pockets of very high levels of deprivation within certain wards in Great Yarmouth. Economic – each area has a very different economic characteristics, strengths and challenges. Greater Norwich has thriving digital, finance and creative sectors, amongst others. East Norfolk has a very strong tourism sector, and an increasingly important energy industry. West Norfolk has strong and resilient agribusiness, defence and manufacturing sectors. All three face very different challenges and constraints upon growth. Housing – each area faces different challenges around housing. There are acute and complex housing pressures in East Norfolk that includes very high house-price-to-earnings ratio (8.1 times annual household earnings) and high numbers of second and holiday homes that reduces availability for local residents. In Greater Norwich, although 20% of residents live in social housing, there is still limited access to affordable homes. In West Norfolk there is a particular shortage of family homes. A single unitary council would find it difficult to develop and deliver the strategies that would meet the very different needs of these areas. Therefore it is less likely to address the key challenges that we have summarised above. A two- or three-unitary model would be much better placed to develop the develop and implement the local strategies and plans, based upon real understanding of place, local economy and needs.
New unitary councils should deliver short term financial savings but also be able to respond to the	3	A single unitary would have a council tax base of 324,008 and estimated total revenue budget of over £1.2 billion which would be substantially higher than the other two options. This would allow it to be substantially more resilient to financial shocks through size.

LGR Criteria	Score	Rationale
future needs of their communities and ensure they are resilient in the longer-term		A single unitary would be able to realise the highest financial benefits from economy of scale and rationalising things such as management structures. The claimed £36.2 million revenue savings identified in the alternative proposal for a single unitary supports this[2]. However, it is important to note that collectively, councils in Norfolk face a projected £200 million budget gap in future years. Savings from economies of scale alone will be nowhere near sufficient to close a gap of this size, therefore fundamental public sector reform will be required. This will likely involve the development of more preventative, responsive services that are tailored to local needs, that can better manage demand and reduce cost of service delivery. A single unitary is much less well placed to do this given the size, very broad geographical area and highly diverse range of communities it would serve. Firstly, the size is likely to make it less agile in terms of delivering transformational change required. Secondly, as noted in the criteria above it is less well placed than a two- or three-unitary model to develop tailored services that meet very specific local needs that will be crucial to managing demand, due to the sheer diversity of local communities. It should also be noted that a single unitary consolidates all financial risks into one single point of failure and doesn't necessarily make for a better mitigation against financial risks.
Unitary councils should support the development	1	A key benefit of a single unitary would be that important, statutory services including Adults and Children's Social Care would likely face least disruption through a move to

[2] Local Government Reorganisation, Report to Strategic and Corporate Select Committee, Norfolk County Council (18 June 2025):

LGR Criteria	Score	Rationale
and delivery of public services that provide the best possible outcomes for residents and communities in the long-term		this model. Conversely, other key local services linked to housing and homelessness could face the greatest disruption from moving to a single unitary model. We believe that LGR presents a huge opportunity to deliver high quality and sustainable services, but this relies upon: Deep understanding of the circumstances and needs of local communities Ability to deliver transformation in an agile and rapid manner Flexibility to join up and tailor services to meet local needs such as social care, health, housing, benefits, education and employment In the long term, a single unitary is the option that is least well placed to meet this criteria as it has very broad reach, size and complexity, and is furthest removed from the neighbourhoods it serves – which make it less able to respond to local need.
The proposal should be a genuine collaboration between councils, underpinned by transparent and meaningful community engagement, and have public support	1	As outlined in the earlier criteria, a single unitary council would span a very large geographical area of over 2,000 square miles, making it second only to North Yorkshire in size. Given the rurality of a large portion of Norfolk, and travel times (for example the journey from King's Lynn to Great Yarmouth takes 90 minutes by car and over 2 ½ hours by public transport), it would be very difficult for councillors and staff to travel across a single unitary – and therefore build relationships and collaborate in person. Although communities in Norfolk to share some common elements of identify, there is diversity across the county. A single unitary would cover three very different major urban centres in Norwich, King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth – in particular for Norwich, which is significantly larger and urban as a key UK city. It would

LGR Criteria	Score	Rationale
		also need to serve the coastal communities in the East and North, and a variety of deep rural areas across the Norfolk. We have already set out how these differ across all aspects in the first criteria (e.g. demography, socioeconomics, etc.). A single unitary would dilute the wide variety of local identities across Norfolk and be unable to represent the varied needs of the communities. This option is being pursued by the County Council in isolation. We are aware that the County Council has carried out consultation and engagement (under the brand 'Ambitious for Norfolk'), However, the seven district, borough and city councils have not played an active role in shaping the proposal. The key consideration is that this option is being driven by the County Council alone. It does not have the backing of any of the district, borough and city councils within Norfolk, who all believe that an alternative option would best serve the county. Furthermore, it is not supported by local MPs who serve their constituencies and know them best. This option does not demonstrate that councils have worked together on a view of what is best for Norfolk.
New unitary councils should be compatible with a Mayoral Combined Authority and support the region's devolution ambitions	1	A new Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) spanning Norfolk and Suffolk is being consulted upon by the Government. This MCA is likely to cover a region of around 3,500 square miles and serve a population of over 1.5 million. A single unitary would be too close in size to the MCA given that it would account for nearly two thirds of the total population – therefore would not represent a clear differentiation between local and regional government.

LGR Criteria	Score	Rationale
		Given that Suffolk District Councils are investigating a three unitary model, a single Norfolk unitary county would be much bigger than its Suffolk counterparts and risk dominating discussions and decisions around regional strategies and initiatives.
New unitary councils should reflect local places and identities, as well as embedding arrangements that promote local decision-making and responding to local needs	1	As set out in earlier criteria, a single unitary will cover a very broad geography and high numbers of communities with diverse range of needs. This will naturally make it harder to engage at a local level. There is a risk that a single unitary would be too remote from communities it serves and unable to represent the diverse communities across Norfolk. Based upon the interim proposal we are aware that a unitary proposal would rely on strengthening existing local partnerships (e.g. Highways Parish Partnership Scheme, Local Member Fund, etc.) and increase the role of parish and town councils to address this gap. However, it is unlikely to offer the scale and flexibility to co-design services to meet local needs in a way that the other two options would be able to.
Total	8	

Table 1: Scoring for the single unitary option

1.2 Two unitaries

The table below sets out our scoring for the two unitary option whereby two new unitary authorities are created from the current two-tier, eight authority system – one covering the East and the other covering the West. We have based this appraisal upon the boundaries for a two-unitary model in the interim proposal that has been published by South Norfolk Council[3].

[3] A Vision for Norwich & East Norfolk and West Norfolk Unitaries, South Norfolk and Broadland Councils: https://southnorfolkandbroadland.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s10483/App%20C.pdf

LGR Criteria	Score	Rationale
Proposal establishes a single tier of government that covers all local government functions and has a realistic delivery plan	2	A two unitary model, based upon the proposed Norwich & East Norfolk and West Norfolk Councils would serve populations of 533,000 and 408,000 respectively. This would make them both within the top five biggest unitaries in terms of population. East Norfolk and West Norfolk would also cover geographies of approximately 890 and 1,100 square miles respectively, again putting them within the top ten biggest unitaries by area size. Although smaller than the single unitary option, both councils would still serve large geographies and a wide variety of communities. A Norwich & East Norfolk unitary would both serve a major city in Norwich, coastal communities such Great Yarmouth, and deeply rural areas including the Norfolk Broads. As laid out in our appraisal for the single unitary it would mean the unitaries would be serving areas with highly varied, geography, demographics, socioeconomics and housing needs. Some specific examples of the differences across a Norwich & East Norfolk unitary are as follows: • Geography – Norwich is a major city with very urban geography, whereas the east is a mix of coastal communities and very rural towns and villages. • Demographics – the Norwich area has substantially different population profiles to areas such as Great Yarmouth, where there is a significantly high proportion of people aged 65 years or older • Economy – the east is dominated by tourism and growing (clean) energy sectors, whereas Norwich has very strong financial, creative and life science sectors

LGR Criteria	Score	Rationale
		In addition, the two unitary option would split the 'energy coast' (e.g. offshore wind generation, carbon capture and natural gas) upon which there is a very strong and growing economic sector and is hugely important to the UK's energy security and transition to carbon neutral economy. This split may pose additional barriers and complications to supporting the sector to grow.
New unitary councils should deliver short term financial savings but also be able to respond to the future needs of their communities and ensure they are resilient in the longer-term	2	The Norwich & East Norfolk and West Norfolk unitary councils would have council tax bases of 174,619 and 149,390 respectively. They would have consolidated revenue budgets of in the region of £550 – 700 million which would put them is a strong position to withstand financial shocks. A two unitary council model would be able to make substantial savings from the economies of scale of streamlining management structures, systems and staffing, though not as much as a single unitary. This is supported by the interim proposal put forward by South Norfolk Council which has identified around £30 million in savings. It should also be noted that there is no reason why the two unitaries could not partner to deliver shared services and leverage economies of scale at a county-wide level, where it makes sense to do so. This is already happening at a district council level with Eastern Internal Audit Services and Norfolk Parking Partnership. However, this should be seen within a larger context of the £200 million budget gap that current councils in Norfolk face. Savings from rationalisation will only contribute a fraction of what is required, and the rest will need to be realised through public sector reform.

LGR Criteria	Score	Rationale
		Though smaller than a single unitary, the two-council model will still face similar challenges in being able to develop services that meet the varied and unique circumstances and needs of the different communities they serve – for example balancing Norwich city with the rural communities of the Norfolk Broads. They are unlikely to be as well placed as a three unitary model to achieve this. However, they may be more flexible and agile than a single unitary to deliver transformation and public sector reform.
Unitary councils should support the development and delivery of public services that provide the best possible outcomes for residents and communities in the long-term	2	A two unitary model would not benefit from minimising disruption to key statutory services such as Adults and Children's Social Care. In fact, it may be the most disruptive because it could be more complex to disaggregate these services given that they are currently based upon three localities. At the same time lower tier services would undergo equivalent change through aggregating functions across districts. As we have set out elsewhere in our proposal, LGR should be seen as a big opportunity for public sector reform, and delivery of high quality, sustainable services. This relies upon: • Deep understanding of the circumstances and needs of local communities • Ability to deliver transformation in an agile and rapid manner • Flexibility to join up and tailor services to meet local needs such as social care, health, housing, benefits, education and employment Although better than a single unitary, the two-council model will still find it difficult to tailor services to meet

LGR Criteria	Score	Rationale
		what will be very large geographies with highly varied communities. However, they are likely to be more agile and flexible than a single council.
The proposal should be a genuine collaboration between councils, underpinned by transparent and meaningful community engagement, and have public support	2	A Norwich & East Norfolk Council and West Norfolk Council model would provide better, more representative unitaries tied to areas with different characteristics and identities. However, each unitary would still serve a very large geography and highly varied communities. This is particularly apparent in Norwich & East Norfolk – the unitary would need to be able to balance the needs of a major city (Norwich), with coastal communities (such as Great Yarmouth) and highly rural areas (such as the Norfolk Broads). The two unitary proposal of Norwich & East Norfolk and West Norfolk Councils has been developed in isolation by South Norfolk Council.
New unitary councils should be compatible with a Mayoral Combined Authority and support the region's devolution ambitions	2	Given an MCA would cover a region of around 3,500 square miles and serve a population of over 1.5 million, the relative size of the proposed Norwich & East Norfolk and West Norfolk Councils (533,000 and 408,000 respectively) would represent a better approach to a single unitary. The two unitaries would be more in keeping with the multi-authority model that is being proposed by Suffolk, and therefore provide a more balanced dynamic across the region. However, the same challenges around ability to cater for, and represent what will be very large geographical areas and highly diverse communities may also affect the two unitaries ability to advocate for their residents.

LGR Criteria	Score	Rationale
New unitary councils should reflect local places and identities, as well as embedding arrangements that promote local decision-making and responding to local needs	2	The two unitary councils option is likely to offer better structures for enabling community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment than a single unitary. The two unitaries would still span wide geographies and a wide range of communities (e.g. Norwich, Norfolk Broads and Great Yarmouth) with very different needs – better than a single unitary but not as good as three which provide better representation of the very different communities within Norfolk. Two unitary councils would have a more appropriate scale and flexibility to co-design services to meet local needs but the geographical size, range and number of communities may still present a barrier to achieving this.
Total	12	

Table 2: Scoring for the two unitaries option

1.3 Three unitaries based upon existing boundaries

The appraisal below is specific to the option whereby three unitary authorities are created, using the existing council boundaries. A more rounded appraisal of a three unitary option is provided in 1.4. This appraisal focuses on considerations specific to use of existing boundaries for a three unitary model.

LGR Criteria	Score	Rationale
Proposal establishes a single tier of government that covers all local government functions and has a realistic delivery plan	2	A three unitary proposal based upon existing boundaries would result in West Norfolk, East Norfolk and Greater Norwich Councils. This option does partially reflect local needs. It establishes unitary councils that represent and serve three very distinct areas of Norfolk – the major city of Norwich, the coast and countryside of East Norfolk, and the deep rural area with a network of market towns within West Norfolk.

LGR Criteria	Score	Rationale
		This option creates unitaries that are largely able to respond to the unique local contexts and needs of their communities. However, the Norwich unitary would be substantially underbounded as it would not encompass very much of the travel-to-work economic area around the city. By not including the surrounding suburbia and network of countryside communities to that have strong links this option does not represent a coherent or complete distinct area.
New unitary councils should deliver short term financial savings but also be able to respond to the future needs of their communities and ensure they are resilient in the longer-term	1	A three unitary option set along existing boundaries would result in a very unbalanced set of councils. West Norfolk, Greater Norwich and East Norfolk would serve 294,677, 144,426, and 477,418 residents respectively. This is a clear imbalance and would leave one authority at a major disadvantage. Greater Norwich would be substantially smaller than the two other councils, both in terms of council tax base (40,353 in 2028/29) and likely revenue budget (Ca. £180 million). This would leave Greater Norwich a lot more vulnerable to financial shocks. Unlike East and West Norfolk Councils, Greater Norwich would not be able to realise any economies of scale, so would be doubly at risk of financial failure. Greater Norwich could attempt to mitigate this through partnering with the other two unitaries on shared services to realise economies of scale, however this is unlikely to be adequate response to the likely financial challenges it faces.
Unitary councils should support the development	1	A three unitary model along existing boundaries faces the same challenges around the need to mitigate

LGR Criteria	Score	Rationale
and delivery of public services that provide the best possible outcomes for residents and communities in the long-term		potential disruption to key social care services as the two-unitary option. In addition, the existing boundaries may make it very difficult to disaggregate social care services – the unbalanced boundaries of the three unitaries will likely require substantial changes to align the three-locality model currently used by the County Council to this new arrangement. At the same time, Greater Norwich would be limited in meeting the needs of the wider are due to being underbounded. It would require neighbouring unitary councils to take key policy decisions and run projects that would support growth in the city. As three unitaries are of smaller size they may be more agile and flexible in delivering the transformation and public sector reform rapidly. However, the financial risks associated with a Greater Norwich may constrain its ability to raise funds for any transformation programme that would allow it to improve public services and realise savings.
The proposal should be a genuine collaboration between councils, underpinned by transparent and meaningful community engagement, and have public support	3	This option is based upon a whole-Norfolk assessment of the communities across the county, including geographies, demography, socioeconomics and several other factors. The three unitaries option offers the most appropriate representation of the diverse and unique communities within the county. This option uses current council geographies as a constraint which means that the three new unitaries would be a poor reflection of local needs, where changes to the boundaries would offer better representation.

LGR Criteria	Score	Rationale
		It is not viewed as a viable alternative to a three unitary model based upon fresh boundaries. This option has not been consulted upon because it was not considered viable at the time we were conducting our programme of engagement (given that MHCLG guidance on this matter was only published at the end of August). This option would also undermine some of the key local partnerships and collaboration such as the Greater Norwich Plan.
New unitary councils should be compatible with a Mayoral Combined Authority and support the region's devolution ambitions	3	This three unitary option would be similar to the other three-unitary option. It would establish three councils of an appropriate size relative to an MCA for Norfolk and Suffolk. However, as a 'junior' partner representing a smaller population and area, Greater Norwich could lose out in any regional dynamics with an MCA.
New unitary councils should reflect local places and identities, as well as embedding arrangements that promote local decision-making and responding to local needs	3	As with the other three unitary option, this could offer the closest and strongest ties to local communities. However, this is partially undermined by Greater Norwich not serving the area immediately around the city, to which it is closely linked.
Total	13	

Table 3: Three unitaries based on existing boundaries

1.4 Three unitaries on new boundaries

The table below sets out our scoring for the three unitary option whereby three new unitary authorities are created from the current two-tier, eight authority system – an East Norfolk, a West Norfolk and a Greater Norwich.

LGR Criteria	Score	Rationale
Proposal establishes a single tier of government that covers all local government functions and has a realistic delivery plan	3	Our three-unitary proposal would see balanced West Norfolk, East Norfolk and Greater Norwich Councils. They would serve populations of 301,712, 336,524 and 278,285 residents respectively. This represents a more natural fit with the geographies within Norfolk, and will see communities that share similar characteristics, needs and challenges represented by the same council. As with the two-unitary model, his option allows for local authority representation of the very different East (coastal and countryside) and West (deep rural) Norfolk. However, in contrast to the two-unitary model this option accommodates the very different and unique circumstances of Norwich which is a major city and a driver of economic growth in the region. It has significantly different characteristics and needs to other areas. Under the other two options Norwich would be subsumed within a wider area with very different, competing demographic, social and economic needs. It should be noted that the Greater Norwich Council would split the very large home-to-work economic area. This would need to be carefully managed to minimise the disadvantages to communities within this area that aren't directly served by a Greater Norwich Council.
New unitary councils should deliver short term	2	Our three unitary option would see the new East Norfolk, West Norfolk and Greater Norwich Councils with projected tax bases in 2028/29 of 129,789, 109,941, and

LGR Criteria	Score	Rationale
financial savings but also be able to respond to the future needs of their communities and ensure they are resilient in the longer-term		94,095 respectively. The three unitaries would hold revenue budgets of between £532 million and £657 million. This represents a big increase upon the current budgets and tax bases of the seven district, borough and city councils, therefore equip each unitary to be in a substantially better position to withstand financial shocks. Although this option wouldn't benefit from the same economies of scale as a single or two-unitary option, there are still substantial savings to be realised through consolidation of management, systems, third party spend and staffing. We have identified over £20 million in savings from moving to a unitary alone in our proposal. As with the two-unitary option, there is no reason why new councils in a multi-unitary model could not partner to realise similar economies of scale, where it makes sense to do so. This is already in evidence through joint services such as Eastern Internal Audit Services, Parking Services and CNC Building Control. In fact, in our proposal we highlight some specific areas where three unitaries could leverage partnerships to realise savings – including social care commissioning which will account for a very large portion of any future budgets for councils. This will realise further efficiencies, that we have not accounted for here. However, within larger context of the £200 million budget gap all Norfolk councils face, the three unitary option presents the greatest opportunity to realise long term savings through public sector reform – which is the only any future council(s) will close this gap. As we have set out in this proposal we see LGR as the catalyst for public sector reform. Our three unitary

LGR Criteria	Score	Rationale
		option incorporates an ambitious plan of transformation to capitalise upon any changes to deliver the efficiencies required.
Unitary councils should support the development and delivery of public services that provide the best possible outcomes for residents and communities in the long-term	2	The three unitary model faces the same challenges around disruption to services as the two-unitary option. This would need to be managed carefully as part of any transition – our implementation plan includes a specific priority around maintaining 'safe and legal' services to mitigate against this risk. However, as each of the three unitaries represents a more local and distinct area of Norfolk, they are better placed to develop high quality and sustainable public services to their communities. This is because they are likely to have a better, deeper understanding of the needs of their local communities. Similarly, because they are closer to these communities they are better placed to co-design services that meet resident needs. The three unitaries are of a smaller size and therefore are likely to be more agile and flexible in delivering the transformation and public sector reform rapidly, where a larger, less nimble organisation with greater layers of management may face greater bureaucracy and inertia.
The proposal should be a genuine collaboration between councils, underpinned by transparent and meaningful community engagement,	3	This option is based upon a whole-Norfolk assessment of the communities across the county, including geographies, demography, socioeconomics and several other factors. The three unitaries option offers the most appropriate representation of the diverse and unique communities within the county. This has been a genuine joint endeavour by most of the existing districts, who have co-owned the development of this proposal.

LGR Criteria	Score	Rationale
and have public support		Our partnership has run a thorough and comprehensive engagement campaign under the brand 'Future Norfolk'. A wide range of local stakeholders including the general public, members of parliament and statutory and voluntary partners have been engaged to shape this proposal. Further details of the engagement programme can be found in the wider proposal. Rather than discarding existing partnership working and collaboration, this option builds upon them, accommodating joint initiatives such as shared services (e.g. CNC building Control) and joint strategies (e.g. Greater Norwich Plan). This option truly represents an approach where councils have worked together and developed a proposal that is shaped by local needs and views.
New unitary councils should be compatible with a Mayoral Combined Authority and support the region's devolution ambitions	3	Our three unitary option would establish three councils of an appropriate size relative to an MCA for Norfolk and Suffolk. Populations of 301,712, 336,524 and 278,285 residents would be complementary to the MCA's estimated population of 1.5 million. The three unitaries would be more in keeping with the multi-authority model that is being proposed by Suffolk, and therefore provide a more balanced dynamic across the region. However, in addition to this three unitaries would provide better representation at a local level, for any regional strategies and initiatives that are delivered in partnership with an MCA.
New unitary councils should reflect local places and	3	Three unitaries represents the option with the closest and strongest ties to their local communities. They do not experience the same level of challenges around competing demands of highly diverse areas, or the

LGR Criteria	Score	Rationale
identities, as well as embedding arrangements that promote local decision-making and responding to local needs		barriers of travelling across their areas, as the single or two unitary options. Because of this each unitary better placed to co-develop services with local communities (of 50,000 residents) that meet the unique circumstances and needs. A three unitary model offers councils of the most relatable scales and that are best placed for local community engagement. The geographies for each of the three new unitaries has been developed so that they are compliant with Boundary Commission advice. In addition to this, we have set out detailed proposals for how councillors and wards will support community democracy and engagement. We have included arrangements for those areas that currently are not represented by a parish or town council. We will review existing community forums and partnerships to ensure that the good practice around community engagement is not lost.
Total	16	

Table 4: Scoring for the three unitaries option

2. Appendix B – Engagement

2.1 Introduction

We developed a comprehensive communications and engagement plan under the banner of "Future Norfolk" to build an informed understanding of the three-unitary model, with an ambition to strengthen democratic accountability, respect local identity and deliver sustainable, adaptable public services.

From the outset, we moved from early awareness-raising and listening around the three pillars — People, Place, Progress - that lead us towards a confident, coordinated presentation of views aligned within our proposal that met the Government's criteria.

Our objectives were to:

- give residents and stakeholders a clear understanding of the proposal's aims and benefits.
- engage and communicate positively about our proposal rather than react to alternatives.
- demonstrate legitimacy by evidencing engagement and aligning with due process.
- maintain a constructive, forward-looking tone, avoiding premature technical debate ahead of formal submission.

A single, memorable narrative spine—People, Place, Progress—anchored everything we produced. The core engagement line "Your council is changing" signalled simply that local government in Norfolk would be different in future, so people understood what they were being asked to consider.

Our audiences were clearly defined to ensure relevance and reach. We had three main groups of stakeholders that we aimed to engage:

- Residents across Norfolk: messages and images tailored to place while maintaining a single county-wide identity, supported by accessible formats to ensure everyone could take part.
- Elected members and staff: equipped to explain the proposal confidently and signpost to more detailed information.

- MPs and key stakeholders (business, voluntary and community sector, health, education): engaged on values and outcomes to build visible credibility ahead of submission.

2.2 Approach

We ran a focused programme of communications and engagement over a six-month period running alongside the development of our three unitary proposal so that we could incorporate what we had learned from the work.

We used a consistent narrative to underpin all engagement activities. Everything flowed from the three pillars — People (Accountability), Place (Local identity), Progress (Future-readiness) — creating a shared language for leaders, officers and partners.

We set up a dedicated website to act as a single source of truth in communicating our proposal. The engagement hub www.futurenorfolk.com was the primary destination for information, FAQs, visual assets, updates and engagement tools. All promotional activity drove back to this hub, concentrating analytics and ensuring quality control. From day one the hub offered accessible formats — Easy Read, audio, translation and paper surveys on request — to enable everyone to participate.

We communicated through a variety of formats to make our programme as accessible to everyone as possible. We used plain-English explainers, FAQs and a short animation to explain complex concepts simply, with a further explainer planned post-submission to support the next phase. The site featured videos, infographics and downloadable toolkits to support local advocacy and storytelling. Search discoverability was prioritised through targeted Search Engine Optimisation on relevant terms, complemented by regular content updates.

We developed a consistent look and feel to all our communications. All outputs were built from a central Future Norfolk pack—master artwork, co-brandable templates and tone/visual guidelines—so the six councils could tailor for place while remaining consistent. Every execution carried one clear call to action back to the hub via short URL or QR code.

We built in inclusivity and accessibility from the start. We published Easy Read versions of communications material on the website and made printed Easy Read copies available at every event. We sent paper survey forms to those preferring offline

participation. Alternative formats were provided on request; and, in selected areas, SMS messages with a clear call to action extended reach to residents less active online.

All Media, marketing and digital engaged using a clear narrative around each of the three pillars, using targeted channels, disciplined timing and prepared materials with a proactive, positive tone. We used a variety of channels to communicate:

- Digital: A steady cadence across Facebook, X and Instagram opened with the three pillars and the survey call to action, then moved to weekly deep dives, supported by animation and infographics, with selective boosting for priority key moments.
- Out-of-home: Bus rears and insides and petrol-station/shop forecourt screens and posters widened reach beyond digital users, using high-contrast creative aligned to the three pillars and pointing back to the website via QR codes.
- Owned/local assets: Posters and leaflets in council and community venues kept information visible at point of need
- Media: Co-ordinated media handling and member/stakeholder briefings sustained message discipline and credibility.
- Events: each council ran or hosted a series of community events or roadshows to engage with stakeholders and members of the public using business cards and leaflets to direct people to the survey.
- Coalition-building: MPs were invited to endorse the values underpinning the model rather than unpublished specifics, building momentum and providing constructive, high-level support ahead of submission and into the Government-led consultation.

Clear sign-off routes, escalation protocols and agreed holding lines underpinned all activity. Our approach to misinformation was not to rise to negative narratives, but to stick to facts, positive logic and the agreed code of conduct, maintaining trust and focus on what matters for residents.

The survey strategy was inclusive, non-prescriptive and audience-led, with a tone that was conversational, empathetic and locally grounded. Reading age was set at 11 to maximise understanding and participation. We used a mix of baseline, bi-weekly pulse and final post-campaign surveys to track perceptions over time, asking open prompts such as “What makes your area unique?”, “How important is local representation to you?”, “What services do you value most?” and “What would you like to see improved in your local council?” Free-text comments were encouraged to capture nuance.

The engagement complied with the Public Sector Equality Duty and UK GDPR. Only anonymous free-text comments were analysed—no personal or identifying data was used; no profiling or automated decision-making was undertaken; analysis estimated tone only. The lawful basis was Public Task (Article 6(1)(e)), supporting service improvement through public consultation. All processing was conducted securely and locally, and no data was sent externally.

2.3 Engagement analysis

We have provided a summary of the reach and breadth of engagement in the main document. Our surveys were the primary mechanism through which we engaged residents and other stakeholders remotely.

We attracted over 5,000 responses from the public. The tables and diagrams below provide details of who responded.

Council	Under 25	25 44	45 64	65 or over	Total
Breckland DC	7	74	197	199	477
Broadland DC	6	88	147	72	313
Great Yarmouth BC	7	64	168	107	346
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	31	129	344	328	832
North Norfolk DC	3	29	108	105	245
Norwich City Council	46	634	1,008	646	2,334
South Norfolk Council	8	72	109	57	246
Unknown / Outside	2	9	17	8	36
Total	110	1,099	2,098	1522	5,000+[4]

Table 5: Breakdown of survey responses

[4] Incorporates the responses to a smaller, additional survey carried out as part of the engagement programme.

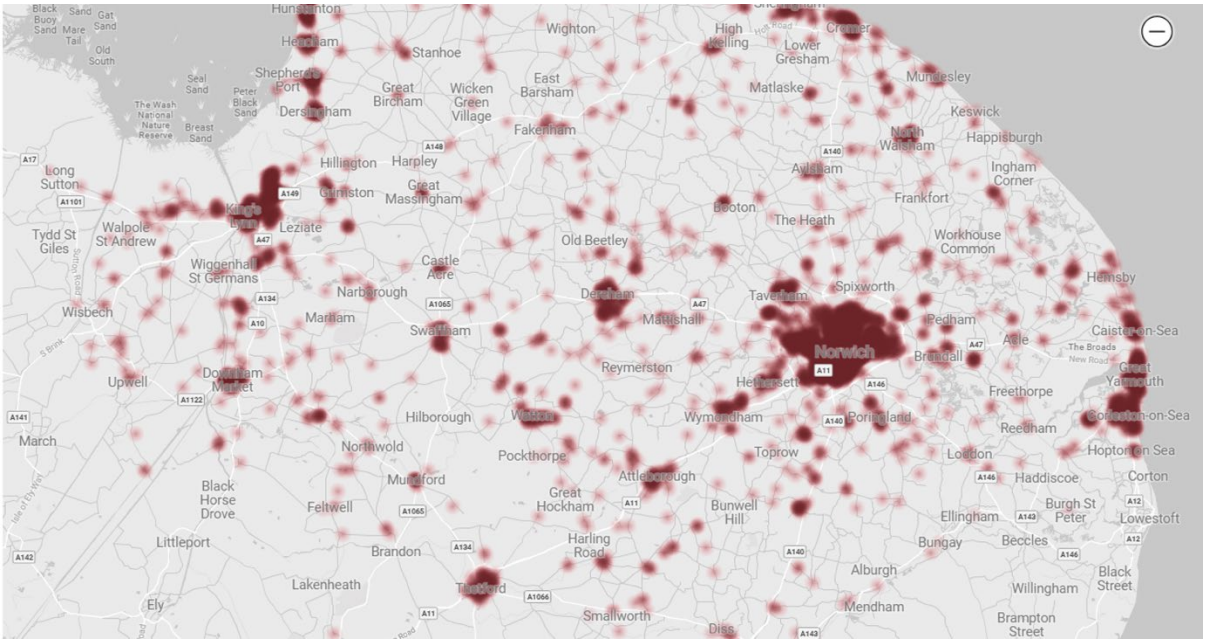

Figure 1: Heatmap of survey responses

Survey respondents were of all ages, with those aged 45-64 and 65 or over particularly well represented. The survey respondents were from across Norfolk – broadly reflecting the main population centres of the county (i.e. Norwich, King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth having high numbers) but also responses from those in more rural areas too.

3. Appendix C – Financial Appraisal

3.1 Current financial position of district councils

Breckland District Council

Breckland District Council concluded the 2024/25 financial year with an underspend of £562k against budget. While the Council experienced overspends in waste services, temporary accommodation costs due to rising homelessness demand, and reduced planning and building control fee income, these were offset by additional treasury income, lower housing benefit claims with higher overpayment recoveries, stronger garden waste subscription performance, and increased commercial property income. Breckland achieved 93% of its savings target and increased its minimum General Fund reserve from £2.5m to over £3m. The absence of plans to replenish usable reserves amid budgetary pressures poses a medium-term risk. The Council's accounts carry disclaimed audit opinion for 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Broadland District Council

Broadland District Council reported a £306k underspend in 2024/25, driven primarily by stronger-than-forecast investment income. The Council was able to transfer £605k into General Reserves, reinforcing its already strong financial position. For 2025/26, Broadland set a net revenue budget requirement of £15.487m, while continuing to face significant homelessness pressures resulting in costly temporary accommodation placements. The authority remains debt-free and is projecting a General Revenue Reserve of £4.644m by March 2026. Audit opinions for 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 are disclaimed.

South Norfolk Council

South Norfolk Council's net expenditure for 2024/25 was £17.142m, £459k below the original budget and £1.13m below the revised budget, despite a range of cost pressures. These were offset by better-than-expected investment income and other savings. The Council was able to transfer funds to reserves, including £600k earmarked for a new nature restoration project. Homelessness demand continues to

exert pressure. For 2025/26, the Council has set a net budget requirement of £21.152m. Audit opinions for 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 are disclaimed.

King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council

King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council recorded a £526k underspend against the approved budget of £26.9m of which £2.1m was supported by planned use of the General Fund reserve. The council had cost pressures driven by inflationary pressures on supplies and lower-than-estimated planning fee income, however, these were offset by increased car parking revenue and other income. The Council also increased its General Fund reserve during the year and subsequently agreed to transfer some to an earmarked reserve to fund economic initiatives. The 2025/26 budget is balanced without any reliance on reserves, with the Council aiming to maintain minimum reserves and improve them over time. Audit opinions are disclaimed for 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Great Yarmouth Borough Council

Great Yarmouth Borough Council set its 2024/25 budget anticipating the use of reserves; outturn figures show reserve usage exceeded forecasts due to shortfalls in income from planning, crematoria, and car parking, lower-than-budgeted business rates, and higher costs in demand-led services. These were partially offset by improved treasury management returns. The General Fund ended the year £601k in deficit. The Housing Revenue Account, however, recorded a £281k surplus. The 2025/26 budget is predicated on further reserve usage. Audit opinions for 2021/22, 2022/23 an 2023/24 are disclaimed.

North Norfolk District Council

North Norfolk District Council reported a £622k underspend in 2024/25, transferring the surplus to reserves. Retained business rates were above budget, and the General Reserve balance at 31 March 2025 stood at £2.825m — comfortably above the recommended minimum. The Council's reserves remain healthy, exceeding 10% of net operating expenditure. In February 2025, it set a budget projecting a £1m surplus for the year, also planned for reserve transfer. Audit opinions are disclaimed for 2021/22, 2022/23, and 2023/24.

Norwich City Council

Norwich City Council reported a £769k underspend on the General Fund revenue account and a windfall surplus of £8.3m arising from a change in national guidance around the use of retained capital receipts on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) during 2024/25. Higher-than-anticipated interest rates generated additional income for the General Fund, while savings were also achieved due to the 2024 pay award being slightly lower than budgeted. The General Fund reserve remains well above the Council's prudent minimum balance, with the 2024/25 underspend transferred to earmarked reserves. In February 2025, the Council set a net budget requirement of £20.85m for 2025/26. Audit opinions for 2021/22, 2022/23, and 2023/24 were disclaimed.

3.2 Council tax harmonisation analysis

3.2.1 Introduction

To evaluate the financial implications of council tax harmonisation, five scenarios were modelled. Each represents a different strategy for aligning Band D charges within each proposed unitary authority from vesting day (assumed to be 1 April 2028) through to full convergence by 1 April 2035. The outcomes are assessed against a baseline scenario in which no reorganisation occurs, and the existing county and district councils continue to set council tax independently, applying the maximum permitted annual increases.

Importantly, this analysis does not make a recommendation. The five scenarios presented are intended to illustrate a range of legally compliant options and their potential fiscal impact. It will be for each shadow authority, once established, to determine its preferred approach to harmonisation based on its local context, policy priorities, and political judgement.

Scenario 1 – Low to Max

All Band D charges within a new unitary are raised to match the highest 2027/28 Band D among its predecessor districts, subject to the statutory 5% cap. Once harmonisation is reached, annual increases continue at the maximum permitted level.

Scenario 2 – High to Min

All Band D charges are immediately aligned to the lowest predecessor district rate of 2027/28. This delivers instant uniformity but results in substantial reductions for higher-charging areas. From this reduced base, Band D increases by 5% annually.

Scenario 3 – Weighted Average on Day 1

The initial Band D charge is set to the weighted average of predecessor district rates for 2027/28, adjusted for their respective tax base sizes. This avoids any first-year increase above the statutory 5% cap. From this starting point, Band D then rises annually at 5%.

Scenario 4 – Weighted Average plus 5% on Day 1

Building on the weighted average approach, this method applies a 5% uplift in the first year — the maximum permissible.

Scenario 5 – Harmonisation Within the 5% Predecessor Authority Cap

Band D charges are set in the first year at the lowest predecessor rate plus 5%, ensuring no area exceeds a 5% increase.

3.2.2 Harmonisation Outcomes

The financial implications of harmonisation vary significantly depending on both the structural model (single, two, or three unitary authorities) and the chosen harmonisation pathway. The table below summarises the cumulative revenue impact from 2025/26 to 2035/36 compared with the baseline (no reorganisation). Negative figures represent foregone revenue, while positive figures reflect a gain.

2025/26 2035/36	Low to Max	High to Min	Weighted Average on Day 1	Weighted Average plus 5% on Day 1	5% Predecessor Authority Cap
Three Unitary Model					
East Norfolk	(90,367,033)	(166, 683,126)	(114,777,603)	21,686,101	(32,814,698)
West Norfolk	(59,382,999)	(121,163,749)	(100,408,283)	13,158,830	(9,153,164)
Greater Norwich	7,191,101	(160,597,725)	(81,860,156)	19,129,449	(63,544,998)
Two Unitary Model					
West Norfolk	(99,900,934)	(184,688,085)	(139,252,196)	20,523,624	(27,184,059)
East Norfolk	N/A	(271,392,525)	(157,793,846)	33,450,757	(85,827,855)
Single Unitary Model					
County-wide	N/A	(485,300,132)	(297,046,043)	53,974,381	(143,692,414)

Table 6. Council Tax Harmonisation Scenarios Under Different Structural Models.

The modelling results show a broadly consistent pattern across Norfolk under all five harmonisation scenarios. In reality, only a few of the modelled scenarios deliver additional revenue. The Weighted Average plus 5% scenario is the only pathway that generates a revenue gain across every structural model. By contrast, the Low to Max scenario delivers a positive outcome only for Greater Norwich within the three-unitary model. This reflects Norwich's comparatively high Band D precept, which significantly raises the starting point for its neighbouring districts.

All other approaches — High to Min, Weighted Average Day 1, and Fastest Harmonisation within the 5% cap — result in revenue losses across every model and geography over the period. This reinforces the need to select a harmonisation pathway that minimises fiscal damage and safeguards the long-term budget position.

Examining the results by structural model reinforces this picture. Under the three-unitary model, all three areas achieve gains under the Weighted Average plus 5% scenario, while Greater Norwich also records a gain under the Low to Max pathway. It is

therefore the only geography in Norfolk with two scenarios that deliver positive revenue. The two-unitary model is more restricted: gains are realised only under Weighted Average plus 5%, with Low to Max ruled out for East Norfolk by referendum limits. The single county-wide unitary shows the same profile, generating gains only under Weighted Average plus 5% and with Low to Max again infeasible.

Overall, there is no single harmonisation strategy that is optimal across all three unitary areas. Instead, each authority will need to weigh political feasibility, fairness to residents, and long-term financial sustainability when determining its preferred path to council tax harmonisation.

3.2.3 Weighted Average: What is it and what does it look like in Norfolk?

The weighted average is a type of mean where each value in the dataset contributes proportionally according to a pre-assigned weight.

$$Weighted\ Average = \frac{\Sigma(x_i \times w_i)}{\Sigma\, w_i}$$

Where:

- x_i = each value
- w_i = its corresponding weight

Unlike a simple average, where all data points are treated equally, a weighted average provides a more accurate reflection of the whole when some values carry greater significance. In the case of council tax harmonisation, for example, a district with a larger tax base exerts a stronger influence on the county-wide picture.

The calculation works by taking the Band D rates of the relevant districts and county, multiplying them by the tax base to determine revenue for each area, then dividing the total revenue by the total tax base.

In 2027/28, the year before vesting day on 1 April 2028, the unitaries would have the following weighted average Band D rates under different structural models:

Structural Model	Area	Weighted Average Band D (£)
Three Unitary Model	East Norfolk	2,120.83
	West Norfolk	2,083.61
	Greater Norwich	2,164.89
Two Unitary Model	West Norfolk	2,093.88
	East Norfolk	2,144.17
One Unitary Model	County-wide Unitary	2,120.99

Table 7. Weighted Average Band D Council Tax by Structural Model (2027/28)

When comparing the different reorganisation options, the three-unitary model offers a fairer and more responsive outcome for Norfolk residents. Under both the single and two-unitary models, households in East and West Norfolk would face higher Band D bills than under the three-unitary option. In effect, two-thirds of Norfolk's geographic area would be subsidising Greater Norwich, which is neither equitable nor justifiable. The three-unitary model avoids this imbalance, ensuring that residents are not asked to shoulder costs driven by circumstances outside their local communities.

Equally important, council tax is a political decision that should reflect local priorities. A single or two-unitary structure binds very different communities together, forcing elected members to make compromises that risk serving no area particularly well. By contrast, three unitaries would allow each authority to set tax levels that align with the realities of their residents—whether that means the challenges of rural service delivery in East and West Norfolk or the pressures of growth and change in Greater Norwich.

Norwich residents, too, are not disadvantaged in this scenario. Under the baseline projection with no reorganisation, the Band D rate for Greater Norwich is expected to reach £2,260.33 by 2027/28. Against this backdrop, the weighted average of £2,164.91 under the three-unitary model is hardly surprising, and represents a reasonable contribution given where the city was already heading.

Ultimately, the three-unitary option balances financial reality with democratic accountability. It protects fairness for East and West Norfolk, provides agility for councils to respond to local needs, and ensures that Greater Norwich pays at a level consistent with its baseline trajectory. Far from being a weakness, the variation

between the three areas is a strength—it recognises the diversity of Norfolk and empowers each community to shape its own future.

3.2.4 East, West and Greater Norwich: Scenario Analysis

The financial impact of each harmonisation approach was modelled over the period from vesting day (1 April 2028) to full convergence (1 April 2035). The table below presents the cumulative net revenue effect for each proposed unitary authority under the five scenarios described above under a three unitary model. Positive figures represent additional cumulative revenue compared to the baseline (no reorganisation), while negative figures indicate cumulative revenue foregone.

Scenario	East Norfolk	West Norfolk	Greater Norwich
Low to Max	(90.37)	(59.38)	7.19
High to Min	(166.68)	(121.16)	(160.60)
Weighted Average on Day 1	(114.78)	(100.41)	(81.86)
Weighted Average + 5% on Day 1	21.69	13.16	19.13
Fastest Harmonisation Within 5% Cap	(32.81)	(9.15)	(63.54)

Table 8. Cumulative Net Revenue Impact of Harmonisation Scenarios, 2025/26 to 2035/36 (£m).

The heat map above demonstrates that, under most harmonisation scenarios, all three proposed unitaries would experience revenue reductions compared to the baseline, with only the "Weighted Average +5%" approach delivering positive outcomes across the board. East Norfolk is hit particularly hard under "High to Min" and "Weighted Average," with revenue losses of over £100m in both cases, though it sees a sizeable gain of £21.7m under "Weighted Average +5%" – the highest gain seen in all unitaries in all scenarios. West Norfolk shows a similar pattern, with sizeable losses under three scenarios but a net gain of £13.2m only under "Weighted Average +5%." Greater Norwich also faces deep losses in most cases, dropping as low as £160.6m under "High to Min," but achieves a strong relative gain of £19.1m under "Weighted Average +5%."

These results reinforce two points. First, the fiscal risks of poorly chosen harmonisation strategies are significant: all three authorities suffer substantial long-term revenue losses, especially under "High to Min," with Greater Norwich hardest hit. Second, the

"Weighted Average +5%" scenario emerges as the only approach that generates higher revenue across all three authorities simultaneously. The evidence underlines the importance of harmonisation being guided by financial resilience, rather than short-term political preference, if the new unitaries are to begin life on stable footing.

As the proposed model for Norfolk is based on three unitaries, it is important to examine the performance of this option in greater detail:

East Norfolk

East Norfolk inherits both South Norfolk and Broadland's relatively high tax bases, alongside the comparatively high Band D levels in Great Yarmouth Borough Council and South Norfolk Council. It also receives the largest share of South Norfolk's tax base, which is divided across all three unitaries under the proposed boundaries.

Scenario	Net Revenue Gain Compared to Baseline (£m)
Low to Max	-90.37
High to Min	-166.68
Weighted Average (Day 1)	-114.78
Weighted Average + 5% (Day 1)	21.69
Fastest Harmonisation (5% Cap)	-32.81

Table 9. East Norfolk Council Tax Harmonisation Results.

Under the Low to Max scenario, East Norfolk's Band D is set to Great Yarmouth Borough Council's rate (the highest in the new unitary) before rising by 5% annually. However, this trajectory grows more slowly than under the baseline, meaning the authority never closes the gap, and revenue losses accumulate over time. As expected, the High to Min pathway also results in significant losses, as all districts are pulled down to the lowest common rate.

The Weighted Average (Day 1) produces a starting Band D of £2,120.83 in 2028/29. This results in a modest gain for Broadland District Council and a small reduction for Great Yarmouth Borough Council, while North Norfolk District Council and South Norfolk Council remain largely unaffected in the first year. However, because the rate of increase is lower than under the baseline, the unitary still suffers a compounded revenue loss over the period.

By contrast, the Weighted Average plus 5% option allows the new unitary to set its Band D at the highest permissible level in Year 1, delivering a sustained revenue gain

relative to the baseline. This is the only scenario that produces a positive outcome for East Norfolk over the modelling horizon.

Finally, the Fastest Harmonisation within the 5% Cap scenario restricts annual increases to ensure no predecessor area rises by more than 5%. In practice, this means Broadland can rise by the full 5%, but other districts are limited to lower increases—3% in some cases and only 2% in Great Yarmouth Borough Council. As a result, East Norfolk's revenue falls short of the baseline and produces a net loss by 2035/36.

West Norfolk

West Norfolk combines Breckland, which has the lowest Band D charge in Norfolk, with King's Lynn and West Norfolk, which has the largest tax base of all the districts. This creates a distinctive profile in the modelling, balancing a very low starting precept with a comparatively broad revenue base.

Scenario	Net Revenue Gain Compared to Baseline (£m)
Low to Max	-59.38
High to Min	-121.16
Weighted Average (Day 1)	-100.41
Weighted Average + 5% (Day 1)	13.16
Fastest Harmonisation (5% Cap)	-9.15

Table 10. West Norfolk Council Tax Harmonisation Results.

Under the Low to Max scenario, all districts are harmonised to South Norfolk's Band D (the highest within the unitary). From there, the precept rises by 5% annually. However, the initial gap to the baseline—around £7 million in 2028/29—is never recovered, resulting in a sustained loss over the period. As expected, the High to Min scenario produces further losses, with all districts drawn down to Breckland's exceptionally low Band D.

