



# Nottingham City Council Case for Change

## Local Government Reorganisation Bii (city conurbation model) summary document

In December 2024, the government announced plans for the biggest shake up of local government in England in over 50 years called Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

LGR aims to improve local services and save money by abolishing the current two-tier system under which some services are provided by county councils and other services are provided by district and borough councils. In their place, it is proposed to introduce a new structure of unitary councils (single councils) that are responsible for all local government services in their area.

Across the whole of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, it is proposed to replace the current nine councils with two new, unitary councils. Three different options of achieving this are under consideration, and the government has launched a statutory consultation and are seeking views from the public and other key stakeholders about these three options.

This summary document is intended to provide some background information on one of the options, called option Bii (city conurbation model). Its aims are:

- to move from nine councils to two – creating one-stop councils
- new council names & identities
- lower costs, fewer top posts, but there will be greater opportunities
- fewer elected members – with more power
- strengthened community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment – different ‘board’ models
- a long-term model that provides ongoing benefits for generations to come.

**The last change in local government was when Nottingham City Council became a unitary council in 1997, yet twenty nine years later the current boundaries are no longer fit for purpose. This proposal is based on a boundary change and not whole districts building blocks as used in the other options. It is acknowledged that this is not the easiest option, but it is the right option to deliver longer lasting benefits for all residents.**

More information on the other two options (known as 1b and 1e) is available online at [www.lgrnotts.org](http://www.lgrnotts.org). You can complete the government survey online at the same link.

# Why a city conurbation model?

Option Bii

Bii puts the real conurbation of Nottingham under a single Core City council to maximise economic growth.

It creates the most balanced and financially sustainable city conurbation council and “north and east” council that will deliver for Nottinghamshire’s towns, villages and rural areas

This is a long-term decision - it is the right choice for the next 50 years.



## What is Bii?

Bii is a proposal not constrained by existing boundaries to maximise benefits for residents by getting local government structures right for the future. This proposal takes the more difficult option for the right reasons.

Bii was developed by Nottingham City Council and proposes creating two new unitary authorities: one that focuses on urban areas (a Southwest unitary) and one for the rural communities (a North and East unitary). The urban authority would bring together Nottingham City with the more built-up parts of Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe, creating a single council that reflects residents’ sense of local identity, how people actually move around, use services, and work across the region. This would make the urban footprint more coherent and allow services to be planned and