The Weighted Average (Day 1) for 2027/28 produces a starting Band D of £2,083.61. This represents an uplift for Breckland, but a reduction for both King's Lynn and South Norfolk. Because the progression thereafter remains below the baseline, the unitary records an overall net loss.

By contrast, the Weighted Average plus 5% pathway delivers a positive result, generating modest revenue gains across the unitary. In practice, this equates to a 4% increase for King's Lynn, 6% for Breckland, and 3% for South Norfolk in the first year. The

uplift compounds in subsequent years, making this the only scenario that yields a revenue gain.

The Fastest Harmonisation within the 5% Cap scenario restricts annual increases to ensure no district rises by more than 5%. Here, Breckland acts as the limiting factor. While Breckland rises by its full 5%, this translates to only a 3% increase for King's Lynn and 2% for South Norfolk, leaving the unitary behind the baseline and generating losses by 2035/36.

Greater Norwich

Greater Norwich incorporates the city of Norwich, with some areas of the two lower-precept districts. Norwich has a much higher Band D charge than others – reflecting the civic responsibilities, high number of tourist visitors and night-time economy and choices of service provision in the city compared to certainly Broadland Council which for example provides no sports or leisure centre facilities. It also inherits the majority of Broadland's tax base, which is divided between East Norfolk and Greater Norwich under the proposed boundaries.

Scenario	Net Revenue Gain Compared to Baseline (£m)
Low to Max	7.19
High to Min	-160.60
Weighted Average (Day 1)	-81.86
Weighted Average + 5% (Day 1)	19.13
Fastest Harmonisation (5% Cap)	-63.54

Table 11. Greater Norwich Council Tax Harmonisation Results.

Greater Norwich is the only one of the three proposed unitaries to generate positive outcomes under two scenarios: Low to Max and Weighted Average plus 5%. Under the Low to Max pathway, all districts align to Norwich's very high Band D. For most areas this represents a substantial uplift compared with the baseline, though Norwich itself sees an effective freeze. The benefits are not immediate: the scenario only begins to outperform the baseline in 2031/32, when the 5% referendum cap applied to the new unitary overtakes the 3% district and 5% county cap in the baseline.

The High to Min scenario produces significant revenue losses as all districts are brought down to the lowest common rate, although these losses are smaller in scale

than those experienced in East Norfolk under the same approach. The Weighted Average (Day 1) scenario also leads to an overall loss. Norwich faces a 4% reduction in the first year, while Broadland and South Norfolk record modest gains, but the lower overall starting point results in revenue falling short of the baseline over time.

By contrast, the Weighted Average plus 5% scenario generates gains across the board. Norwich itself benefits only slightly, with an increase of around 1%, but the impact is far greater for Broadland (around 9%) and South Norfolk (around 7%), producing a sustained positive outcome for the unitary as a whole.

Finally, under the Fastest Harmonisation within the 5% Cap scenario, Broadland's 5% ceiling constrains the other districts. Norwich sees a reduction in its Band D, while South Norfolk records only a modest uplift. This results in an overall loss against the baseline by the end of the period.

3.2.5 Conclusion

The modelling demonstrates that council tax harmonisation is a complex but manageable challenge, with different approaches carrying distinct fiscal and political trade-offs. No single pathway is universally optimal, and it will be for each new authority to weigh financial resilience against local priorities when determining its approach.

What is clearer, however, is the structural dimension. The three-unitary model stands out as the only option in which more than one harmonisation pathway delivers positive revenue outcomes. This provides greater flexibility for future decision-makers, as well as a closer alignment between local tax bases and local accountability. By enabling each unitary to make choices that reflect the circumstances of its communities, the three-unitary model offers Norfolk the best opportunity to balance financial sustainability with democratic responsiveness.

3.3 Council tax harmonisation analysis by area

3.3.1 Greater Norwich

Scenario 1 – Low to Max

Band D	2027/28	2028/29	Difference	Difference (%)
Norwich City	2,260.33	2,260.33	–	0%
Broadland	2,080.49	2,260.33	179.84	9%
South Norfolk	2,121.39	2,260.33	138.95	7%

Table 12: Low to Max' scenario results for Greater Norwich – resident experience 2027/28 to 2028/29

Under the Low to Max scenario, council tax rates across Greater Norwich are brought up to the current highest level – that of Norwich City. For Norwich residents, this means no change at all: their Band D charge remains at £2,260.33. However, for Broadland and South Norfolk residents the effect is significant. Broadland sees the sharpest rise, with Band D increasing by almost £180 (a 9% increase), while South Norfolk faces an increase of nearly £140 (7%).

This scenario therefore delivers a major boost to Greater Norwich's council tax revenue base — an additional £7.7m over the ten-year period — but it does so at the expense of steep and immediate increases for households in Broadland and South Norfolk.

Comparison to other structural options

Single county unitary

N/A - Not feasible, as moving straight to Norwich's Band D would breach the 5% referendum cap.

Two unitary model

West Norfolk

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
King's Lynn	£2,098.45	£2,119.67	£21.22	1%
Breckland	£2,064.11	£2,119.67	£55.56	3%
North Norfolk	£2,119.67	£2,119.67	-	0%

Table 13: West Norfolk under a two unitary model – Low to Max Scenario results

- None of the councils making up West Norfolk in the two-unitary model overlap with those in Greater Norwich under the three-unitary model, so a direct comparison between the two areas is not meaningful.

East Norfolk

N/A - Not feasible, as moving straight to Norwich's Band D would breach the 5% referendum cap.

Scenario 2 – High to Min

Band D	2027/28	2028/29	Difference	Difference (%)
Norwich City	2,260.33	2,080.49	(179.84)	-8%
Broadland	2,080.49	2,080.49	-	0%
South Norfolk	2,121.39	2,080.49	(40.90)	-2%

Table 14: High to Min' scenario results for East Norfolk – resident experience 2027/28 to 2028/29

In the High to Min scenario, all three areas move downwards to align with Broadland's current Band D rate of £2,080.49. For Broadland residents, this means no change at all. However, for Norwich City, the impact is stark: Band D charges fall by almost £180, an 8% reduction. South Norfolk also sees a modest cut of around £41 (2%).

While this approach may appear attractive to residents facing lower bills, it creates a significant funding shortfall for the new Greater Norwich authority. Over ten years, the model shows a £160.6m reduction in revenue compared to baseline. Given that Greater Norwich already starts from a weaker financial position than East or West, this scenario would deepen the authority's budget pressures and undermine its financial sustainability.

Comparison to other structural options

Single county unitary

Band D	2027/28	2028/29	Difference	Difference (%)
Broadland DC	2,080.49	2,064.11	(16.38)	-1%
North Norfolk DC	2,119.67	2,064.11	(55.56)	-3%
South Norfolk Council	2,121.39	2,064.11	(57.28)	-3%
Great Yarmouth BC	2,139.79	2,064.11	(75.68)	-4%
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	2,098.45	2,064.11	(34.34)	-2%
Breckland DC	2,064.11	2,064.11	-	0%
Norwich City Council	2,260.33	2,064.11	(196.22)	-9%

Table 15: Single unitary under High to Min scenario results

- In a single unitary under this scenario, all councils converge at Breckland's lower Band D, whereas in the three-unitary model Greater Norwich converges at Broadland's slightly higher level.
- As a result, the reductions are sharper: Norwich's Band D falls by 9% under the single unitary compared with 8% in the three-unitary, while South Norfolk drops by 3% in the single unitary versus 2% in the three-unitary model.

Two unitary model

West Norfolk

Band D	2027/28	2028/29	Difference	Difference (%)
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	2,098.45	2,064.11	(34.34)	-2%
Breckland DC	2,064.11	2,064.11	-	0%
North Norfolk DC	2,119.67	2,064.11	(55.56)	-3%

Table 16: West Norfolk under a two unitary model - High to Min Scenario results

East Norfolk

Band D	2027/28	2028/29	Difference	Difference (%)
Great Yarmouth BC	2,139.79	2,080.49	(59.30)	-3%
Norwich City Council	2,260.33	2,080.49	(179.84)	-8%
South Norfolk Council	2,121.39	2,080.49	(40.90)	-2%
Broadland DC	2,080.49	2,080.49	-	0%

Table 17: East Norfolk under a two unitary model - High to Min scenario results

- Under the two-unitary model, the East Norfolk authority also converges at Broadland's Band D, the same as in the three-unitary model. As a result, the outcomes are identical across both structures.

Scenario 3 – Weighted Average

Band D	2027/28	2028/29	Difference	Difference (%)
Norwich City Council	£2,260.33	£2,164.91	(£95.42)	-4%
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,164.91	£84.42	4%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,164.91	£43.52	2%

Table 18: Scenario 3 – Weighted Average

In the Weighted Average scenario, council tax rates converge towards the middle point of the three predecessor districts. Norwich City residents see a reduction of £95.42 (–4%), while Broadland residents face an increase of £84.42 (+4%) and South Norfolk residents an increase of £43.52 (+2%). This balanced approach spreads the adjustment more evenly, limiting sharp swings for any single group of residents. Financially, it delivers a dramatic revenue gain of £19.13m compared to baseline which is one of the largest gains seen across all unitaries in all scenarios.

Comparison to other structural options

Single county unitary

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,121.01	£40.52	2%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,121.01	£1.34	0%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,121.01	(£0.38)	0%
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,121.01	(£18.78)	–1%
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,121.01	£22.56	1%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,121.01	£56.90	3%
Norwich City Council	£2,260.33	£2,121.01	(£139.32)	–6%

Table 19: Weighted Average scenario under the single county unitary model

- Under a single unitary, the weighted average Band D is lower than in the Greater Norwich authority, largely due to Norwich's high starting Band D rate.
- Norwich households therefore face a sharper reduction under the single unitary (–6%) compared with the three-unitary model (–4%).
- Broadland records a smaller increase, rising by 2% under the single unitary compared with 4% in the three-unitary.
- South Norfolk follows the same pattern, with a modest cut under the single unitary rather than the 2% rise seen in the three-unitary model.

Two unitary model

West Norfolk

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,093.88	(£4.57)	0%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,093.88	£29.77	1%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,093.88	(£25.79)	-1%

Table 20: Weighted Average scenario under the two unitary model for West Norfolk

East Norfolk

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,144.22	£4.42	0%
Norwich City Council	£2,260.33	£2,144.22	(£116.11)	5%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,144.22	£22.83	1%
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,144.22	£63.73	3%

Table 21: Weighted Average scenario under the two unitary model for East Norfolk

- Under a two-unitary model, the weighted average in East Norfolk is lower than in the three-unitary's Greater Norwich.
- As a result, Norwich households face a 5% cut, compared with 4% under the three-unitary.
- South Norfolk sees a smaller uplift, rising by 1% instead of 2%.
- Broadland's increase is also reduced, at 3% rather than 4%.

Scenario 4 – Weighted Average + 5%

	2027/28	2028/29	Difference	Difference (%)
Norwich City	2,260.33	2,273.16	12.82	1%
Broadland	2,080.49	2,273.16	192.67	9%
South Norfolk	2,121.39	2,273.16	151.77	7%

Table 22: Scenario 4 – Weighted Average + 5%

In the Weighted Average + 5% scenario, council tax rates are set at the maximum level permitted for harmonisation, representing the most ambitious option available. For Greater Norwich, this generates the largest gain of all five scenarios—around £19.1m above the baseline over ten years. Norwich City residents face only a small increase of £12.82 (+1%), while Broadland and South Norfolk residents experience much steeper uplifts of £192.67 (+9%) and £151.77 (+7%) respectively. This scenario therefore delivers the greatest financial return, but at the cost of pushing households to the highest feasible council tax levels.

Comparison to other structural options

Single county unitary

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,227.06	£146.57	7%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,227.06	£107.39	5%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,227.06	£105.67	5%
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,227.06	£87.27	4%
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,227.06	£128.61	6%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,227.06	£162.95	8%
Norwich City Council	£2,260.33	£2,227.06	(£33.27)	-1%

Table 23: Weighted Average + 5% scenario under the single county unitary model

- Under a single unitary, the weighted average Band D +5% is lower than in Greater Norwich.
- As a result, Norwich City, Broadland, and South Norfolk all face smaller increases under this model compared with the three-unitary option.
- In Norwich, residents would actually see a 1% tax cut, compared with a 1% rise under the three-unitary scenario.

Two unitary model

West Norfolk

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,198.58	£100.13	5%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,198.58	£134.47	7%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,198.58	£78.91	4%

Table 24: Weighted Average + 5% scenario under the two unitary model for West Norfolk

East Norfolk

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,251.43	£111.64	5%
Norwich City Council	£2,260.33	£2,251.43	(£8.90)	0%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,251.43	£130.04	6%
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,251.43	£170.94	8%

Table 25: Weighted Average + 5% scenario under the two unitary model for East Norfolk

- In the two-unitary model, the weighted average Band D +5% is lower than in the three-unitary model.
- Norwich residents therefore see a small tax cut in the two-unitary, compared with a 1% rise in the three-unitary.
- By contrast, South Norfolk and Broadland residents face 1% higher rises under the three-unitary than in the two-unitary model.

Scenario 5 – Fastest Harmonisation (5% Predecessor Cap)

	2027/28	2028/29	Difference	Difference (%)
Norwich City Council	2,260.33	2,184.52	(75.82)	-3%
Broadland DC	2,080.49	2,184.52	104.02	5%
South Norfolk Council	2,121.39	2,184.52	63.13	3%

Table 26: Scenario 5 – Fastest Harmonisation (5%% Predecessor Cap)

The Fastest Harmonisation (5% Cap) scenario illustrates how quickly council tax levels could converge if all predecessor authorities were constrained to annual increases of no more than 5%. In this case, Norwich City residents actually experience a reduction of £75.82 (–3%) as the city's Band D charge moves down towards the harmonised level. By contrast, Broadland residents see the steepest increase of £104.02 (+5%), with South Norfolk residents facing a more modest uplift of £63.13 (+3%).
It produces a divergent impact: households in Norwich benefit from a cut, while those in Broadland and South Norfolk bear notable increases. From a financial perspective, there is an overall loss of £63m over the ten-year period.

Comparison to other structural options

Single county unitary

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,167.32	£86.83	4%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,167.32	£47.65	2%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,167.32	£45.93	2%
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,167.32	£27.52	1%
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,167.32	£68.87	3%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,167.32	£103.21	5%
Norwich City Council	£2,260.33	£2,167.32	(£93.02)	–4%

Table 27: Fastest Harmonisation (5%% Predecessor Cap) Scenario under the single county unitary model

- Under a single unitary, convergence occurs at a lower 2028/29 Band D because of Breckland's inclusion. As a result, Norwich residents face a steeper cut than under the three-unitary model, while South Norfolk and Broadland residents see smaller increases.

Two unitary model

West Norfolk

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,167.32	£68.87	3%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,167.32	£103.21	5%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,167.32	£47.65	2%

Table 28: Fastest Harmonisation (5%% Predecessor Cap) scenario under the two unitary model for West Norfolk

East Norfolk

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,184.52	£44.72	2%
Norwich City Council	£2,260.33	£2,184.52	(£75.82)	-3%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,184.52	£63.13	3%
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,184.52	£104.02	5%

Table 29: Fastest Harmonisation (5%% Predecessor Cap) scenario under the two unitary model for East Norfolk

- Under a two-unitary model, the East Norfolk authority converges at the same Band D level as Greater Norwich in the three-unitary model. As a result, the increases and the reduction for Norwich residents are identical across both options.

3.3.2 West Norfolk

Scenario 1 – Low to Max

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,121.39	£22.94	1%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,121.39	£57.28	3%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,121.39	–	0%

Table 30: Low to Max' scenario results for West Norfolk – resident experience 2027/28 to 2028/29

Under the Low to Max scenario, council tax rates across West Norfolk are harmonised up to South Norfolk Council's Band D level of £2,121.39. For South Norfolk residents, this means no change, while King's Lynn households see a modest rise of £23 (1%). Breckland District Council faces the steepest adjustment, with Band D increasing by £57 (3%) to align with the higher rate. While the household-level uplifts are relatively limited in scale, the overall effect for the authority is negative, with the scenario reducing resources by around £44m compared to the baseline over the ten-year period.

Comparison to other structural options

Single county unitary

N/A - Not feasible, as moving straight to Norwich's Band D would breach the 5% referendum cap.

Two unitary model

West Norfolk

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,119.67	£21.22	1%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,119.67	£55.56	3%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,119.67	–	0%

Table 31: West Norfolk under a two unitary model – Low to Max Scenario results

- Under this scenario in the three-unitary model, districts converge at South Norfolk's Band D. In West Norfolk under the two-unitary model, convergence instead occurs at North Norfolk Council's (a lower level than South Norfolk's). As a result, residents in King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council and Breckland District Council see slightly smaller increases—though the difference is minimal, around £1–£2.

East Norfolk

N/A - Not feasible, as moving straight to Norwich's Band D would breach the 5% referendum cap.

Scenario 2 – High to Min

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,064.11	(£34.34)	-2%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,064.11	-	0%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,064.11	(£57.28)	-3%

Table 32: High to Min' scenario results for East Norfolk – resident experience 2027/28 to 2028/29

Under the High to Min scenario, council tax rates across West Norfolk are harmonised down to Breckland District Council's Band D level of £2,064.11. For Breckland residents, this means no change, but households elsewhere see reductions: King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council falls by £34 (-2%) and South Norfolk Council by £57 (-3%). While these cuts may be welcomed by residents in the short term, they significantly weaken the council tax base, removing £121m of potential revenue over the ten-year period and leaving West Norfolk in a far more constrained financial position.

Comparison to other structural options

Single county unitary

Band D	2027/28	2028/29	Difference	Difference (%)
Broadland DC	2,080.49	2,064.11	(16.38)	-1%
North Norfolk DC	2,119.67	2,064.11	(55.56)	-3%
South Norfolk Council	2,121.39	2,064.11	(57.28)	-3%
Great Yarmouth BC	2,139.79	2,064.11	(75.68)	-4%
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	2,098.45	2,064.11	(34.34)	-2%

Breckland DC	2,064.11	2,064.11	-	0%
Norwich City Council	2,260.33	2,064.11	(196.22)	-9%

Table 33: Single unitary under High to Min scenario results

- Under a single county unitary, the results are identical to the three-unitary model in this scenario as all converge at Breckland's Band D.

Two unitary model

West Norfolk

Band D	2027/28	2028/29	Difference	Difference (%)
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	2,098.45	2,064.11	(34.34)	-2%
Breckland DC	2,064.11	2,064.11	-	0%
North Norfolk DC	2,119.67	2,064.11	(55.56)	-3%

Table 34: West Norfolk under a two unitary model - High to Min Scenario results

East Norfolk

Band D	2027/28	2028/29	Difference	Difference (%)
Great Yarmouth BC	2,139.79	2,080.49	(59.30)	-3%
Norwich City Council	2,260.33	2,080.49	(179.84)	-8%
South Norfolk Council	2,121.39	2,080.49	(40.90)	-2%
Broadland DC	2,080.49	2,080.49	-	0%

Table 35: East Norfolk under a two unitary model - High to Min scenario results

- Under a two unitary model, results are broadly similar to the three-unitary scenario.
- The main difference is for South Norfolk Council residents, who would see a steeper drop of -3% in the West unitary in the three-unitary model compared to -2% under the two-unitary model.

Scenario 3 - Weighted Average

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,083.61	(£14.84)	-1%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,083.61	£19.50	1%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,083.61	(£37.78)	-2%

Table 36: Scenario 3 - Weighted Average

Under the Weighted Average scenario, council tax rates across West Norfolk converge at £2,083.61. This produces a mixed impact: Breckland households see a modest rise of £20 (1%), while King's Lynn residents experience a small reduction of £15 (-1%). South Norfolk faces the largest cut, with Band D falling by £38 (-2%). Although the percentage shifts are relatively limited, the downward adjustments in King's Lynn and South Norfolk outweigh the uplift in Breckland, leaving West Norfolk with a weaker overall revenue position compared to the baseline (£85.6m decrease).

Comparison to other structural options

Single county unitary

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,121.01	£40.52	2%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,121.01	£1.34	0%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,121.01	(£0.38)	0%
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,121.01	(£18.78)	-1%
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,121.01	£22.56	1%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,121.01	£56.90	3%
Norwich City Council	£2,260.33	£2,121.01	(£139.32)	-6%

Table 37: Weighted Average scenario under the single county unitary model

- Under a single unitary, the weighted average is higher, meaning residents in King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council see a tax increase, whereas under the three-unitary model they experience a cut.
- In Breckland District Council, residents face only a 1% rise under the three-unitary, but this rises to 3% under a single unitary.
- In South Norfolk, residents see cuts under both models, though the reduction is larger under the three-unitary model.

Two unitary model

West Norfolk

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,093.88	(£4.57)	0%

Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,093.88	£29.77	1%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,093.88	(£25.79)	-1%

Table 38: Weighted Average scenario under the two unitary model for West Norfolk

East Norfolk

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,144.22	£4.42	0%
Norwich City Council	£2,260.33	£2,144.22	(£116.11)	-5%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,144.22	£22.83	1%
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,144.22	£63.73	3%

Table 39: Weighted Average scenario under the two unitary model for East Norfolk

- The weighted average in West Norfolk under the three-unitary model is lower than in the two-unitary West.
- King's Lynn residents see a small cut under the two-unitary, but a larger cut under the three-unitary.
- Breckland residents experience a modest increase of 1% in both models.
- South Norfolk residents face a 2% cut under the three-unitary but a 1% increase under the two-unitary.

Scenario 4 – Weighted Average + 5%

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,187.79	£89.34	4%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,187.79	£123.68	6%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,187.79	£66.40	3%

Table 40: Scenario 4 – Weighted Average + 5%

In the Weighted Average +5% scenario, council tax rates in West Norfolk are harmonised upwards to £2,187.79. This delivers clear increases across all three districts,

though the scale varies: Breckland District Council sees the largest uplift of £124 (6%), reflecting its very low starting point, while King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council rises by £89 (4%) and South Norfolk Council by £66 (3%). These rises are more pronounced than in other scenarios, but the result is a much stronger and more sustainable council tax base. The scenario generates a positive revenue impact, leaving West Norfolk £13.2m better off than the baseline over the ten-year period – the best performing of all scenarios modelled for West.

Comparison to other structural options

Single county unitary

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,227.06	£146.57	7%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,227.06	£107.39	5%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,227.06	£105.67	5%
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,227.06	£87.27	4%
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,227.06	£128.61	6%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,227.06	£162.95	8%
Norwich City Council	£2,260.33	£2,227.06	(£33.27)	-1%

Table 41: Weighted Average + 5% scenario under the single county unitary model

- Under a single unitary, the Band D plus 5% level is higher than in the three-unitary model, resulting in larger increases for residents in King's Lynn & West Norfolk, Breckland and South Norfolk.

Two unitary model

West Norfolk

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,198.58	£100.13	5%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,198.58	£134.47	7%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,198.58	£78.91	4%

Table 42: Weighted Average + 5% scenario under the two unitary model for West Norfolk

East Norfolk

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,251.43	£111.64	5%
Norwich City Council	£2,260.33	£2,251.43	(£8.90)	0%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,251.43	£130.04	6%
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,251.43	£170.94	8%

Table 43: Weighted Average + 5% scenario under the two unitary model for East Norfolk

- The Weighted Average +5% for West Norfolk under the two-unitary model is higher than under the three-unitary. As a result, residents in King's Lynn and Breckland face steeper increases in the two-unitary scenario.
- For South Norfolk, the contrast is especially stark: under the two-unitary model the council tax rise is almost double that of the three-unitary (£130.04 vs £66.40).

Scenario 5 – Fastest Harmonisation (5% Predecessor Cap)

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,167.32	£68.87	3%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,167.32	£103.21	5%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,167.32	£45.93	2%

Table 44: Scenario 5 – Fastest Harmonisation (5%% Predecessor Cap)

Under the Fastest Harmonisation scenario, Band D rates across West Norfolk are aligned at £2,167.32, representing the lowest predecessor rate uplifted by 5%. Breckland sees the steepest rise of £103 (5%), with King's Lynn also increasing by £69 (3%) and South Norfolk by £46 (2%). These changes are moderate compared to Weighted Average +5%, but they still represent meaningful adjustments for residents. From a fiscal perspective, this approach generates a modest net gain, leaving West Norfolk £5.6m better off than the baseline over ten years but balances this with ensuring no resident experiences more than a 5% rise.

Comparison to other structural options

Single county unitary

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,167.32	£86.83	4%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,167.32	£47.65	2%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,167.32	£45.93	2%
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,167.32	£27.52	1%
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,167.32	£68.87	3%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,167.32	£103.21	5%
Norwich City Council	£2,260.33	£2,167.32	(£93.02)	-4%

Table 45: Fastest Harmonisation (5%% Predecessor Cap) Scenario under the single county unitary model

- Under this scenario, all districts in West Norfolk under the three-unitary model converge at Breckland's Band D +5%. The single unitary follows the same approach, so the increases are identical.

Two unitary model

West Norfolk

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,167.32	£68.87	3%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,167.32	£103.21	5%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,167.32	£47.65	2%

Table 46: Fastest Harmonisation (5%% Predecessor Cap) scenario under the two unitary model for West Norfolk

- In West Norfolk under the two-unitary model, Band D is also capped at Breckland's +5%, the same as in the single unitary. This means residents in North Norfolk face a smaller rise than they would under the three-unitary model.

East Norfolk

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,184.52	£44.72	2%

Norwich City Council	£2,260.33	£2,184.52	(£75.82)	-3%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,184.52	£63.13	3%
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,184.52	£104.02	5%

Table 47: Fastest Harmonisation (5%% Predecessor Cap) scenario under the two unitary model for East Norfolk

- In the two-unitary model, West Norfolk again converges at Breckland +5%, matching the three-unitary outcome. However, in the East Norfolk of the two-unitary model, residents in South Norfolk face a sharper rise of 3%, compared with a smaller 2% increase under the three-unitary model.

3.3.3 East Norfolk

Scenario 1 – Low to Max

	Band D 2027/28	2028/29	Difference	Difference (%)
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,139.79	£59.30	3%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,139.79	£20.13	1%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,139.79	£18.41	1%
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,139.79	-	0%

Table 48: Low to Max' scenario results for East Norfolk – resident experience 2027/28 to 2028/29

Under the Low to Max scenario, council tax rates across East Norfolk are brought up to Great Yarmouth Borough Council's Band D level of £2,139.79. For Great Yarmouth residents, this means no change, while the increases elsewhere are relatively modest: Broadland faces the largest rise of £59 (3%), with North Norfolk and South Norfolk seeing smaller uplifts of £20 (1%) and £18 (1%) respectively. Despite the limited household impacts, this harmonisation scenario results in foregone revenue, with council tax income falling £90.4m below the baseline over the ten-year period.

Comparison to other structural options

Single county unitary

N/A - Not feasible, as moving straight to Norwich's Band D would breach the 5% referendum cap.

Two unitary model

West Norfolk

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,119.67	£21.22	1%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,119.67	£55.56	3%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,119.67	-	0%

Table 49: West Norfolk under a two unitary model – Low to Max Scenario results

- In West Norfolk under the two-unitary model, all authorities converge at North Norfolk's Band D of £2,119.67. This is lower than the Band D level reached in East Norfolk under the three-unitary model, meaning that North Norfolk residents face a small increase of £20.13 in the three-unitary scenario but experience a freeze under the two-unitary West.

East Norfolk

N/A - Not feasible, as moving straight to Norwich's Band D would breach the 5% referendum cap.

Scenario 2 – High to Min

	Band D			
	2027/28	2028/29	Difference	Difference (%)
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,080.49	-	0%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,080.49	(£39.18)	-2%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,080.49	(£40.90)	-2%

Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,080.49	(£59.30)	-3%

Table 50: High to Min' scenario results for Greater Norwich - resident experience 2027/28 to 2028/29

Under the High to Min scenario, council tax rates across East Norfolk are brought down to Broadland District Council's Band D level of £2,080.49. For Broadland residents, this results in no change, but the reductions elsewhere are more noticeable: North Norfolk's Band D falls by £39 (-2%), South Norfolk by £41 (-2%), and Great Yarmouth Borough Council by £59 (-3%). While households benefit from lower bills, this scenario substantially reduces the council's fiscal capacity, delivering only a £56.4m net revenue gain compared to baseline — the weakest outcome of the five harmonisation approaches

Comparison to other structural options

Single county unitary

Band D	2027/28	2028/29	Difference	Difference (%)
Broadland DC	2,080.49	2,064.11	(16.38)	-1%
North Norfolk DC	2,119.67	2,064.11	(55.56)	-3%
South Norfolk Council	2,121.39	2,064.11	(57.28)	-3%
Great Yarmouth BC	2,139.79	2,064.11	(75.68)	-4%
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	2,098.45	2,064.11	(34.34)	-2%
Breckland DC	2,064.11	2,064.11	-	0%
Norwich City Council	2,260.33	2,064.11	(196.22)	-9%

Table 51: Single unitary under High to Min scenario results

- Under a single county unitary, reductions are deeper than in the three-unitary model. For example, Great Yarmouth Borough Council falls by -4% compared to -3%, with North Norfolk District Council and South Norfolk Council also facing steeper cuts.

Two unitary model

West Norfolk

Band D	2027/28	2028/29	Difference	Difference (%)
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	2,098.45	2,064.11	(34.34)	-2%
Breckland DC	2,064.11	2,064.11	-	0%
North Norfolk DC	2,119.67	2,064.11	(55.56)	-3%

Table 52: West Norfolk under a two unitary model - High to Min Scenario results

East Norfolk

Band D	2027/28	2028/29	Difference	Difference (%)
Great Yarmouth BC	2,139.79	2,080.49	(59.30)	-3%
Norwich City Council	2,260.33	2,080.49	(179.84)	-8%
South Norfolk Council	2,121.39	2,080.49	(40.90)	-2%
Broadland DC	2,080.49	2,080.49	-	0%

Table 53: East Norfolk under a two unitary model - High to Min scenario results

- Under a two unitary model, results are broadly similar to the three-unitary scenario.
- The main difference is for North Norfolk residents, who would see a steeper drop of -3% in the West unitary of the two-unitary model compared to -2% under the three-unitary model.

Scenario 3 – Weighted Average

	2027/28	2028/29		
	Band D		Difference	Difference (%)
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,120.87	£40.38	2%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,120.87	£1.28	0%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,120.87	(£0.44)	0%
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,120.87	(£18.85)	-1%

Table 54: Scenario 3 – Weighted Average

The Weighted Average scenario brings council tax rates in East Norfolk to a blended midpoint across districts. Broadland records the largest increase, with Band D rising by just over £40 (2%). North Norfolk experiences only a negligible uplift of £1, while South Norfolk remains effectively unchanged. Great Yarmouth Borough Council, by contrast, sees a modest reduction of £19 (–1%). This balanced approach avoids sharp swings for households while still strengthening revenues, adding £108.5m over the ten-year period compared with the baseline.

Comparison to other structural options

Single county unitary

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,121.01	£40.52	2%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,121.01	£1.34	0%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,121.01	(£0.38)	0%
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,121.01	(£18.78)	–1%
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,121.01	£22.56	1%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,121.01	£56.90	3%
Norwich City Council	£2,260.33	£2,121.01	(£139.32)	–6%

Table 55: Weighted Average scenario under the single county unitary model

Under a single unitary, the weighted average is slightly higher, leading to marginally larger increases for residents in Broadland District Council and North Norfolk District Council compared with the three-unitary model. Conversely, residents in Great Yarmouth Borough Council and South Norfolk Council experience slightly deeper reductions under the three-unitary model than under the single unitary.

Two unitary model

West Norfolk

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,093.88	(£4.57)	0%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,093.88	£29.77	1%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,093.88	(£25.79)	-1%

Table 56: Weighted Average scenario under the two unitary model for West Norfolk

- Under a two-unitary model, residents in North Norfolk would face a small reduction in Band D due to the lower weighted average, whereas under a three-unitary model they would instead see a slight increase.

East Norfolk

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,144.22	£4.42	0%
Norwich City Council	£2,260.33	£2,144.22	(£116.11)	-5%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,144.22	£22.83	1%
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,144.22	£63.73	3%

Table 57: Weighted Average scenario under the two unitary model for East Norfolk

- Residents in Broadland would face a larger increase under the two-unitary model (+£63.73) compared with the three-unitary model (+£40.38), reflecting a higher weighted average Band D.
- In South Norfolk, residents would see an increase of £22.83 under the two-unitary model, whereas under the three-unitary model they would experience a

small reduction (–£0.44). A similar pattern applies in Great Yarmouth, where the two-unitary model delivers a slight increase while the three-unitary model results in a modest cut.

Scenario 4 – Weighted Average + 5%

	2027/28	2028/29		
	Band D		Difference	Difference (%)
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,226.91	£146.42	7%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,226.91	£107.24	5%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,226.91	£105.52	5%
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,226.91	£87.12	4%

Table 58: Scenario 4 – Weighted Average + 5%

The Weighted Average +5% scenario lifts all districts in East Norfolk to a harmonised rate above the blended midpoint, delivering the sharpest increases across the area. Broadland residents face the largest rise, with Band D jumping by £146 (7%). North Norfolk and South Norfolk follow closely, each seeing uplifts of just over £105–107 (5%). Even Great Yarmouth Borough Council, which already has the highest precept in the area, records an increase of £87 (4%). While the approach generates substantial additional revenue — £21.7m over ten years compared with the baseline—it does so at the cost of relatively steep upfront increases for households across all districts.

Comparison to other structural options

Single county unitary

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,227.06	£146.57	7%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,227.06	£107.39	5%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,227.06	£105.67	5%
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,227.06	£87.27	4%
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,227.06	£128.61	6%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,227.06	£162.95	8%
Norwich City Council	£2,260.33	£2,227.06	(£33.27)	-1%

Table 59: Weighted Average + 5% scenario under the single county unitary model

- Under a single unitary, the Band D plus 5% level is higher than in the three-unitary model, resulting in larger increases for residents.

Two unitary model

West Norfolk

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,198.58	£100.13	5%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,198.58	£134.47	7%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,198.58	£78.91	4%

Table 60: Weighted Average + 5% scenario under the two unitary model for West Norfolk

- North Norfolk District Council residents see a smaller rise under the two-unitary model compared with the three-unitary (4% vs 5%).

East Norfolk

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,251.43	£111.64	5%
Norwich City Council	£2,260.33	£2,251.43	(£8.90)	0%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,251.43	£130.04	6%
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,251.43	£170.94	8%

Table 61: Weighted Average + 5% scenario under the two unitary model for East Norfolk

- In East Norfolk, the weighted average Band D plus 5% is higher under the two-unitary model than under the three-unitary, resulting in larger increases across the board. For example, Great Yarmouth Borough Council rises by 5% under the two-unitary compared with 4% under the three-unitary in this scenario.

Scenario 5 – Fastest Harmonisation (5% Predecessor Cap)

	2027/28	2028/29		
	Band D	Lowest Band D plus 5%	Difference	Difference (%)
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,184.52	£104.02	5%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,184.52	£64.85	3%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,184.52	£63.13	3%
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,184.52	£44.72	2%

Table 62: Scenario 5 – Fastest Harmonisation (5%% Predecessor Cap)

In this scenario, all districts in East Norfolk converge at a rate set 5% above the current lowest Band D (Broadland). Broadland households see the sharpest increase, with Band D rising by £104 (5%). North Norfolk and South Norfolk experience more moderate uplifts of around £63–65 (3%), while Great Yarmouth Borough Council faces the

smallest change, an increase of £45 (2%). The approach delivers a loss in revenue of £32.9m over the ten-year period relative to the baseline.

Comparison to other structural options

Single county unitary

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,167.32	£86.83	4%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,167.32	£47.65	2%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,167.32	£45.93	2%
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,167.32	£27.52	1%
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,167.32	£68.87	3%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,167.32	£103.21	5%
Norwich City Council	£2,260.33	£2,167.32	(£93.02)	-4%

Table 63: Fastest Harmonisation (5%% Predecessor Cap) Scenario under the single county unitary model

- East Norfolk under a three unitary model ends up at a higher Band D than the single unitary under this scenario. This is because under the three-unitary, Broadland's higher Band D is increased by 5% and all districts converge at that level, whereas under the single unitary, the cap is applied to Breckland's lower Band D, producing less steep results overall.

Two unitary model

West Norfolk

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
King's Lynn & West Norfolk BC	£2,098.45	£2,167.32	£68.87	3%
Breckland DC	£2,064.11	£2,167.32	£103.21	5%
North Norfolk DC	£2,119.67	£2,167.32	£47.65	2%

Table 64: Fastest Harmonisation (5%% Predecessor Cap) scenario under the two unitary model for West Norfolk

- In West Norfolk under the two-unitary model, Band D is also capped at Breckland's +5%, the same as in the single unitary. This means residents in North Norfolk face a smaller rise than they would under the three-unitary model.

East Norfolk

	2027/28 Band D	2028/29 Band D	Difference	Difference (%)
Great Yarmouth BC	£2,139.79	£2,184.52	£44.72	2%
Norwich City Council	£2,260.33	£2,184.52	(£75.82)	-3%
South Norfolk Council	£2,121.39	£2,184.52	£63.13	3%
Broadland DC	£2,080.49	£2,184.52	£104.02	5%

Table 65: Fastest Harmonisation (5%% Predecessor Cap) scenario under the two unitary model for East Norfolk

- In East Norfolk under the two-unitary model, Band D is capped at Broadland's +5%, identical to the three-unitary approach. As a result, increases are the same under both models.

3.4 Balance sheet disaggregation

A critical element of local government reorganisation is the disaggregation of the closing balance sheets of the abolished authorities and the preparation of opening balance sheets for the successor unitaries. This is not simply an accounting exercise: the way in which assets, liabilities and reserves are apportioned will have a direct bearing on the financial sustainability of each new council and will need to withstand public, political and audit scrutiny.

With our proposal, the disaggregation will cover:

- Norfolk County Council – including all county-level service assets, reserves, and liabilities.
- Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council – which, under our proposals would be split between the successor unitaries. Their balance sheets must therefore be divided as well as absorbed.
- The Collection Fund balances – specific to the billing authorities (districts) and requiring allocation to the relevant new billing areas.

Each outgoing authority will prepare a closing balance sheet as at 31 March. A comprehensive disaggregation schedule will then map each line item to one of the three new unitaries.

Experience from other reorganisations demonstrates the value of agreeing an estimated balance sheet disaggregation well before vesting day. This enables shadow authorities to understand their capital finance requirements, Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) obligations, reserves positions and overall indebtedness. In Cumberland, for example, early MRP calculations were based on provisional disaggregation work across multiple legacy councils, helping the new authority to prepare for its financing needs.

The County Council's balance sheet is of particular significance given its sheer scale. Norfolk must ensure that the successor councils inherit a sufficiently strong balance sheet, with adequate reserves and manageable debt portfolios, to maintain financial sustainability.

There is no standardised model for dividing County balance sheet items between new authorities. Instead, the process relies on local negotiation, professional judgement and clear documentation. The bases of allocation will differ depending on the nature of the item:

- Service responsibility – assets, liabilities and earmarked reserves linked to particular services (e.g. schools, highways, adult social care) will follow the service to the unitary that inherits it.
- Geography – site-specific assets (land, buildings, heritage assets) will transfer according to location.
- Functional metrics – highways assets and related borrowing by road miles; schools by pupil numbers; adult social care provisions by client base.
- Financial proxies – general borrowing, cash, and debtors/creditors will normally be apportioned by tax base or population, unless clearly attributable to a service or project.
- Contractual obligations – PFI schemes, leases and other long-term commitments will be novated wholesale to the unitary inheriting the asset or service.
- Reserves – earmarked reserves will follow the purpose for which they were established; general fund balances will be split on a neutral basis (typically tax base).
- Unusable reserves – such as the Revaluation Reserve, Capital Adjustment Account, and Pensions Reserve must be aligned with the associated assets and liabilities.

3.5 Reserves

Reserves are a critical component of financial resilience, providing councils with the capacity to absorb unexpected shocks, manage cash flow pressures, and fund investment in public service reform. In the context of local government reorganisation, the treatment and distribution of reserves will be central to ensuring that each new unitary authority begins on a sound and sustainable footing.

The key distinction is between earmarked reserves, which are set aside for specific purposes (such as capital programmes, transformation funds, or risk management), and unearmarked reserves, which provide general flexibility to support unforeseen spending needs. Both play an important role, but only unearmarked reserves offer full discretion to meet new pressures.

Across Norfolk, reserves are unevenly distributed. Norfolk County Council holds by far the largest balances, with over £35 million unearmarked reserves and £124 million earmarked reserves projected by 2028/29. At the district level, there is significant variation. King's Lynn and West Norfolk holds earmarked reserves of £35.5 million (although this is projected to reduce), more than double those of any other district council, while Broadland and Breckland are projected to hold under £9 million each. Levels of unearmarked reserves are more modest across the districts, with Norwich City holding the highest at £8.25 million, but others, including South Norfolk, North Norfolk, and King's Lynn and West Norfolk, have lower balances (under £2.5 million).

The chart below illustrates the composition of earmarked and unearmarked reserves across the Norfolk authorities, highlighting both the concentration of balances in the County Council and the scale of variation between districts.

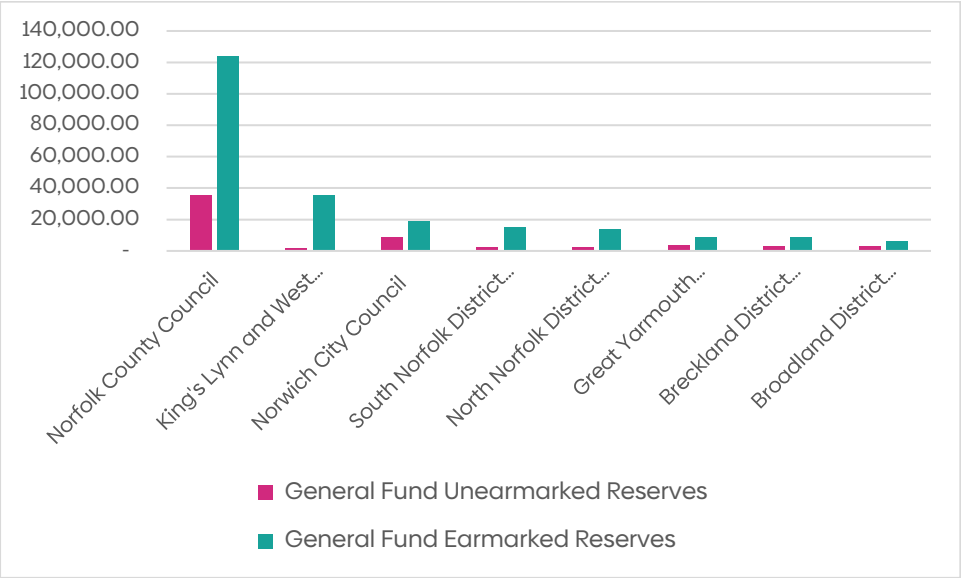

Figure 2: Composition of earmarked and unearmarked reserves across the Norfolk authorities (2028/29)

The table below shows the projected reserves position of each Norfolk authority in 2028/29.

Authority	General Fund Unearmarked Reserves	General Fund Earmarked Reserves
Norfolk County Council	35,403	124,051
King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council	1,467	35,505
Norwich City Council	8,250	18,420
South Norfolk Council	1,886	15,229
North Norfolk District Council	2,204	13,991
Great Yarmouth Borough Council	3,500	8,909
Breckland District Council	2,500	8,239
Broadland District Council	2,593	5,759

Table 66: Projected reserves position of each Norfolk authority in 2028/29

Experience from elsewhere demonstrates why this matters. In Cumberland, for example, legacy councils relied heavily on reserves to balance budgets in the years immediately preceding reorganisation. The combined General Fund Balance for 2023/24 fell from an estimated £37.7m to £7.9m, covering just 2.55% of net budget. This sharp deterioration meant that the new council entered its first year under-resourced

and financially vulnerable, with limited scope to manage shocks. Norfolk must avoid this pattern: ensuring that reserves are not depleted in the run-up to vesting day is critical to safeguarding the financial resilience of the successor authorities.

Importantly, reserves also have a role to play in supporting the transition to new unitary governance. Experience shows that transition costs — covering redundancy, systems integration, estates rationalisation, and programme management — can be significant and often need to be met upfront. In Norfolk, the scale of available reserves across the County and district councils is sufficient to absorb these costs without undermining long-term sustainability. This provides reassurance that reorganisation can be funded in a responsible way, without imposing unsustainable short-term pressures on the new councils' revenue budgets.

The treatment of reserves will therefore need to be approached with the same care as debt and assets, with transparent principles agreed in advance of vesting day. This will provide confidence that the new authorities will inherit a balanced and sustainable position, capable of managing both short-term transition pressures and long-term financial risk.

3.6 Debt

The treatment of debt and borrowing is one of the most complex aspects of balance sheet disaggregation. Norfolk County Council currently holds substantial borrowing, primarily to finance its capital programme, and this will need to be allocated fairly and transparently across the successor unitary authorities. The way in which debt is divided will have long-term implications for each council's capital financing requirement, Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charges, and overall financial sustainability.

Disaggregation of debt directly affects MRP calculations, as each new authority will need to make annual revenue provision for the repayment of its share of the capital financing requirement. Early modelling is therefore essential to estimate the impact on ongoing revenue budgets. In Cumberland, for example, provisional MRP calculations were prepared in advance of vesting day based on disaggregation schedules, giving the new council visibility of its financing costs.

A key objective is to ensure that no new council inherits a disproportionate debt burden that undermines its financial resilience. Decisions will need to reflect both the scale of debt transferred and the income and reserves position of each authority.

Transparency over how indebtedness is supported by the inherited asset base and loan portfolio will be central to demonstrating financial sustainability.

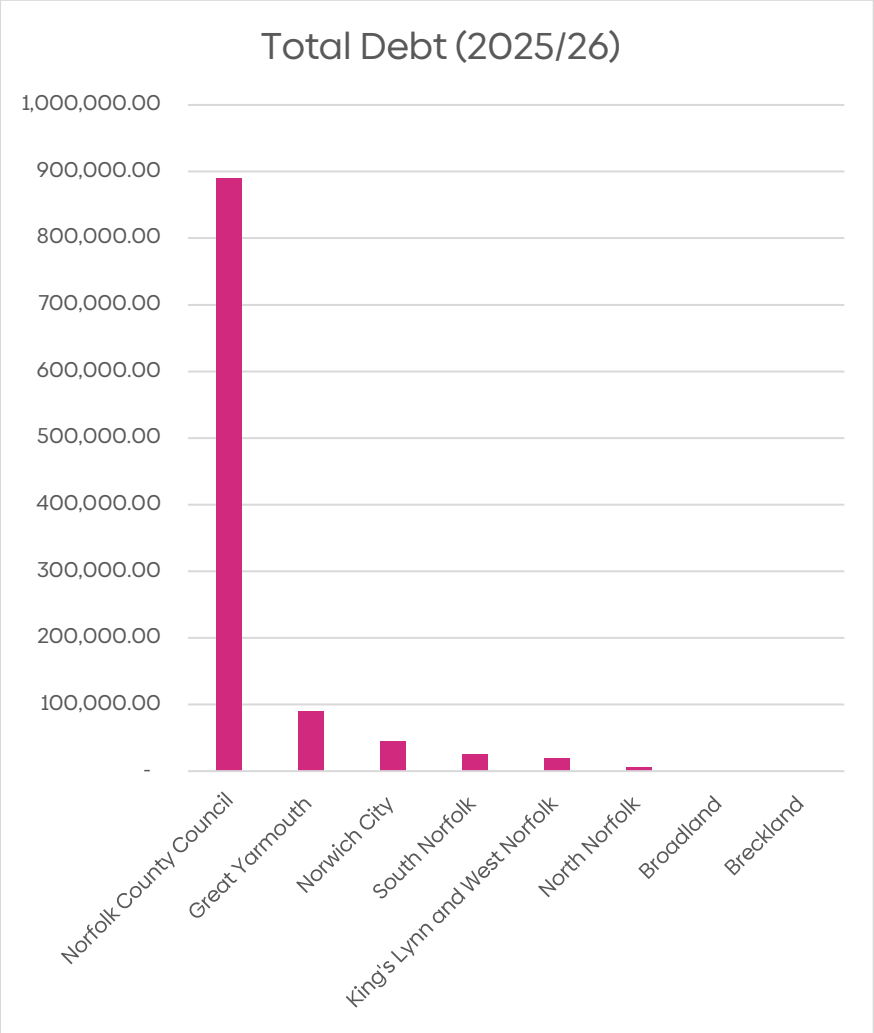

Figure 3: Total Debt (2025/26)

Norfolk County Council is by far the most indebted of the local authorities in the county. Its Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) has risen steadily over the past decade, increasing by around £335 million since 2016/17 to stand at just over £1 billion by 2024/25. This growth reflects the scale of the council's capital investment programme, alongside exceptional financial pressures such as the deficit in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) programme, which forced the authority to borrow sooner than originally planned. Forecast net borrowing at 31 March 2026 is expected to be £907 million, with annual interest payable of £31.8 million.

Year	Opening CFR (£000s)	Increase in CFR (£000s)	Closing CFR (£000s)
2016/17	673,444	24,273	697,717
2017/18	697,717	40,291	738,008
2018/19	738,008	39,838	777,846
2019/20	777,846	49,919	827,765
2020/21	827,765	59,280	887,045
2021/22	887,045	83,712	970,757
2022/23	970,757	25,700	996,457
2023/24	996,457	12,248	1,008,705
2024/25	1,008,705	–	–

Table 67: Opening, Increase and Closing CFR by year

Total increase in indebtedness (2016/17–2024/25): £335.3m

The County Council has maintained an under-borrowed position in recent years, using cash balances, reserves and working capital to support elements of its capital financing need rather than fully drawing down on external loans. While this has temporarily contained borrowing costs, it does not remove the underlying financing requirement, which will ultimately fall to the successor unitaries.

At the district level, borrowing positions vary considerably. Norwich City Council and Great Yarmouth Borough Council both carry significant housing-related debt, linked to the 2012 self-financing settlement for council housing stock. Norwich has borrowing of £45 million and Great Yarmouth Borough Council £110 million, much of which is secured against retained housing assets and serviced through rental income. King's Lynn and West Norfolk (£19 million) and South Norfolk (£25 million) hold more modest levels of debt, while North Norfolk (£5 million) carries small balances. Breckland and Broadland remain debt-free. Relative to the national picture, Norfolk County Council ranks as the twenty-fifth most indebted authority in absolute terms, but only one-hundred and eighty-fifth when measured per capita, reflecting its large population base.

The disaggregation of debt raises several risks which must be carefully managed if the new councils are to be established on a stable footing. The foremost is the risk of concentration: the scale of the County Council's borrowing means that, unless allocations are carefully structured, one of the successor unitaries could inherit a

disproportionate share of the debt burden. Given that annual debt servicing costs already exceed £30 million, even relatively small differences in allocation could have material consequences for revenue budgets.

Further risks arise from the pressures linked to the SEND deficit, which may require additional borrowing beyond current forecasts. Housing-related borrowing at Norwich City Council and Great Yarmouth Borough Council also presents a constraint, as these loans are tied to housing revenue accounts and must remain aligned with the management of retained stock. There is also a structural risk in the County Council's current under-borrowed position: reliance on cash balances has deferred the need to borrow externally, but this is not a permanent solution. Successor councils will ultimately need to meet the full financing requirement, and there is a danger that the true scale of indebtedness is understated if this is not explicitly recognised.

Finally, differences in the way predecessor councils have calculated Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) could lead to inconsistencies in the ongoing cost of servicing debt unless a common methodology is adopted. This was highlighted in Cumberland, where harmonisation of MRP policies was necessary following reorganisation. Unless addressed, such inconsistencies could undermine comparability between the new councils' financial positions and weaken confidence in their governance.

3.7 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit and its impact on council finances

Schools funding in Norfolk, covering both locally maintained schools and academies, is provided primarily through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This ring-fenced grant is allocated to local authorities, who then distribute it to schools in line with the locally agreed formula. The DSG itself is divided into four funding blocks: the Schools Block, High Needs Block, Early Years Block, and Central School Services Block.

Norfolk County Council is one of just 38 councils nationally to be subject to a Safety Valve agreement, placing it under enhanced monitoring and support from the Department for Education (DfE) because of the scale of its financial pressures. Despite these arrangements, the County Council is carrying a substantial DSG deficit, with the cumulative shortfall forecast to reach £127.8 million by the end of 2024/25.

In principle, the statutory override means that the DSG deficit does not legally have to be taken into account when assessing the sufficiency of a council's general reserves. However, in practice the deficit has grown so large that it is beginning to undermine the Council's overall financial position. The scale of the shortfall is putting acute pressure on cash balances and eroding the authority's financial resilience.

The County Council has already implemented a significant programme of capital investment and service transformation aimed at stabilising the High Needs Block. Yet, despite these efforts, demand pressures have far outpaced available resources, leaving the DSG position unsustainable.
As the deficit has accumulated, Norfolk has relied heavily on internal borrowing — drawing down reserves, balances, and cash to meet day-to-day expenditure within the High Needs Block. This has left the authority in an under-borrowed position and facing a severe cash shortage. Medium-term forecasts now point to the risk of a negative cash balance, raising the prospect of a genuine financial emergency.

This situation underlines why concentrating risk in a single county-wide unitary is so problematic. A DSG deficit of this scale, if held centrally, creates systemic vulnerability. By contrast, a three-unitary model distributes responsibility more effectively, containing financial risk within smaller, more accountable organisations and avoiding a single point of failure.

4. Appendix D - Boundaries

4.1.1 Background

As set out elsewhere in our proposals, geography and place - alongside the creation of councils that local people identify with - are central to our approach. We believe that a three-unitary model based on the boundaries outlined in this proposal will deliver:

- A true 'Greater Norwich' – an urban authority which represents the city's status as a major regional city, tackles historic under-bounding and unlocks Norwich's economic growth potential, based on its wider, functional and recognised footprint
- Two further authorities which are strong in their own rights, and reflective of the population and area characteristics in the East and West of the county, enabling them to also respond to their local challenges.
- A balance of authorities across the region, which provides an equal footing and approach to new unitary governance and best supports effective devolution across Norfolk and Suffolk

This Appendix sets out in greater detail the approach, evidence and rationale for our proposed new unitary boundaries, considering the guidance and requirements set out by MHCLG.

The starting point for this process was to use the existing districts as building blocks for our proposals. We set out below the steps taken from this to arrive at the optimal solution considering the socioeconomics, demographics and geographies across the region, as well as to allow for the transformation of public services to serve the distinct needs of the communities across the region, and create financially, sustainable new unitaries.

We have engaged with data, partners, and worked with guidance including Local Government Boundary Commission for England, to assist in identifying the most optimal approach to boundary setting, and subsequent workshops with relevant officers and members, alongside additional analysis informed by evidence, to arrive at the optimal solution based on MHCLG criteria.

The Appendix set out:

- The rationale for the proposed geography for each area
- A summary of the evidence to support this position.

4.1.2 Specific rationale for our new unitaries

Greater Norwich

We carried out a comprehensive exercise to appraise the geographical options for what a Greater Norwich unitary council could serve. This involved detailed analysis of the demographics, local socio-economics, and a range of other factors.

The boundary for Greater Norwich has been drawn to reflect the city's status as Norfolk's economic engine and as a functional economic area in its own right, considering factors such as its Travel to Work Area, housing market area, economic clusters and potential for growth. This proposal creates a new unitary that brings together the historic city, its urban fringes, and key growth areas. These new boundaries will enable Greater Norwich to ensure democratic representation for those living within the city's functional economic and social geography. At present, many residents and businesses who are functionally part of Norwich have no say over its governance, creating a democratic deficit. Creating a Greater Norwich unitary authority based on the built-up area would strengthen community identity by aligning governance with the city's natural geographic and social footprint.

This option would reflect the lived experience of residents who identify with the city and share common needs, challenges, and services. By governing within the true functional urban area, local decisions would be more representative, cohesive, and rooted in the shared identity of the wider Norwich community. Whilst simultaneously supporting the same for residents who identify with a non-city geography.

Norwich functions as a dense urban centre with unique governance, infrastructure, and service needs that differ significantly from the surrounding rural areas. Greater Norwich provides more inclusive governance by ensuring that the people in wider urban area and fringe parishes have representation from the authority delivering the services they most use.

Greater Norwich provides for a stronger financial base expanding the tax base to include more residents and businesses and could improve the authority's financial sustainability and creates a more balanced taxbase across the 3 unitaries.

The Greater Norwich area keeps the largest settlements in the wider Greater Norwich area within the East and West unitaries, which better reflects the geography and

community identity. It would also support two large East / West Unitaries either side with a core shared set of characteristics.

The Greater Norwich area allows for a more balanced development by including growth areas just outside the city for more coherent and strategic development planning, reducing pressure on the urban core, and increasing impact in the new Strategic Authority across Norfolk and Suffolk.

By including major growth areas and areas with high potential for development, the Greater Norwich boundary enables the city to grow as a globally connected, inclusive city-region. It also allows the new authority to better address embedded socio-economic challenges while unlocking development opportunities. This boundary is designed to reflect the real geography of economic activity and social need, supporting a service delivery model that is responsive, strategic, and fit for the future.

East Norfolk

The boundary for East Norfolk has been drawn to better represent a functional economic and social geography, aligned closely to existing district boundaries. The area shares an economic identity, anchored in clean energy, marine services, tourism, agriculture and healthcare, as well as a dynamic network of market towns and rural communities.

The rationale for the East Norfolk boundary is to create a unitary that can lead, through its sector strengths, while also addressing the area's specific challenges. By aligning the boundary with the real geography of economic activity and social need, the new authority will be able to design and deliver services that are tailored to the distinct characteristics of coastal, rural and market town communities. Market towns have their own historical, cultural, and economic identities that evidence shows, differs markedly from the Greater Norwich urban area.

The area also has shared environmental characteristics and issues, such as those associated with coastal erosion, and protection and enhancement of the Broads and Norfolk Coast. In addition, the significant Norfolk parts of The Broads National Park are all within one Unitary providing a clean landscape distinction between East and West.

West Norfolk

The West Norfolk boundary has been drawn to reflect the area's role as Norfolk's gateway to the Midlands, Lincolnshire, and Cambridgeshire, characterised by a resilient agri-food economy, advanced manufacturing, and a strong visitor sector. The boundary brings together the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk, Breckland District Council, and a small part of South Norfolk, creating a unitary that is both economically and demographically distinct (see previous economic and social distinctiveness sections). This boundary enables West Norfolk to build on its strengths and design a service delivery model that is accessible, inclusive, and tailored to local needs.

The rationale for the West Norfolk boundary is clear. The area generates 33% of Norfolk's total Gross Value Added, second only to Greater Norwich, from a fundamentally different base of agriculture, food production, logistics, advanced manufacturing, and tourism. Anchored by the Port of King's Lynn, and key transport corridors including the A47, A10, A11, and A17, West Norfolk plays a pivotal role in linking the county to national and international markets.

Settlement patterns reinforce this case. King's Lynn, with nearly 50,000 residents and a thriving industrial and cultural economy, acts as the principal urban anchor, while Thetford, Dereham, Downham Market, and Swaffham provide strong market-town hubs. Together with over 200 villages across 1,000 square miles, this network forms one of the most geographically extensive and community-rich areas in the UK. Aligning them within a single unitary allows services to be planned coherently around real communities, reducing duplication and ensuring inclusive access across dispersed geographies.

The distinctiveness of West Norfolk is also cultural and environmental. From the Brecks to the Fens and a historic coastline, the landscape underpins both the visitor economy and a strong sense of identity.

A unitary authority for West Norfolk therefore provides clarity, coherence, and strategic purpose. It creates a geography that reflects how the area works, supports sustainable growth in its core sectors, and enables services to be designed for both urban and rural communities. Distinct from Greater Norwich and East Norfolk, West Norfolk offers a strong, balanced unitary identity, rooted in economic productivity, connectivity, and community resilience.

4.1.3 Summary of the evidence used

A summary of the evidence that has supported the development of the boundaries for the three-unitary model, which considered factors such as economic activity, Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs), deprivation levels, and spatial planning, is listed below.

- **Census data on rates of economic activity** highlight that areas around the Norwich urban centre have higher rates of economically active individuals. As you move away from the urban centre, these rates become lower. Mapping shows that economically active individuals are concentrated in built-up areas, supporting a boundary option that reflects this pattern. This spatial distribution is significant when considering a boundary change for Greater Norwich. Aligning boundaries with areas of higher economic activity ensures that governance structures, service delivery, and strategic planning are better tailored to the needs of the population driving the local economy. A boundary that reflects the concentration of economically active individuals allows for more effective resource allocation, infrastructure investment, and policy development. It also strengthens the case for integrated transport, housing, and employment strategies that support sustainable growth across the wider urban area. Ultimately, a boundary change that captures this economic geography helps create a more coherent and responsive framework for managing growth and delivering public services across Greater Norwich.

- **Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs)** for the County clearly show that Norwich stands out as a dominant employment hub, with the Norwich TTWA covering a large part of the central and eastern regions. This emphasises the economic importance of Norwich and the impact it will have on commuting trends within a unitary framework. Whilst the three unitary model would not match the TTWAs, the Greater Norwich model does stay within the Norwich TTWA. People living around the Norwich urban area generally have shorter commuting distances compared to those in more rural or suburban areas. This suggests that many residents in Norwich likely work within the city or nearby, benefiting from the city's compact layout and efficient transport options. Shortening commuting distances in a new unitary authority around urban Norwich is important because it boosts productivity, promotes sustainability, improves quality of life, enhances local governance, and supports urban planning.

- **Levels of deprivation** from the Census 2021 data show that levels are higher in certain areas within Norwich city centre. In contrast, the surrounding rural areas generally have lower levels of deprivation and therefore better socio-economic conditions. When drawing boundaries for Greater Norwich, we considered both deprivation levels and economic activity rates. Including areas with higher deprivation ensures targeted resource allocation, while integrating economically active areas promotes growth and stability.

- **Map and data taken from Local Plans.** (GNLP) highlights how the urban area beyond the city of Norwich is set to grow in all directions, and to various degrees – much of it beyond the current city council boundary. With a sufficient area for growth, Greater Norwich has a better opportunity to accommodate national housing targets independently, reducing the risk of neighbouring authorities having to assist to meet those targets and the risk that future local plans are rejected by the Government (as has recently happened for Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole, and Oxford City Council).

- Norwich and the fringe parishes will be the area's major focus for **jobs, homes, and service developmen**t. This will enhance Greater Norwich's role as a regional centre and promote major regeneration, the growth of strategic and smaller scale extensions and redevelopment , supporting neighbourhood renewal. The area will provide 27,960 additional homes and sites for a significant increase in jobs. This includes around 257 hectares of undeveloped land allocated for employment use. To achieve this, development sites are focussed on the city centre, in strategic regeneration areas in East Norwich and the northern city centre and at strategic urban extensions in the north-east and west alongside a other locations across the urban area.

- **Partner and other geography mapping** - We have worked with partners (health, police, VCSE, business, public agencies) to understand the geographical focus of their approaches to try and align synergies. Whilst there is no single approach for Norfolk, and many entities work at a County or Regional level, our proposals represent the best fit alignment and reflect many agencies seek to work on smaller footprints that County level. We have sought to align proposals with new and emerging plans around neighbourhoods, and neighbourhood level activity. We have also considered existing public boundaries, including parliamentary constituencies.

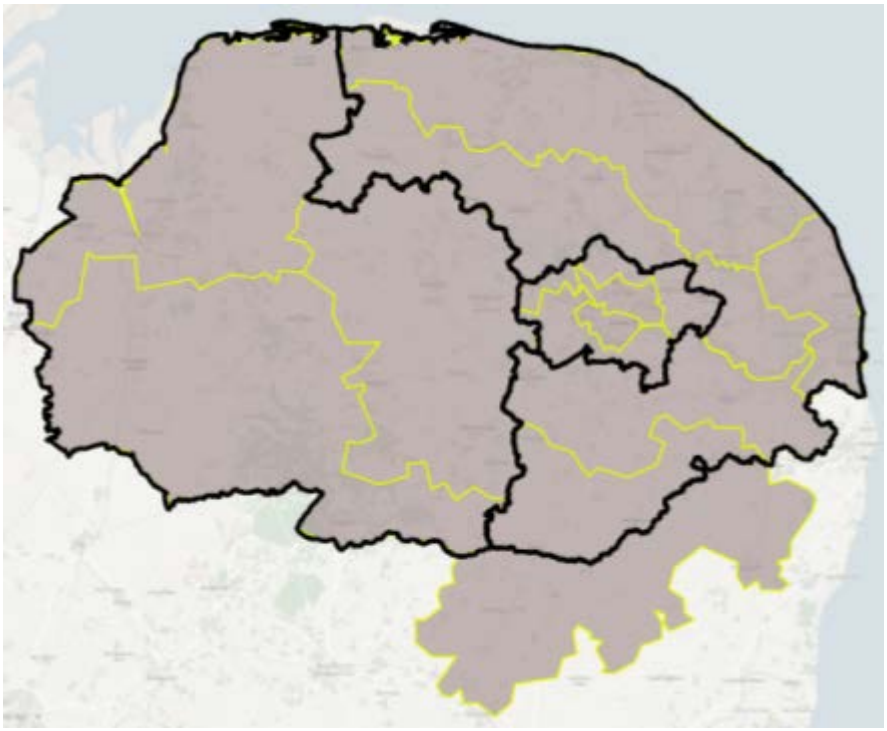

Figure 4: Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries

4.1.4 Measuring financial resilience and achievability

To ensure any new unitary authority is financially sustainable, we have modelled the financial resilience and achievability of each boundary option. This analysis is essential to demonstrate that proposed structures can not only deliver effective services but also meet government criteria for reorganisation.

As outlined in our wider proposals, we have developed financial models that assess both the revenue-generating potential and the cost implications of different areas. The “income” potential considers factors such as council tax base and business rates, while the “cost” potential estimates service delivery expenses using Super Output Area and population data-tracking, and, where possible, the spatial origins of service demand and expenditure.

Through this modelling we have been able to stress test shortlisted boundary configurations, to ensure sufficient confidence in their achievability. The detailed outcomes of this financial assessment for our final chosen model are set out in Chapter 7 of the Area Proposals.

5. Appendix E – East Norfolk Blueprints

5.1 Early Intervention and Prevention via a Healthy & Thriving Communities Department

5.1.1 Context & constraints

East Norfolk presents a uniquely complex landscape, spanning coastal towns, rural villages, and large market towns. This diverse geography distinctly shapes the lived experience of its residents and contributes to persistent challenges in health, housing stability, and economic security. Healthy life expectancy is significantly below the national average, with some of the widest disparities in Norfolk between its most and least deprived communities. The area also has the highest proportion of residents disabled under the Equality Act, elevated rates of preventable long-term conditions, and a rapidly growing older population, many of whom face isolation, frailty, and barriers to timely care.

Residents must navigate multiple entry points across district, county, health, and VCSE services, often encountering inconsistent pathways and thresholds. Yet, there are pockets of good practice—integrated hubs, strong parish and community anchor networks, and targeted health programmes—that, while promising, remain unevenly distributed and insufficiently scaled to deliver consistent, whole-system impact.

National policy creates both a distinct opportunity and a pressing urgency for transformation. Initiatives such as the Government's Family Hubs and Start for Life programme, NHS neighbourhood models, and the broader Public Service Reform agenda all point towards a prevention-first, integrated, place-based approach. For East Norfolk, the Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP) programme offers an opportunity to move beyond short-term pilots and towards a coordinated, sustainable offer - designed to tackle root causes, support older residents to live independently, reduce health inequalities, and improve stability and self-sufficiency for working-age residents

5.1.2 Recommended delivery model

In East Norfolk, this will be delivered via a dedicated department called Healthy & Thriving Communities. The model will be tailored to local needs, bringing together

housing, health, employment, skills, and VCSE partners through hubs in urban areas, and supported by mobile teams serving rural areas, ensuring coverage across the full geography.

This integrated model is uniquely designed to respond to East Norfolk's demographic pressures: high levels of need among older adults, increasing demand from working-age residents, and complex challenges facing children and families. By offering joined-up, proactive services that are locally rooted and easy to access, the department ensures support is tailored to the realities of life across coastal, rural, and market town communities. Teams will operate a "no wrong door" approach, making it distinctly easier for residents to receive timely support in familiar, trusted places.

Operationally, this department has five functions:

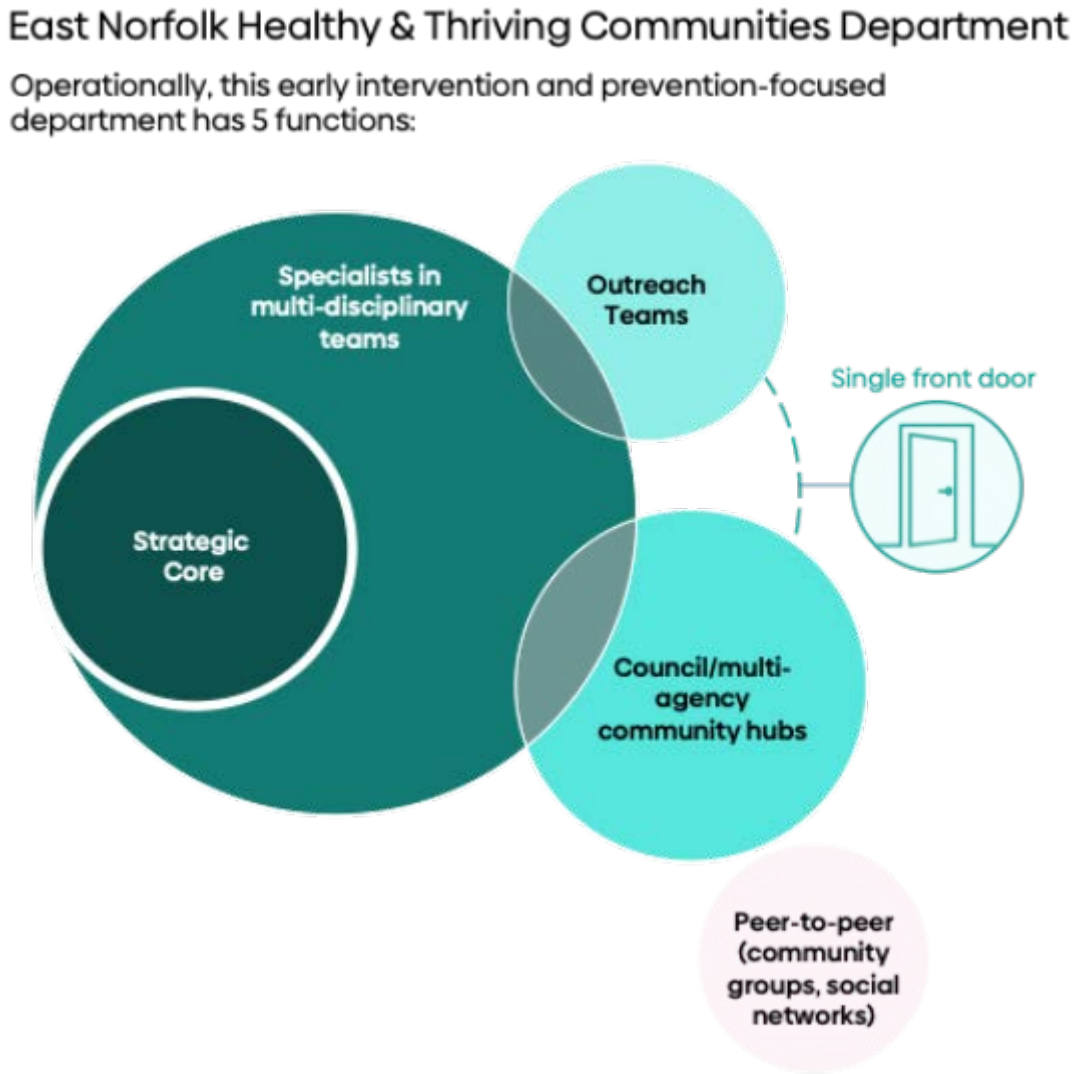

Figure 5: East Norfolk Healthy & Thriving Communities Department functions

Function 1: Strategic Core

This function sets the strategic direction for the department. It uses population health data, labour market insights, and housing demand forecasts to shape commissioning. The corporate core also ensures alignment between health, housing, and employment services to maximise impact in coastal, rural, and urban contexts.

Function 2: Specialists / experts in multidisciplinary teams

Specialist practitioners work in integrated teams to support individuals, families, and elderly residents facing multiple barriers, from insecure housing to unemployment, poor health, or debt. They bring deep expertise in housing options, employment support, domestic abuse, financial inclusion, and community safety. These specialists often act as case coordinators for those at risk of crisis.

Function 3: Front door

The front door is the single access point for residents to seek support. Staff here resolve simpler queries immediately, connect residents to local support, and flag more complex cases for coordinated intervention. They maintain a strong focus on accessibility for rural residents and those without digital access.

Function 4: Community hubs

Community hubs are accessible local spaces where residents can find integrated advice on housing, employment, skills development, and wellbeing. They also host group activities, outreach sessions from health services, and targeted support for at-risk groups.

Function 5: Outreach teams

Mobile teams bring support to residents who cannot easily access hub locations, especially in rural villages and coastal communities. They provide home visits, outreach in community venues, and proactive contact with people at risk of homelessness or unemployment.

5.1.3 Improving outcomes, unlocking innovation

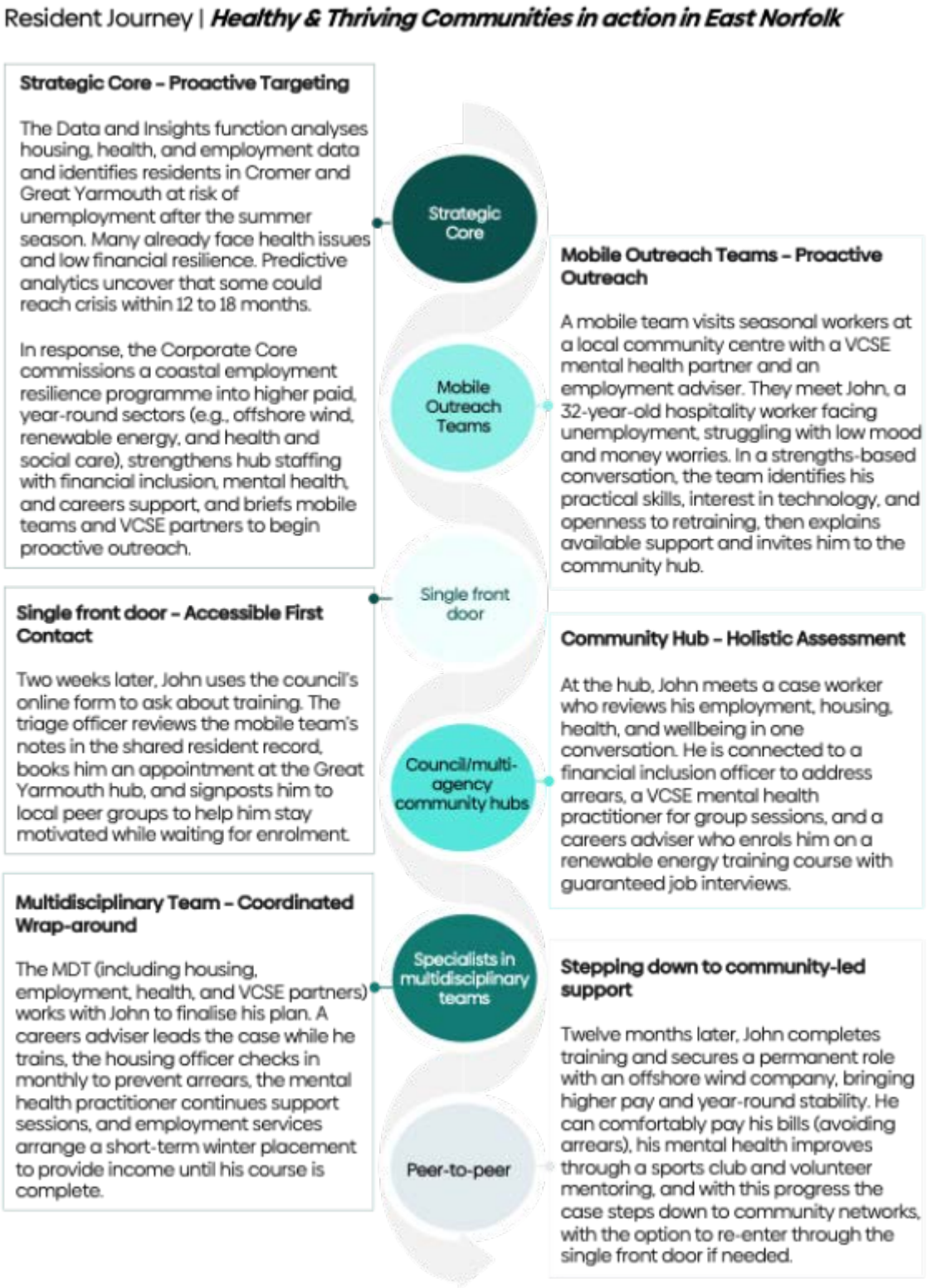

Figure 6: Example East Norfolk resident journey

The East Norfolk Healthy & Thriving Communities department's is designed around the principle that the right support should come from the right place at the right time, with no wrong door for residents. Physical hubs across the geography will enable drop ins for advice, skills workshops, and health and wellbeing activities. Along the coast and in rural villages, mobile and pop-up sessions ensure that distance and poor transport are never barriers to help.

When a resident makes contact, whether in person, by phone, online, or via referral from a partner, they meet someone who listens and takes the time to understand their whole situation. Conversations explore the full picture of housing, health, work, and family relationships, and recognising the assets each resident and their community already have. The combination and urgency of needs determine who is best placed to lead a case.

From that first interaction, the lead professional works with a multidisciplinary team that can draw on health, housing, employment, skills, family support, and VCSE partners to wrap the right mix of support around the resident. This could mean resolving an immediate problem, such as rent arrears, while also addressing linked challenges like job insecurity or loneliness. Support is coordinated so that residents experience it as one connected service rather than a set of disconnected interventions.

For multi-agency partners, the model creates a more coordinated and proactive way of working in an area where challenges can be highly localised. Health providers, housing teams, employment services, training organisations, and VCSE groups share space in hubs and outreach venues, building trust and making joint decisions based on a shared understanding of local priorities. Predictive analytics use securely shared data from housing, health, schools, and community partners to identify residents and communities at risk of crisis 12–18 months ahead. This insight guides targeted outreach, such as job readiness programmes in coastal areas before the off-season or wellbeing checks in rural villages with high rates of isolation.

For staff, the model means working in flexible multidisciplinary teams that reflect the diversity of East Norfolk's communities. They have the tools, shared information, and relationships to act quickly, spend less time duplicating assessments, and more time building trust and delivering solutions that last.

5.1.4 Unlocking financial benefits

The East Norfolk EIP department is designed to deliver a shift in public service demand. By acting earlier and in more coordinated ways, it will reduce the number of people who reach crisis, meaning less spend on high-cost interventions and more people staying well, independent, and economically active.

Savings will be driven by reducing duplication between services, replacing siloed working, multiple access points, and repeated assessments with a consolidated prevention-led front door and multidisciplinary teams. This streamlined approach means issues are resolved earlier and more effectively, avoiding escalation into costly interventions.

Predictive analytics will identify residents and communities at risk 12 to 18 months ahead of crisis. These interventions deliver both financial and social returns.

Upfront investment will be needed in ICT, governance, and workforce development, alongside the disaggregation of county-delivered services and aggregation of district functions such as housing, homelessness, early help, public health, reablement, customer contact, and commissioning.

5.2 Housing & Homelessness

5.2.1 Context & constraints

There are difficult market conditions in East Norfolk for housing and homelessness services, including areas of challenging development conditions with value of land not exceeding anticipated revenue profits for development, pockets of high house prices (10.8x earnings in 2022) and a retreat of landlords from the rented sector.

East Norfolk has the second highest proportion of LSOAs in the highest 20% of deprivation in England, (the second highest in Norfolk). Conversely it also has a disproportionately high amount of second homes and holiday let ownership. This highlights the diverse nature of the housing market in East Norfolk and challenges across the area - without a nuanced and tailored approach to service delivery, symptoms of these conditions will only get worse. A three unitary model that achieves

the necessary scale while still being close enough to residents to link housing, development and homelessness services to well understood need, is the best solution.

As of 24/25 and compared to the other unitary areas, EN has the largest allocated budget for homelessness services (£5.5m for 25/26), the second highest number of assessments (1,965) and the highest proportion of assessments converting to a prevention or relief duty (84%). High conversion rates also indicate that aligning with EI&P functions would help to reduce the amount of people reaching crisis and requiring statutory or relief duties.

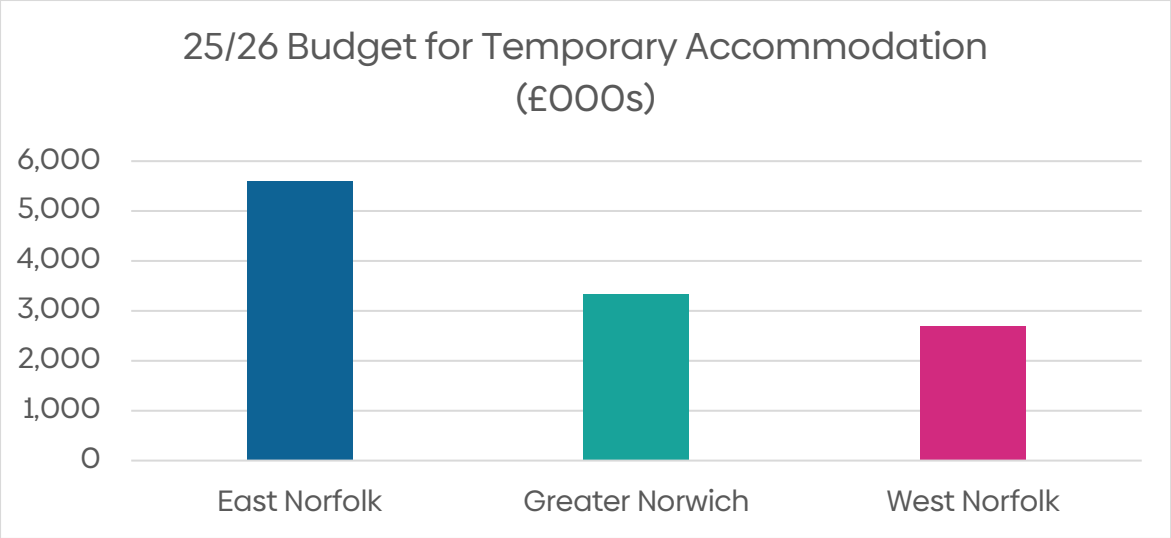

Figure 7: 2025/26 Budget for Temporary Accommodation

The housing register in East Norfolk clearly shows a need for one bed homes, accounting for 54% of total households on the register. It also shows that there is the highest need for 4+ bed homes in Norfolk (8%), and an increase in accessible properties.

5.2.2 Recommended delivery model

Homelessness

Consolidate homelessness (and housing) within the Healthy & Thriving Communities department to provide a joined-up approach that tackles the root causes of homelessness. Rough sleeping outreach services will ensure that rough sleeping across all areas is identified.

Housing

Housing Services will be moved within the Healthy & Thriving Communities function to better capitalise on opportunities for collaboration and intervention. The HRA management and maintenance infrastructure should maintain its existing structure outside of EI&P.

Different approaches to allocations currently exist across the footprint of the new unitary; Great Yarmouth Borough Council previously operated a choice-based lettings policy and has now moved to direct allocation with success, North Norfolk, South Norfolk & Broadlands operate hybrid-based lettings favouring homelessness flow. Considering the differences and history, East Norfolk should adopt a single direct lettings policy across the unitary. This policy should be developed with the intention to reduce homelessness and make best use of social homes.

East Norfolk should expand the existing social landlord/ HRA infrastructure to provide the management and maintenance of council owned housing across East Norfolk and to merge all current functions providing this service. Through this approach there is an opportunity to ensure all services are resident-centred to respond to new regulation requirements, including Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs).

Development

Great Yarmouth Borough Council is the sole shareholder of two arm's length organisations that support development and regeneration:

- Equinox Enterprises – A development company.
- Equinox Property Holdings – offers good quality rental homes, driving up local standards and generating income.

Similarly South Norfolk & Broadland operate similar companies (Big Sky Ventures Ltd, Broadland Living and Broadland Growth). Shadow authorities must consider how best to proceed with these organisations to best stimulate housing supply, and private rental sector improvements. Repton Homes, who are wholly owned by the county, will also need consideration and assessment.

Company Name	Ownership	Ambition
Repton Homes	100% (Norfolk County Council)	Develops private homes for sale.
Equinox Enterprises	100% (Great Yarmouth BC)	Development company, delivering new homes to buy throughout the borough
Equinox Property Holdings	100% (Great Yarmouth BC)	Property management company, offering quality rental homes to the local market, aiming to enhance the range of market ready properties and improve PRS standards.
Broadland Living	100% (Broadland)	Offers below market rental homes in the private rental market.
Broadland Growth	100% (Broadland)	Housing development company offers delivery options to the council and returns profits
Big Sky Group		
Big Sky Ventures Ltd	100% (South Norfolk	Builds and sells market and affordable housing.
Big Sky Property Management	100% (South Norfolk)	Sells asset management services and rents properties - profits returned to the council.

Table 68: ALOS that need to be considered by shadow authorities

5.2.3 Improving outcomes, unlocking innovation

Homelessness

East Norfolk has the highest number of households needing prevention or relief. Through more effective tackling of root causes, we believe there will be a reduction in the demand for this support. This will be enabled through outreach teams that can meet coastal and rural needs, as well as more effective information sharing.

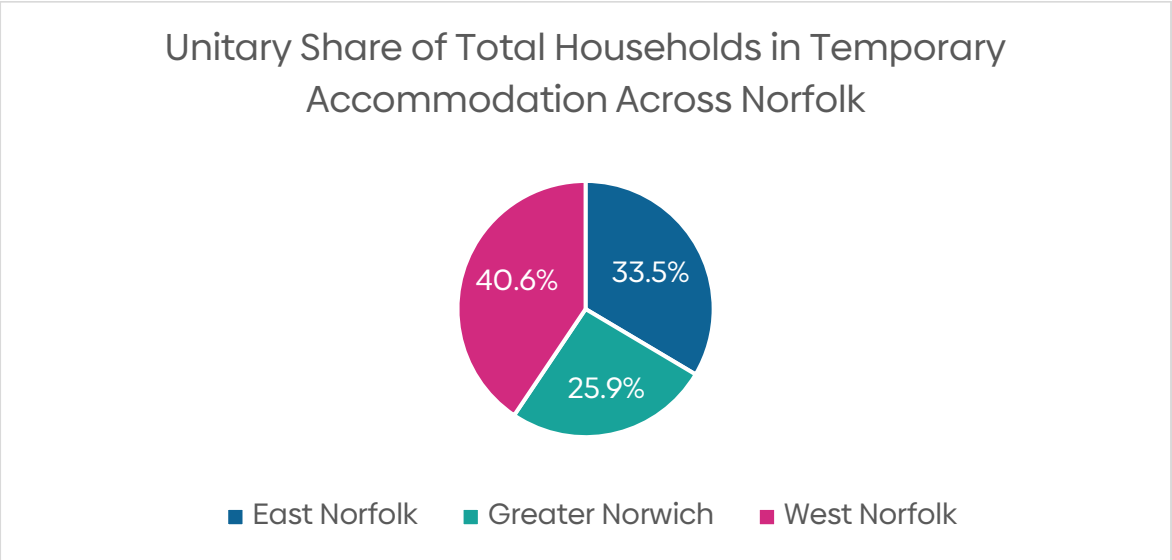

Figure 8: Unitary share of total households in Temporary Accommodation across Norfolk

Unitarisation will also support East Norfolk to have better access to affordable quality housing which will better tackle local housing needs and reduce the demand on homelessness services.

Housing

East Norfolk will inherit an established HRA (5,754 homes) which will enable the authority to purchase homes for social rent to increase their housing supply. This is positive but should be focused on ensuring the increase in supply of one bed homes and three bed homes to meet the needs in the unitary.

There are some nontraditional build types in across East Norfolk (Middlegate Estate, in particular) that may be at risk of not meeting any new decency standards. A unitary will be able to access funds to help regenerate these homes and support central government growth ambitions. Consistent housing management and maintenance quality can be achieved by extending the existing social landlord function in and the associated infrastructure to support any stock owned across the new unitary.

There is an opportunity with the acquisition of supported housing services (currently commissioned by the county) to be integrated into the wider service team to create a more joined up and preventative enabled service. Working in collaboration with Adult Social Care, development can target the increase in housing suitable for care in the community helping to prevent more expensive social care interventions and enable more independent living for residents.

Development

The new unitary boundaries offer a significant opportunity for development. Whilst much of the obvious development land has already been built on, new packaged development opportunities may be more appealing to developers who require scale. By also gaining oversight of other functions (like highways and transport and strategic infrastructure) it puts the East unitary in a strong position to respond to its specific coast requirements and support the region in its growth ambitions.

East Norfolk is well placed to benefit from the UK's shift to clean energy. The Sizewell C Nuclear power stations and Norfolk Offshore Wind Zone, along with the supporting operations in Great Yarmouth will bring skilled jobs - backed by Enterprise Zone status and targeted port investment. If unmanaged, growth on this scale could put further strain on the housing market, particularly the already stretched PRS.

In a unitary model that is close to the opportunity, economic expansion can be directly linked to affordable housing delivery, stronger PRS oversight, and homelessness prevention. In a larger, one size fits all model, these connections are harder to make, risks exacerbated, and opportunities missed.

5.2.4 Unlocking financial benefits

Cost Considerations

The forthcoming social rent settlement of up to CPI +1% will help to ease service strain and increase income within the HRA, however there will be forthcoming challenges to both the HRA and wider development capacity between aging social housing stock, non-traditional builds and the forthcoming Awaab's Law.

Potential Savings

Through the amalgamation and rationalisation of homelessness, housing and development teams, it's expected that savings will be made. Staff savings will predominantly be at senior management level as the demand on officers and services will initially remain the same.

Embedding homelessness and housing into the EI&P function will also realise savings. A conservative saving estimate on non-staffing costs of 10% can be achieved, among

other things this would also include an expected saving on temporary accommodation spend and EI&P activities prevent worsening and crisis situations.

While there are no major savings to be made within the HRA – there are opportunities for income maximisation in the effort towards more EI&P working:

- Reduce relet times for properties; and
- Reduce current tenant arrears which would increase in year rental income.

Cost neutral assumptions

While there may be economies of scale achieved through contract renegotiation costs for technology licences for H&H these costs are often based on a per head fee. This means that while there may be some savings due to staff reductions – there are no material savings expected from this.

A neighbourhood model for housing growth (aligned with EI&P) means development is designed around the reality of each place, not a single county wide blueprint. While this isn't a cost saving as such, it does translate government growth ambitions to local need while creating a single attractive partner for housing delivery in the three unitary model.

5.3 Adult Social Care

5.3.1 Context & constraints

East Norfolk covers a large geographical area with coastal, semi-rural and rural communities, with the highest percentage of the population aged over 65. More older adults are in nursing and residential care in comparison to the other unitaries, indicating a lack of focus on independence. Demand also increased for working-age adults, with East Norfolk having the highest number of 18–64-year-olds accessing services out of the three unitaries.

Alongside this, costs are increasing for all types of support, evidencing a need for change in the model of support and an opportunity to redesign the approach to market management.

5.3.2 Recommended delivery model

There are several delivery models to consider for the implementation of Adults Social Care within the new unitary. Some have been summarised in an options appraisal below:

Model	Description	Strengths	Weaknesses
Shared Services Model	A single unitary is appointed to deliver Adults Services on behalf of all or some of the new authorities. This is carried out under a formal shared services agreement or delegation.	• Economies of scale and reduced duplication • Reduces transition risk as staff and structures can remain in place in short term • Consistency of approach across unitaries	• Diluted accountability and complex governance • Compromises over operational and strategic priorities • Still requires core service (DAS) in each unitary • Dependency on an external organisation
Separate Services	The disaggregated model - the new unitaries each establish their own Adults Service structure and workforce, with local leadership and systems. Examples include Cumberland and Bedfordshire	• Locally accountable • Decisions making and services delivered closest to communities • Can reflect local needs • Retains option to run some services jointly	• Duplication of teams and staff across three unitaries • Challenge of recruiting high quality staff from other councils • Higher risk transition that could impact day-to-day services
Central Leadership – Diffused Delivery	The new authority operates a single Adult Services directorate. Delivery is decentralised into locality-based teams aligned to former council areas or other geographies	• Combines strategic leadership with place-based delivery • Easier to maintain partner relationships • Retains local responsiveness • Enables phased integration	• Blurred lines of accountability if not clearly defined • Potential inconsistencies between areas • Requires strong central oversight and performance management

Table 69: Types of delivery models for implementing Adults Social Care

Following engagement with Leaders, Chief Executives and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), our recommended delivery model for East Norfolk is to establish a single Adults Social Care service.

The creation of a dedicated East Norfolk Adult Social service will enable a greater focus on the local needs, assets, and challenges. The model will provide the opportunity to have a greater focus on the local context and challenges and support a move to a person-centred approach to Social Care. In urban centres and towns such as Great Yarmouth, neighbourhood hubs will be closely connected to multi-agency networks, with targeted proactive outreach in the most deprived wards. Elsewhere, the model will adapt to coastal communities which have a higher percentage of older adults and making greater use of mobile and digital services such as Technology Enable Care to support rural communities. A new local delivery model and front door will be closely aligned to community assets and inform priorities for what is commissioned locally and in collaboration with partners to avoid duplication.

Whilst partners such as the Police and Health will have to service three unitaries, their movement to three footprints across the Norfolk geographies aligns with this recommended option and will allow for closer working relationships to develop between staff within the new unitary function.

There are positive examples of joint working that exist across the county footprint currently and would not seek to unpick these where they provide positive outcomes for residents. These will be managed through partnership boards to ensure there is appropriate governance in place. The Adults Safeguarding Board is also something which will be retained to bring together statutory and non-statutory organisations and supported through their connection to more localised service delivery model.

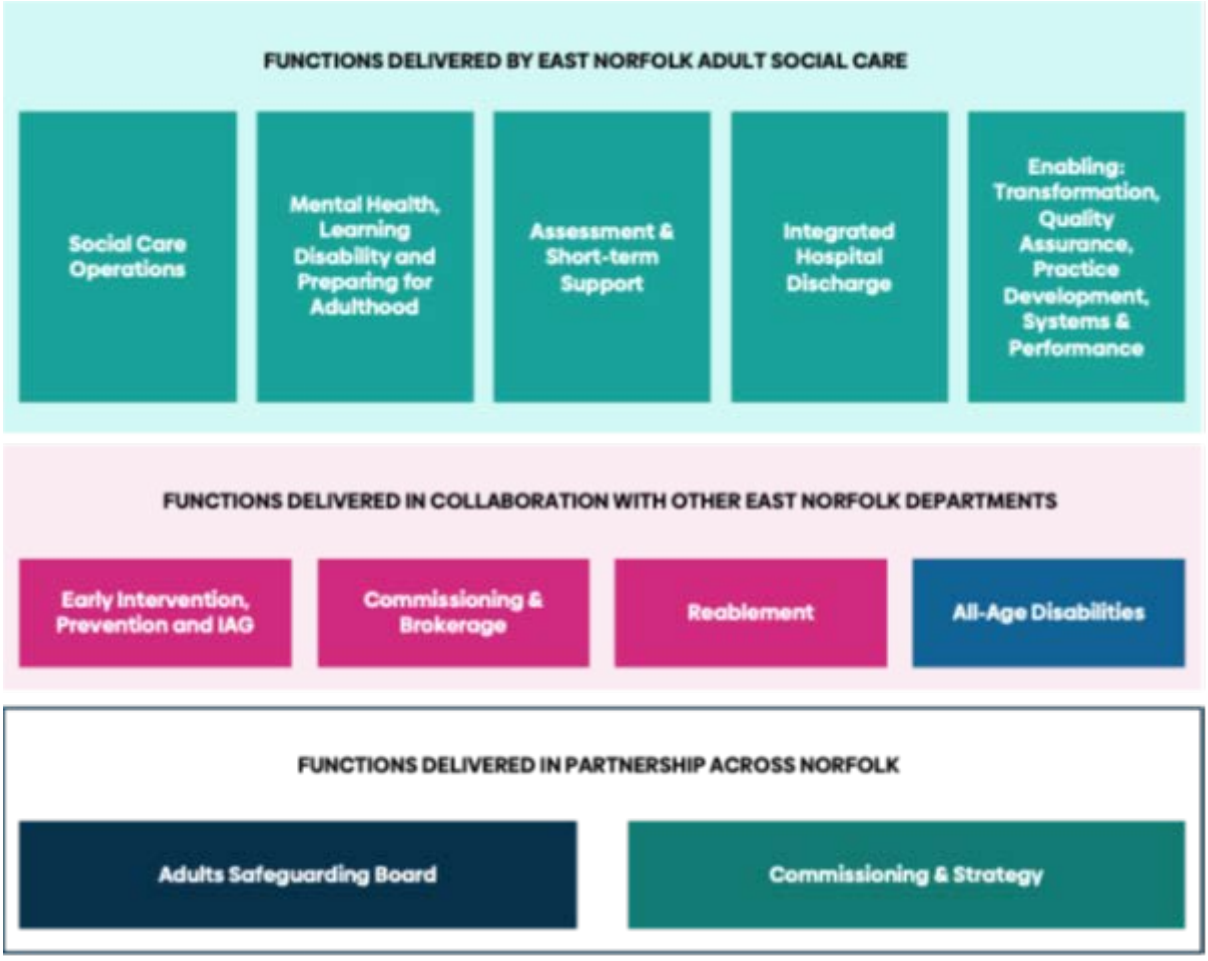

Figure 9: Functional model of Adult Social Care across the unitary.

Our analysis has indicated that the Norfolk care market has seen increased costs across supported living, home care and residential care and there is a need to ensure the provider market remains sustainable. East Norfolk will have its own commissioning & partnerships function – but will come together with Greater Norwich and West

Norfolk through partnership boards to commission support like residential care placements and to develop a market management approach.

This new model will shift East Norfolk from a county wide one size fits all approach. to a person-centred approach where communities and the VCFSE sector have a greater role to help keep people as independent as possible in their own homes with lower levels of support. Where there is a need for additional support and a care package this will put the person at the heart of this to support them to be as independent as possible and focused on improving their outcomes. This model with reestablish the primacy of place to ensure commissioned services are tailored to local needs with the right level of support at the right time and help reduce demand for statutory interventions.

5.3.3 Improving outcomes, unlocking innovation

The Early Intervention & Prevention offer in East Norfolk is critical to the new model to help keep people as independent as possible and prevent and delay the need for social care support. A key element of this is approach with Adults is for East Norfolk to have a focus on maximising reablement to support be to be as independent as possible given this area has the largest percentage of the population 65+. The reablement service will be moved into the EI&P service and assigned the most appropriate lead based on their needs who will oversee their case and track progress. There are strong foundations to build a more focused local prevention-based approach to Adults Social Care which further develops the strength-based approach to help maintain greater independence.

There is significant potential to scale what already works based on local knowledge of communities the challenges they face and the most appropriate interventions. With East Norfolk having a growing number of older people 65+ due to people wanting to retire to a costal / rural setting this is resulting in an increase in demand in services for frail elderly people. The new model will build upon what is working well in East Norfolk and ensure that locally based commissioned services and plans for facilities e.g. Benjamin Court are made locally and have improved financial security on a longer-term basis which was an issue raised in the localised initiatives in Great Yarmouth. Having agreed priorities across agencies at a neighbourhoods level will enable commissioned services to be aligned to local needs and better coordination of what gets commission by each organisation to avoid duplication.

Working closely with health and hospital partners including the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in West Norfolk, James Paget Hospital in East Norfolk and Norfolk & Norwich Hospital in Greater Norwich, will be key to provide coordinated support and outreach in both primary care in communities and hospital discharge. Given East Norfolk covers a large geographical area many residents have a greater distance to travel to acute hospitals for condition management. This is a particular challenge in North Norfolk which has a higher number of older people 65+ which this new model will support through greater collaboration with health to develop more innovative community-based solutions for older people's health and wellbeing. Developing the local offer building on existing partnerships at a neighbourhood level will support NHS England's 10-Year Plan to introduce an integrated neighbourhood model with a multi-agency front door by 2028. The three unitary model will support the implementation of this through statutory partners working together on localised geographies to deliver services based on local needs – based on deep relationships, mitigating risks of disaggregation.

This model will introduce an All-Age Disability Service for Learning Disabilities with a greater focus on increasing independence, providing secure appropriate housing, skills and employment. With East Norfolk having the highest number of working-age adults this new model will identify and support cases from 14 years of age working with Children's Social Care to agree the most appropriate commissioned services, skills to help them gain employment and secure the most appropriate housing. This will enable a person-centred approach to help the individual to be an independent as possible with the appropriate level of support. This will help East Norfolk to provide targeted support to those who need it most and align with local service provision.

5.3.4 Achieving financial benefits

The key to achieving financial benefits of the new model and creating long term financial sustainability is through the early identification of needs and putting in place lower levels of support through local community provision or technology. Helping to maintain people's independence and supporting them to live in their own home in the communities they know is a better outcome for the individual and helps avoid residential care which in East Norfolk costs an average of £615 a week.

A holistic approach to case reviews to establish if a reduced level of support e.g. a move from residential to a supported living provision may be possible. This would equate to a saving of £478 per week demonstrating that in East Norfolk, a small reduction in numbers could have a significant impact. This may also enable older adults to have improved independence in an environment that they feel safe and secure and have an improved quality of life.

Focusing services on early intervention and prevention allows for staff to be reorganised around community hubs. Specialist skills can be allocated at the initial stage to ensure effective triage. Cases needing social care intervention will be led by a social worker, who completes the Care Act Assessment and coordinates EIP support if appropriate. This approach ensures cases are managed based on required support levels and individual needs, with minimal transfers.

5.4 Children's Social Care

5.4.1 Context & constraints

East Norfolk will inherit the highest proportion of Children in Care in the county. Unlike trends in the other two unitaries, demand for has slightly increased over the past three years, indicating a need for more effective family support and early intervention within thew new unitary. Numbers of Children in Need (CIN) are also high, and whilst Child Protection Plans (CP) are lower than elsewhere, this may be a result of young people tipping into the threshold for becoming looked after as opposed to effective early intervention. Should this trend continue, there would be a significant demand pressure on East Norfolk.

The area has also seen higher increases in costs compared to the other unitaries and notably has the highest cost residential care placements out of the three areas – indicating a need to use this opportunity to reset market relationships to ensure effective market management.

5.4.2 Recommended delivery model

There are several delivery models to consider for the implementation of Children's Social Care within the new unitary. Some have been summarised in an options appraisal below:

Service Model	Strengths	Risks
Disaggregation & Integration: Each unitary establishes their own Children's Services	• Strong local control of the service operation and spend • Tailored services for the local community • Can retain partnership arrangements during implementation and beyond where appropriate	• Recruitment and retention of key staff if a HR strategy is not well considered • Data security and retention could be at risk if not carefully managed through transition • Duplication of processes, roles and contracts may increase costs • Transition may introduce significant risk that will need to considered and managed
Shared Services: One authority hosts Children's Services on behalf of other authorities via a Shared Services agreement	• May be easier to manage workforce challenges & contracts in the short-term • Enables the achievement of economies of scale • Provides some continuity for staff and care provision	• There are distinct needs across the three unitaries that this model may not address • May introduce challenges when it comes to OFSTED inspections and ensuring all areas are meeting required responsibilities • Dilutes accountability for service success • May introduce complexity should a member organisation wish to leave the arrangement
Joint Children's Trust: Authorities create or commission a trust, which operates independently with a shared governance board	• There have been indications that the introduction of a trust can drive practice improvements	• Central government has been clear that this is not their preferred option for social care delivery • Requires significant investment to set up • May introduce complexity should a member organisation wish to leave the arrangement • Dilutes accountability for improvement work

Table 70: Types of delivery models for implementing Children's Social Care

Following engagement with Leaders, Chief Executives and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), our recommended delivery model for East Norfolk is to establish a single Children's Service.

This option provides the greatest opportunity for each unitary to build a genuinely local and community connected service, that leverages local community assets to deliver positive outcomes for residents. Given the demand challenges that East Norfolk is facing and has faced as part of a large single unitary there is a risk that remaining in a larger organisational structure will just further exacerbate these pressures.

Whilst partners such as the Police and Health systems will have to service three unitaries, their movement to three footprints across the Norfolk geographies aligns with this recommended option and will allow for closer working relationships to develop between staff within the new unitary function.

There are positive examples of joint working that exist across the county footprint currently and would not seek to unpick these where they provide positive outcomes for residents. Partnership arrangements that should be retained include the Norfolk Children's Safeguarding Partnership which could be served by a joint administrative function and retain its local community safeguarding groups which will be strengthened through their connection to more localised service delivery.

Finally, our analysis has indicated that the Norfolk care market has seen increased costs in placement types and there is a need to ensure the placement market remains sustainable. Positioned within EI&P, East Norfolk will have its own Commissioning & Partnerships function, that will commission service across the council. However, they will come together with Greater Norwich and West through partnership boards to commission support like residential care placements and will continue involvement within regional care collaboratives such as Adopt East and Foster East to work in partnership with other authorities and sector specialists to provide support for children and young people.

These organisations already span organisational boundaries beyond Norfolk, so refining membership should not have the destabilising impact that has been suggested. Retaining a sovereign commissioning service will also enable East Norfolk to develop hyper-local relationships with providers and the community sector to meet needs – ensuring there is not a risk of a 'postcode lottery' in provision but that residents have access to provision that is right for their needs.

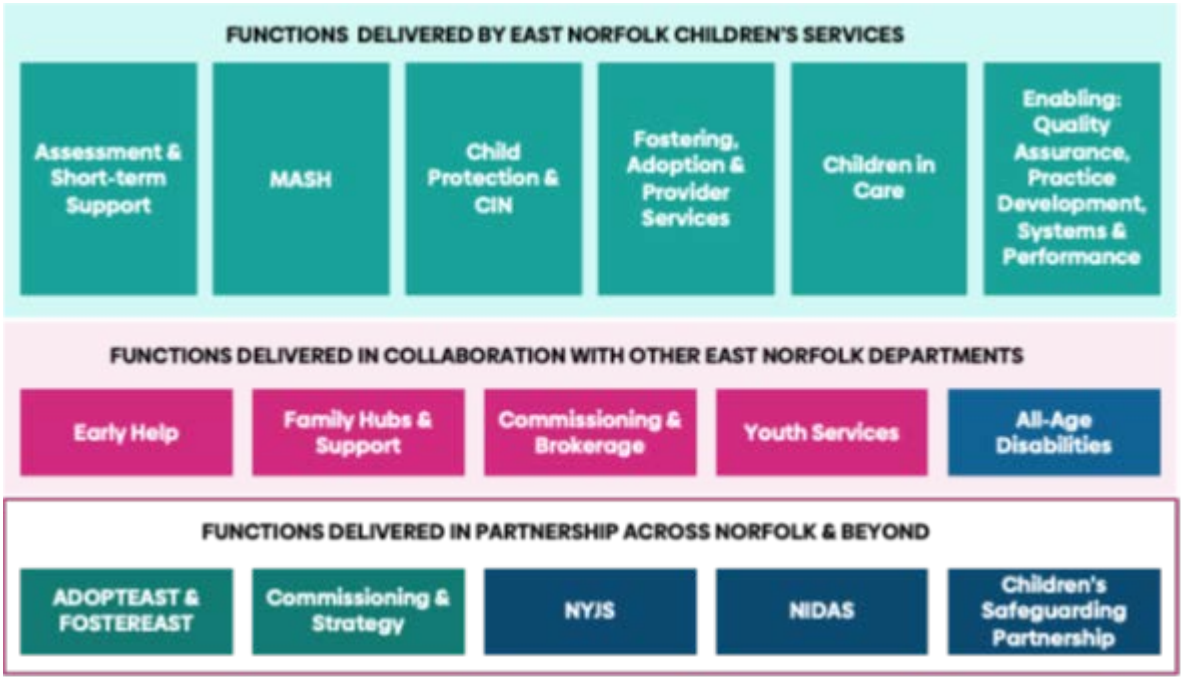

Figure 10: Functional model of Children's Social Care across the unitary.

5.4.3 Improving outcomes, unlocking innovation

Children, young people and their families in East Norfolk will benefit from a service offer that is rooted in their local communities and needs. It is clear from the current context

in East Norfolk that the current method of service delivery is not delivering the outcomes that are needed for families and young people. We believe that the best way to manage the challenges facing East Norfolk is a service response that is deeply rooted in the local community, that builds upon (not over) good practice and relationships that exist currently to be able to more effective target support at residents before a crisis emerges.

The Early Intervention & Prevention offer in East Norfolk will be primarily focused on ensuring the stability and resilience of adults across the area, connecting them to employment, housing, as well as proactively support debt management and the risk of domestic abuse. More resilient households will result in less demand for services.

Where there is a need for a statutory intervention – or concern about safety of a child or young person – a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will be located within Children's Services which will bring together statutory partners from police, health and other partners, building on existing strong safeguarding arrangements to identify and respond to need quickly. The three unitary model aligns with the move of statutory partners to more localised geographies of service delivery – enabling the development of deep relationships and mitigating risks of disaggregation.

For children who do enter the care system, the emphasis on family-based placements will be retained, exploring kinship and then wider fostering arrangements. East Norfolk has the highest number of residential care placements, and there is an opportunity within the new unitary to ensure these are genuinely meeting needs and providing value for money – or whether young people can be stepped down into family-based placements.

As young people leave care, East Norfolk as a unitary will connect them to local housing and employment opportunities. Through close partnership with housing colleagues, suitable accommodation will be accessed with support for independence skills where that is needed. East Norfolk has a strong ambition linked manufacturing, construction, engineering and clean energy, there is therefore an opportunity to link this to East Norfolk's corporate parenting role and connect care leavers to apprenticeships, training and employment within these sectors.

For those children and young people who require support due to a disability, an all-age disability approach will be in place. This will enable effective management of transition between Children's Social Care and Adults Social Care, as well as a focus on preparing

for independence from as early as possible by bringing together staff with expertise and experience from across the age spectrum. This service will work closely with Health colleagues to support service delivery and transition between services, and with SEND teams to support transition where that is appropriate. This will provide families with consistency of approach and reduce the experience of a 'cliff edge' between Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care.

5.4.4 Achieving financial benefits

Where needs arise, it will be identified earlier and members of the family can be supported across a range of service. For example, where an adult in a family is experiencing mental health challenges resulting in unemployment, support can be provided that address those issues rather than funnelling a family into statutory supporting – saving on average £26,500 per package of support and having immeasurable impact on the outcomes of a child who avoids going into care.

A holistic approach to case management can also enable families to welcome children in care back home, with around 354 children in care, a small reduction in numbers could have a significant impact. This may also enable more young people to move into safe and appropriate accommodation as they leave family placements, increasing their independence and reducing spend on high-cost semi-independent living.

A structuring of services that focuses on early intervention and prevention also enables the reorganisation of staff around community hubs and early intervention. There is also an opportunity to revisit the structure of case working staff, so they are better aligned with demand across East Norfolk.

5.5 SEND & Education

5.5.1 Context & constraints

In addition to significant demand for Children's Social Care, East Norfolk will also inherit the highest number of Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) out of the three unitaries. More children are placed in 'other' types of provision than mainstream settings, and East also has a higher proportion of children and young people being educated in specialist settings than elsewhere in the county. This, alongside 37% of

exclusions in the county, speaks to an education system that is not as inclusive as it could be.

East Norfolk also has the lowest number of special school placements out of the three areas, which is likely contributing to spend on home to school transport. This may also be the reason behind this area being the area with the highest number of children attending independent special schools, the highest cost provision. More children are also home educated than elsewhere in the county – again, contributing to a sense that education institutions are not consistently meeting young people's needs.

As a unitary, East Norfolk will be managing a range of both new schools over the next five years, but also areas where pupil numbers are declining or where parental preference for certain settings is driving down numbers in others.

In addition to sixth forms attached to schools, young people in East Norfolk also have access to studying opportunities at East Norfolk Sixth Form, Paston College and East Coast College. Whilst young people will continue to travel beyond the unitary boundaries to attend colleges and sixth forms, ensuring local colleges continue to build deep relationships with local employers will enable young people to access employment opportunities within the area, and benefit from the potential of the energy coast.

5.5.2 Recommended delivery model

SEND and Education will be part of the Children's Social Care management structure, and as outlined in 1.1 this will be a disaggregated service model, providing opportunities to build services that are tied in the requirements of local areas – whilst enabling collaboration across the county footprint where that is required, for instance, in the recruitment of specialist roles (e.g. Educational Psychologists).

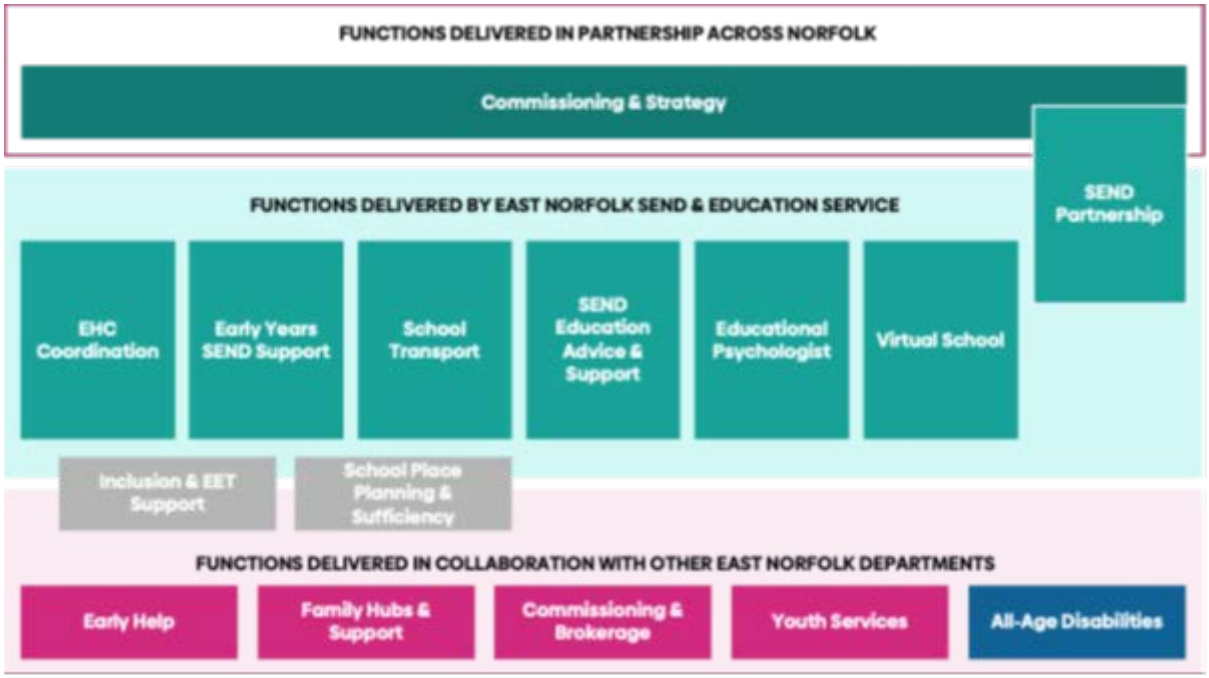

Figure 11: Functional model of SEND & Education across the unitary.

5.5.3 Improving outcomes, unlocking innovation

As with Children's Social Care, it is apparent that the current model of delivery in Norfolk is not meeting the needs of the young people of East Norfolk consistently enough, with not enough young people being able to access education within mainstream or other school settings. With a focus on more local service delivery, East Norfolk is positioned to deepen existing partnership working around local schools, and with partners to deliver a truly inclusive response to young people's needs.

Families and young people will benefit from an integrated approach with Early Intervention & Prevention as families will be able to access holistic support close to them to enable families to be connected to peers and community support to build resilience around a child's needs. This offer will also support young people who may be at risk of exclusion or at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), preventing a risk of entrenching unemployment within communities.

Where children and young people do need additional support to access education, EHC coordinators will be supported through workforce development to build closer working relationships with families to support them through the timely development of EHCPs and regular review and updates of these plans, aligned to a young person's needs. Teams Around the School will be developed on a patch basis around local

schools to provide effective inclusion support – and intervene to prevent education placements breaking down or young people being suspended or excluded.

Planning for independence and transition will be considered throughout a young person's pathway. Where a young person may need support from Adult Social Care, support will be accessed alongside the All-Age Disability service to enable early planning for independence. If a young person is not eligible for future support, the service will connect them to the Early Intervention & Prevention to enable them to access support across housing and employment.

We would place school transport decision making alongside both place planning and EHCP coordination, to ensure its central role to enabling independence and the significant role it can play in additional cost is considered alongside decision making on school placements.

The new model will also leverage the deep understanding of communities and planning, alongside considerations for school place planning. With the development and growth opportunity that devolution presents – we would see this function working together with colleagues in planning and development to ensure we are designing an education system that is fit for future demand across mainstream and specialist education. Tying together place planning and school teams will also enable intervention where parental preference may be driving pupil numbers to intervene quickly to understand root causes.

Our vision for East Norfolk is as an area that celebrates innovation and new technology – developing a compelling skills offer that connects young people to these opportunities will be key to ensuring truly inclusive growth.

5.5.4 Achieving financial benefits

Working to reset and strengthen our approach to SEND will provide the opportunity to unlock reduced spend against the High Needs Block, which currently carries a significant deficit.

Through effective deployment of Early Intervention & Prevention and Teams Around Schools, we will be able to reduce the amount of plans to young people – with a rough cost of £8,000 per year for each child who has a mainstream plan, increasing to over £23,000 where a child may be in a special school.

Exploring opportunities to step children down from placements based on a deeper understanding of their needs and outcomes will also release savings, through more effective relationships between staff and families, and patch-based working, families can have greater confidence in support.

Norfolk also has a higher-than-average rate of exclusions, which typically lead to detrimental life outcomes for children and young people. There is an opportunity to continue to avoid additional exclusions through both school-based support, and effective engagement with young people and their families to understand and support wider complexities.

5.6 Enabling Services

5.6.1 Context & constraints

Enabling services set up the environment in which frontline services and partners can work together to serve local communities. Therefore, they need to provide efficient support at the lowest possible cost.

They will need to support East Norfolk as a larger scale organisation, to serve a broader area, whist delivering a more complex range of services (e.g. social care, education, highways, etc.).

Predecessor Councils in East Norfolk have adopted some different delivery models for their enabling support services, which will impact upon the new unitary blueprint. The diagram below illustrates where each district has moved away from a standalone, in-house service to adopt a different delivery model:

	Broadland	South Norfolk	Great Yarmouth	North Norfolk
Most Enabling Services	Shared Service			
ICT & Digital	Shared Service		Partially outsourced to Norfolk CC	
Procurement	Outsourced to East Suffolk			
Legal	Outsourced to NPLAW (Norfolk CC)		Outsourced to EIAS	Traded Service (EastLaw)
Audit	Outsourced to EIAS	Host EIAS	Outsourced to EIAS	Outsourced to EIAS

Figure 12: Current delivery models for Enabling Services in predecessor East Norfolk councils

The primary benefit of moving to a three-authority model is around being able to tailor frontline services, support and wider partnerships to the very different needs of each area. However, there are some challenges and opportunities that East Norfolk faces in relation to providing enabling services that can support the wider organisation.

The small size of districts has meant that councils have had to operate small functions to provide enabling support. A large unitary allows each organisation to scale up its services to realise economies of scale, build in resilience and mitigate the risks of single points of failure.

Moving from five councils and four management structures, to three unitaries also poses an opportunity to realise efficiencies through streamlining senior officer posts, reducing the financial pressure on the frontline services that will benefit residents and communities.

A move to three unitaries also represents an opportunity to 'reset' enabling services so that they can adopt best practice operating models that can deliver greatest value for money to the organisation and taxpayers. The district councils already have mature, high-performing services that could be adopted in the new organisation.

Because the boundary of East Norfolk is not coterminous with the existing district councils, portions of Broadland and South Norfolk sit in the new authority. At the same time these two councils have successfully run a shared service. These two factors will

make it complex to disaggregate the shared budgets, contracts, policies, systems and staff to migrate to the new unitary.

The new authority will also inherit a broad range of arm's length companies and shared services, which its enabling services may also need to support so that they can continue to thrive. This **includes** the following:

- Big Sky Group (comprising a range of ltd companies)
- Broadland Living Company
- CNC Building Control
- Great Yarmouth Services Ltd
- Eastern Internal Audit Services
- Norfolk Environment Credits Ltd
- Broadland Growth Ltd
- Equinox Enterprises Ltd
- Equinox Property Holdings Ltd

East Norfolk will also inherit a share of the county council's arm's length traded company, Norse Group which delivers a range of asset management and place-based services. It may also take on Repton Property Development.

5.6.2 Recommended delivery model

East Norfolk will have a core of enabling services that are set up to provide the right support to the wider organisation. The diagram below shows what enabling services it will run and what models will be adopted.

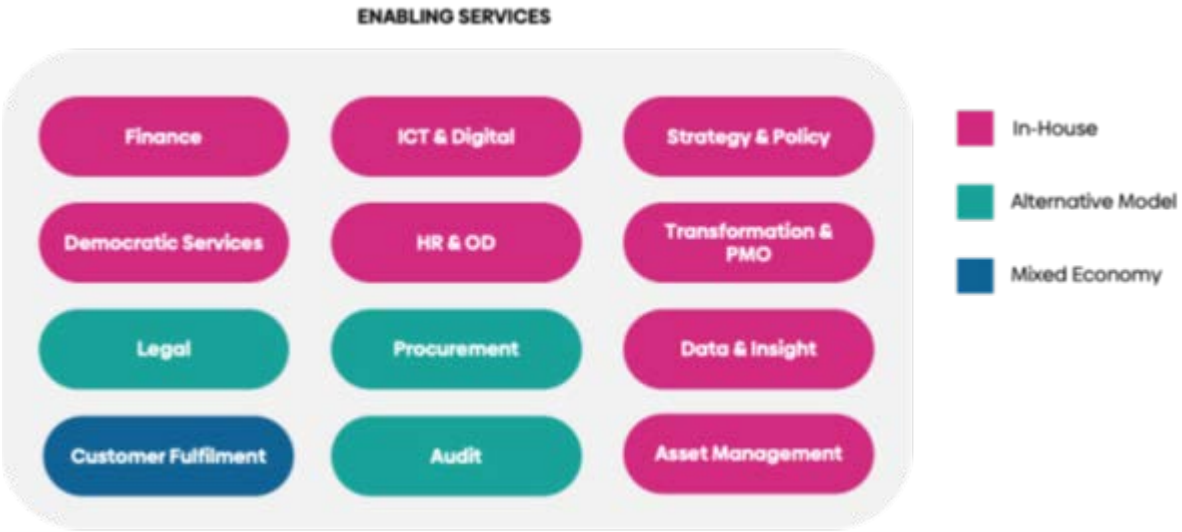

Figure 13: East Norfolk Enabling Services

The key features of this service are summarised below.

Control and coordination	Enabling Services are either centralised (e.g. HR & OD, Finance) or adopt a hub and spoke mode[5]l (Transformation & PMO, Data & Insight[6]) as a means of keeping control of scarce resources and maintaining a resilient, flexible resource whilst also fostering a community of practice and common standards across the organisation.
Mixed economy	Wherever possible enabling services are delivered in-house as standalone functions to maximise control and flexibility to evolve as the council's needs change over time. There are some exceptions where a mix of models is in place: • Legal – The aspiration will be to either in-source the service or consolidate into a shared service. • Procurement The aim is to adopt a single model for the unitary • Audit – East Norfolk would be the natural home (seeing as one of the current authorities host this service already) for the shared Eastern Internal Audit Services and would continue to offer this function to Greater Norwich and West Norfolk.
Best practice	The services would seek to continue the best practice from the existing services within councils, whilst also using the redesign of enabling functions as an opportunity to innovate.
Appropriate scale and capacity	Although there are opportunities to realise efficiencies from moving to a single unitary, it is important to make sure enabling services retain the capacity to support the new council in delivering an ambitious transformation programme to realise the wider benefits for residents and communities.
Tailored to local needs and services	Enabling services will be set up to support the unique requirements of East Norfolk. For example, Asset Management will include specific capability to support management of its

[5] A hub and spoke model is where there is a larger corporate function but also a network of smaller pockets of capacity. They work together and form a community of practice for the organisation.

[6] The Data & Insight function proposed within the EI&P model will form a "large' spoke within the hub and spoke model

	extensive portfolio of coastal assets including defences, piers and seaside amenities.
Ability to select the best opportunities to scale up	There are further longer-term opportunities for East Norfolk to collaborate with the two other unitaries, where it makes sense to pool resources, they share the same needs and can benefit from economies of scale or increased purchasing power.

5.6.3 Achieving financial benefits

As one of three unitaries, East Norfolk is of the right scale to both tailor services to the unique needs and circumstances of the area but also benefit from being of a size to realise the benefits of combining the previous councils. The main financial benefits of the model would come from the following changes:

- Streamlining duplicated management structures
- Gaining economies of scale for those enabling services that currently operate on a small scale
- Removing duplication of processes and functions
- Rationalising key systems such as the multiple Enterprise Resource Planning, Finance and HR & Payroll systems used across the organisations

5.7 Place

5.7.1 Context & constraints

East Norfolk is a rural area with market towns and a large coastline, including Great Yarmouth and Cromer. The region has a strong tourism economy and growing clean energy sectors, with assets, established clusters and emerging opportunities in offshore wind, hydrogen, and carbon capture. The coast is a vital natural asset with protected landscapes like the Broads National Park and Norfolk Coast National Landscape, though coastal erosion is a concern.

The economy is diverse, spanning ports, market towns, and rural communities. The Broads and Norfolk Coast are key tourism destinations with potential for year-round growth. Clean energy businesses, including offshore wind and energy transmission, present significant opportunities for high-value jobs and skills development. Key assets

include Bacton, Great Yarmouth Energy Park, Hethel Engineering Centre, and Sizewell power station.

Market towns and rural areas have strong small business networks, high SME survival rates, and housing growth potential. However, challenges include high deprivation rates in specific wards within Great Yarmouth and a skills mismatch that needs addressing to ensure inclusive growth.

East Norfolk will also have to work closely with the Broads Authority which manages the Norfolk Broads and has planning powers within the park.

The East Norfolk coast is impacted by coastal erosion with recent national coastal erosion assessments identifying 2097 residential properties, other assets and infrastructure identified at risk of loss from erosion by 2105. The East Norfolk unitary will become the Risk Management Authority for coastal erosion which includes management of sea defences and preparing for the wider impacts of coastal change.

In both the existing Great Yarmouth Borough Council and North Norfolk District Council local authority areas, place based discretionary service spend on place-based services is important in maintaining of sense of character and place – particularly in coastal resort towns and villages, underpinning the tourism and day visitor economy. Both of these authorities have ownership of, and maintenance responsibilities for, significant tourism infrastructure assets such as promenades; beach huts, chalets and concessions; public gardens; woodlands, leisure centres, Pier and Pavilion Theatre; Blue Flag beach infrastructure and life-saving equipment; and significant numbers of public conveniences – all of which support the tourism economy.

Whilst some of these assets can generate income, the seasonal nature of seaside tourism means that management, repair and maintenance costs etc. exceed income, even where a commercial approach to lettings is applied. Both authorities seek to recover / meet the costs of the provision of many of these discretionary services through the levying of car park charges, but the discretionary nature of such services means that planned repairs and maintenance and investment in new facilities is challenging given the increased demand for statutory services and wider financial pressures.

In the more rural parts of the proposed East Norfolk unitary authority, particularly in communities within the Broads Executive area, market towns and the pilgrimage village of Walsingham, the existing district authorities also provide public toilets and

have joint or shared responsibilities with the County Council for maintaining public realm assets – including pedestrian areas, public seating and street furniture, historic environment, travel hubs etc which serve to create a sense of community and place, and where the predominance of small businesses (and lack of large scale investments in town centre retail and leisure schemes) means that responsibilities for the provision of such services rests with the local authorities.

All of these services and facilities are greatly valued by our local residents and tourist visitors and form essential elements of our local communities, economy and "place" – which could be safeguarded and strengthened by scale through LGR.

East Norfolk councils have adopted some different delivery models for place-based services, which will impact upon the new unitary blueprint. The diagram below illustrates where each district has adopted a different delivery model, where the table shows as empty this is indicative of an existing in-house service.

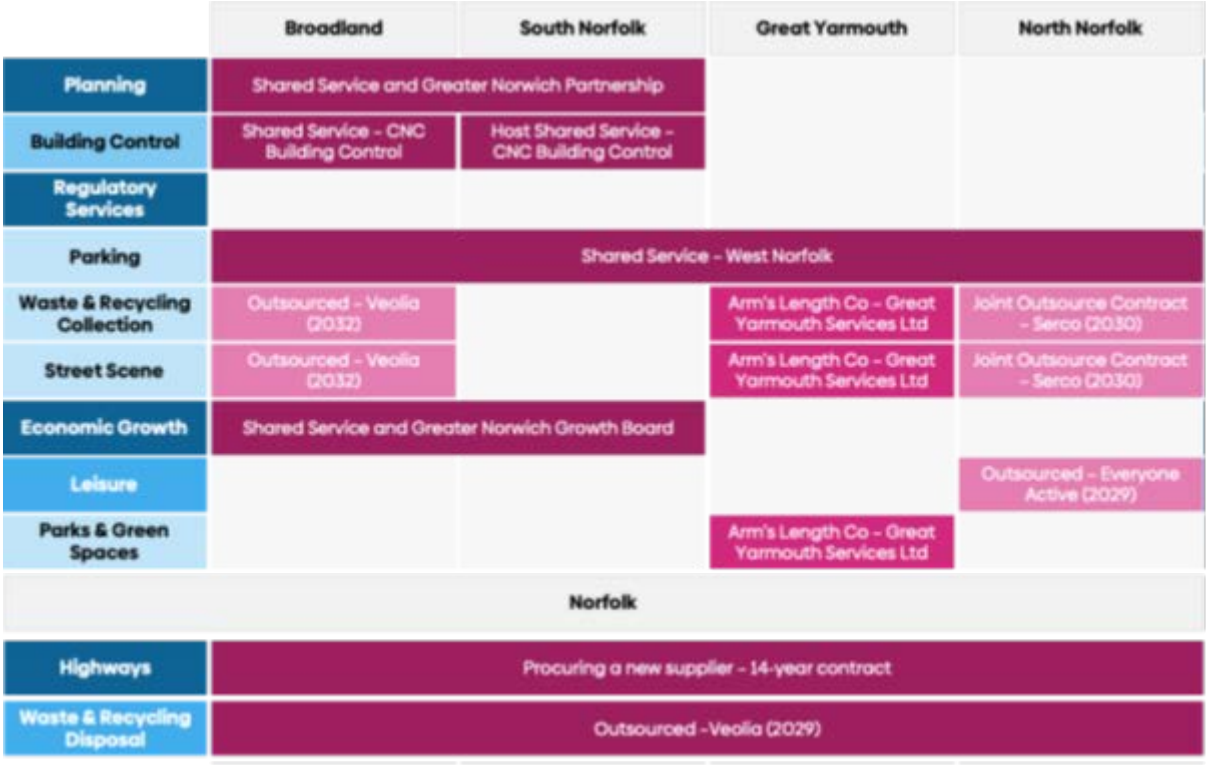

Figure 14: Current delivery models for East Norfolk councils.

The county council has also just gone out to market for a highways maintenance and professional services contract lasting 14 years. It also has a contract with Veolia for waste transfer and disposal that runs until end of March 2029. East Norfolk is likely to take on responsibility for part of these contracts.

In addition to this mixed economy of services, East Norfolk will inherit all or a portion of the following arm's length delivery vehicles[7] that have a role in shaping place within the area:

- Big Sky Ventures Ltd – an arm's length property developer of affordable homes and is a property management company
- Broadland Living – an arm's length company that offers below market rental homes in the private market
- Equinox Enterprises – an arm's length company that develops new homes to buy across Great Yarmouth Borough
- Equinox Property Holdings - an arm's length company that offers below market rental homes in the private market
- Great Yarmouth Services Ltd – a wholly-owned company that delivers environmental services including waste collection and street scene
- Norse Group – a wholly owned trading company offering a broad range of services
- Repton Homes – an arm's length development company owned by the County Council.
- Norfolk Environmental Waste Services (NEWS) – a joint venture with all councils that operates recycling and waste transfer stations for the reprocessing and sale of recycling material which generates income.

East Norfolk would take on a range of 'place-based' services including Highways & Transport, Waste Disposal, Cultural Services, further Planning responsibilities, and Trading Standards.

Placemaking requires a multi-faceted approach to planning, designing, and managing public spaces and this will require unitaries to exercise a wide range of levers to shape places. Bringing in Economic Development, Highways & Transport, Cultural services, Waste Disposal and other functions will help East Norfolk coordinate these services to deliver a truly joined up approach to create vibrant, healthy, and meaningful places that enhance people's well-being and connection to their community. East Norfolk will also need to work closely with the Mayoral Combined Authority to those initiatives (e.g. infrastructure, attracting inwards investment, etc.) but can complement this with interventions tailored to local needs.

[7] There are some other arm's length bodies sat with current district councils, however we are proposing these will sit with other unitaries

Local government reorganisation and a move to establish unitary authorities therefore presents opportunities for the greater co-ordination, reform and transformation of place-based services across the proposed East Norfolk unitary authority, through streamlining strategic management – highways, public transport, historic environment in traditional "highways / public realm" areas and realising economies of scale, critical mass and specialisms, across a wider geography.

Such opportunities are believed to exist around estates and asset management, in-house property services repairs and maintenance teams and outsourced contracts; larger scale contracts for grounds maintenance, street, beach and amenity cleansing and litter bin emptying; public convenience servicing; and the provision of beach and lifeguard services.

East Norfolk is ideally placed to take a placemaking approach that addresses the local needs and context of the area. It is of a suitable size and scale to be able to tailor services at a neighbourhood level and represent efficient use of resources.

There are opportunities to realise efficiencies from streamlining management structures and rationalising systems. Increased scale will also support greater resilience for services such as Planning.

However, the mix of long-term contracts, in-house and arm's length company delivery for Waste collection and Street Scene poses a challenge for the new unitary. The council will need to take a long-term approach to rationalising waste collection and disposal services – but it can unlock benefits from coordination of operations, rationalising depots and optimised route planning.

In addition, regulatory changes for Planning and Building Control will result in major changes for services, and some uncertainty around what responsibilities local authorities will retain.

5.7.2 Recommended delivery model

East Norfolk is best placed to service the area with its own unique identity, communities, demography, geography, and economy. The delivery model is described below, and represents a pragmatic, interim state that factors in contractual

constraints while allowing East Norfolk to invest time in developing and implementing a new model in the longer-term.

Figure 15: East Norfolk Place Services

Placemaking	The model brings together all the services that can make a major contribution to create vibrant, healthy, and meaningful places that enhance people's well-being and connection to their community.
Shift to East Norfolk	With Greater Norwich taking on a broader area around the city, East Norfolk can now focus on a strategic approach to sustainable development and economic growth in the more rural, coastal area of the county.
Mixed economy	Given the constraints of long-term contracts already in place for waste collection and disposal, street scene and highways, services within Place will be mixed economy. Although several will be run in-house as standalone services, others will take the form of either shared services, outsourced or a mix of both. • Waste collection, disposal & street scene – Collection will be delivered by a combination of in-house, outsourced and arm's length models until contracts expire. East Norfolk will work in partnership with the across the county on waste disposal.

	• Highways – anticipated to be delivered through a mix of in-house expertise and the new supplier being procured by the county • Building Control – consolidation to take place once there is clarity on a on regulatory changes • Parking – the unitary will inherit and continue to operate the shared parking service • Leisure – will continue to be delivered through a mix of in-house and outsourced models across the unitary • Parks & Green Spaces – will be delivered through in-house services and an arm's length company
Leverage new and existing partnerships	Place will draw upon the existing, successful pan-Norfolk partnerships to deliver recycling and waste transfer stations (via the joint venture Norfolk Environmental Waste Services), shared parking services and CNC Building Control.
Long-term approach	Place will have the ability to strategically plan and implement transformational change across all its placemaking services. This will take time to properly plan and execute, which works well with some of the long-term contractual commitments that it will inherit.

This model will bring placemaking services together so that they can provide a multifaceted approach to fostering neighbourhoods. For example, the potential growth in green sectors and associated jobs could place further strains on the local housing market. As a unitary with housing powers, it can adopt a joined-up approach to mitigate the risks of shortfall of affordable housing and use it as an enabler of growth.

5.7.3 Achieving financial benefits

In the longer-term East Norfolk will seek to consolidate those services that are currently delivered through a range of models to benefit from economies of scale and break down service silos to join up delivery. This will realise greater value for money for local taxpayers and further enable a total placemaking approach for local neighbourhoods.

In the short-term the new model will allow benefits to be realised through the following means:

- Streamlining duplicated senior management structures
- Some reductions in duplication across similar functions (e.g. Planning Policy) or from joining up services (e.g. green spaces and management of highways verges)
- Harnessing economies of scale for some services (e.g. Development Management)
- Rationalising key systems for Planning, Environmental Services and other functions

In the longer-term there will be benefits from coordinating services and further reducing duplications. There may also be benefits from consolidation of assets such as depots and fleet management.

5.8 Implementation considerations

A more detailed plan for implementation can be found in Appendix H, however considerations specific to implementing the blueprints can be found below.

Workforce & Service Delivery

The operating model is rooted in neighbourhood-level service delivery, and as part of implementation the shadow unitaries will decide on the scale and size of these areas to inform the appropriate location of community buildings and development of outreach teams between coastal, urban and rural areas.

Where East Norfolk is inheriting functions which are currently delivered in a variety of ways – change will not occur from Day One, rather the shadow and new authorities will review and consolidate arrangements as appropriate supported by a phased transformation programme to embed design new systems and unlock new ways of working.

The establishment of a new functions, and the bringing together of many others, will require a focused recruitment & retention strategy alongside investment in workforce development. For staff who are working in the new EI&P function, they will need to be trained in person-centred models of practice and be equipped with the skills they need to work across several service areas. In statutory functions, in addition to the roles of the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) and Director of Children's Service (DCS), consideration will need to be given to the management of shifting existing locality teams and therefore not losing local knowledge and ensuring a strategy is in

place to attract and retain specialist staff. This may include ensuring there are 'grow your own' pathways within East Norfolk to grow and develop a sustainable workforce.

Partnerships

As set out across the blueprints, partnership working within and outside of East Norfolk is central to effective delivery of our ambitions. This includes develop closer relationships with registered housing providers to drive growth and expanding housing options. East Norfolk will be able to develop closer locality working relationships with Health, enabling collaboration on the 10 Year Neighbourhood Health plan as well as meeting immediate needs around hospital discharge and joint funding. Strong partnerships with schools and importantly families and children and young people will ensure services are designed collaboratively as part of implementation.

Data & Technology

Technology and data will be central enablers to delivery of the new services. A single resident record and integrated case management will replace fragmented arrangements, allowing teams to share information and respond to resident needs. This will include reviewing and rationalising current housing systems to enable effective case management and data sharing. Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers opportunities to detect risks earlier and ease the administrative burden on frontline staff, enabling them to focus on building relationships with residents.

6. Appendix F – Greater Norwich Blueprints

6.1 Early Intervention and Prevention via a Thriving Communities Department

6.1.1 Context & constraints

Greater Norwich is distinctly characterised by a dense urban core surrounded by suburban and semi-rural communities. It faces some of the most acute pressures in Norfolk, including high children's social care costs and the largest share of unpaid carers. These figures reflect the complex needs of families which remain unaddressed until they escalate into crisis. Across Greater Norwich, the gap in healthy life expectancy between the most and least deprived wards is more than 15 years.

Despite these challenges, Greater Norwich has strong foundations for prevention. Help Hubs, which coordinate housing, social care, police, health and VCSE support, are already active across both urban and rural areas. Community anchor organisations are also well-established. These initiatives are distinctly local and demonstrate the tangible impact of joined-up, early help when local partners collaborate effectively.

However, these promising efforts are not yet part of a consistent, system-wide offer. VCSE partners in Greater Norwich are frequently constrained by short-term funding, limiting their ability to play a sustained role. Residents continue to navigate a fragmented system where responsibilities for children's social care, public health and housing are split between county and district councils. This fragmentation results in duplicated processes, multiple access points and no single view of a resident. The consequences are not only financial inefficiencies but also missed opportunities for early intervention and improved outcomes.

Local Government Reform presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to align these national priorities from the NHS 10 Year Plan prioritising neighbourhood models to the Family Hub programme, with the specific strengths of Greater Norwich. The new unitary authority could act as a place leader, aligning its EIP model with NHS neighbourhood footprints and fostering a sustainable system of support across public services, the VCSE sector and communities. This would enable a decisive shift from fragmented, reactive provision to a distinctly Greater Norwich prevention-first system.

It would be designed to keep residents well, resilient and connected, while ensuring long-term financial sustainability.

6.1.2 Recommended delivery model

In Greater Norwich the prevention model will be delivered via a dedicated department called Thriving Communities. It will unite housing, social care, education, health and VCSE partners around neighbourhood hubs in Norwich. These hubs will co-locate (where and as appropriate) and work alongside partner organisations and voluntary groups, complemented by outreach in rural areas and accessible digital and phone options. This ensures the offer is inclusive and distinctly responsive to local needs. For residents this means a clear, “no wrong door” offer, with earlier, joined-up support in trusted local settings.

Support will be tailored to the full picture of housing, health, work and family life specific to each resident. Multidisciplinary teams will coordinate responses so that residents only tell their story once, with case leadership shifting seamlessly as needs evolve. Predictive analytics, supported by AI, will identify households, streets and communities at risk 12 to 18 months ahead. This will guide targeted interventions such as stabilising family life where safeguarding pressures emerge or supporting carers before they reach crisis.

Operationally, the department has five functions:

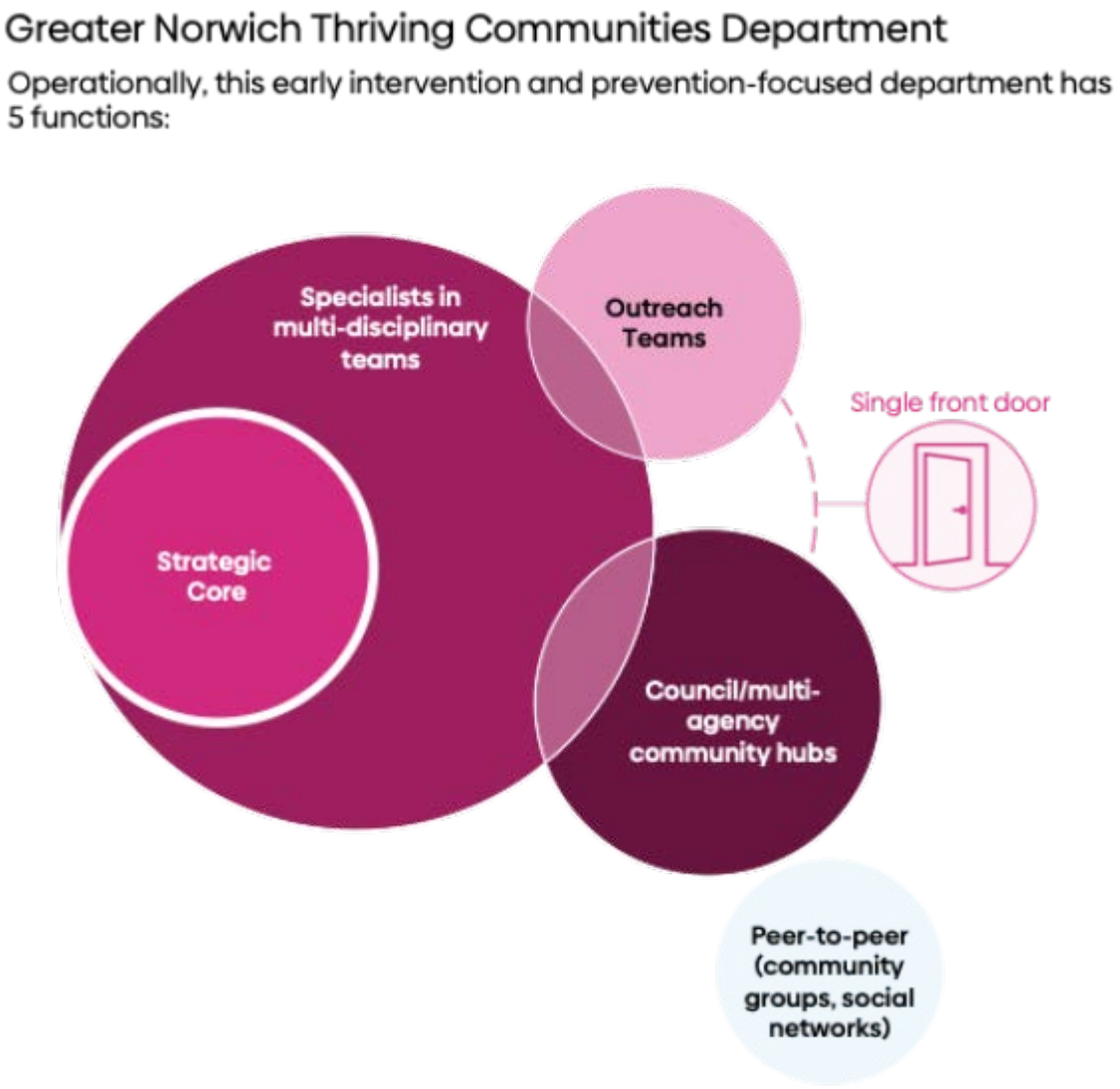

Figure 16: Functions of the Greater Norwich Early Intervention and Prevention Department

Function 1: Strategic Core

This sets the strategic ambition for the prevention-led department, ensuring it is guided by evidence. This will enable effective investment to strengthen early years and family resilience and facilitating coordinated activity across Greater Norwich. Additionally, it ensures that commissioning practices harness economies of scale while remaining responsive to the distinct needs of suburban, and urban communities.

Function 2: Specialists/experts in multidisciplinary teams

Specialist practitioners contribute targeted expertise to collaborative case management involving complex family and early years requirements. Working in partnership with both universal and community-based staff, they ensure that families experiencing crisis or facing escalating needs receive timely and appropriate

interventions. These professionals may offer specialisations in areas such as safeguarding, family therapy, mental health, domestic abuse, housing, or school engagement.

Function 3: Front door

The front door offers a unified and accessible point of contact for residents – whether by telephone, online platforms, or email – to obtain early assistance, information, and guidance on issues including childcare, school attendance and parenting. Staff at this entry point address routine inquiries, assess and direct more complex cases, and connect residents with appropriate specialist or community-based support services.

Function 4: Community hubs

Community hubs function as integrated service points within local neighbourhoods, delivering in-person support focused on early years development and family resilience. They facilitate access to a comprehensive range of services, including parenting programmes, benefits support, housing assistance, and wellbeing activities. Staff working in these hubs are recognised and trusted members of the community, collaborating closely with schools and health professionals.

Function 5: Outreach teams

Mobile teams deliver early intervention services directly to families who may otherwise have limited access, particularly in locations with limited transport infrastructure. These professionals conduct home visits, facilitate school-based programs, and proactively identify needs that may not be immediately visible. Frequently, they are the first to recognise safeguarding concerns or indications of family stress within underserved communities.

For staff and partners, the model enables flexible team working with shared data, stronger collaboration and less duplication. For residents, it means earlier, more connected help that strengthens families, supports carers and improves wellbeing. Over time, this will reduce reliance on costly statutory interventions, delivering better outcomes for residents and a more sustainable system for Greater Norwich.

6.1.3 Improving outcomes, unlocking innovation

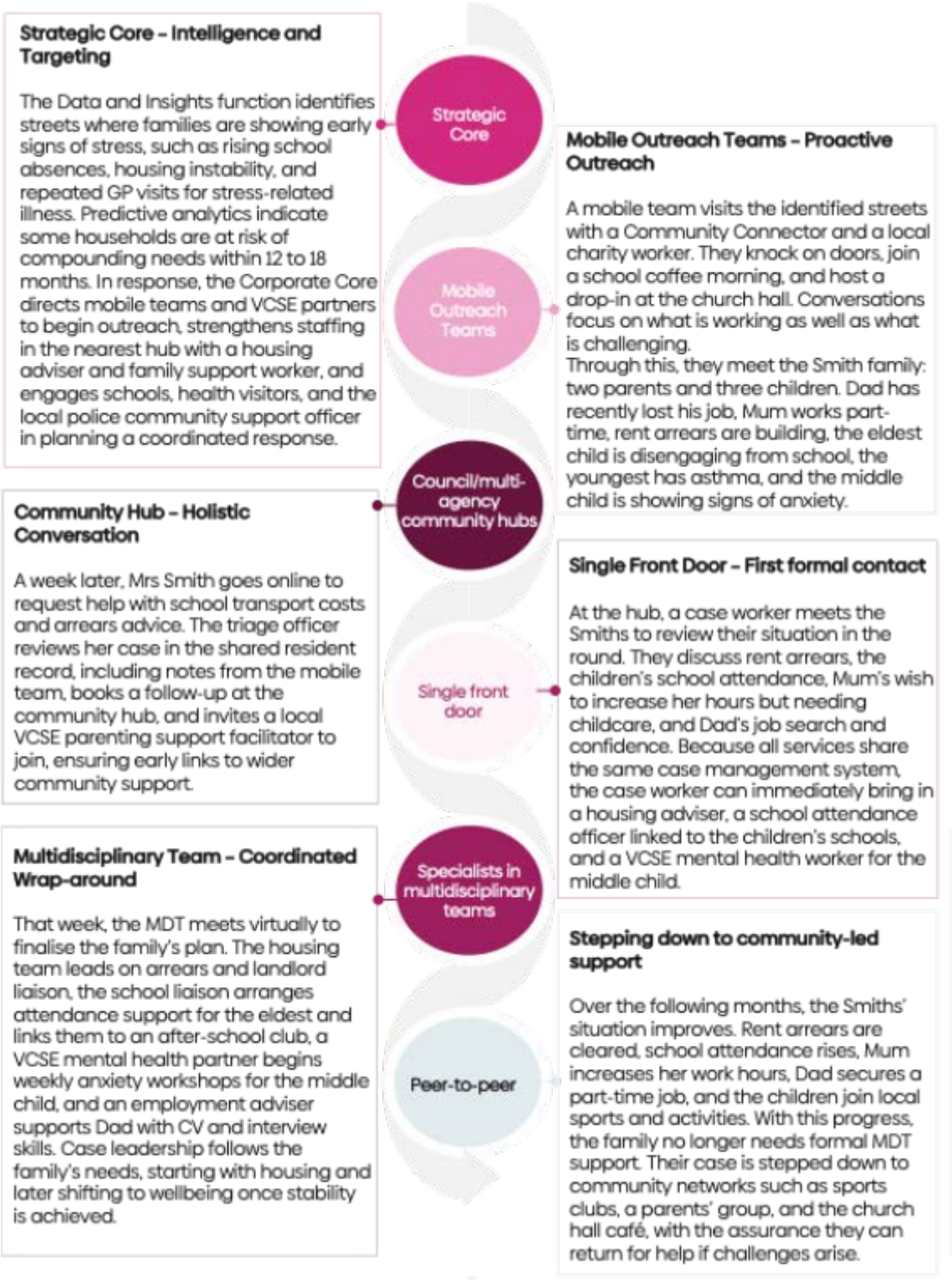

Figure 17: Greater Norwich resident journey

In Greater Norwich, neighbourhood hubs, which will be designed as part of the service redesign, will be a single, visible access point for early help, bringing together local

government services that were previously dislocated between county and borough councils.

Support will be delivered by multidisciplinary and multi-agency teams combining housing, social care, public health, education, and community partners. The combination and complexity of a resident's needs determines who is best placed to take the lead. As needs change, for example, when a housing crisis is resolved but mental health support is still required, leadership within the team shifts seamlessly, ensuring residents experience one connected system rather than a series of hand-offs.

Predictive analytics, using shared data, will identify residents, streets, or communities at risk of crisis 12–18 months ahead, enabling targeted, preventative action, for example, strengthening family resilience where safeguarding pressures are emerging, or directing early help to carers before they reach breaking point. By aligning with NHS neighbourhood footprints and the Government's Family Hub programme, the model will bring coherence to existing initiatives, building them into a sustainable, prevention-first system of support.

6.1.4 Unlocking financial benefits

The Greater Norwich EIP model is designed to manage demand by enhancing family resilience, safeguarding early childhood growth, and proactively tackling the root causes of crises before escalation. By deploy effective early intervention enhanced by predicative analytics, the level of spend on high-cost child protection, housing and health will reduce.

Financial efficiencies will be realised by reducing staffing duplication and fragmentation; this is achieved by replacing isolated referrals between education, health, and social care sectors with an integrated, prevention-focused intake and multidisciplinary early support teams.

Initial investment will be required for reallocating resources to prevention, streamlining functions, advanced ICT systems facilitating shared case oversight, and unification of education, health, and housing information infrastructures.

By reinforcing community assets, fostering parental wellbeing, and advancing school preparedness, the demand for costly statutory children's services is anticipated to

decline, thus cementing the shift from reactive crisis response to a robust, preventative approach to family resilience.

6.2 Housing & Homelessness

6.2.1 Context & constraints

Like all the unitary areas, Greater Norwich (GN) is distinct and diverse in the needs of its population. There is a high risk that without a place-based approach only achievable through a three unitary model, GN risks losing the opportunities afforded to it by its uniqueness.

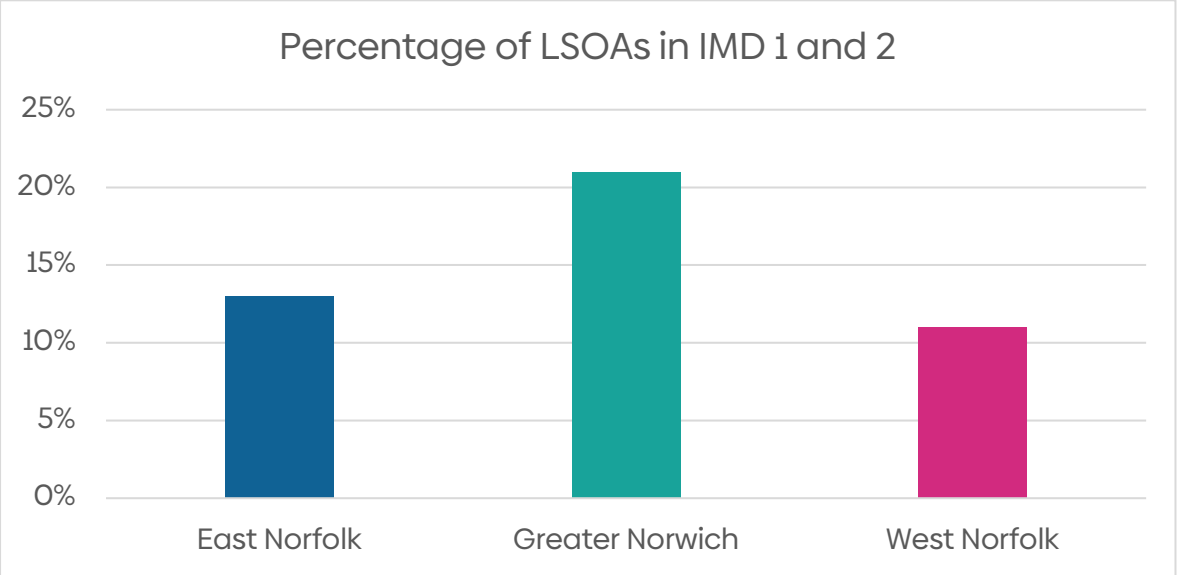

Figure 18: Percentage of LSOAs in IMD 1 & 2

GN has a high proportion of private and social rented homes, and the highest average private sector rents in Norfolk. This concentration increases the need for regulation and enforcement than in other areas. The city's large student population (about 20,500) further raises demand for Housing of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs). The area also accommodates more refugees and asylum seekers. Additionally, 21% of LSOAs in GN are among England's 20% most deprived.

Rough sleeping is the lowest of the three proposed unitaries, around 23% of Norfolk's total, but there were still 134 households in temporary accommodation in December 2024, most of them single people. This cohort is also represented within the housing register, with 59% of applicants are looking for one-bed homes, more than in East or West Norfolk.

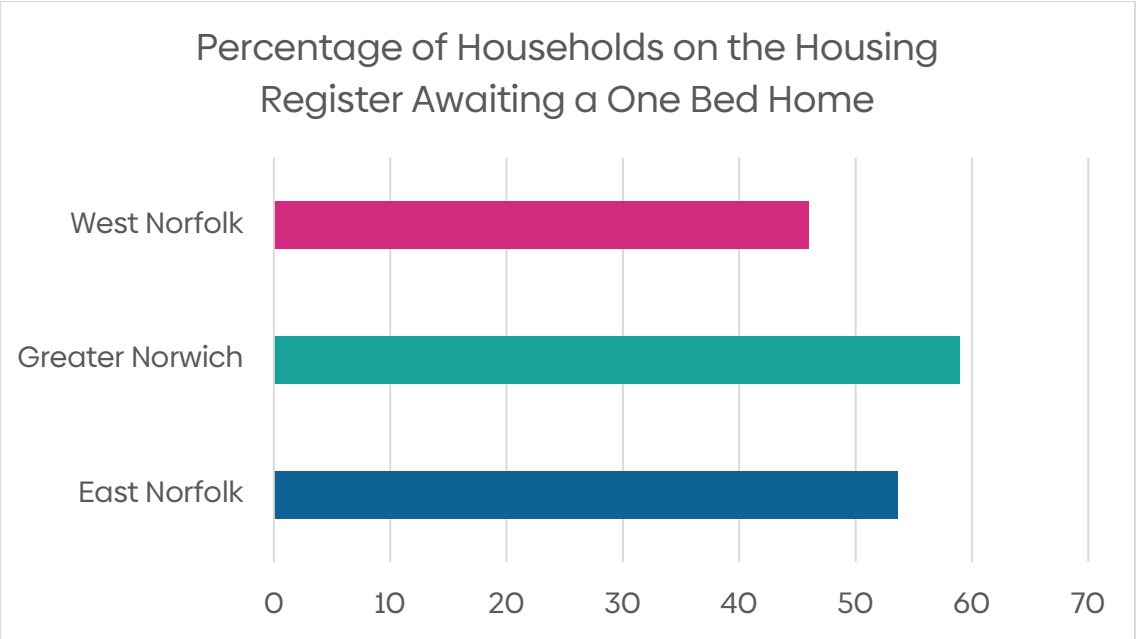

Figure 19: Percentage of households on the Housing Register awaiting a one bed home

6.2.2 Recommended delivery model

Homelessness

Aligning with the unitary's EI&P model, the homelessness function should be integrated and align with wider EI&P services. This means teams from across Greater Norwich and their commissioning will be merged, streamlined and become part of the Early Intervention & Prevention function.

An increased focus on early intervention supported by joined up working within multidisciplinary teams will offer opportunities for predictive interventions and holistic support packages. This in turn will prevent more people from reaching crisis and requiring more intensive support. This will be supported by existing hubs and partnerships should be broadened into the new unitary areas, supported by proactive outreach.

Housing

GN should establish with a choice based letting policy, ensuring residents have fair and transparent access to homes in the area.

Housing management and maintenance functions across the unitary should be brought together to create a consistent housing service, overseen by a dedicated

Director of Housing. Considering the specialist nature of the HRA the existing structure should be maintained with current senior management outside of EI&P.

The HRA should be established across the GN region to manage and maintain new homes that are developed/acquired as appropriate, as when HRA capacity allows, noting landlord function, compliance and preparation for Awaab's Law will take precedence.

Development

With the access to development opportunities in the urban fringes, the new unitary would be able to leverage existing partnerships and enable growth tailored to Greater Norwich. It is recommended that a blended approach is adopted i.e. in house, arm's length (Big Sky Ventures Ltd, Broadway Living and Broadland growth) and partnership delivery to enable the delivery of small, medium and large-scale growth.

To orient the approach to housing in line with early intervention and prevention, greater consideration should be given to the development of other community facilities through S106 as part of opportunities to reset planning policy, that will bring services closer to communities and encourage third sector partners to expand EI&P services.

Considering the arm's length organisations around the rest of the Norfolk footprint (Equinox in East Norfolk and West Norfolk Property/ Housing in WN), ALOs provide an opportunity to deliver efficiently (due to scale) and effectively; existing ALOs could be deployed within GN as a first step and then reset to deliver even more benefit in the future. These ALOs along with Repton Homes (100% owned by Norfolk County Council) should be fully considered by shadow organisations prior to final decisions on their future.

Company Name	Ownership	Purpose
Repton Homes	100% (Norfolk County Council)	Develops private homes for sale.

Broadland Living	100% (Broadland)	Offers below market rental homes in the private rental market.
Broadland Growth	100% (Broadland)	Housing development company offers delivery options to the council and returns profits
Big Sky Group		
Big Sky Ventures Ltd	100% (South Norfolk)	Builds and sells market and affordable housing.
Big Sky Property Management	100% (South Norfolk)	Sells asset management services and rents properties - profits returned to the council.

Table 71: ALOs that needs to be considered by shadow authorities

6.2.3 Improving outcomes, unlocking innovation

Homelessness

Access to homelessness and temporary accommodation support will be through the Early Intervention & Prevention front door. This will enable a joint set of services to address root causes demand. This new way of working will build upon existing good practice already in effect within Greater Norwich.

Domestic abuse is a significant driver of homelessness, and Greater Norwich will carry forward current commitments to DAHA accreditation, in addition to this being a core focus on the EI&P model.

Demand from asylum seekers, including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, poses a particular challenge for Greater Norwich. Building on existing good practice at county level, a single entity and a single team can be established to provide specialist support. A collaborative model between the Home Office, Children's Social Care and Housing will help identify demand sooner through easier access and to the 'pipeline' of young people who will need accommodation and joined up opportunities to address their needs e.g. care leavers. By having direct responsibility for children services and housing together allows for a better response to these challenges.

Housing

Greater Norwich will inherit a large stock of owned social homes (14,211 + c3,500 leaseholders). This offers an opportunity to help manage the flow through homelessness, TA and into long term housing for a broader (but manageable) population.

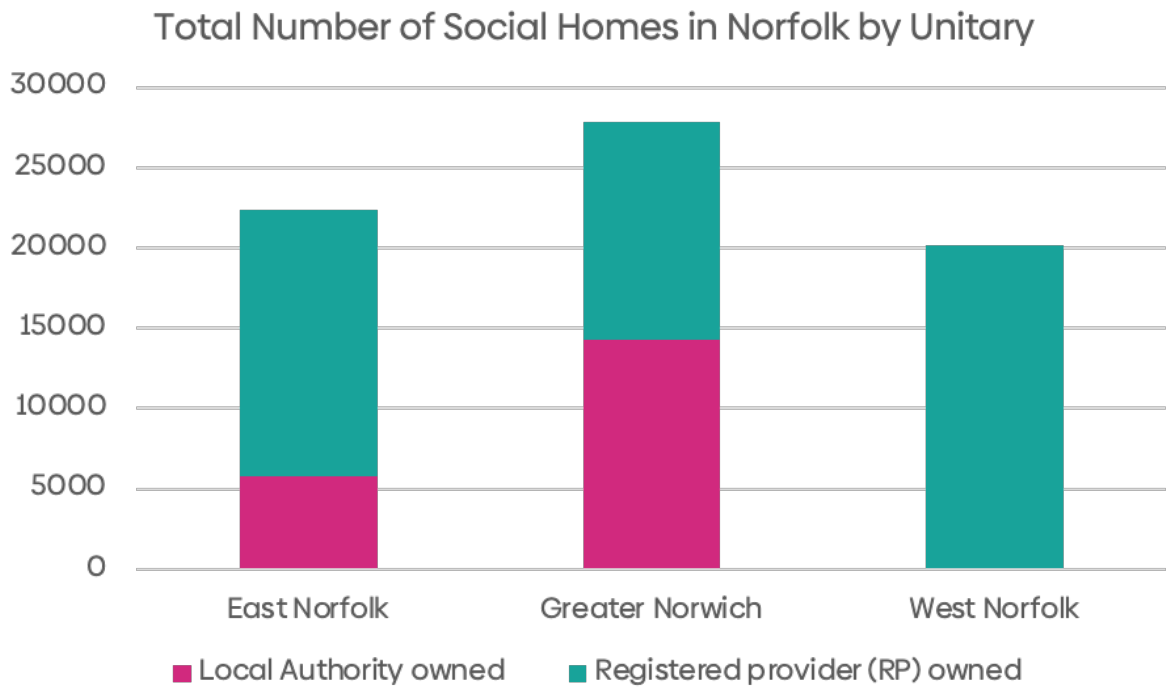

Figure 20: total number of social homes in Norfolk by Unitary

Having a HRA enables GN to build or purchase homes for social rent to increase their housing supply as and when the HRA allows. This is positive but, should be monitored to ensure accessibility for more vulnerable groups and to help tackle specific housing need e.g. 1 bed across the GN area and accessible properties.

Recent improvements in collecting tenant arrears and new policies have improved income collection and will improve expectations in the future. Working with the new EI&P model means that integrated set of predictive and real-time indicators can be developed, acted on by the right service much earlier, resulting in proactive interventions which ultimately are more cost-effective for the Council as it reduces the risk of rent loss and outstanding debt, as well as enabling long-term financial health for individuals.

Development

Greater Norwich has a strong development and planning function with established partnerships that would benefit from access to urban fringes to drive urban growth and housing development. This potential for a concentrated and urban focus will benefit Greater Norwich and the wider region.

By unifying planning, housing, and infrastructure delivery, the GN unitary offers Homes England and other partners a single accountable partner. This will enable the ability to move sites from concept to completion without the delay and complexity of multi-tier negotiations and ensuring that plans and developments are relevant to (and joined up with) the people who they serve, including addressing housing demand more effectively. This streamlined approach accelerates delivery, increases the proportion of affordable homes, and supports the creation of sustainable communities

The current use of ALOs will need consideration by shadow organisations to assess the opportunities and risks associated with future delivery, however, there is a clear opportunity to expand current operations and unlock new development opportunities through a flexible approach to GN development.

6.2.4 Unlocking financial benefits

Cost implications

- Aging social home stock and the introduction of Awaab's Law will mean a focus on investment in current social housing stock – this will reduce the development capability of the HRA in GN for the immediate future.
- The new rent settlement for social housing of up to CPI +1% will help to ease service strain and increase income.
- Norwich currently carries a lot of tenant debt (both former and current tenants). Efforts are already underway to reduce this down and standardise an approach to former tenant arears – both of which are promising.
- TA budget is often overspent and this has been reflected in the following year's budget. Between 24/25 and 25/26 this led to a 28% increase across all councils.

Potential Savings

Through the amalgamation and rationalisation of housing and development teams, it is expected that savings will be made. This will predominantly be at senior management level as the demand on officers and services will initially remain the same.

Embedding H&H into the EI&P function will support savings both in H&H services and in other downstream services. For example, MHCLG's analysis of a housing first approach (inherently in line with EI&P working) shows a 2:1 cost benefit.
A conservative saving estimate on non-staffing costs within H&H budgets of 10% can be achieved.

While there are no savings to be made within the HRA – there are opportunities for income maximisation

- Reduce relet times for properties – as an example, a 10% reduction in current relet times equates to c£90,000 in rental income.
- Further reducing tenant arrears would increase in year rental income. Focus should be on current tenant arrears.

Cost Neutral Assumptions

While there may be economies of scale achieved through contract renegotiation, costs for technology licences in H&H are often based on a per head fee. This means that while there may be some savings due to staff reductions – there are no material savings expected from this.

6.3 Adult Social Care

6.3.1 Context & constraints

Greater Norwich is home to a dense urban core surrounded by suburban and semi-rural communities which is a different profile from the other areas across Norfolk. Whilst Greater Norwich has the lowest percentage of older adults, this area has seen the highest growth in demand which provides a strong justification for the need for an improved preventative offer to help manage this.

Increases in demand across both working age and older adults are resulting in increasing pressures in service delivery and are forecast to continue to grow. Alongside this, costs are increasing for all types of support, evidencing a further need for change in the model of support and an opportunity to redesign the approach to market management.

6.3.2 Recommended delivery model

There are several delivery models to consider for the implementation of Adults Social Care within the new unitary. Some have been summarised in an options appraisal below:

Model	Description	Strengths	Weaknesses
Shared Services Model	A single unitary is appointed to deliver Adults Services on behalf of all or some of the new authorities. This is carried out under a formal shared services agreement or delegation.	• Economies of scale and reduced duplication • Reduces transition risk as staff and structures can remain in place in short term • Consistency of approach across unitaries	• Diluted accountability and complex governance • Compromises over operational and strategic priorities • Still requires core service (DAS) in each unitary • Dependency on an external organisation
Separate Services	The disaggregated model - the new unitaries each establish their own Adults Service structure and workforce, with local leadership and systems. Examples include Cumberland and Bedfordshire	• Locally accountable • Decisions making and services delivered closest to communities • Can reflect local needs • Retains option to run some services jointly	• Duplication of teams and staff across three unitaries • Challenge of recruiting high quality staff from other councils • Higher risk transition that could impact day-to-day services
Central Leadership – Diffused Delivery	The new authority operates a single Adult Services directorate. Delivery is decentralised into locality-based teams aligned to former council areas or other geographies	• Combines strategic leadership with place-based delivery • Easier to maintain partner relationships • Retains local responsiveness • Enables phased integration	• Blurred lines of accountability if not clearly defined • Potential inconsistencies between areas • Requires strong central oversight and performance management

Table 72: Types of delivery models for Adult Social Care

Following engagement with Leaders, Chief Executives and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), our recommended delivery model for Greater Norwich, and the three unitaries, is to establish a single Adults Social Care service.

The creation of a dedicated Greater Norwich Adult Social service will enable a greater focus on the local needs, assets, and challenges. The model will provide the opportunity to have a greater focus on the local context and challenges and support a move to a person-centred approach to Social Care. In urban centres, neighbourhood hubs will be closely connected to dense, multi-agency networks, with targeted proactive outreach in the most deprived wards. Elsewhere, the model will adapt to rural realities, making greater use of mobile and digital services such as Technology Enable Care, community venues and assets. All areas will have a prevention-first approach to maximise independence and strengths. A new local delivery model and front door will be closely aligned to community assets and inform priorities for what is commissioned locally and in collaboration with partners to avoid duplication.

Whilst partners such as the Police and Health will have to service three unitaries, their movement to three footprints across the Norfolk geographies aligns with this recommended option and will allow for closer working relationships to develop between staff within the new unitary function.

There are positive examples of joint working that exist across the county footprint currently and would not seek to unpick these where they provide positive outcomes for residents. These will be managed through partnership boards to ensure there is appropriate governance in place. The Adults Safeguarding Board is also something which will be retained to bring together statutory and non-statutory organisations and supported through their connection to more localised service delivery model.

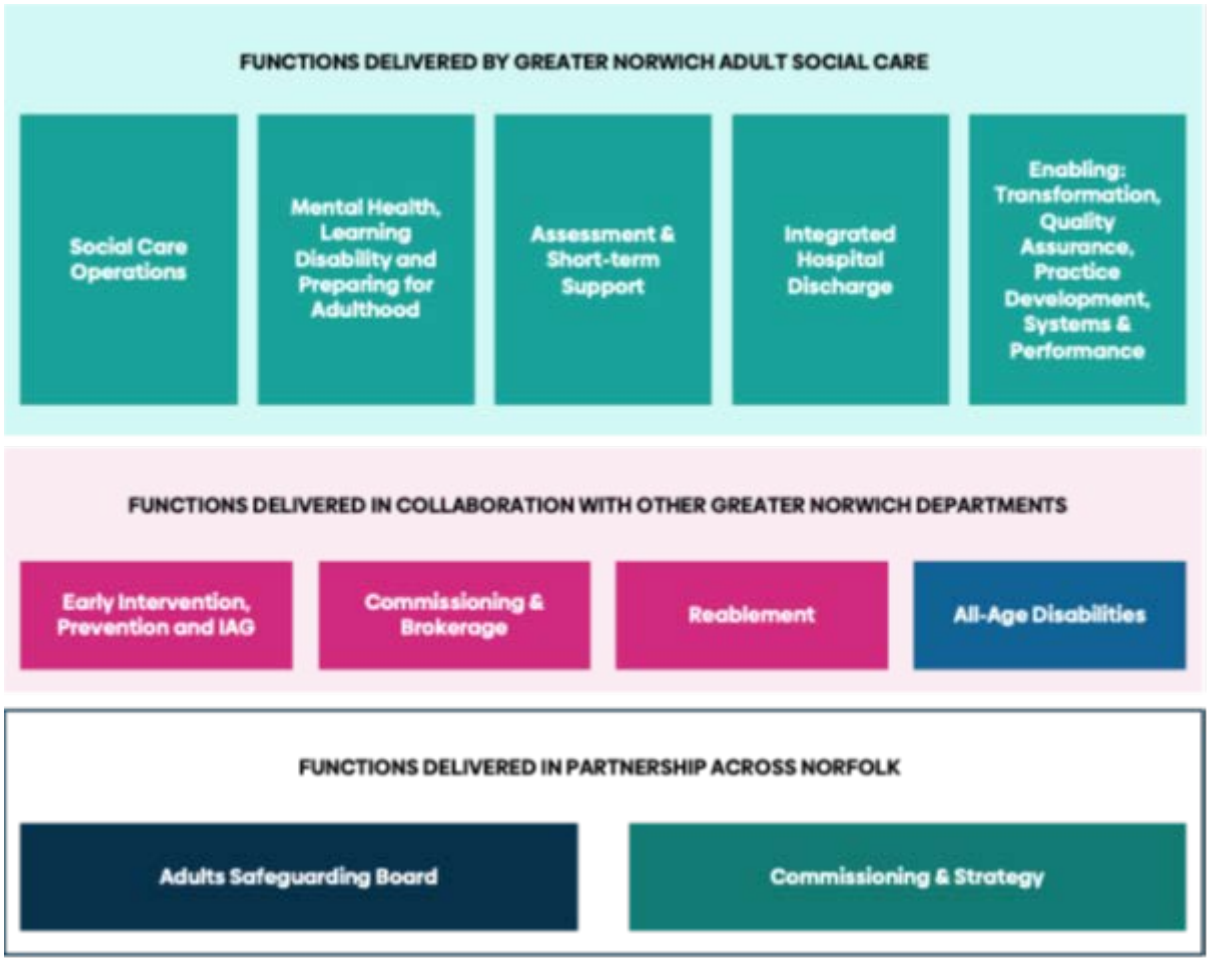

Figure 21: Functional model of Adult Social Care across the unitary.

Our analysis has indicated that the Norfolk care market has seen increased costs across supported living, home care and residential care and there is a need to ensure the provider market remains sustainable. Greater Norwich will have its own commissioning & partnerships function – which will be located within Early Intervention

& Prevention and service Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care as well as wider prevention activity– but will come together with West and East through partnership boards to commission support like residential care placements working with large providers such as Norse Care and developing a market management approach.

This new model will shift Greater Norwich from a county wide one size fits all approach. to a person-centred approach where communities and the VCFSE sector have a greater role to help keep people as independent as possible in their own homes with lower levels of support. Where there is a need for additional support and a care package this will put the person at the heart of this to support them to be as independent as possible. This model with reestablish the primacy of place to ensure commissioned services are tailored to local needs with the right level of support at the right time and help reduce demand for statutory interventions.

6.3.3 Improving outcomes, unlocking innovation

The Early Intervention & Prevention service in Greater Norwich is critical to the new model to help keep people as independent as possible and prevent and delay the need for social care support. There are strong foundations to build a more focused local prevention-based approach to Adults Social Care which further develops the strength-based approach to help maintain greater independence.

Developing the local offer building on existing partnerships at a neighbourhood level will support NHS England's 10-Year Plan to introduce an integrated neighbourhood model with a multi-agency front door by 2028. The new model should align to the health neighbourhoods in Greater Norwich to ensure community-based services across health, public health, and social care are all working in the same footprints and have a shared understanding of the local needs and priorities.

Working closely with health and the Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital will be key to provide coordinated support in both primary care in communities and hospital discharge. The three unitary model aligns with the move of statutory partners to more localised geographies of service delivery – enabling the development of deep relationships and mitigating risks of disaggregation.

Key areas of focus for the new model for Adults Social Care include having a different approach to working with health, commissioning and learning disability which is an

area with complex cases and high costs. This will enable a more localised approach to working with health on a neighbourhood basis to ensure that decisions are made as close as possible to the neighbourhood based on the local needs. The new model will have a Commissioning Director across both Adults and Children's, which will sit in EIP, to ensure that what is commissioned supports people throughout their life and helps avoid the challenges in transitioning from Children's to Adults Social care to support better outcomes. In addition, this will introduce an All-Age Service Disabilities Service with a greater focus on increasing independence, providing secure appropriate housing, skills and employment. This will help Greater Norwich to provide targeted support to those who need it most and align with local service provision.

6.3.4 Achieving financial benefits

The key to achieving financial benefits of the new model and creating long term financial sustainability is through the early identification of needs and putting in place lower levels of support through local community provision or technology. Helping to maintain people's independence and supporting them to live in their own home in the communities they know is a better outcome for the individual and helps avoid residential care which in Greater Norwich costs an average of £490 a week.

A holistic approach to case reviews to establish if a reduced level of support e.g. a move from residential to a supported living provision may be possible. This may also enable older adults to have improved independence in an environment that they feel safe and secure and have an improved quality of life.

A structuring of services that focuses on early intervention and prevention also enables the reorganisation of staff around community hubs and early intervention. There is also an opportunity to consider the level of specialist skills and experience required at the front door to ensure cases can be triaged effectively. Where cases require specialist social care intervention a social worker will take the lead on the case and complete the Care Act Assessment. They will also coordinate any support which can be provided by the EIP service so that cases are not being transferred and the key difference is who leads the case depending on the level of support required and individual needs.

6.4 Children's Social Care

6.4.1 Context & constraints

Greater Norwich will inherit the highest demand for support within Children in Need (CIN) and Child Protection (CP) cohorts in the county. Whilst this may speak to positive practice in the county, as recognised via the service having a 'Good' OFSTED rating, this also highlights a need for Greater Norwich to design a local prevention model to prevent escalation of need through the system. Alongside this, costs are increasing for all types of support, evidencing a further need for change in the model of support and an opportunity to redesign the approach to market management.

6.4.2 Chosen delivery model

There are several delivery models to consider for the implementation of Children's Social Care within the new unitary. Some have been summarised in an options appraisal below:

Service Model	Strengths	Risks
Disaggregation & Integration: Each unitary establishes their own Children's Services	• Strong local control of the service operation and spend • Tailored services for the local community • Can retain partnership arrangements during implementation and beyond where appropriate	• Recruitment and retention of key staff if a HR strategy is not well considered • Data security and retention could be at risk if not carefully managed through transition • Duplication of processes, roles and contracts may increase costs • Transition may introduce significant risk that will need to considered and managed
Shared Services: One authority hosts Children's Services on behalf of other authorities via a Shared Services agreement	• May be easier to manage workforce challenges & contracts in the short-term • Enables the achievement of economies of scale • Provides some continuity for staff and care provision	• There are distinct needs across the three unitaries that this model may not address • May introduce challenges when it comes to OFSTED inspections and ensuring all areas are meeting required responsibilities • Dilutes accountability for service success • May introduce complexity should a member organisation wish to leave the arrangement
Joint Children's Trust: Authorities create or commission a trust, which operates independently with a shared governance board	• There have been indications that the introduction of a trust can drive practice improvements	• Central government has been clear that this is not their preferred option for social care delivery • Requires significant investment to set up • May introduce complexity should a member organisation wish to leave the arrangement • Dilutes accountability for improvement work

Table 73: Types of delivery models for implementing Children's Social Care

Following engagement with Leaders, Chief Executives and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), our recommended delivery model for Greater Norwich, and the three unitaries, is to establish a single Children's Service.

This option provides the greatest opportunity for each unitary to build a genuinely local and community connected service, that leverages local community assets to

deliver positive outcomes for residents. Greater Norwich will have the highest proportion of children in touch with the council in the new unitary structure, and the largest proportion of Children in Need and Child Protection Plans – which placing into a larger structure could limit the impact of interventions and risk increasing numbers of children coming into the care system.

Whilst partners such as the Police and Health systems will have to service three unitaries, their movement to three footprints across the Norfolk geographies aligns with this recommended option and will allow for closer working relationships to develop between staff within the new unitary function.

There are positive examples of joint working that exist across the county footprint currently and would not seek to unpick these where they provide positive outcomes for residents. Partnership arrangements that should be retained include the Norfolk Children's Safeguarding Partnership which could be served by a joint administrative function and retain its local community safeguarding groups which will be strengthened through their connection to more localised service delivery. NIDAS (Norfolk Integrated Domestic Abuse Service) provides valuable personalised support for residents and will be retained as part of reorganisation.

Finally, our analysis has indicated that the Norfolk care market has seen increased costs in placement types and there is a need to ensure the placement market remains sustainable. Greater Norwich will have its own Commissioning & Partnerships function, located within Early Intervention & Prevention, which will work across services but will come together with West and East through partnership boards to commission support like residential care placements, and will continue involvement within regional care collaboratives such as Adopt East and Foster East to work in partnership with other authorities and sector specialists to provide support for children and young people. These organisations already span organisational boundaries beyond Norfolk, so refining membership should not have the destabilising impact that has been suggested.

Retaining a sovereign commissioning service will also enable Greater Norwich to develop hyper-local relationships with providers and the community sector to meet needs – ensuring there is not a risk of a 'postcode lottery' in provision but that residents of Greater Norwich have access to provision that is right for their needs.

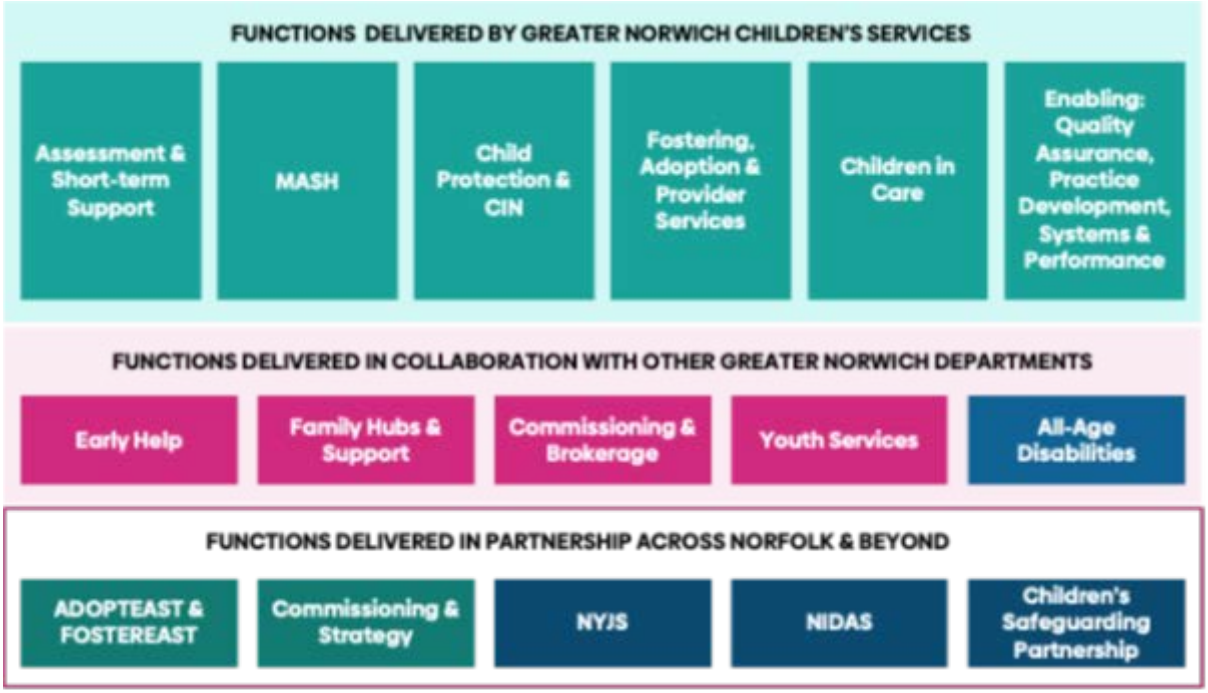

Figure 22: Functional model of Children's Social Care across the unitary.

6.4.3 Improving outcomes, unlocking innovation

Children, young people and their families in Greater Norwich will benefit from a service offer that is rooted in their local communities and needs.

The Early Intervention & Prevention offer in Greater Norwich will play a pivotal role in ensuring families are enabled to receive support prior to a crisis occurring. Families will be supported through accessing hubs that are local to them and supported by staff who can build trusted relationships that connect residents not just to statutory organisations, but to a wider community offer. Building family resilience will further reduce demand on Children's Social Care, and the cost of complex forms of support. This enables Greater Norwich to build upon existing good practice that exists in the area, now being able to leverage the decision-making responsibilities and powers that come with running Children's Social Care. It also builds upon the government commitments to Family Hubs and the introducing of Family Group Decision-Making being located alongside communities, bringing together multi-disciplinary staff to support parents and families.

Where there is a need for a statutory intervention – or concern about safety of a child or young person – a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will be located within Children's Services which will bring together statutory partners from police, health and

other partners, building on existing strong safeguarding arrangements to identify and respond to need quickly. The three unitary model aligns with the move of statutory partners to more localised geographies of service delivery – enabling the development of deep relationships and mitigating risks of disaggregation.

For children who do enter the care system, the emphasis on family-based placements will be retained, exploring kinship and then wider fostering arrangements. Greater Norwich has seen a decrease in fostering placements with local authority carers and increasing costs in the independent market. There is an opportunity to ensure that the retention offer for foster carers is appealing to residents and that foster carers are well supported in their local area through training and peer-to-peer support. Where more acute support is needed for a child or young person, residential care will either be commissioned in partnership or in-house provision will be used where that is available and meets the need of young person. At all stages in a child's journey, where appropriate for their outcomes and the experience of parents, opportunities will be explored for reunification or step-down of from residential into fostering placements.

As young people leave care, Greater Norwich as a unitary will be rooted in its corporate parenting duties. Greater collaboration between social care and housing colleagues will more effectively enable young people to move into tenancies and independence – as it becomes designed into process rather than reliant on relationships between personal assistants and housing providers. This is particularly a strength in Greater Norwich in how relationships can be developed with the PRS, and existing assets could be transformed to meet the needs of this cohort of young people.

For those children and young people who require support due to a disability, an all-age disability approach will be in place. This will enable effective management of transition between Children's Social Care and Adults Social Care, as well as a focus on preparing for independence from as early as possible by bringing together staff with expertise and experience from across the age spectrum. This service will work closely with Health colleagues to support service delivery and transition between services, and with SEND teams to support transition where that is appropriate. This will provide families with consistency of approach and reduce the experience of a 'cliff edge' between Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care.

6.4.4 Achieving financial benefits

Where needs arise, it will be identified sooner, and members of the family can be supported across a range of service. For example, where an adult in a family is experiencing mental health challenges resulting in unemployment, support can be provided that address those issues rather than funnelling a family into statutory supporting – saving on average £27,000 per package of support and having immeasurable impact on the outcomes of a child who avoids going into care.

A holistic approach to case management can also enable families to welcome children in care back to their family home. This may also enable more young people to move into safe and appropriate accommodation as they leave family placements, increasing their independence and reducing spend on high-cost semi-independent living.

A structuring of services that focuses on early intervention and prevention also enables the reorganisation of staff around community hubs and early intervention. There is also an opportunity to revisit the structure of case working staff, so they are better aligned with demand across Greater Norwich.

6.5 SEND & Education

6.5.1 Context & constraints

Whilst Greater Norwich will inherit the lowest total number of current EHCPs out of the three new unitaries, growth in this area is the highest with numbers climbing by 49% since 2021. Most young people with an EHCP attend mainstream schools, indicating that there is a good base of inclusion that can be built upon within the new service unitary model of delivery.

Greater Norwich has the highest number of maintained special school provision across the county footprint – which may be mitigating its comparatively low spend on transport. The management of the potential importing of young people into these schools will have to be carefully considered as part of implementation planning.

It is also a unitary that benefits from proximity to a range of post-16 options for young people in the area – including sixth forms attached to secondary schools, two Further

Education colleges and the University of East Anglia (UEA). This is reflected in it being the area with the highest level of qualification out of the three unitaries.

6.5.2 Chosen delivery model

SEND and Education will be part of the Children's Social Care management structure, and as outlined in 1.4 this will be a disaggregated service model, providing opportunities to build services that are tied in the requirements of local areas – whilst enabling collaboration across the county footprint where that is required, for instance, in the recruitment of specialist roles (e.g. Educational Psychologists).

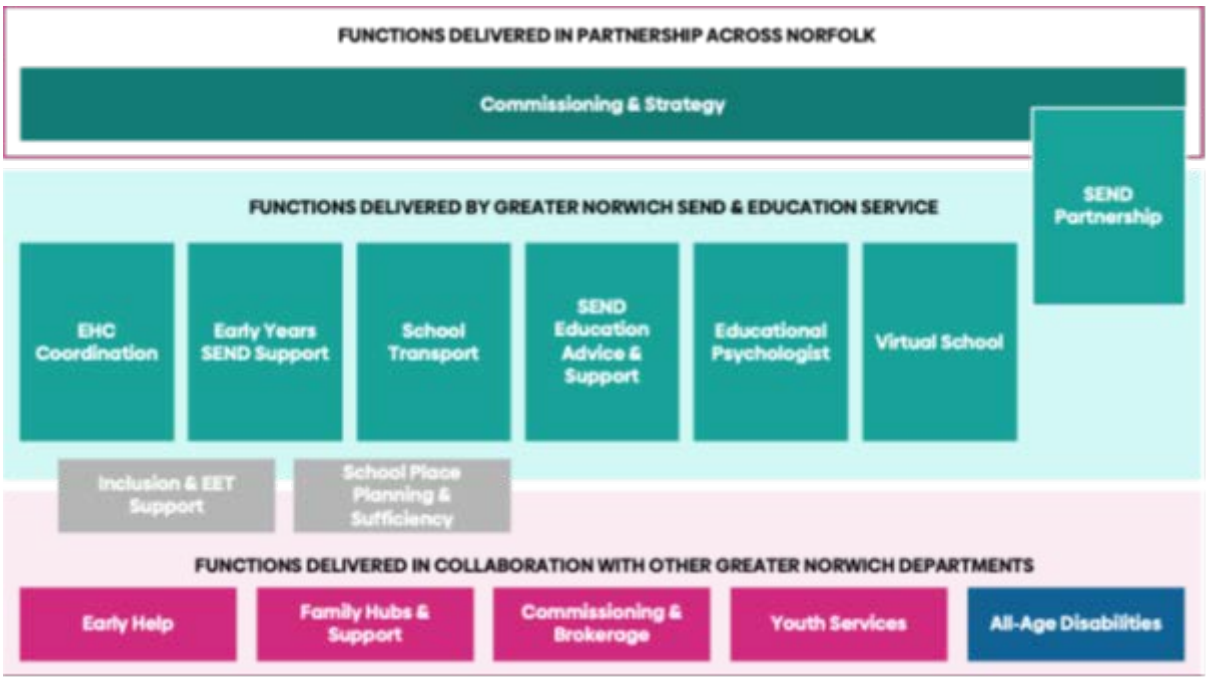

Figure 23: Functional model of SEND & Education across the unitary.

6.5.3 Improving outcomes, unlocking innovation

As with the Children's Social Care model, families and young people will benefit from an integrated approach with Early Intervention & Prevention as families will be able to access holistic support close to them – whilst this would not necessarily start the assessment process for an EHCP, it will enable families to be connected to peers and community support to build resilience around a child's needs. This includes signposting to existing effective interventions, such as Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) delivered by the ICB within Norfolk. This offer will also support young people who may be at risk of exclusion or at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

Where children and young people do need additional support to access education, EHC coordinators will be supported through workforce development to build closer working relationships with families to support them through the timely development of EHCPs and regular review and updates of these plans, aligned to a young person's needs. Teams Around the School will be developed on a patch basis around local schools to provide effective inclusion support – and intervene to prevent education placements breaking down or young people being suspended or excluded.

Planning for independence and transition will be considered throughout a young person's pathway. Where a young person may need support from Adult Social Care, support will be accessed alongside the All-Age Disability service to enable early planning for independence. If a young person is not eligible for future support, the service will connect them to the Early Intervention & Prevention to enable them to access support across housing and employment.

We would place school transport decision making alongside both place planning and EHCP coordination, to ensure its central role to enabling independence and the significant role it can play in additional cost is considered alongside decision making on school placements.

The new model will also leverage the deep understanding of communities and planning, alongside considerations for school place planning. With the development and growth opportunity that devolution presents – we would see this function working together with colleagues in planning and development to ensure we are designing an education system that is fit for future demand across mainstream and specialist education.

Our vision for Greater Norwich is as an area that unlocks both growth and innovation – and our inclusion work will be focused on enabling that this holds relevance to all our young people – developing a compelling skills offer that connects young people to opportunities.

6.5.4 Achieving financial benefits

Working to reset and strengthen our approach to SEND will provide the opportunity to unlock reduced spend against the High Needs Block, which currently carries a significant deficit.

Through effective deployment of Early Intervention & Prevention and Teams Around Schools, we will be able to reduce the amount of plans to young people – with a rough cost of £8,000 per year for each child who has a mainstream plan, increasing to over £23,000 where a child may be in a special school.

Exploring opportunities to step children down from placements based on a deeper understanding of their needs and outcomes will also release savings, through more effective relationships between staff and families, and patch-based working, families can have greater confidence in support.

Norfolk also has a higher-than-average rate of exclusions, which typically lead to detrimental life outcomes for children and young people. Whilst Greater Norwich has a lower proportion of these (again suggesting strong inclusive practice that can be built on within school settings), there is an opportunity to continue to avoid additional exclusions through both school-based support, and effective engagement with young people and their families to understand and support wider complexities.

6.6 Enabling Services

6.6.1 Context & constraints

Enabling services set up the environment in which frontline services and partners can work together to serve local communities. Therefore, they need to provide efficient support at the lowest possible cost.

They will need to support Greater Norwich as a larger scale organisation, to serve a broader area, whist delivering a more complex range of services (e.g. social care, education, highways, etc.).

Greater Norwich councils have adopted some different delivery models for their enabling support services, which will impact upon the new unitary blueprint. The diagram below illustrates where each district has moved away from a standalone, in-house service to adopt different delivery models.

	Norwich	Broadland	South Norfolk
Most Enabling Services		Shared Service	
Asset Management	In-house / commissioned from NCSL	Shared Service	
ICT & Digital		Shared Service	
Procurement		Outsourced to East Suffolk	
Legal		Outsourced to NPLAW (Norfolk CC)	
Audit		Outsourced to EIAS	Host EIAS

Figure 24: Current delivery models for Enabling Services for East Norfolk councils.

However, given that a minority of South Norfolk will sit within the new unitary area, the Eastern Internal Audit Service will likely move across to be hosted by East Norfolk – although this will be determined through implementation.

The primary benefit of moving to a three-authority model is around being able to tailor frontline services, support and wider partnerships to the very different needs of each area. However, there are some challenges and opportunities that Greater Norwich faces in relation to providing enabling services that can support the wider organisation.

Moving to a larger, single unitary council will allow Greater Norwich to scale up its enabling services to realise economies of scale, build in resilience and mitigate the risks of single points of failure.

Moving from four councils (and three management structures) to a single unitary provides an opportunity to realise efficiencies through streamlining senior officer posts, reducing the financial pressure on the frontline services that will benefit residents and communities.

The move to a single unitary also represents an opportunity to 'reset' enabling services so that they can adopt best practice operating models that can deliver greatest value

for money to the organisation and taxpayers. There are examples of mature, high-performing services that could be adopted in the new organisation.

The new authority will also inherit a broad range of arm's length companies and shared services, which its enabling services may also need to support so that they can continue to thrive. This includes the following:

- Broadland Living – a small arm's length property developer and management company
- Norwich City Services Ltd - a wholly owned company that delivers some FM services and wider place-based services
- ThreeScore OpenSpace
- Legislator - a joint venture to develop land north of the city

Greater Norwich will also inherit a share of the county council's arm's length traded company, Norse Group, and the housing development company, Repton Homes.

6.6.2 Recommended service model

Greater Norwich will have a core of enabling services that are set up to provide the right support to the wider organisation. The diagram below shows what enabling services it will run and what models will be adopted.

Figure 25: Greater Norwich Enabling Services

The key features of this service are summarised below.

Control and coordination	Enabling Services are either centralised (e.g. HR & OD, Finance) or adopt a hub and spoke model[8] (Transformation & PMO, Data & Insight[9]) as a means of keeping control of enabling support and maintaining a resilient, flexible resource whilst also fostering a community of practice and common standards across the organisation.
Mixed economy	Wherever possible enabling services are delivered in-house as standalone functions to maximise control and flexibility to evolve as the council's needs change over time. There are some exceptions where a mix of models is in place: • Procurement – the council will largely take on an in-house function, but may have some commitments to the outsourced, shared procurement service that is currently hosted by East Suffolk. • Audit – the council will inherit an in-house function and a shared service arrangement in the form of Eastern Internal Audit Services, which will be hosted by East Norfolk.
Best practice	The services would seek to continue the best practice from the existing services within councils, whilst also using the redesign of enabling functions as an opportunity to innovate.
Appropriate scale and capacity	Although there are opportunities to realise efficiencies from moving to a single unitary, it is important to make sure enabling services retain the capacity to support the new council in delivering an ambitious transformation programme to realise the wider benefits for residents and communities.
Tailored to local needs and services	Enabling services will be set up to support the unique requirements of Greater Norwich. For example, Asset Management will include specific capability to support management of a large portfolio of commercial assets and include links with its housing portfolio.
Ability to select the best	There are further longer-term opportunities for Greater Norwich to collaborate with the two other unitaries, where it makes sense

[8] Hub and spoke model – there is a primary, central corporate resource but a network of smaller, distinct teams sat within other areas of the council. All teams work together and form a community of practice.

[9] This is separate to any Data & Insight function within an EI&P model – but the two would work together

opportunities to scale up	to pool resources, they share the same needs and can benefit from economies of scale or increased purchasing power.

6.6.3 Achieving financial benefits

As one of three unitaries, Greater Norwich is of the right scale to both tailor services to the unique needs and circumstances of the area but also benefit from being of a size to realise the benefits of combining the previous councils. The main financial benefits of the model would come from the following changes:

- Streamlining duplicated management structures
- Gaining economies of scale for those enabling services that currently operate on a small scale
- Removing duplication of processes and functions
- Rationalising key systems such as the multiple Enterprise Resource Planning, Finance and HR & Payroll systems used across the organisations

6.7 Place

6.7.1 Context & constraints

Greater Norwich is the main urban centre in the county, boasting a growing population and a vibrant economy. It has a strong creative and knowledge-intensive economy and serves as a hub for key growth sectors like FinTech, Digital, and environmental science. The city is rich in heritage, with two cathedrals, over 5,800 listed assets, and 90 conservation areas. Despite being an urban centre, it also has natural assets including nature reserves and areas of special conservation.

Historically, the area has faced challenges due to poor transport infrastructure, but planned investments aim to boost growth. Greater Norwich is a significant economic powerhouse for Norfolk and one of the largest employment centres in the Greater South-East, with 143,000 jobs, 10,000 businesses, and a contribution of over £3 billion to the national economy. The presence of key educational institutions like Norwich University of the Arts and the University of East Anglia supports its dynamic and productive economy.

However, there are challenges that need to be addressed, such as a considerable proportion of the working-age population having entry-level or no qualifications, and poor health outcomes in deprived communities leading to economic inactivity and other social issues. Additionally, a significant portion of the city's economic activity has shifted to the outskirts, causing some stagnation in the city centre.

Greater Norwich councils have adopted some different delivery models for place-based services, which will impact upon the new unitary blueprint. The diagram below illustrates where each district has moved away from a standalone, in-house service to adopt a different delivery model.

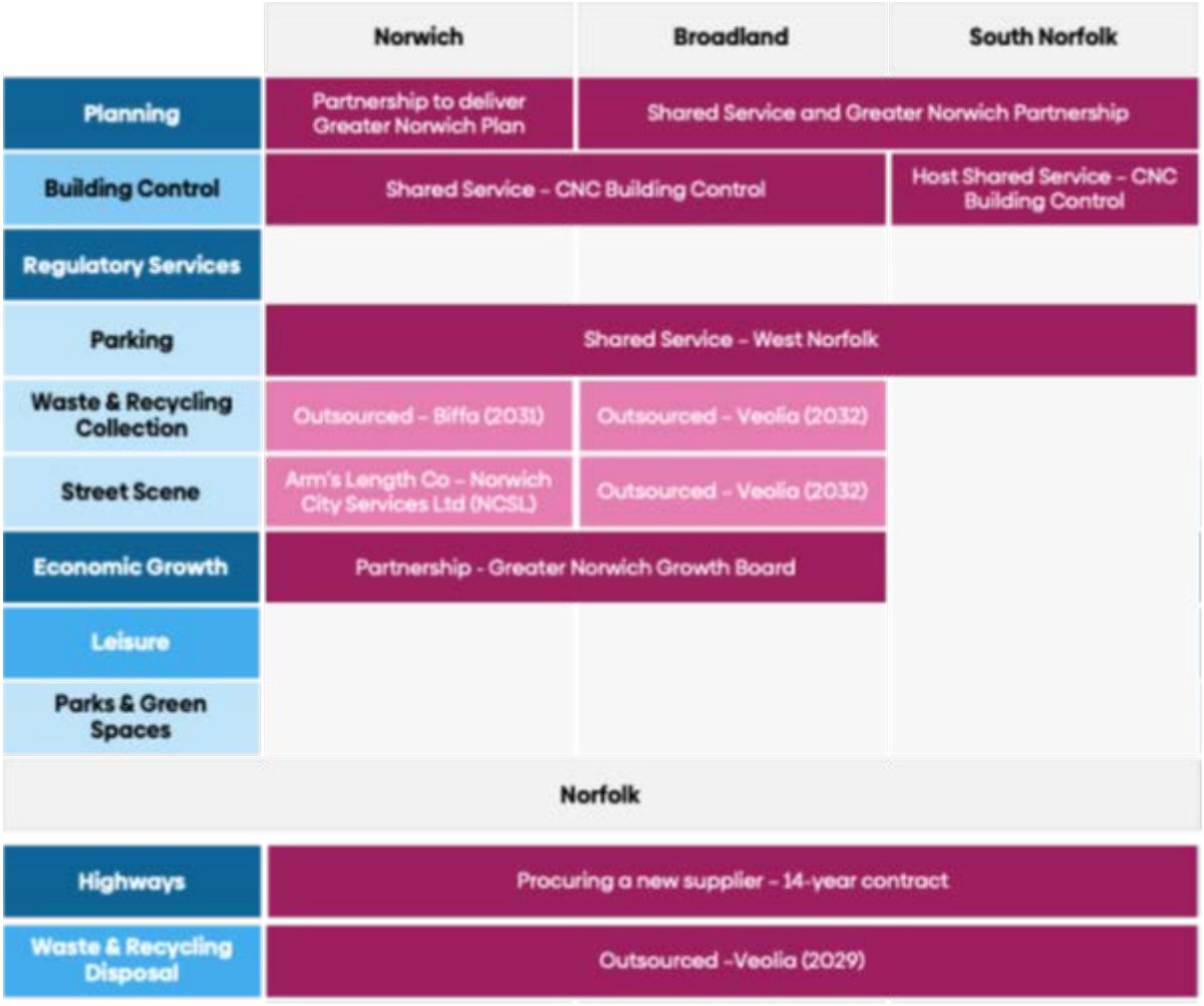

Figure 26: Current delivery models for Greater Norwich councils. NOTE: the Norwich Growth Board is a joint initiative, but each council retains their own economic development function.

The county council has also just gone out to market for a highways maintenance and professional services contract lasting 14 years. It also has a contract with Veolia for waste transfer and disposal that runs until end of March 2029. Greater Norwich is likely to take on responsibility for part of these contracts.

In addition to this mixed economy of services, Greater Norwich will inherit all or a portion of the following arm's length delivery vehicles that have a role in shaping place within the area:

- Big Sky Ventures Ltd – an arm's length property developer of affordable homes and is a property management company
- Broadland Living – an arm's length company that offers below market rental homes in the private market
- Norwich City Services Ltd - a wholly owned company that delivers some FM services and wider place-based services
- ThreeScore OpenSpace - an arm's length company set up to manage open space at Three Score Bowthorpe
- Legislator - a joint venture to develop land north of the city
- Norfolk Environmental Waste Services (NEWS) – a joint venture with all councils that operates recycling and waste transfer stations for the reprocessing and sale of recycling material which generates income.
- Norse Group – wholly owned company of the County Council
- Repton Homes - wholly owned development company of the County Council
- Norfolk Environmental Credits Ltd – a jointly owned company that provides services to developers and businesses for sustainability

Greater Norwich would take on a range of 'place-based' services including Highways & Transport, Waste Disposal, Cultural Services, further Planning responsibilities, and Trading Standards.

Placemaking requires a multi-faceted approach to planning, designing, and managing public spaces and this will require unitaries to exercise a wide range of levers to shape places. Bringing in Highways & Transport, Cultural services, Waste Disposal and other functions will help Greater Norwich coordinate these services to deliver a truly joined up approach to create vibrant, healthy, and meaningful places that enhance people's well-being and connection to their community.

Greater Norwich is ideally placed to take a placemaking approach that serves the urban hub and surrounding area to deliver inclusive, sustainable growth. It is of a suitable size and scale to be able to tailor services at a neighbourhood level and represent efficient use of resources.

There are opportunities to realise efficiencies from streamlining management structures and rationalising systems. Increased scale will also support greater resilience for services such as Planning.

However, the mix of long-term contracts (Biffa, Veolia), in-house (South Norfolk) and arm's length company (Norwich City Services Limited) delivery for Waste collection and Street Scene poses a challenge for the new unitary. The fact that some of the contracts cross the new boundaries will require close partnership working with East Norfolk to ensure continuity of services. The council will need to take a long-term approach to rationalising waste collection and disposal, and street scene services – but it can unlock benefits from coordination of operations, rationalising depots and optimised route planning.

In addition, regulatory changes for Planning and Building Control will result in major changes for services, and some uncertainty around what responsibilities local authorities will retain, that will need to be reflected in the council's operating model.

6.7.2 Recommended service model

Greater Norwich is best placed to serve the growing, vibrant urban city of Norwich and surrounding area to deliver the inclusive growth and help shape local neighbourhoods into places communities can thrive.

The delivery model is described below, and represents a pragmatic, interim state that factors in contractual constraints but enables a placemaking approach, whilst allowing Greater Norwich to invest time in developing and implementing a new model in the longer-term.

Figure 27: Greater Norwich Place Services

The key features of the place-based service models are described below.

Placemaking[10]	The model brings together all the services that can make a major contribution to create vibrant, healthy, and meaningful places that enhance people's well-being and connection to their community. It should be noted that this will also require close partnership working with the Mayoral Combined Authority
Shift to Greater Norwich	Greater Norwich serves the city, and surrounding areas so can focus on the support that will enable this city to grow and develop its suburbs, overcoming barriers that had previously impeded growth.
Mixed economy	Many services will be in-house but given the constraints of long-term contracts already in place for waste collection and disposal, street scene and highways, there will be a mixed economy. The following services will be • Waste collection, disposal and street scene – collection will be delivered by a combination of in-house and outsourced models until contracts expire. Greater Norwich will work in partnership with the other two unitaries on waste disposal

[10] Placemaking is the process of shaping public spaces and communities. It is a multifaceted approach involving collaboration and design to create spaces that a foster a deeper connection between people and their environment, leading to spaces that people want to visit, live in, and care for.

	• Highways – anticipated to be delivered through a mix of in-house expertise brought in from the county and the new supplier being procured. • Building Control – continue to be delivered through the shared service CNC function. • Parking – continue to be delivered through the shared parking service hosted by East Norfolk.
Leverage new and existing partnerships	Place will draw upon the existing, successful pan-Norfolk partnerships to deliver recycling and waste transfer stations (via the joint venture Norfolk Environmental Waste Services), shared parking services and CNC Building Control.
Long-term approach	Place will have the ability to strategically plan and implement transformational change across all its placemaking services. This will take time to properly plan and execute, which works well with some of the long-term contractual commitments that it will inherit.

6.7.3 Achieving financial benefits

In the longer-term Greater Norwich will seek to consolidate those services that are currently delivered through a range of models to benefit from economies of scale and break down service silos to join up delivery. This will realise greater value for money for local taxpayers and further enable a total placemaking approach for local neighbourhoods.

In the short-term the new model will allow benefits to be realised through the following means:

- Streamlining duplicated senior management structures
- Some reductions in duplication across similar functions (e.g. Planning Policy) or from joining up services (e.g. green spaces and management of highways verges)
- Harnessing economies of scale for some services (e.g. Development Management)
- Rationalising key systems for Planning, Environmental Services and other functions

In the longer-term there will be benefits from coordinating services and further reducing duplications. There may also be benefits from consolidation of assets such as depots and fleet management.

6.8 Implementation considerations

A more detailed plan for implementation can be found in Appendix H, however considerations specific to implementing the blueprints can be found below.

Workforce & Service Delivery

The operating model is rooted in neighbourhood-level service delivery, and as part of implementation the shadow unitaries will decide on the scale and size of these areas to inform the appropriate location of community buildings and development of outreach teams between urban and suburban areas.

Where Greater Norwich is inheriting functions which are currently delivered in a variety of ways – change will not occur from Day One, rather the shadow and new authorities will review and consolidate arrangements as appropriate supported by a phased transformation programme to embed design new systems and unlock new ways of working. This includes agreeing the ways in which organisations owned by districts whose boundaries are not conterminous with the Greater Norwich boundaries will be owned and managed.

The establishment of a new functions, and the bringing together of many others, will require a focused recruitment & retention strategy alongside investment in workforce development. For staff who are working in the new EI&P function, they will need to be trained in person-centred models of practice and be equipped with the skills they need to work across several service areas. In statutory functions, in addition to the roles of the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) and Director of Children's Service (DCS), consideration will need to be given to the management of shifting existing locality teams and therefore not losing local knowledge and ensuring a strategy is in place to attract and retain specialist staff. This may include ensuring there are 'grow your own' pathways within Greater Norwich to grow and develop a sustainable workforce.

Partnerships

As set out across the blueprints, partnership working within and outside of Greater Norwich is central to effective delivery of our ambitions. This includes further

leveraging relationships with housing providers, Homes England and Investment Partnerships to drive further growth and housing delivery. Greater Norwich will be able to develop closer locality working relationships with Health, enabling collaboration on the 10 Year Neighbourhood Health plan as well as meeting immediate needs around hospital discharge and joint funding. Strong partnerships with schools and importantly families and children and young people will ensure services are designed collaboratively as part of implementation.

Data & Technology

Technology and data will be central enablers to delivery of the new services. A single resident record and integrated case management will replace fragmented arrangements, allowing teams to share information and respond to resident needs. This will include reviewing and rationalising current housing systems to enable effective case management and data sharing. Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers opportunities to detect risks earlier and ease the administrative burden on frontline staff, enabling them to focus on building relationships with residents.

7. Appendix G – West Norfolk Blueprints

7.1 Early Intervention and Prevention via a Wellbeing & Communities Department

7.1.1 Context & constraints

West Norfolk is a large and predominantly rural area with dispersed communities, a high percentage of older people, and a local economy shaped by seasonal work, skilled trades, and care-related occupations. Many residents live in villages and market towns that are physically distant from each other and from the main service centres. While most households own at least one vehicle, public transport is limited, creating barriers to accessing timely help for those without personal transport. Fewer residents report being in very good health than the national average, and the area has higher-than-average rates of disability under the Equality Act.

The population profile means that West Norfolk faces distinctive pressures. Older residents are at increased risk of isolation, frailty, and long-term care needs. At the same time, educational attainment is lower than in the rest of Norfolk, with the highest proportion of the population with no qualifications across the three unitaries. This limits access to stable employment and can contribute to cycles of economic inactivity. More residents are in the most acute forms of social care, indicating that issues are going undetected until they escalate to more acute and expensive interventions.

Current service delivery is constrained by its geography and structure. Visible points of early help are fewer, and services are harder to navigate. Many community-based initiatives operate on short-term funding, limiting their ability to form part of a sustained, system-wide prevention offer. Over the years, the district councils have increasingly stepped in to provide preventative support to residents, often filling gaps left by reductions in County Council funding for non-statutory services. Where funding is still available, such as through grant schemes, it is typically time-limited and subject to annual reductions, making long-term planning and sustained impact more challenging.

Despite these challenges, there are important strengths to build on. The ambition to become a recognised ‘Marmot Place’, existing social prescriber networks and platforms like Lily, which provide locality-based signposting and community

information tailored to West Norfolk's rural and coastal context, all provide a strong basis on which to build a more integrated approach

Local Government Reform offers the chance to move from a reactive, council-by-default system to one where the unitary acts as a place leader, fostering a sustainable system of support that keeps residents well, independent, and connected for longer. In West Norfolk, this means shifting towards earlier, joined-up intervention that supports ageing well, reduces isolation, and promotes health and resilience across rural and coastal communities. By scaling what works, embedding multi-agency collaboration, and investing in the right enabling infrastructure, the new model can improve outcomes for residents while ensuring public services remain financially sustainable.

7.1.2 Recommended delivery model

West Norfolk will establish a Wellbeing & Communities department which will bring together local government services previously dislocated between county and borough councils, creating a single, coordinated route into early help that is better for residents and more effective for service delivery. This will bring housing, social care, public health, employment and VCSE partners together around hubs in e.g., King's Lynn, Downham Market and Hunstanton. These will be supported by mobile outreach teams covering rural villages and coastal areas, creating a clear "no wrong door" offer that makes it easier for residents to access coordinated help in familiar, local settings.

Operationally, this department has five functions:

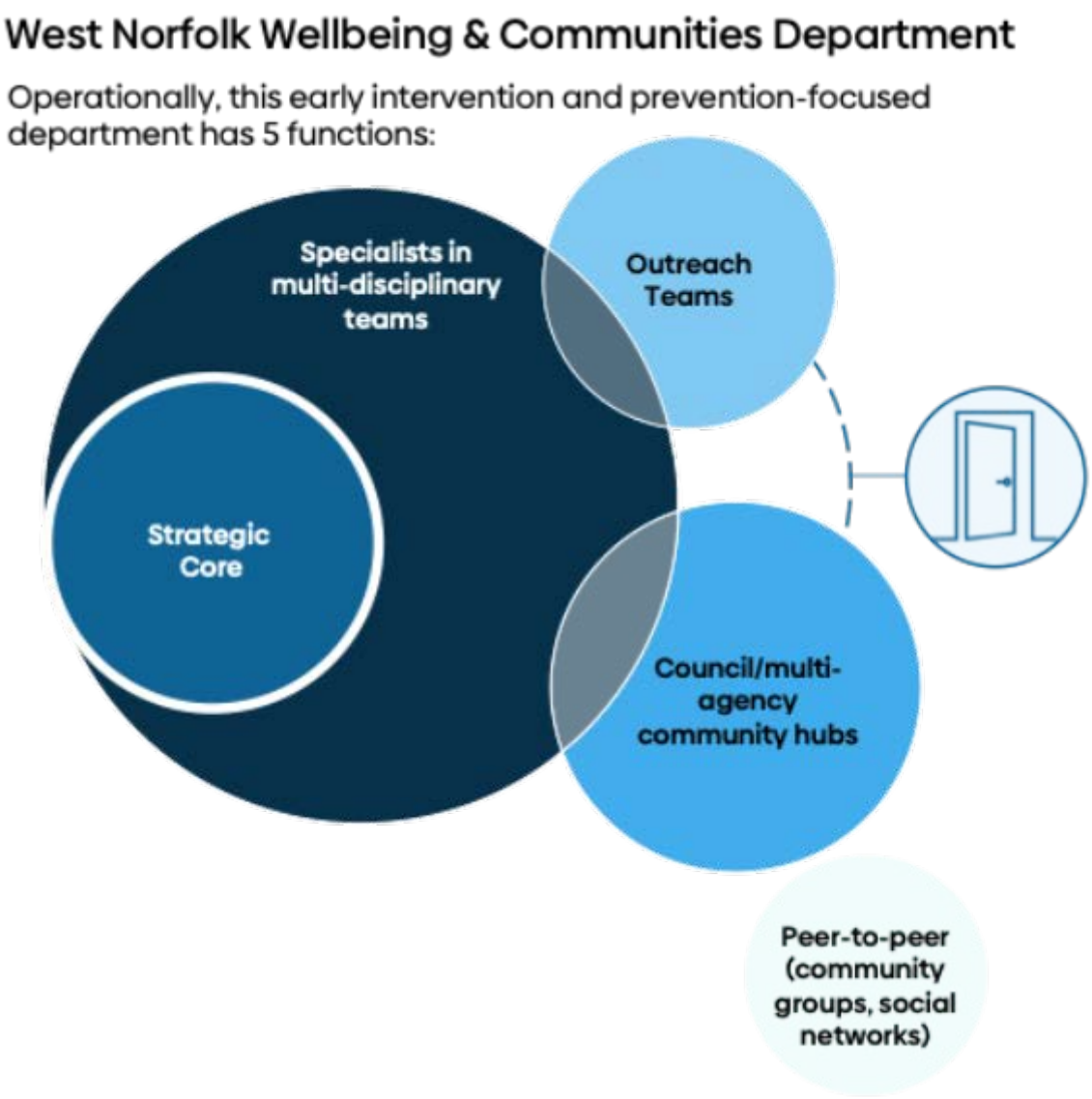

Figure 28: Functions of the West Norfolk Early Intervention and Prevention Department

Function 1: Strategic Core

The strategic core ensures the department delivers a coherent, data-driven approach to supporting ageing well and promoting independence. It coordinates strategy, commissioning, and partnerships with health services, voluntary groups, and housing providers. The focus is on aligning housing, health, and community safety plans to address rural isolation, poor transport, and health inequalities.

Function 2: Specialists/Experts in Multidisciplinary Teams

Specialist staff bring deep expertise in health, housing adaptations, falls prevention, community safety, and complex case management for older adults. They support those with chronic conditions, mobility challenges, or at risk of isolation, and work closely with health partners to prevent hospital admissions and enable safe discharge.

Function 3: Front Door

The front door offers residents and carers a single point of contact for information, advice, and referrals — covering social care, housing adaptations, wellbeing activities, and community safety. Staff are trained to identify early signs of decline in independence and resilience to connect callers to targeted services.

Function 4: Community Hubs

Community hubs, including libraries, provide localised, face-to-face support to older residents and their families. They host health and wellbeing activities, advice drop-ins, digital skills training, and social programmes to combat isolation. They also act as venues for partner services such as NHS clinics and housing advice sessions.

Function 5: Outreach teams

Outreach teams take services directly to people who cannot access hubs due to mobility, transport, or health barriers. They carry out home visits, deliver wellbeing checks, install safety equipment, and facilitate social activities in small village venues.

7.1.3 Improving outcomes, unlocking innovation

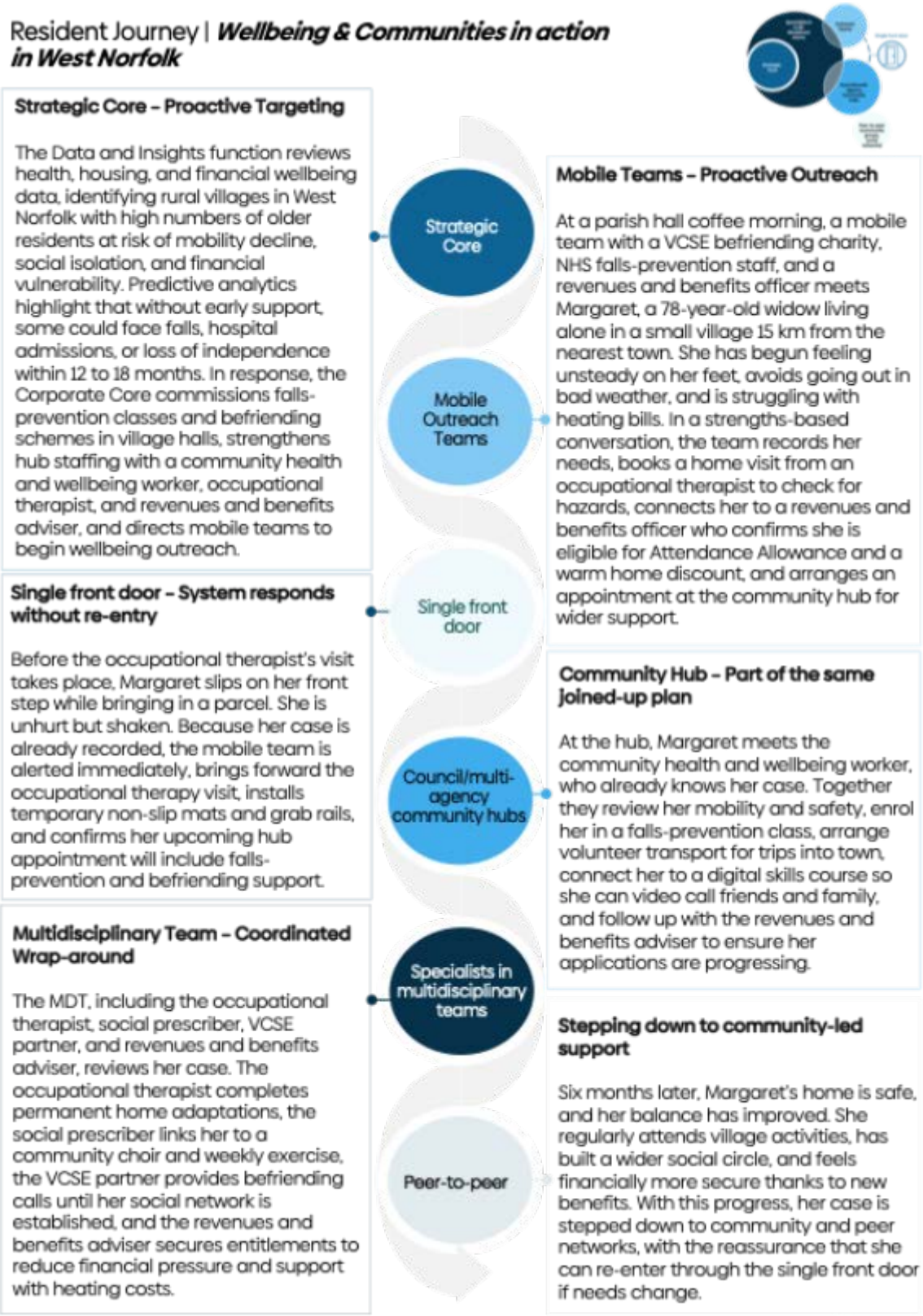

Figure 29: West Norfolk resident journey

Residents tell their story once, and the right mix of support is wrapped around them, from practical help such as a volunteer driver, to tenancy advice, a mental health check-in, or access to local skills and employment programmes. Mobile outreach teams can carry out home visits, deliver wellbeing checks, install safety equipment, and facilitate social activities in small village venues to support those with accessibility and mobility barriers. As needs reduce, residents are stepped down to community-based support that keeps them independent and connected to their communities.

For multi-agency partners, the model creates a shared purpose, a single version of the truth, and better intelligence about where to focus resources. Secure data-sharing arrangements allow information to flow between partners, while predictive analytics identify residents, streets, and communities at risk of crisis up to 18 months ahead. This could mean targeting coastal communities before seasonal unemployment hits, providing wellbeing checks for isolated older people, or stepping in early with households in rent arrears.

Over time, this approach will not only resolve issues earlier but also strengthen community capacity, reduce reliance on costly statutory interventions, and improve the overall wellbeing and resilience of West Norfolk's residents.

7.1.4 Achieving financial benefits

By implementing earlier and more integrated interventions, especially within rural, coastal, and market town communities, the approach seeks to lower instances of crisis, such as residential care admissions, strengthening the sustainability of adult social care and public health frameworks, delivering better results without escalating costs. Financial efficiencies will also be achieved by reducing duplication and fragmentation.

By employing predictive analytics and harnessing community insights, the model will pinpoint individuals and neighbourhoods at risk up to 12–18 months before crises may arise, preventing spend on crisis being required.

To implement this model, initial investments will be necessary in digital care infrastructure, data consolidation, and expanding a mobile workforce, alongside integrating district-level community services, housing, health, safety, wellbeing, and commissioning into a unitary system aligned with adult social care, public health, and

NHS operations. Over time, greater community capacity, improved management of chronic conditions, and diminished reliance on statutory services are anticipated to reduce the demand for acute and residential care, thereby cementing the shift from crisis-driven responses to a proactive, independence-focused framework.

7.2 Housing & Homelessness

7.2.1 Context & constraints

West Norfolk (WN) faces a complex mix of housing challenges and development opportunities.
It records the highest level of rough sleeping in Norfolk, accounting for around 34% of Norfolk's total, yet has the lowest budget to address the issue, with £2.6m allocated for 2025/26. In December 2024 there were 210 households in temporary accommodation, the highest figure among the three proposed new unitary areas.

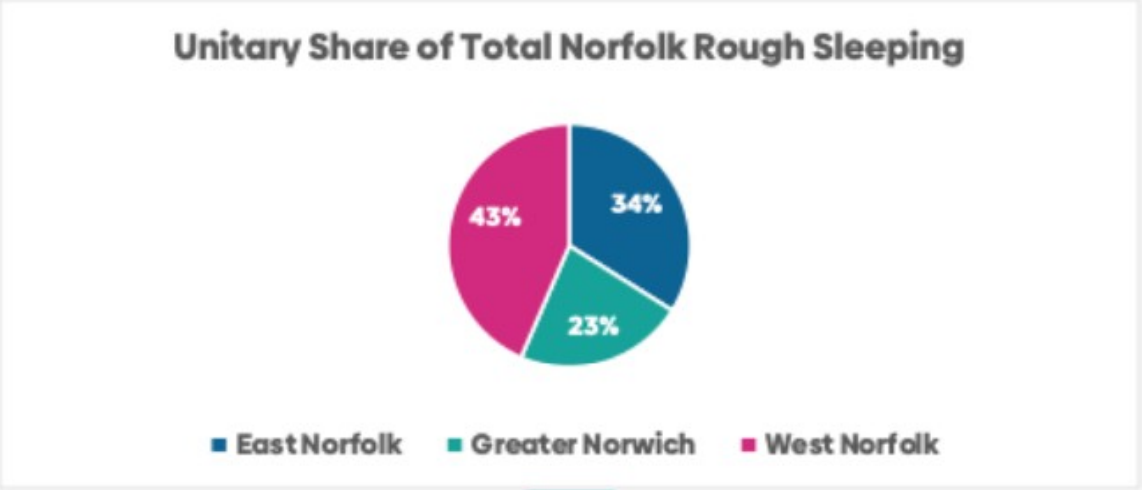

Figure 30: Share of rough sleeping across the three unitary areas.

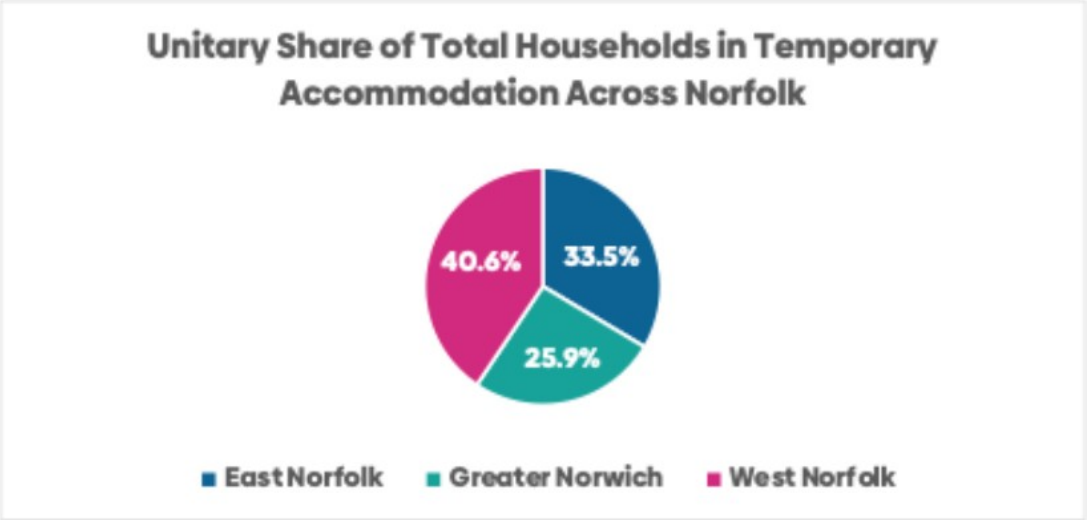

Figure 31: Households in temporary accommodation across the three unitary areas

Housing demand is weighted towards one-bedroom homes, much like other parts of Norfolk, but there is a marked difference in West Norfolk's need for larger family properties. Around 23% of applicants on the housing register require a three-bedroom home, a far higher proportion than in Greater Norwich or East Norfolk.

On the development side, the area benefits from a strong five-year housing land supply and significant delivery capacity.

7.2.2 Recommended delivery model

Homelessness

Homelessness support will be consolidated into the EI&P approach, building on successful models of current support and established early intervention pathways. This will enable the tackling of underlying challenges, such as debt, mental health and domestic abuse. This enables a more preventative, coordinated response to homelessness across the unitary area.

Housing

A choice-based lettings approach should be delivered through a unified policy across the unitary.

KL&WN have a 100% stake in West Norfolk Housing Company. The organisation is a registered provider of social homes and acts as a dynamic option for social housing management and growth in the unitary.

With the inclusion of LA-owned homes in West Norfolk Housing Company, there is no requirement to set up an HRA. Shadow authorities should consider how WN and current Arms-Length Organisations (ALOs) work together to manage social housing expansion as part of the set-up of the new organisations. This consideration should also factor in and include key partnerships within WN. for example, with other registered providers like Freebridge and Broadland Housing association.

Development

West Norfolk has high levels of home ownership. While the area is predominantly rural, it also includes market towns and coastal communities with distinct housing pressures such as access to transport and a lack of affordable one bed homes. This further supports the case for a 3 unitary approach that better tailors services to the needs of the people living in the unitary.

The new unitary will inherit stakes in two house building organisations – Breckland Bridge (part owned with The Land Group) and West Norfolk Property Ltd, a home development and rental company. Both KL&WN and Breckland both have house building organisations. Considering the duplication of purpose, operations and the difference in shareholdings, it is recommended that the West Unitary exists its partnership with Breckland Bridge. Directing future opportunities towards West Norfolk Property Limited – where 100% of benefits can be realised. There are ongoing financial and development commitments that must be considered through a transition – such as the relationship with Lovells. This will need to be carefully considered by shadow authorities for any opportunities and implications.

Company name	Ownership	Purpose/ notes
Repton Homes	NCC - 100%	Develops private homes for sale.
West Norfolk Housing Company	KL&WN - 100%	A registered provider with the regulator for social housing. Rents social homes and sells shared ownership. Partnership with Broadland housing association.
West Norfolk Property Company	KL&WN - 100%	Holds private rentals and develop new homes. aims to improve private rental options and raise funds for the council.
Breckland Bridge	Breckland - 50% The Land Group – 50%	Joint venture with The Land Group to deliver housing and regeneration projects.

Table 74: West Norfolk housing companies and home ownership

7.2.3 Improving outcomes, unlocking innovation

Homelessness

WN has the highest temporary accommodation and rough sleeping numbers of the three unitaries. This is partly driven by a mismatch between available accommodation and need. The new model can, through EI&P, identify need earlier and provide support around individuals and households to address root causes which currently sits across a range of professional areas (e.g. debt, mental health issues and domestic abuse).

Combining teams will provide opportunities to target areas and issues (e.g. rough sleeping in rural Breckland) and learn good practice from each other. It's acknowledged that temporary accommodation and rough sleeping numbers are not equally split across the authority, so the design of services and the way they are accessed needs to be considered – for example contributing to and utilising EI&P's outreach programme within Breckland's rural areas. Using a person-centred approach

to service delivery and adapting to the different needs of each area is a key strength of the three unitary model that is lost at a larger scale.

There are existing commissioning and partnership working across the area, this offers an opportunity to build on good practice that compliments the EI&P agenda. By connecting closely with the wider EI&P offer there is an opportunity to address the root causes of homelessness at an early stage. Additionally, the new scale of the unitary makes commissioning opportunities more appealing to partners and enable them to design outreach that tackles rural and dispersed challenges – this is great opportunity for WN as there are great partnerships already in place that could be built upon.

Housing

West Norfolk will not inherit a HRA but will be building upon close working relationships with registered providers in the area. The arms-length organisation, West Norfolk Housing, means that the area will have access to some social stock and by combining resources, the unitary will be able to unlock quicker growth.

Development

There is an opportunity to expand activity further through arms-length organisations and work to find efficiencies in both development and social housing functions e.g. making s106 acquisitions more and making one-bed homes more feasible for HAs.

Shadow authorities should consider the consolidation of the three organisations in West Norfolk to make the most of opportunities and bring efficiencies among these organisations.

7.2.4 Achieving financial benefits

Through the amalgamation and rationalisation of housing and homelessness teams, it's expected that savings will be made. This will predominantly be at senior management level as the demand on officers and services will initially remain the same.

Embedding housing and homelessness into the EI&P function will also realise savings. A conservative saving estimate on non-staffing costs of 10% can be achieved. Among other things this will also include temporary accommodation costs.

With the increase in scale and the high use of commissioning within homelessness services in WN, there is an opportunity to offer new opportunities to partners. This could also drive costs savings as contracts are larger. There is also the opportunity to attract new partners (both local and national) who may not have previously been interested in the scale offered.

7.3 Adult Social Care

7.3.1 Context & constraints

West Norfolk covers a large geographical area with some larger communities such as King's Lynn and many semi-rural and rural communities, with the second highest percentage of the population aged 65+ at 25.6%. More older adults are in nursing and residential care, and fewer are in supported living indicating a lack of focus on independence. Demand also increased significantly in working-age adults, with West Norfolk having an increasing number of 18-64 year olds requiring nursing / residential care provision.

Increases in demand across both working age and older adults are resulting in increasing pressures in service delivery and are forecast to continue to grow. Alongside this, costs are increasing for all types of support, evidencing a need for change in the model of support and an opportunity to redesign the approach to market management.

7.3.2 Recommended service model

There are several delivery models to consider for the implementation of Adults Social Care within the new unitary. Some have been summarised in an options appraisal below:

Model	Description	Strengths	Weaknesses
Shared Services Model	A single unitary is appointed to deliver Adults Services on behalf of all or some of the new authorities. This is carried out under a formal shared services agreement or delegation.	• Economies of scale and reduced duplication • Reduces transition risk as staff and structures can remain in place in short term • Consistency of approach across unitaries	• Diluted accountability and complex governance • Compromises over operational and strategic priorities • Still requires core service (DAS) in each unitary • Dependency on an external organisation
Separate Services	The disaggregated model - the new unitaries each establish their own Adults Service structure and workforce, with local leadership and systems. Examples include Cumberland and Bedfordshire	• Locally accountable • Decisions making and services delivered closest to communities • Can reflect local needs • Retains option to run some services jointly	• Duplication of teams and staff across three unitaries • Challenge of recruiting high quality staff from other councils • Higher risk transition that could impact day-to-day services
Central Leadership – Diffused Delivery	The new authority operates a single Adult Services directorate. Delivery is decentralised into locality-based teams aligned to former council areas or other geographies	• Combines strategic leadership with place-based delivery • Easier to maintain partner relationships • Retains local responsiveness • Enables phased integration	• Blurred lines of accountability if not clearly defined • Potential inconsistencies between areas • Requires strong central oversight and performance management

Table 75: Types of delivery models for Adult Social Care

Following engagement with Leaders, Chief Executives and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), our recommended delivery model is to establish a single Adults Social Care service for West Norfolk.

The creation of a dedicated West Norfolk Adult Social service will enable a greater focus on the local needs, assets, and challenges. The model will provide the opportunity to have a greater focus on the local context and challenges and support a move to a person-centred approach to Social Care. For urban centres in towns such as King's Lynn, neighbourhood hubs will be closely connected to multi-agency networks, with targeted proactive outreach in the most deprived wards. Elsewhere given the large geographical area of West Norfolk, the model will adapt to rural communities and making greater use of mobile services and digital such as Technology Enable Care to help connect residents and help them feel safe in their own homes for as long as possible. A new local delivery model and front door will be closely aligned to community assets and inform priorities for what is commissioned locally and in collaboration with partners to avoid duplication.

Whilst partners such as the Police and Health will have to service three unitaries, their movement to three footprints across the Norfolk geographies aligns with this recommended option and will allow for closer working relationships to develop between staff within the new unitary function.

There are positive examples of joint working that exist across the county footprint currently and would not seek to unpick these where they provide positive outcomes for residents. These will be managed through partnership boards to ensure there is appropriate governance in place. The Adults Safeguarding Board is also something which will be retained to bring together statutory and non-statutory organisations and supported through their connection to more localised service delivery model.

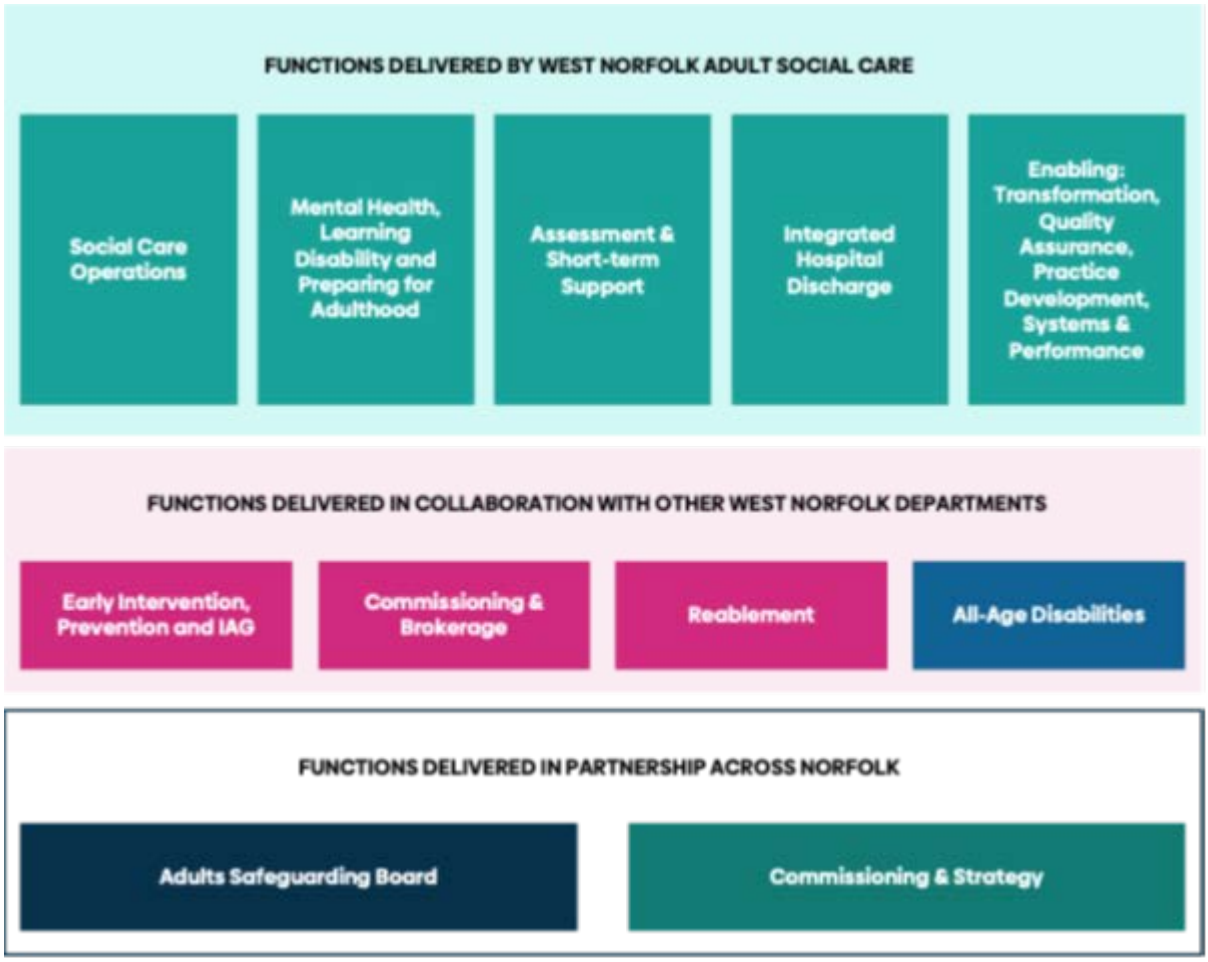

Figure 32: Functional model of Adult Social Care across the unitary

Our analysis has indicated that the Norfolk care market has seen increased costs across supported living, home care and residential care and there is a need to ensure the provider market remains sustainable. West Norfolk will have its own commissioning & partnerships function within EIP – which will work across Early Intervention & Prevention, Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care – but will come together with Greater Norwich and East Norfolk through partnership boards to commission support like residential care placements working with large providers such as Norse Care and developing a market management approach.

This new model will shift West Norfolk from a county wide one size fits all approach. to a person-centred approach where communities and the VCFSE sector have a greater role to help keep people as independent as possible in their own homes with lower levels of support. This model with reestablish the primacy of place to ensure commissioned services are tailored to local needs with the right level of support at the right time and help reduce demand for statutory interventions.

7.3.3 Improving outcomes, unlocking innovation

The key area of focus for West Norfolk is maximising reablement to support be to be as independent as possible e.g. in cases where the person has a fall. The reablement service will be moved into the EI&P service and assigned the most appropriate lead based on their needs who will oversee their case and track progress.

There is significant potential to scale what already works based on local knowledge of communities the challenges they face and the most appropriate interventions. Developing the local offer building on existing partnerships at a neighbourhood level will support NHS England's 10-Year Plan to introduce an integrated neighbourhood model with a multi-agency front door by 2028. The new model should align to the health neighbourhoods in West Norfolk to ensure community-based services across health, public health, police and social care are all working in the same footprints and have a shared understanding of the local needs and priorities.

Where there is a need for additional support and a care package this will put the person at the heart of this to support them to be as independent as possible and focused on improving their outcomes. Working closely with health and the James Paget University Hospital and the St Edmunds Hospital, will be key to provide coordinated support in both primary care in communities and hospital discharge. The new model will support improved discharge pathways through closer working between occupational therapists and social care teams focused on reablement and maximising local community provision. The three unitary model aligns with the move of statutory partners to more localised geographies of service delivery – enabling the development of deep relationships and mitigating risks of disaggregation. West Norfolk has committed to becoming a Marmot Place creating a healthier and fairer environment for everyone, particularly those facing the greatest disadvantages which

this model is best placed to help achieve this through a stronger partnership with Health.

Key areas of focus for the new model for Adults Social Care include having a different approach to working with health, commissioning and learning disability which is an area with complex cases and high costs. With West Norfolk having the highest growth in working-age adults this new model will identify and support cases from 14 years of age working with Children's Social Care to agree the most appropriate commissioned services, skills to help them gain employment and the most appropriate housing. This will enable a person-centred approach to help the individual to be an independent as possible and help reduce the growing numbers of 18–64-year-olds needing residential / nursing provision.

The new model will have a Commissioning function across Adults, Children's and Prevention to ensure that what is commissioned supports people throughout their life and helps avoid the challenges in transitioning from Children's to Adults. This will benefit West Norfolk through closer working with local providers based on the current and future needs of the area and where appropriate the use of very acute placements. In addition, this will introduce an All-Age Disability Service for Learning Disabilities with a greater focus on increasing independence, providing secure appropriate housing, skills and employment.

7.3.4 Achieving financial benefits

The key to achieving financial benefits of the new model and creating long term financial sustainability is through the early identification of needs and putting in place lower levels of support through local community provision or technology. Helping to maintain people's independence and supporting them to live in their own home in the communities they know is a better outcome for the individual and helps avoid residential care which in West Norfolk costs an average of £627 a week.

A holistic approach to case reviews to establish if a reduced level of support e.g. a move from residential to a supported living provision may be possible. This would equate to a saving of £517 per week demonstrating that in West Norfolk, a small reduction in numbers could have a significant impact. Given that West Norfolk has the lowest number of older adults in supported living provision this is a key area to grow this provision to help address the service delivery challenges and improve longer term

financial sustainability. This may also enable older adults to have improved independence in an environment that they feel safe and secure and have an improved quality of life.

Focusing services on early intervention and prevention allows for staff to be reorganised around community hubs. Specialist skills can be allocated at the initial stage to ensure effective triage. Cases needing social care intervention will be led by a social worker, who completes the Care Act Assessment and coordinates EIP support if appropriate. This approach ensures cases are managed based on required support levels and individual needs, with minimal transfers.

7.4 Children's Social Care

7.4.1 Context & constraints

Children's Social Care in West Norfolk will service the lowest number of children across the three unitaries, with numbers declining over the past three years. This may indicate that there is existing good early intervention practice in place in this area.

Numbers of children and young people placed with in-house foster carers have declined over the past three years, with numbers placed in independent fostering placements has increased. This may indicate that foster carers are either leaving the sector or are not being supported to be able to support needs and/or are being appropriately matched. As West Norfolk has the highest cost IFA placements, addressing this challenge will be key to enabling sustainability within the new service model.

Demand for support at the Child in Need (CIN) level has slightly increased over the past three years, indicating a need for effective early intervention and family support – to ensure that demand for acute support remains stable.

The unitary has already begun on its journey to become a 'Marmot Place' in collaboration with Public Health and the ICB to address the significant health inequalities across the area. Principles behind becoming a Marmot Place include giving every child the best start in life, which provides a clear ambition and direction to a new service.

7.4.2 Recommended delivery model

There are several delivery models to consider for the implementation of Children's Social Care within the new unitary. Some have been summarised in an options appraisal below:

Service Model	Strengths	Risks
Disaggregation & Integration: Each unitary establishes their own Children's Services	• Strong local control of the service operation and spend • Tailored services for the local community • Can retain partnership arrangements during implementation and beyond where appropriate	• Recruitment and retention of key staff if a HR strategy is not well considered • Data security and retention could be at risk if not carefully managed through transition • Duplication of processes, roles and contracts may increase costs • Transition may introduce significant risk that will need to considered and managed
Shared Services: One authority hosts Children's Services on behalf of other authorities via a Shared Services agreement	• May be easier to manage workforce challenges & contracts in the short-term • Enables the achievement of economies of scale • Provides some continuity for staff and care provision	• There are distinct needs across the three unitaries that this model may not address • May introduce challenges when it comes to OFSTED inspections and ensuring all areas are meeting required responsibilities • Dilutes accountability for service success • May introduce complexity should a member organisation wish to leave the arrangement
Joint Children's Trust: Authorities create or commission a trust, which operates independently with a shared governance board	• There have been indications that the introduction of a trust can drive practice improvements	• Central government has been clear that this is not their preferred option for social care delivery • Requires significant investment to set up • May introduce complexity should a member organisation wish to leave the arrangement • Dilutes accountability for improvement work

Table 76: Service models for Children's Social Care

Following engagement with Leaders, Chief Executives and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), our recommended delivery model is for a singular Children's service for West Norfolk.

This option provides the greatest opportunity for each unitary to build a genuinely local and community connected service, that leverages local community assets to deliver positive outcomes for residents. The fluctuating demand for Children's Social Care in West Norfolk may get lost within a larger organisation.

Whilst partners such as the Police and Health systems will have to service three unitaries, their movement to three footprints across the Norfolk geographies aligns with this recommended option and will allow for closer working relationships to develop between staff within the new unitary function.

There are positive examples of joint working that exist across the county footprint currently and would not seek to unpick these where they provide positive outcomes for residents. Partnership arrangements that should be retained include the Norfolk

Children's Safeguarding Partnership which could be served by a joint administrative function and retain its local community safeguarding groups which will be strengthened through their connection to more localised service delivery.

Finally, our analysis has indicated that the Norfolk care market has seen increased costs in placement types and there is a need to ensure the placement market remains sustainable. West Norfolk will have its own Commissioning & Partnerships function within the EI&P department but will come together with Greater Norwich and East Norfolk through partnership boards to commission support like residential care placements and will continue involvement within regional care collaboratives such as Adopt East and Foster East to work in partnership with other authorities and sector specialists to provide support for children and young people.

These organisations already span organisational boundaries beyond Norfolk, so refining membership should not have the destabilising impact that has been suggested. Retaining a sovereign commissioning service will also enable West Norfolk to develop hyper-local relationships with providers and the community sector to meet needs – ensuring there is not a risk of a 'postcode lottery' in provision but that residents have access to provision that is right for their needs.

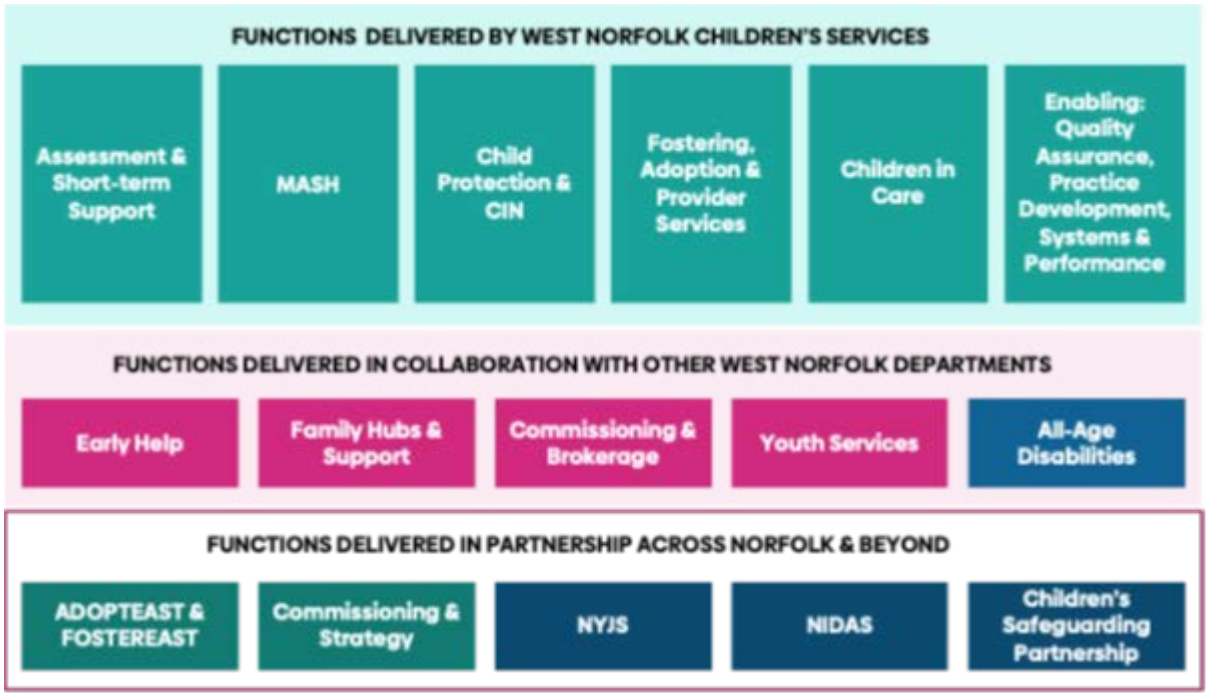

Figure 33. Functional model of Children's Services for the unitary.

7.4.3 Improving outcomes, unlocking innovation

Given the ambition already present in West Norfolk to tackle deprivation and tackle the root causes of demand for Children's Services, it follows that a new model of service delivery should be in place to formalise relationships, strengthen decision-making and enable close working between social care, public health and other service areas.

The Early Intervention & Prevention offer in West Norfolk will be the first point for engagement with family support. Family Hubs will be developed as part of the government reforms, building upon existing sites in King's Lynn which will connect residents not just to statutory services but to a wider community offer, including peer to peer support. Families will be supported by the most appropriate lead professionals which may not always be a staff member from Children's Social Care.

Where there is a need for a statutory intervention – or concern about safety of a child or young person – a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will be located within Children's Services which will bring together statutory partners from police, health and other partners, building on existing strong safeguarding arrangements to identify and respond to need quickly. The three unitary model aligns with the move of statutory partners to more localised geographies of service delivery – enabling the development of deep relationships and mitigating risks of disaggregation.

For children who do enter the care system, the emphasis on family-based placements will be retained, exploring kinship and then wider fostering arrangements. Given the fluctuation in numbers of foster carers within the unitary, there may be a need to ensure there is a targeted recruitment campaign linked to community partners and a focus on ensuring the retention offer meets the needs of local children.

As young people leave care, West Norfolk as a unitary will connect them to local housing and employment opportunities, as an ambitious corporate parent. Through close partnership with housing colleagues, suitable accommodation will be provided with support for independence skills where that is needed. West Norfolk sees growth within its agri-tech and advanced manufacturing sectors, and there will be a need for the development of a strong care workforce to meet future needs. Care leavers should be connected to opportunities within these sectors through pathway planning and connections with local education institutions.

For those children and young people who require support due to a disability, an all-age disability approach will be in place. This will enable effective management of transition between Children's Social Care and Adults Social Care, as well as a focus on preparing for independence from as early as possible by bringing together staff with expertise and experience from across the age spectrum. This service will work closely with Health colleagues to support service delivery and transition between services, and with SEND teams to support transition where that is appropriate. This will provide families with consistency of approach and reduce the experience of a 'cliff edge' between Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care.

7.4.4 Achieving financial benefits

Early identification of needs will allow for timely support across services. For instance, when an adult faces mental health challenges leading to unemployment, targeted assistance can be offered, avoiding statutory interventions. This approach saves around £26,500 per support package and greatly improves outcomes for children who avoid entering care.

A holistic approach to case management can also enable families to welcome children in care back home, with a small reduction in numbers could have a significant impact. This may also enable more young people to move into safe and appropriate accommodation as they leave family placements, increasing their independence and reducing spend on high-cost semi-independent living.

A structuring of services that focuses on early intervention and prevention also enables the reorganisation of staff around community hubs and early intervention. There is also an opportunity to revisit the structure of case working staff, so they are better aligned with demand across West Norfolk.

7.5 SEND & Education

7.5.1 Context & constraints

West Norfolk has experienced EHCP growth of 43% over the past three years. The largest growth area has been within Independent Special School placements, indicating that more local population is not meeting the needs of children and young

people. West Norfolk also has the highest proportion of exclusions in the county, suggesting that settings are not as inclusive as they could be.

Given its rural nature, it is perhaps unsurprising that West Norfolk has the highest spend on school transport, for children in both mainstream and special placements. Without being managed carefully this could be a significant cost pressure for the new authority.

The new unitary will be overseeing a number of exciting housing development opportunities over the coming years and leveraging planning and growth experience with an approach to managing declining pupil numbers elsewhere in the unitary footprint will be key to ensuring development is right-sized to the changing demographics of the area – and the West is able to afford the costs associated with statutory transport to schools.

In addition to sixth forms attached to schools, young people in West Norfolk also have access to studying opportunities at the College of West Anglia, which offers degree-level qualifications and a specialist nursing school – alongside City College East, Otley College and West Suffolk College providing cross boundary support. Given the shifting population demographics towards older adults in this unitary, ensuring young people are connected to local employment opportunities that are sustainable will prevent risks of young people migrated to other areas of the county or outside of Norfolk all together.

7.5.2 Recommended delivery model

SEND and Education will be part of the Children's Social Care management structure, and as outlined in 1.1 this will be a disaggregated service model, providing opportunities to build services that are tied in the requirements of local areas – whilst enabling collaboration across the county footprint where that is required, for instance, in the recruitment of specialist roles (e.g. Educational Psychologists).

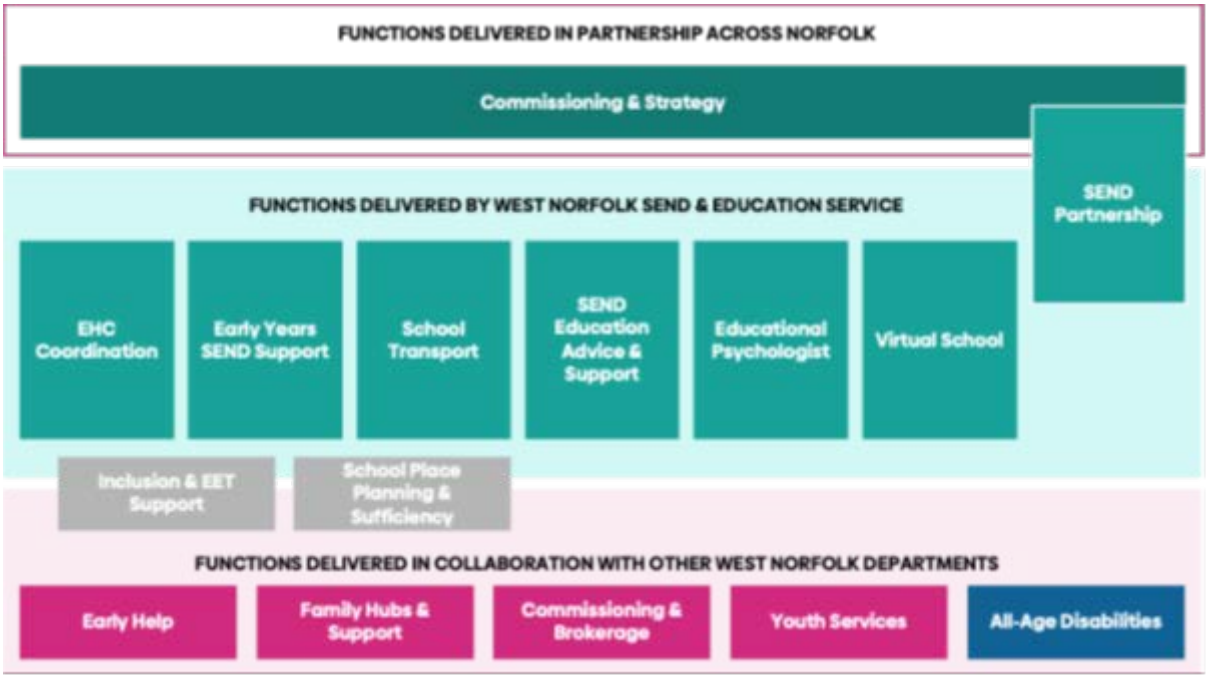

Figure 34: Functional model of SEND & Education across the unitary.

7.5.3 Improving outcomes, unlocking innovation

With a focus on more local service delivery, West Norfolk is positioned to deepen existing partnership working around local schools, and with partners to deliver a truly inclusive response to young people's needs. Its relatively unique population and geography make-up compared to the other unitaries risks getting lost in a large authority – where demands elsewhere may conceal the needs of this area.

Families and young people will benefit from an integrated approach with Early Intervention & Prevention as families will be able to access holistic support close to them to enable families to be connected to peers and community support to build resilience around a child's needs. Given the rurality of West Norfolk, whilst support will be available within urban hub centres, a mobile support offer will wrap around areas located in areas that families are likely to visit – including building the offer into mobile libraries, health locations and community events. This model also speaks to embedding the Marmot Principles with all children and young people in the area, enabling young people to have the best start in life.

Where children and young people do need additional support to access education, EHC coordinators will be supported through workforce development to build closer working relationships with families to support them through the timely development of EHCPs and regular review and updates of these plans, aligned to a young person's

needs. Teams Around the School will be developed on a patch basis around local schools to provide effective inclusion support – and intervene to prevent education placements breaking down or young people being suspended or excluded.

Given this particular challenge around exclusions in West Norfolk, as a single unitary they will also benefit from developing Schools Forum relationships with maintained and academy schools in the area, enabling close working to understand the reasons behind a higher proportion of exclusions and to explore opportunities to develop a wider range of alternative provision to ensure young people are not distanced from learning for too long.

Planning for independence and transition will be considered throughout a young person's pathway. Where a young person may need support from Adult Social Care, support will be accessed alongside the All-Age Disability service to enable early planning for independence. If a young person is not eligible for future support, the service will connect them to the Early Intervention & Prevention to enable them to access support across housing and employment.

We would place school transport decision making alongside both place planning and EHCP coordination, to ensure its central role to enabling independence and the significant role it can play in additional cost is considered alongside decision making on school placements.

The new model will also leverage the deep understanding of communities and planning, alongside considerations for school place planning. With the development and growth opportunity that devolution presents – we would see this function working together with colleagues in planning and development to ensure we are designing an education system that is fit for future demand across mainstream and specialist education. Tying together place planning and school teams will also enable intervention where declining populations may introduce challenges to the sustainability of the sector.

Our vision for West Norfolk is as an area that takes full advantage of its unique geography and range of industries from tourism to advanced manufacturing – developing a compelling skills offer that connects young people to these opportunities will be key to ensuring truly inclusive growth, ensuring they feel as though they have control over their lives and preventing the movement away of the working age population.

7.5.4 Achieving financial benefits

Working to reset and strengthen our approach to SEND will provide the opportunity to unlock reduced spend against the High Needs Block, which currently carries a significant deficit.

Through effective deployment of Early Intervention & Prevention and Teams Around Schools, we will be able to reduce the amount of plans to young people – with a rough cost of £8,000 per year for each child who has a mainstream plan, increasing to over £23,000 where a child may be in a special school.

Exploring opportunities to step children down from placements based on a deeper understanding of their needs and outcomes will also release savings, through more effective relationships between staff and families, and patch-based working, families can have greater confidence in support.

Norfolk also has a higher-than-average rate of exclusions, which typically lead to detrimental life outcomes for children and young people. West Norfolk has the highest proportion of these, and there is an opportunity to continue to avoid additional exclusions through both school-based support, and effective engagement with young people and their families to understand and support wider complexities.

7.6 Enabling Services

7.6.1 Context & constraints

Enabling services set up the environment in which frontline services and partners can work together to serve local communities. Therefore they need to provide efficient support at the lowest possible cost.

They will need to support West Norfolk as a larger scale organisation, to serve a broader area, whist delivering a more complex range of services (e.g. social care, education, highways, etc.).

West Norfolk councils have tended to run their enabling services as in-house functions, with some exceptions:

- HR & OD – the majority of HR functions are delivered in-house; however King's Lynn & West Norfolk have outsourced their payroll to Bedfordshire Council
- Audit – Breckland is a partner in the shared Eastern Internal Audit shared service (EIAS) that will likely be hosted by East Norfolk.

The primary benefit of moving to a three-authority model is around being able to tailor frontline services, support and wider partnerships to the very different needs of each area. However, there are some particular challenges and opportunities that West Norfolk faces in relation to providing enabling services that can support the wider organisation. As a large unitary with a broader range of services and budgets, West Norfolk is able to scale up its services to realise economies of scale, build in resilience and mitigate the risks of single points of failure.

Moving to a single unitary also poses an opportunity to realise efficiencies through streamlining senior officer posts, reducing the financial pressure on the frontline services that will benefit residents and communities.

The move to a West Norfolk unitary is an opportunity to 'reset' enabling services so that they can adopt best practice operating models that can deliver greatest value for money to the organisation and taxpayers. This would build upon some of the existing strong practices and processes that already exist in the services.

The new authority will also inherit the arm's length companies, Breckland Bridge, West Norfolk Property Limited and West Norfolk Housing Company Limited, which its enabling services may also need to support so that they can continue to thrive. It will also inherit a share of the county council's arm's length traded company, Norse Group which delivers a range of asset management and place-based services.

7.6.2 Recommended service model

West Norfolk will have a core of enabling services that are set up to provide the right support to the wider organisation. The diagram below shows what enabling services it will run and what models will be adopted.

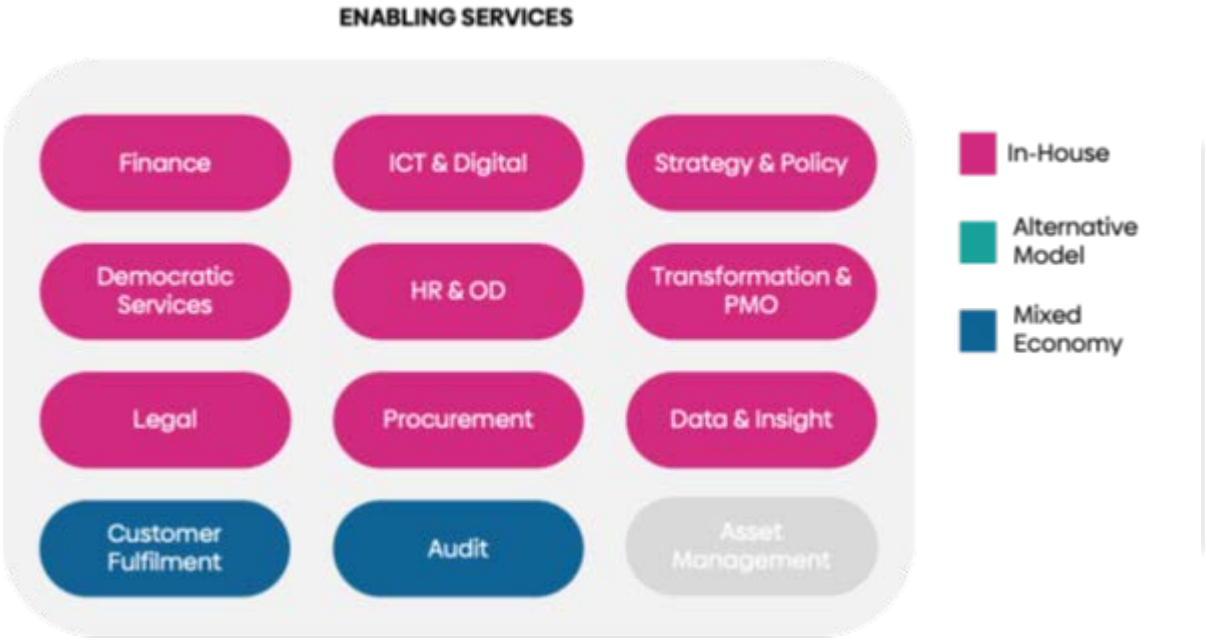

Figure 35. Functional model of Enabling Services for the unitary.

The key features of this service are summarised below.

Control and coordination	Enabling Services are either centralised (e.g. HR & OD, Finance) or adopt a hub and spoke model[11] (Transformation & PMO, Data & Insight[12]) as a means of keeping control of enabling support and maintaining a resilient, flexible resource whilst also fostering a community of practice and common standards across the organisation.
Mixed economy	Wherever possible enabling services are delivered in-house as standalone functions to maximise control and flexibility to evolve as the council's needs change over time. There are exceptions to this. For Audit the council will run a combination of in-house supplemented with the shared service but would aim to either fully participate in the EIAS shared service or bring back fully in-house. In addition, elements of customer service relating to waste collection are outsourced to Serco which will continue until the

[11] Hub and spoke model – there is a primary, central corporate resource but a network of smaller, distinct teams sat within other areas of the council. All teams work together and form a community of practice.

[12] This is separate to any Data & Insight function within an EI&P model – but the two would work together

	contract expires. West Norfolk would seek to bring payroll back in-house to deliver as part of a consolidated HR & OD service.
Best practice	The services would seek to continue the best practice from the existing services within councils, whilst also using the redesign of enabling functions as an opportunity to innovate.
Appropriate scale and capacity	Although there are opportunities to realise efficiencies from moving to a single unitary, it is important to make sure enabling services retain the capacity to support the new council in delivering an ambitious transformation programme to realise the wider benefits for residents and communities.
Tailored to local needs and services	Enabling services will be set up to support the unique requirements of West Norfolk. For example, Asset Management will include specific capability to support management of what we envisage will be a large portfolio of commercial assets.
Ability to select the best opportunities to scale up	There are further longer-term opportunities for West Norfolk to collaborate with the two other unitaries, where it makes sense to pool resources, they share the same needs and can benefit from economies of scale or increased purchasing power. Examples of this include carrying out joint procurements and jointly funding specialist ICT roles and functions.

7.6.3 Achieving financial benefits

As one of three unitaries, West Norfolk is of the right scale to both tailor services to the unique needs and circumstances of the area but also benefit from being of a size to realise the benefits of combining the previous councils. The main financial benefits of the model would come from the following changes:

- Streamlining duplicated management structures
- Gaining economies of scale for those enabling services that currently operate on a small scale
- Removing duplication of processes and functions
- Rationalising key systems such as the multiple Enterprise Resource Planning, Finance and HR & Payroll systems used across the organisations

7.7 Place

7.7.1 Context & constraints

West Norfolk serves as a crucial gateway to the west, connecting Norfolk with the Midlands, Lincolnshire, and Cambridge through key transport corridors, rail links, and nearby airports. The area has key transport routes like the A47, A17 and A10, and rail links to Cambridge, Ely and London, with the Cambridge-Norwich Technology corridor running through it along the A11.

The region's rural nature shapes its strengths and constraints. While King's Lynn is the urban centre, smaller towns like Downham Market, Swaffham and Thetford have the potential to further develop their position as established economic and service hubs. There are many small and micro-businesses that need support to expand and create jobs, but growth is hindered by poor public transport connections, lack of dedicated spaces for small businesses, and a constrained commercial property market. The area boasts a resilient agri-food economy, defence and advanced manufacturing/engineering expertise with tourism driving the economy in the north of the proposed geography, especially around the coast.

King's Lynn is a key economic centre with a strong industrial base in manufacturing and engineering, and high growth potential in these sectors. It also hosts a major hospital which is scheduled for a significant development by 2030 and plays a vital role in education through the College of West Anglia's partnership with Anglia Ruskin University and the dedicated school of nursing. There is significant funding aligned with King's Lynn and Thetford developments.

Environmental constraints include Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, and a large MoD training ground. The Norfolk Coast National Landscape is a protected national asset, and flood risk is a significant issue. Currently across the proposed geography there are number of internal drainage boards, a unitary council would provide a strong focus and relationship with managing flood risk and better improve water manage across the area. Major growth plans include a sustainable urban extension in West Winch, Thetford and Attleborough and a new government-funded road to support development.

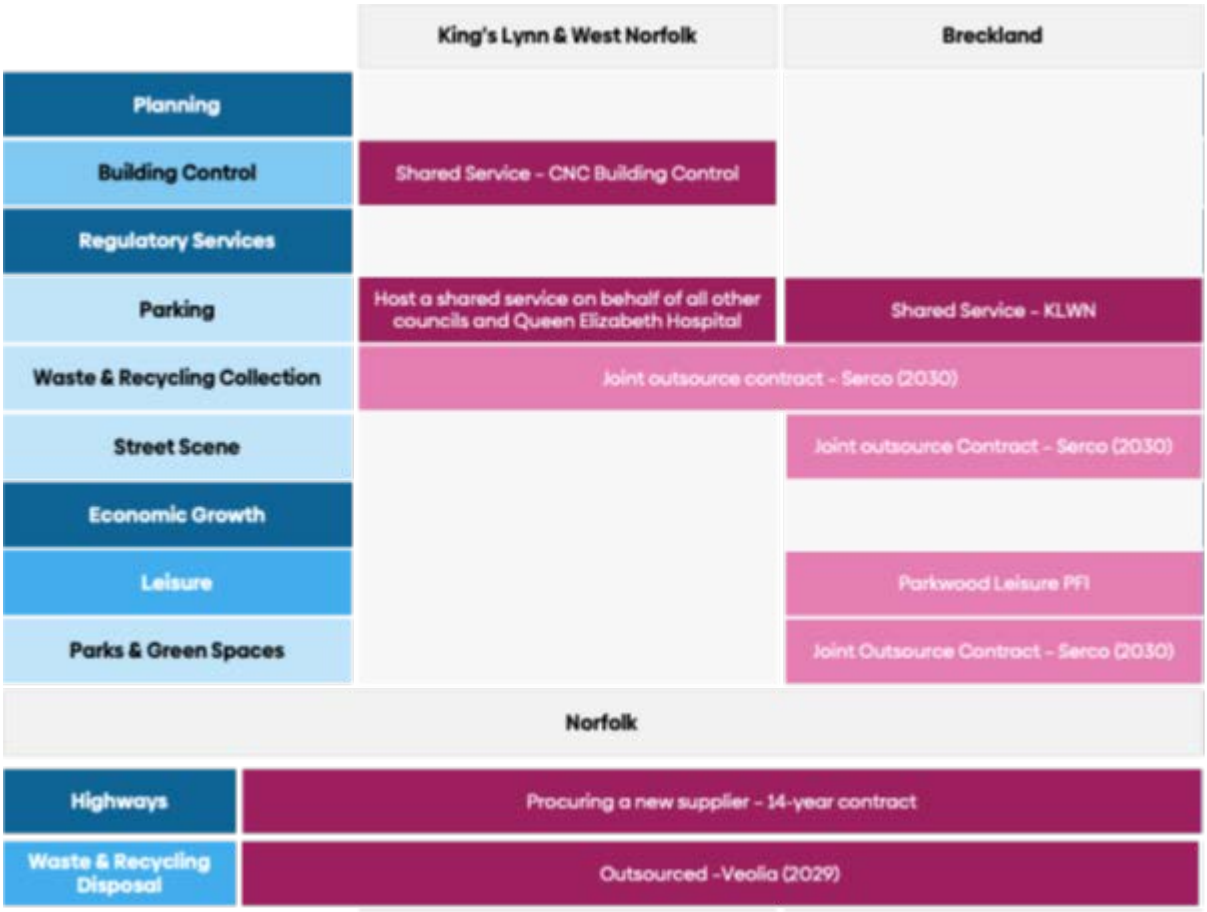

Figure 36. Current delivery models for West Norfolk councils.

The county council has also just gone out to market for a highways maintenance and professional services contract lasting 14 years. It also has a contract with Veolia for waste transfer and disposal that runs until end of March 2029. West Norfolk is likely to take on responsibility for part of these contracts.

In addition to this mixed economy of services, West Norfolk will inherit all or a portion of the following arm's length delivery vehicles that have a role in shaping place within the area1:

- West Norfolk Property Limited – a joint venture that develops and manages private rental homes with the intention of improving the private rental sector
- West Norfolk Housing Company Limited – a registered social housing provider that rents social homes and sells shared ownership properties

These delivery vehicles have to potential to drive both economic growth and reduce pressures on affordable housing for West Norfolk.

West Norfolk would take on a range of 'place-based' services including Highways & Transport, Waste Disposal, Cultural Services, further Planning responsibilities, and Trading Standards.

Placemaking requires a multi-faceted approach to planning, designing, and managing public spaces and this will require unitaries to exercise a wide range of levers to shape places. Bringing in Highways & Transport, Cultural services, Waste Disposal and other functions will help West Norfolk coordinate these services to deliver a truly joined up approach to create vibrant, healthy, and meaningful places that enhance people's well-being and connection to their community.

West Norfolk is ideally placed to take a placemaking approach that serves the rural area with a network of towns and villages, and centre of King's Lynn. It can support the region to grow by taking a tailored approach to harnessing its strengths such as its connectivity whilst overcoming barriers such as constrained commercial property markets and poor public transport. It is of a suitable size and scale to be able to tailor services at a neighbourhood level and represent efficient use of resources.

There are opportunities to realise efficiencies from streamlining management structures and rationalising systems. Increased scale will also support greater resilience for services such as Planning.

West Norfolk is in the enviable position as the current councils have already worked closely together to run a joint outsourcing exercise for Waste collection (Serco). However, there are some additional complexities that will require working through:

- Breckland has also outsourced Street Scene to the same supplier
- The joint outsourced waste collection arrangement covers part of East Norfolk also.
- A small portion of households in West Norfolk are currently served by an in-house waste collection service.

These factors will require West Norfolk to work closely with East Norfolk to carefully manage the current arrangements and any changes with suppliers. Given the long-term contractual commitment, the council will need to take a long-term approach to rationalising waste collection and disposal, and street scene services – but it can unlock further benefits from coordination of operations, rationalising depots and optimised route planning.

In addition, regulatory changes for Planning and Building Control will result in major changes for services, and some uncertainty around what responsibilities local authorities will retain, that will need to be reflected in the council's operating model.

7.7.2 Recommended delivery model

West Norfolk is best placed to serve the rural geography with a network of small towns and urban centre of King's Lynn to take a tailored approach to addressing local challenges and fostering economic growth.

The delivery model is described below, and represents a pragmatic, interim state that factors in contractual constraints but enables a placemaking approach, whilst allowing West Norfolk to invest time in developing and implementing new models for Place in the longer-term.

Figure 37. Functional model of Place services within the new unitary.

The key features of the place-based service models are described below.

Placemaking[13]	The model brings together all the services that can make a major contribution to create vibrant, healthy, and meaningful places that enhance people's well-being and connection to their community. It should be noted that this will also require close partnership working with the Mayoral Combined Authority
Focus on West Norfolk	West Norfolk has access to all the services and serves an area with unique and distinct needs, contexts and constraints that allow it to tailor the support it provides to tackle local issues such as public transport and harness strengths such as connectivity and strong agri-business sector.
Mixed economy	Many services such as Planning and Economic Development will be in-house. However several services have already entered into long-term contractual arrangements so will adopt different delivery models: • Building Control – the council will have an in-house function but also inherit an existing commissioned service from CNC Building Control (that will be hosted by East Norfolk). Depending upon the regulatory changes it may seek to fully move to the shared service. • Parking – the council will continue to host and deliver the shared service that has successfully been rolled out across the other councils. • Waste collection and disposal – the council is committed to an outsourced waste collection contract until 2030 and will take on an outsourced waste disposal service that terminates March 2029. In addition, existing councils have committed to the NEWS joint venture in the long term. The new authority will aim to design a new delivery model and transition to this as these contracts end.

[13] Placemaking is the process of shaping public spaces and communities. It is a multifaceted approach involving collaboration and design to create spaces that a foster a deeper connection between people and their environment, leading to spaces that people want to visit, live in, and care for.

- Street scene – one area of the council is committed to an outsourced service whereas the other runs an in-house service. The shadow authority will seek to bring together service provision when current contracts expire.
- Highways - anticipated to be delivered through a mix of in-house expertise brought in from the county and the new supplier being procured.
- Leisure – some is outsourced currently.

Leverage new and existing partnerships	Place will draw upon the existing, successful pan-Norfolk partnerships to deliver recycling and waste transfer stations (via the joint venture Norfolk Environmental Waste Services), shared parking services and CNC Building Control.
Long-term approach	Place will have the ability to strategically plan and implement transformational change across all its placemaking services. This will take time to properly plan and execute, which works well with some of the long-term contractual commitments that it will inherit.

This model will bring placemaking services together so that they can provide a multifaceted approach to fostering neighbourhoods. For example, poor public transport acts as a constraint to growth in the rural dispersed geography of West Norfolk. As a unitary West Norfolk will be able to develop initiatives that overcome this barrier leveraging its services and budgets relating to highways and transport (in partnership with any future Mayoral Combined Authority).

7.7.3 Achieving financial benefits

In the longer-term West Norfolk will seek to consolidate those services that are currently delivered through a range of models to benefit from economies of scale and break down service silos to join up delivery, once existing commitments and contracts have ended. This will realise greater value for money for local taxpayers and further enable a total placemaking approach for local neighbourhoods.

In the short-term the new model will allow benefits to be realised through the following means:

- Streamlining duplicated senior management structures

- Some reductions in duplication across similar functions (e.g. Planning Policy) or from joining up services (e.g. green spaces and management of highways verges)
- Harnessing economies of scale for some services (e.g. Development Management)
- Rationalising key systems for Planning, Environmental Services and other functions

In the longer-term there will be benefits from coordinating services and further reducing duplication. There may also be benefits from consolidation of assets such as depots and fleet management.

7.8 Implementation considerations

A more detailed plan for implementation can be found in Appendix H, however considerations specific to implementing the blueprints can be found below.

Workforce & Service Delivery

The operating model is rooted in neighbourhood-level service delivery, and as part of implementation the shadow unitaries will decide on the scale and size of these areas to inform the appropriate location of community buildings and development of outreach teams across rural areas to ensure residents are not isolated or excluded from service delivery.

Where West Norfolk is inheriting functions which are currently delivered in a variety of ways – change will not occur from Day One, rather the shadow and new authorities will review and consolidate arrangements as appropriate supported by a phased transformation programme to embed design new systems and unlock new ways of working.

The establishment of a new functions, and the bringing together of many others, will require a focused recruitment & retention strategy alongside investment in workforce development. For staff who are working in the new EI&P function, they will need to be trained in person-centred models of practice and be equipped with the skills they need to work across several service areas. In statutory functions, in addition to the roles of the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) and Director of Children's Service (DCS), consideration will need to be given to the management of shifting existing

locality teams and therefore not losing local knowledge and ensuring a strategy is in place to attract and retain specialist staff. This may include ensuring there are 'grow your own' pathways within West Norfolk to grow and develop a sustainable workforce.

Partnerships

As set out across the blueprints, partnership working within and outside of West Norfolk is central to effective delivery of our ambitions. This includes continuing to deepen locality working relationships with Health to deliver Marmot Place principle ambitions, and close collaboration with voluntary sector partners to develop community connections. Strong partnerships with schools and importantly families and children and young people will ensure services are designed collaboratively as part of implementation.

Data & Technology

Technology and data will be central enablers to delivery of the new services, especially given West Norfolk's rurality. A single resident record and integrated case management will replace fragmented arrangements, allowing teams to share information and respond to resident needs. This will include reviewing and rationalising current housing systems to enable effective case management and data sharing. Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers opportunities to detect risks earlier and ease the administrative burden on frontline staff, enabling them to focus on building relationships with residents.

8. Appendix H – Implementation Plan

In this section we provide a more detailed proposal for implementation of both transitioning to three unitaries and delivering transformation and public sector reform.

8.1 Future state

For all three unitaries there will be fundamental changes to the way services are delivered, although each new council will have slightly different circumstances. The diagram below articulates some of the main changes between the present and the new unitaries.

Figure 38: Key changes to service delivery

The main changes in the three unitaries model are as follows.

8.1.1 Combining services

Each new unitary will bring together both county and district services within its geography, creating a single organisation for its area that is responsible for the full range of local government functions. This means large-scale county services such as social care, education and highways will sit alongside existing district services like housing, planning and waste. At the same time, district services that are currently delivered by seven councils will be consolidated into three, ensuring simpler, more joined-up delivery and reducing duplication across boundaries.

8.1.2 Public service reform

We see LGR as a catalyst for fundamental reform of services to meet the challenges we face.

- Integration of services (e.g. Housing & Homelessness with Social Care)
- Adoption of Early Intervention & Prevention (EI&P)
- A multi-faceted approach to place whereby council services (and partners) will work together to shape places to live, work and visit (e.g. seaside resorts)

Although these changes won't necessarily be delivered from day one of the new authorities, we anticipate that the work to implement these will start on day one.

8.1.3 Democracy

The creation of three new unitaries provides a unique opportunity to strengthen local democracy in Norfolk. Each authority will provide clearer accountability, reduce fragmentation, and bring decision-making closer to residents. This will support the devolution agenda, empower local voices, and ensure councillors are able to represent their communities more effectively without the confusion of services delivered between County and District councils.

8.1.4 Partnerships

The new unitaries will be in a stronger position to work closely with local partners, including community groups, voluntary organisations, businesses, health services, and government. Each council will provide a clear, single and unified voice for its area, making it easier to agree priorities and deliver change together. By working side by side with partners, the new councils can design better services and make sure transformation reflects the needs of local people.

8.1.5 Systems, staffing and spend

The transition to three new unitaries means aligning and consolidating resources so that each new council can deliver its responsibilities. Budgets, staff, systems and contracts will need to be thoroughly mapped out and transferred to the new authorities, whilst minimising the risks to continuity of service.

It should be noted that there is the potential for the new unitaries to incur substantial redundancy costs, if the transition does not take a strategic approach. The three unitaries should seek to avoid any unnecessary redundancies through:

Recruitment freezes on any posts that are not an absolute priority (e.g. exceptions being social workers, statutory functions, key leadership roles)
Use of fixed term contracts for any posts that might be rationalised with the move to three unitary councils
Harnessing any natural turnover in those areas where there could be economies of scale and therefore reductions in posts.

8.1.6 A new culture

LGR is a chance to reset. Each unitary can shape a modern, open culture that values collaboration, empowers staff, and puts residents at the centre of everything they do. This means breaking away from the old divides between county and districts, creating a shared identity, and building a "one team" ethos across each new unitary. By setting clear values, modelling inclusive leadership, and embedding behaviours that support innovation and accountability, the new councils will be able to deliver services in a way that feels joined-up and responsive to residents. Culture will be a key enabler of transformation, shaping how staff work together, how decisions are made, and how residents experience their councils from Day One.

8.2 Implementation roadmap

Our implementation roadmap will support us to deliver the main changes through LGR. It will need to cover the key activities around workforce, systems, data, finance, democracy and engagement as part of this work.

We have scoped the programme of work using two lenses:

- **Prioritising the change** – we have set out an ambitious programme of transformation within this proposal, which aims to capitalise upon the significant opportunity which exists through LGR to fundamentally redesign local government services in Norfolk so that they meet the needs of our residents and communities for at least the next thirty years. It would be unrealistic for us to plan for the all the details of such significant change prior to the launch of the three new unitaries. However, we have broken our implementation plan into the prioritised 'essentials' and those elements which can be delivered after vesting day.
- **Alignment to the LGR timeline** – our implementation will be constrained by the LGR timetable. For example, we will need to wait until a formal government announcement on the preferred option before we can deliver any of the

changes required. However, we can plan to be ready on day one. Therefore, we have broken our implementation plan into phases that correspond to key events in the timetable.

8.2.1 Prioritising the change

We propose using LGR as a catalyst for systemic transformation however the scale of the task means that we won't be able to deliver everything we want for vesting day. Consequently, we need to prioritise what do now versus what we plan to deliver once the three unitaries are set up. However, our joint aspiration is to front-load as much of the transformation and public sector reform work as possible during the transition period.

Given the fundamental changes of moving from a two-tier, eight council system to a set of three unitary authorities, there is high risk of disruption to services and function that could negatively impact upon residents, communities and our staff, unless planned carefully. Our priority for vesting day has to be ensuring that the three new organisations are able to function with minimal disruption and have the foundations that will enable them to deliver transformational change that lasts. Consequently, our focus until vesting day will therefore be establishing 'safe and legal' councils with the enabling services and conditions to start delivery of ambitious portfolios of transformation.

8.2.2 Safe and legal Day One – requirements by service area

When we say 'safe and legal' we mean the essentials for each unitary to fulfil its legal duties, deliver critical services without disruption and meet obligations to staff and suppliers. The table below lays out a summary of some of the key requirements.

Requirement	*Description*	*Basis*
Corporate Governance / Statutory Officers	Key leadership roles filled (finance, legal, adult services, children's services, public health) and a clear constitution in place.	Strong leadership, accountability, and confidence in decision-making.
Finance (Budget, Council Tax, Collection Fund)	Budgets agreed, council tax set, and systems ready to collect and manage money fairly.	Financial stability and continuity of services.

Requirement	*Description*	*Basis*
Adult Social Care (ASC)	Support for older people and adults with care needs in place from day one, including advice, assessments, and safeguarding.	Protecting vulnerable adults and ensuring continuity of care.
Children's Services & SEND	Children's services leadership in place, safeguarding working, support for children with special needs, and school admissions process ready.	Safeguarding and protecting children, fair access to education.
Housing & Homelessness	Housing services live from day one – managing council homes, allocations, and homelessness support.	Supporting residents in housing need and preventing homelessness.
Regulatory / Place	Licensing, planning, and food safety systems running to protect communities and support local businesses.	Public safety.
Emergency Planning	Emergency response plans ready so the council can deal with incidents and keep residents safe.	Resilience and protection of communities.
People / Workforce (Transfers)	Staff and services transfer smoothly so residents see no disruption.	Workforce continuity and uninterrupted service delivery.
Assets, Contracts & Continuity	Council property, contracts and responsibilities securely transferred.	Smooth handover of responsibilities and service continuity.
Information Governance / Data	Data, records and information handled safely and responsibly across the new organisation.	Protecting residents' information and ensuring compliance.

Requirement	*Description*	*Basis*
Digital & Cyber Readiness	IT systems and cyber security in place so staff can work securely, and services run smoothly.	Secure and reliable systems for staff and residents.
Transitions / Controls	Any restrictions on contracts or spending carefully followed.	Good governance and financial protection.

Table 77: Requirements by service area

Part of a 'safe and legal' council is having the right data and systems in place on day one. In this regard we will prioritise executing this in as simple and straightforward way as possible given the complexity of the work to be ready for day one.

8.2.3 Laying the foundations for transformational change

We don't want to limit our ambition to 'safe and legal' unitaries. We also want to equip them to deliver portfolios of ambitious transformation from day one. Therefore, we will seek to prioritise the design and implementation of key functions and processes that will enable them to do this. We believe the foundations are as follows:

Governance mechanisms

Setting up the constitutions and officer governance mechanisms that will allow the new councils to coordinate and drive effective transformation programmes. This will require consistency and standards of governance at project, programme and portfolio level, overseen by the senior leadership team.

Frameworks and methodology

Supporting approaches, tools and processes that allow for a consistent, robust and proportionate approach to developing initiatives and delivering projects and programmes. This will comprise a methodology, a minimum viable toolset, templates and guidance.

Stable enabling services

The new unitaries will rely on a set of enabling services to coordinate, advise and implement transformational projects – this includes HR & OD, ICT & Digital, Assets, Procurement, Transformation & PMO amongst others. It is imperative that these

services are designed and launched as early as possible to avoid valuable capacity being diverted from the public reform work post-vesting day.

Fostering the right cultures and capabilities

Although culture can't be fully set until the new organisations are established, there is preparatory work that can be done with any interim leadership to start shaping the new culture and feeding in the best elements from the existing authorities.

8.2.4 Transformation

Wherever possible we will front-load the work to design transformational change during the transition period. This will allow us to hit the ground running come vesting day by having the foundations in place to consult and implement public sector reform changes that will deliver the benefits.

Some specific areas of focus will be:

- Development of Early Intervention & Prevention models for each new unitary
- Starting the work to develop and review options for waste & recycling collections and disposal service models, to be implemented once existing contracts expire
- Detailed design and preparation of enabling services that will support the wider unitaries in the delivery of services and adapting to new challenges

8.2.5 Alignment to the LGR timeline

We have linked the phases in our implementation plan to the key milestones of the wider LGR timeline, as these will dictate what we are able to carry out. We have broken our plan into four phases:

- Phase 1 – Preparation & Mobilisation – the period leading up to your decision on the LGR option to be taken forward in Norfolk. The focus is this phase will be 'getting our house in order', laying the groundwork so we can move at pace once the decision is announced – mapping the governance, establishing baselines, identifying Day 1 requirements, cleansing data, and engaging with key stakeholders.
- Phase 2 – Design & Planning - once there is a mandate to proceed, we will move into detailed design and planning. This will involve mobilising the PMO, joint committee, and workstream teams, developing target operating models,

aligning systems, contracts and assets, preparing the workforce for change, and working with partners, anchor institutions, and residents to shape services.

- Phase 3 – Transition - as set out in the SCO, either Shadow Authorities (typically formed via elections) or Implementation Executives (appointed from predecessor councils) will be established. At their first meetings, the bodies will appoint a Leader and Executive, and take over responsibility for the implementation plan, budget-setting, council tax, staffing structures, and finalising the new councils' constitutions. The priority here will be to ensure we have completed the transition to three unitaries that are able to deliver statutory services on day one. This includes setting up the foundational enabling services and processes that will support the organisations to grow and transform, such as the Programme Management Office and Data & Insight functions. Capacity permitting, we will also aim to deliver some of the transformational change that will realise the benefits set out in the wider business case.
- Phase 4 – Day 1 onwards - the new unitaries are live. With the foundations in place to ensure that all services can be delivered safely and legally, each authority will be positioned to deliver a portfolio of transformation to realise the full benefits set out in the proposal

A more detailed roadmap with key activities for each phase is set out in section 8.2.7.

8.2.6 Implementation governance

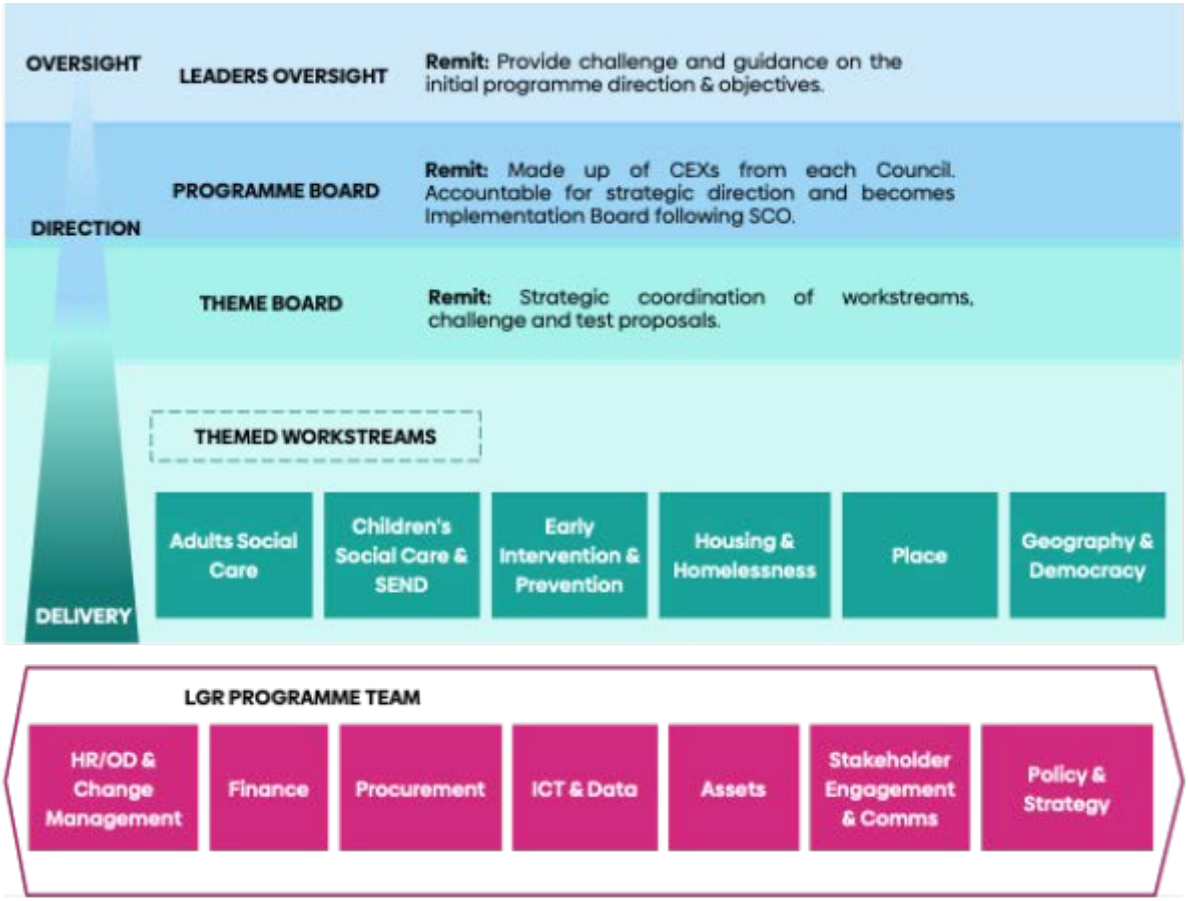

Figure 39: Governance structure

A strong, coherent governance framework will underpin the implementation of the three unitary authorities. Our approach ensures political oversight, strategic leadership, and operational delivery are aligned, with clear roles and responsibilities at each level. Governance will build upon the joint working approach established during the business case development, becoming progressively more formalised through mobilisation, design, and ultimately the Shadow Authority period.

At the top level, a Leaders Oversight Board will provide collective political challenge, direction, and assurance on the programme's overall objectives. Alongside this, a Programme Board, comprised of all current Chief Executives, will hold responsibility for strategic alignment, risk management, and oversight of interdependencies across organisations. Once the SCO takes effect, this body will formally transition into the Implementation Board / Joint Committee, accountable for driving delivery up to the formation of the Shadow Authorities.

Beneath this, Theme Boards will coordinate the work of enabling and service workstreams, testing and challenging proposals, managing cross-cutting issues, and sequencing activity to ensure continuity for residents and businesses. Delivery will be driven by a series of Themed Workstreams, bringing together senior officers from across councils to develop Target Operating Models (TOMs), plan the aggregation and disaggregation of services, and secure the safe transfer of functions for Day One.

Once the Shadow Authorities are established, they will take on formal responsibility for the programme, including setting budgets, approving constitutions, and overseeing delivery against Day One priorities.

This governance framework will be supported by a dedicated programme team (PMO), providing coordination, reporting, and assurance across the tiers of governance, with appropriate scrutiny and audit mechanisms in place to ensure transparency and accountability throughout.

8.2.7 Detailed roadmap

A detailed roadmap, broken down into each of the four phases is set out below.

8.2.8 Phase 1 – Preparation (Pre-announcement groundwork)

Learning from other local government reorganisations, we know that getting as much of the groundwork done as early as possible is key to being able to move forward efficiently once your decision is made. This early work helps avoid delays later, ensures our plans are based on accurate and complete information, and creates opportunities for teams from across all councils to collaborate, build trust, and work jointly on shaping the transition. By putting strong foundations in place early, building understanding across councils, securing essential baseline information, and setting up the required structures and resources, we can move forward efficiently and with confidence one the decision is made.

Key Activities

Establish Programme Governance

- Agree early governance principles and the intended structure for the future PMO and service workstreams.
- Identify potential officer and member leads for each workstream, including cross-cutting areas such as finance, data, legal, and procurement, to guide later appointments.

Build a Robust Baseline

- Expand on the data gathered in the business case, covering service structures, budgets, statutory duties, key contracts, reserves, debt, assets, ICT systems, workforce profiles, vacancies, and skills gaps.
- Identify missing or inconsistent data that must be addressed before design work begins.

Neighbourhood Consultation

Run consultations on area committees and local democratic structures that have been set out as part of this LGR proposal. We would engage the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) at the earliest opportunity to agree a timeline for review of these. We anticipate that LGBCE will want to carry out a high-level review in advance of elections, then a full review during the first term of the new authorities

Legacy Arrangements

- Compile an initial inventory of council-owned arms-length organisations (ALOs), subsidiaries, and joint ventures.
- Map legacy assets, including properties, ICT systems, heritage assets, and other holdings not expected to transfer.
- Begin high-level review of legacy reserves, debts, and liabilities.
- Identify statutory, contractual, or governance obligations that may require early planning for closure or transfer.

Day 1 Requirements Framework

Draft a long list of what must be in place for the new authority to be safe, legal, and operational on Vesting Day. Highlight areas that present high complexity or risk so they can be prioritised in the next phase.

Data and Systems Readiness

- Audit critical datasets such as finance, HR, property, and contracts to understand current quality and compatibility. Where quick fixes are possible, begin cleansing data.
- Map out existing systems architecture
- Document known issues (e.g. non-compatible systems, missing data fields) so they can be addressed early in the design phase.
- Agree some key principles and a broad strategy for how systems (and supported processes) will be selected, how data will be migrated, and staff trained in how to use them.
- Identify those systems that are business critical for the council such as social care, finance, payroll, and web
- Begin the discussion amongst services around the preferred systems and processes to adopt in the new unitaries on day 1 – with the principle that an existing one will be used wherever possible

Resource and Capacity Planning

- Identify the resources needed to deliver the Implementation Plan while maintaining business-as-usual, using this to determine where additional capacity is required through external expertise, officer secondments, and backfilling. We have set out an indicative programme team in the sections below.
- We have assumed that given the magnitude of the change we will need external support. We will spend time assessing what external support will be required and how this will be procured with appropriate lead-in times.

Funding

Secure the funding required for the transition and transformation, based upon the detailed resource and capacity planning work.

Community Engagement

Develop a clear plan for engagement during the design phase with anchor institutions, key partners, businesses, residents, staff, and trade unions. This plan will guide how we gather input, co-develop services, and maintain clear communications throughout the transition.

Risks & Mitigations

Review risks identified in the business case and refine them with input from across the existing councils. Begin putting early mitigations in place where practical.

Detailed Programme & Governance arrangements

- Develop a detailed programme plan.
- Map the structure for Joint Committee and implementation team

Ongoing liaison with government

Maintain active dialogue with Government on matters such as debt, funding stability, capacity support, and opportunities to unlock devolution powers.

8.2.9 Phase 2 – Mobilisation (Post-announcement, Pre-Structural Changes Order)

The Mobilisation Phase begins once the Government announces its decision on the future structure of local government for Norfolk. At this stage, the focus will shift from informal preparation to actively putting in place the early governance, resourcing, and planning arrangements needed to be ready for the Structural Changes Order (SCO) coming into force.

This phase builds on the groundwork from Phase 1, using the draft Implementation Plan to stand up initial governance structures, confirm the resources required, and start coordinated cross-council work so that the transition programme can move at pace once the SCO takes effect.

Key Activities:

Formalise Governance Foundations

- Begin forming the Joint Committees ahead of them being formally required by the SCO. Agree their draft terms of reference and early priorities, including oversight of transitional planning.
- Map council officers to the roles set out in Phase 1 for the implementation team and workstreams.

Mobilise Programme Management Arrangements

- Stand up the interim PMO capacity to coordinate activity across councils, supported by officers seconded from each authority.
- Ensure there is clear political and executive oversight through a Leaders' Oversight Group or equivalent.

Confirm and Refine Baseline Information

Use this period to improve the quality and completeness of service, finance, asset, and workforce data gathered in Phase 1. This will help reduce delays later and support early design activity.

Legacy Arrangements

- Conduct due diligence on Arm's Length Organisations (ALOs), including financial health, contractual obligations, and legal structures.
- Begin engagement with ALO boards and leadership to assess preferred transition or closure options.
- Further refine the asset inventory and legacy reserves position, closing data gaps identified in Phase 1.
- Identify any "time critical" contractual or statutory obligations that will require early action before SCO comes into force.

Begin Joint Working

Convene officer groups aligned to priority enabling workstreams (e.g. finance, legal/governance, HR/OD, ICT/data, assets, procurement/contracts, service delivery). Focus initially on information sharing, identifying dependencies, and mapping early actions required on or before Vesting Day.

Develop Change Management Plan

- Develop comprehensive change management plans covering communication, engagement, and staff wellbeing.
- Identify staff groups and services most impacted by the reorganisation and agree guiding principles for supporting staff through change, in partnership with unions and HR leads.
- Map out timelines for engagement, training, and transition activities.

Organisational Design

Refine and build upon the high-level 'blueprints' for the three unitaries set out within the proposal through design and consultation exercises with staff and union representatives to shape the detailed Target Operating Models (TOMs) for each authority.

Data and systems

1. Agree the processes and systems that will be used on day one for each service or function
2. Develop systems architecture for the new authorities that incorporates chosen systems
3. Plan the procurement / configuration / migration to the new systems
4. Negotiate any changes in terms with existing system suppliers

Day 1 Readiness Planning

Refine the "safe and legal" Day 1 requirements, mapping them to their appropriate workstreams.

Identify which activities can be progressed pre-SCO (e.g. contract reviews, ICT compatibility assessments) and those that must wait.

Resource and Capacity Confirmation

- Finalise the resource plan to deliver the Implementation Plan alongside maintaining business-as-usual.
- Begin securing additional capacity, including secondment of officers from predecessor councils, procurement of external expertise, and backfilling critical posts.

Stakeholder Engagement

Building on the engagement planning in Phase 1, begin engagement with residents, anchor institutions, staff, and key partners to collaboratively shape and co-develop the future service models, ensuring their insights directly inform the detailed design work.

8.2.10 Phase 2.5 – Design (Post-Structural Changes Order, Pre-Shadow Authority)

The design phase begins once the SCO comes into force. At this stage, statutory governance arrangements are formally established, including the Joint Committees, Implementation Teams, and service workstreams, to lead the programme through the Shadow Authority period and prepare for Vesting Day.

This phase builds on the mobilisation work from Phase 2, moving from early coordination to detailed design and planning. The focus is on finalising the SCO-compliant Implementation Plans, developing detailed Target Operating Models for each new authority, and putting in place the structures, resourcing, and change management approaches needed for delivery in the Shadow period.

Key Activities

Standup Governance and Workstreams

- Establish the Joint Committees and Implementation Teams in line with SCO requirements, ensuring clarity of remit, membership, and reporting lines.
- Confirm workstream leads and membership based on the mapping work from Phase 2, including cross-cutting functions such as finance, legal, procurement, ICT, and HR.

Mobilise the full PMOs

- Transition from interim arrangements into the formal PMOs, with clear roles for monitoring delivery, managing interdependencies, and reporting to the Joint Committees.
- Embed robust programme governance and decision-making processes to drive pace and maintain oversight.

Refine and Finalise the Implementation Plan

Develop the outline plans from earlier phases into fully detailed, SCO-compliant Implementation Plans. This should include sequencing and dependencies for key transition tasks such as contract transfers, ICT/data migration, budget setting, and drafting the new constitution, ensuring these are ready to implement in Phase 3.

Legacy Arrangements

- Agree the approach for each ALO (transfer, merge, dissolve, or retain) and map the legal/financial steps required.
- Prepare asset transfer or disposal plans for properties not moving to the new authorities.
- Develop detailed financial closure plans for legacy reserves and liabilities.
- Ensure all legacy contractual obligations are logged, with responsibility for their transfer, novation, or termination clearly assigned in the Implementation Plan.

Implement Change Management Plans

- Begin delivering change management activities, including regular briefings, drop-in sessions, and targeted engagement with affected teams.
- Launch early training and development to prepare staff for new roles and structures.
- Provide wellbeing and support measures, including access to HR and counselling services where appropriate.
- Monitor and respond to morale, retention, and recruitment risks as changes are developed.

Detailed Organisational Design

- Progress from high-level blueprints into fully costed, detailed TOMs for each service, mapping service interdependencies and confirming the resource needed to support them.
- Begin detailed planning for safe and legal Day 1 arrangements (final delivery in Phase 3).
- This includes development of long-term service models for waste collection & disposal and street scene services where a long lead-in time will be required to transition to new arrangements.

Resource and Capacity Deployment

Deploy seconded officers and any procured external expertise secured in Phase 2 to workstreams.

8.2.11 Phase 3 – Transition (Shadow Authority to Vesting Day)

The Transition Phase begins once the Shadow Authorities are in place. This is the most intensive delivery period, focused on completing all activities required to ensure the new unitaries are safe, legal, and operational on Vesting Day.

During this phase, the Implementation Plans will move into full execution. Governance structures, staffing, systems, contracts, and statutory services are transferred, tested, and readied for Day 1 operation. At the same time, foundational enabling services are embedded, and any early transformation projects identified in earlier phases are progressed where capacity allows.

Key Activities

Transfer of governance to Shadow Authorities / Implementation Executives
Transition programme oversight to the Shadow Authority Executives or Implementation Executives in line with SCO requirements. Maintain clear decision-making processes to approve policies, budgets, and key service arrangements ahead of Vesting Day.

Deliver Implementation Plan

- Progress all workstream activities to ensure safe and legal operations from Day 1.
- Oversee the legal transfer of property, rights, liabilities, and contracts to the new councils.
- Complete the recruitment and appointment of statutory officers, senior leadership teams, and other key roles.

Recruitment of Statutory Officers
Appoint the Chief Executives, Monitoring Officers, Section 151 Officers, and any other statutory posts set out in the SCO.

Finalise Target Operating Models (TOMs)

- Complete detailed service design, organisational structures, and staffing allocations.
- Ensure interdependencies between services are fully addressed.
- Sign-off final TOMs through Shadow Authority governance.

Systems, Data, and ICT Readiness

- Implement and test ICT systems for Day 1 operation.
- Complete data migration and validation to ensure accuracy and accessibility.
- Put in place interim workarounds where full integration will follow post-Vesting Day.

Contracts, Procurement, and Assets

- Transfer or novate contracts to the new authorities.
- Align procurement processes and priorities.
- Confirm operational readiness of property and other physical assets.

Legacy Arrangements

- Implement agreed actions for ALOs, including legal steps for closure or transfer.
- Execute property transfers or disposals according to agreed plans.
- Complete financial closure activities, including finalising reserves and settling outstanding debts.
- Close or novate all contractual arrangements as required for Vesting Day readiness.
- Ensure all statutory and civic obligations of predecessor councils are fulfilled before dissolution.

Change Management and Workforce Transition

- Communicate confirmed TOMs, structures, and role allocations to staff.
- Deliver training, induction, and team building for staff moving into new roles.
- Continue wellbeing and engagement activity to support morale and retention.

Testing of Day 1 Assurance

- Carry out readiness reviews and service-level testing to ensure all critical functions are in place.
- Agree and sign off Day 1 Assurance Reports for each workstream.

Stakeholder and Community Engagement

- Prepare and deliver communications to residents, partners, and stakeholders outlining what to expect on Vesting Day.
- Engage key partners in any changes to service access or delivery arrangements.

Elections

Prepare to hold elections for new councillors, based upon the wards and representation arrangements that have been set out as part of the SCOs.

8.2.12 Phase 4 – Day One onwards

From Vesting Day, the new unitary authorities take full responsibility for all services, assets, staff, and statutory duties. The initial focus is on stabilising service delivery, embedding the new operating models, and maintaining public confidence, while also beginning the transformation programmes that deliver the benefits set out in the business case.

Key Activities

Legal Closure of Predecessor Councils
Finalise the dissolution of county, district, borough and city councils, including preparing final accounts, completing audits, and concluding statutory reporting.

Stabilise Service Delivery
Monitor all frontline services closely, enforce contingency plans where necessary, and fix teething problems that may arise immediately after go-live.
This is particularly important for social care as these need to be stable to avoid compromising safeguarding duties before any transformation can be delivered in these services.

Begin Implementing New TOMs
Implement new operating models in phases, starting with critical services and enablers, to ensure stability while unlocking efficiencies.

Transformation and Benefits Realisation Programme
Launch a structured transformation programme designed to deliver the long-term benefits projected in the business case.

Financial Consolidation & Sustainability
Realign budgets to the new structures, implement efficiencies, and systematically track cost savings against targets.

Cultural Integration
The new unitaries will not exist until vesting day, therefore this is the earliest point at which a new culture and values of the organisations can be set and instilled. However, as part of the transition, design and consultation there will be an opportunity to set expectations of what the culture and values of the new unitaries will be. This work will

need to be done with the people who will be moving to the new organisations. Most of the councils will already have values and behaviours in place so this work needs to recognise that.

Enhanced Communications & Public Engagement
Maintain proactive engagement with communities, reinforcing clarity about transformations and service improvements, and preserving local democratic legitimacy.

Carry out reviews with Boundary Commission
Given the timescales associated with a review (up to 1½ years) we will engage the Boundary Commission early on to agree when these should take place. Further detail on the process and timelines for boundary reviews is set out in the Boundary Commission review guidance[14].

8.2.13 Resourcing and team

To enable the governance structure, a dedicate programme team will be set up for each unitary which will provide the full range of programme management and support. The teams will comprise the following expertise, as full-time roles:

- Programme Manager – a programme manager to plan, coordinate and manage the transition to a new unitary
- Workforce / HR & OD – an expert to shape the workforce plan and coordinate its delivery
- Finance – to support the work of attributing council budgets, external funding streams, liabilities, assets and debt to the new unitaries
- Procurement – review of existing contracts to identify where they will novate or where they should be decommissioned or reprocured, advice of any negotiations with suppliers and contract variations
- ICT & Data – coordination and advice on the data and systems work that will be required to safely move to a new unitary
- Assets – assistance with attributing assets to the new authority and understanding commercial, legal, compliance, and maintenance issues
- Legal – support with all legal aspects of LGR
- Communications – coordination of a comms and engagement programme to support the transition

[14] Electoral Reviews: Technical Guidance, The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (Updated June 2023):

We will second existing staff from the councils to form these teams and backfill their substantive posts. This will allow us to leverage the corporate knowledge and relationships that exist. There also needs to be key people back in the organisations who will feed this team with intel etc. otherwise BAU will use all the resource and make it difficult for this team to work.

These teams will need to have the capacity to support whole organisation design, engagement and implementation, which should not be underestimated. For reference, the most recent 'One Team' initiative delivered by Broadland and South Norfolk required a team of 20 officers to deliver the changes.

For this reason, we have assumed that each group of councils and unitary / shadow authority will require the support of a transformation partner or allocate a substantial budget to secure temporary external support. The scoping and procurement of such partners has been built into the implementation plan above.

9. Appendix I – RAID Log

A full risk, assumptions, issues and dependency log based upon engagement across organisations is set out below. It sets out the following:

- Type – whether it is a risk, issue, assumption or dependency
- Description – what it is and the implications
- Rating – how important it might be
- Mitigation – any activities that could help reduce a negative impact upon LGR

Type	Description	Rating	Mitigation
Risk	**Knowledge retention**: the high levels of organisational change and uncertainty impacts upon staff morale resulting in the loss of key officers who have been with councils a long time and consequently deep institutional knowledge	M	Thorough communications and engagement plan with workforce.
Risk	**Payroll:** Ensuring all staff in the new authorities are paid accurately and on time from the first payroll, Changes to payroll systems and migration of data risk errors and therefore employees not being paid.	H	Thorough data migration and testing in advance of first payroll after vesting day.
Risk	**Employment law:** The single biggest changes to employment law in a number of years. All HR teams pre the new unitaries will need to be working on and implementing the changes in their respective councils, as well as the new unitaries needing to ensure	M	To be owned by the designated HR reps within the Transition enabling team.

Type	Description	Rating	Mitigation
	that they are compliant with the new legislation.		
Risk	**Culture:** High levels of change and disruption combined with forming new groups of workforce results in loss of the strong cultures built up by authorities.	M	Programme of culture change to be run as part of the transition, with shadow council leadership to own.
Risk	**Management capability & capacity:** Some managers may lack the capabilities and/or capacity to lead on the changes that are required to move to a three unitary model, leading to additional strain on HR functions, delays in implementation and reduced success	M	Assessment of manager capabilities in advance of government decision to aid in detailed transition planning.
Risk	**Workforce allocation:** Complexities in splitting shared staff and services (e.g., Section 113 agreements, externally funded posts) could lead to inaccurate allocation of staff, and consequent under-resourcing leading to operational and financial issues	H	Thorough establishment data cleansing exercise and JDs for all relevant posts to be carried out prior to government announcement in April.
Risk	**HR Capacity:** HR functions do not have the capacity to support the organisation with key activities required to successfully implement the transformation (i.e. workforce analysis, staff	M	Second HR reps from current teams to provide dedicated capacity, and backfill vacant posts with fixed term contracts.

Type	Description	Rating	Mitigation
	consultation and engagement, organisational development).		
Risk	**HR stress:** HR teams will face increased workloads managing both organizational transformation and their own restructuring, leading to staff burnout and reduced effectiveness, and retention and recruitment issues	M	See above
Risk	**HR retention:** Uncertainties for staff cause loss of HR officers, leading to reduced capacity and therefore disruption to both implementation and operations during the transition	M	HR reps in transition enabling team to own this risk.
Risk	**Workforce alignment:** Multiple sets of terms, policies, and redundancy multipliers across councils complicate harmonization and cost calculations, increasing the risk of errors and unforeseen costs.	M	Approach to handling T&Cs to be developed by the HR lead (s) within the transition enabling teams.
Risk	**Union engagement:** the variety of different unions that will need to be engaged and consulted with around the LGR proposals could result in inconsistent or conflicting approaches therefore undermining	H	Programme of comms & engagement will build in an approach to union engagement. The HR reps within transition enabling teams to feed into this.

Type	Description	Rating	Mitigation
	credibility and overall workforce relations.		
Risk	**Guidance clarity:** Lack of up-to-date government guidance on redundancy and TUPE principles leads to unforeseen changes in timescales, resources and costs	M	Use of the most recent MHCLG guidance as a backstop. Ongoing dialogue with the MHCLG regional representative.
Risk	**Workforce data:** Different HR and payroll systems, and inaccuracies/gaps in workforce data hinder effective planning and implementation	M	Thorough establishment data cleansing exercise in advance of Government decision.
Risk	**Asset data:** Incomplete or inaccurate baseline data risks comparing inconsistent approach to assets and incorrect decisions over transfer and planning	M	Thorough asset data gathering / cleansing exercise prior to government announcement.
Risk	**Evolving Asset Portfolios:** Ongoing asset disposals, acquisitions, and portfolio changes by councils before LGR could result in a moving target for asset allocation and planning, complicating the split across new unitaries.	L	Asset rep within the transition enabling team to own this risk.
Risk	**Unexpected liabilities:** in transferring assets new authorities might find that there isn't adequate budget provision for asset maintenance, leading to unexpected financial commitments or pressures.	M	Asset rep within transition enabling team to own this risk.

Type	Description	Rating	Mitigation
Risk	**Asset System and Data Migration:** Different councils use various asset management and GIS systems, which may pose challenges for integration, data quality, and migration in the new unitary structure.	H	Asset rep within transition enabling team to own this risk.
Risk	**Changes in applications:** councils will need to replace some systems as they become unsupported which may make it difficult to plan any consolidation of applications	M	Exercise to map out systems and contract end dates, involving services, ICT and Procurement reps in the transition enabling team.
Risk	**Data migration:** identifying data across multiple systems and assigning it to the right unitary authority may be difficult and inaccuracies could lead to loss of service or data breaches	H	Data cleansing and mapping exercise across all systems.
Risk	**Planning policy:** Changes in Planning could cause disruption to services and uncertainty in the market – leading to a slowdown in development and associated economic growth including missed housing targets	L	Ongoing monitoring of policy developments.
Risk	**Waste contracts:** Current long-term waste collection contracts will constrain councils from either making changes to align with LGR changes or prevent	H	Formation of working groups to develop detailed interim plan and longer-term strategy as soon as possible.

Type	Description	Rating	Mitigation
	extension to give adequate time to plan a long-term solution.		
Risk	**Collaboration of waste:** New authorities are unable to reach any agreement on managing waste collection in the short-term resulting in potential inconsistent services, disruptions or substantial additional costs for services	M	See above.
Risk	**Social care system**: three new systems will need to be set up. The provider(s) may not be able to implement it in time for vesting day	M	To be addressed once government decision is announced.
Risk	**Social care data disaggregation:** service user data will need to be split across the unitary areas. This will be sensitive data so inaccuracies or errors in the process could result in service disruption, breaches of confidentiality, or risks to safeguarding.	M	Provisional approach to data management to be developed by the ICT rep within the transition enabling team.
Risk	**Social care service migration:** the transition to the unitaries may disrupt key safeguarding services and therefore critical cases may be missed or interventions delayed leading to risk for service users	H	Approach to prioritise 'safe and legal' services as part of transition.

Type	Description	Rating	Mitigation
Risk	**Social care workforce:** the disruption combined with a national workforce shortage may prevent the unitaries recruiting to social care roles including statutory roles	M	Targeted communications and engagement to social workers about changes.
Risk	**Changes locality teams:** boundary changes will require locality team geographies to change, leading to potential disruption	M	To be addressed as part of any planning and design work post-government announcement.
Risk	**Telecare:** current service commissioned at a county-wide level. It will need to be transferred to the three unitaries	M	To be addressed as part of contracts and commissioning work during transition.
Risk	**Electoral boundaries**: The changes will require additional work and consultation	M	We have developed a proposal that is compliant with Boundary Commission criteria to help expedite this work
Risk	**EI&P culture**: the workforce finds it difficult to adopt the mindset and way of working to support an EI&P approach therefore reducing its impact and associated benefits	M	This should form part of both the design approach and cultural change work during transition.
Risk	Legislation around family hubs and NHS reform is not aligned with any EI&P so it undermines it or opportunities to join up services are missed	H	Role of Public Health will be integrated in the EI&P model
Risk	**EI&P data sharing**: EI&P requires multi-agency data sharing and if the barriers	H	To be addressed as prt of the design approach during transition. Will require input

Type	Description	Rating	Mitigation
	are not addressed then it may delay or reduce integrated working and impact		from the ICT lead within enabling teams.
Risk	**Financial priorities**: pressures discourage the new unitaries from investing in EI&P (which isn't statutory) and therefore benefits aren't realised	H	Secure buy-in from shadow authority leadership from the outset
Risk	**Capacity**: The work to both deliver the transition and transformation will be too much for the unitaries to accomplish in time to be ready for vesting day	H	We have budgeted for external support to be delivered throughout the transition period and beyond to provide additional capacity
Risk	Misalignment between pre-cepting and non-precepting neighbourhood structures may create democratic imbalance or perceptions of unfairness. A solution must be identified during community engagement and implementation phases.	H	Targeted engagement strategies and governance design workshops to align structures and ensure smooth implementation.
Issue	**NHS boundaries:** NHS boundaries do not align with new unitaries. We will need to develop a suitable way of working together to overcome this. This is potentially a bigger issue in the East.	M	Ongoing dialogue with NHS partners.
Dependency	Implementation of EI&P model will be dependent upon Adults and Children's Social Care being set up,	H	Ongoing monitoring of social care services during transition and immediately after vesting day.

Type	Description	Rating	Mitigation
	stable, and 'safe and legal' before any elements of these can be incorporated into the model		
Dependency	**Integration with finance:** any social care system will include a financial management component which will need to integrate with the corporate ERP / finance system	L	To be addressed as part of ICT and social care transition planning.
Dependency	A radical EI&P approach will require full backing of the incoming CEX, DAS, DCS and councillors	H	Incorporate as part of any advertisement and recruitment for shadow authority posts.
Dependency	The devolution deal and new Mayoral Combined Authority will influence the design and role for each unitary, in particular around economic development, transport and housing	H	Ongoing dialogue with government and subsequent MCA.

Table 78: RAID log

10. Appendix J: Overarching Design Principles

To inform the development of the blueprints for each new unitary (as seen in Appendices E-G), Leaders and Chief Executives of the district councils agreed to the following design principles.

Figure 40: Design principles for our organisations

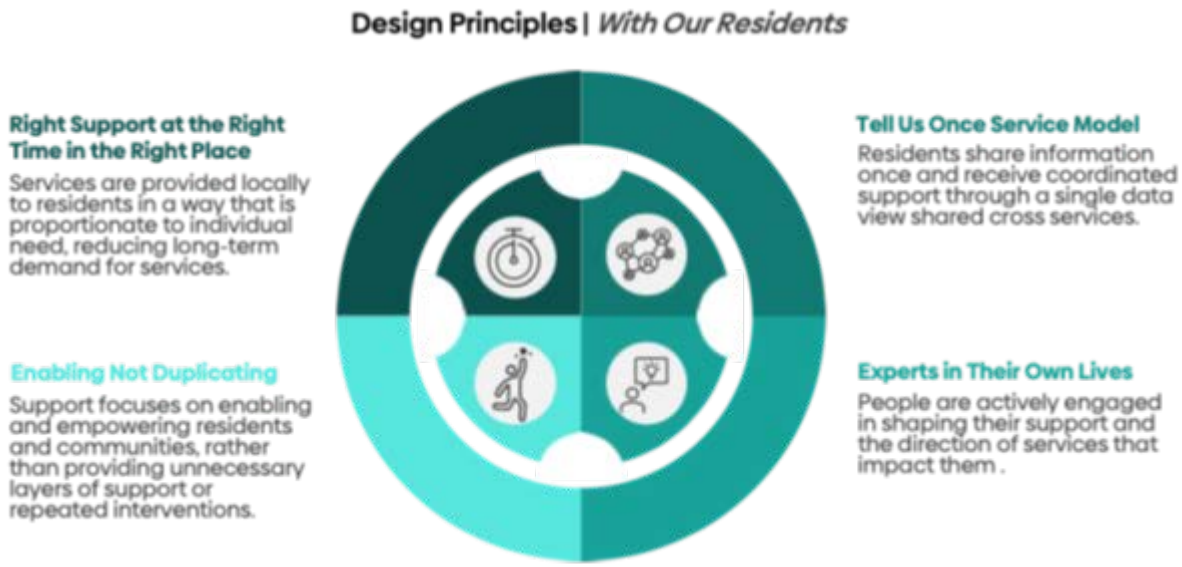

Figure 41: Design principles for our residents

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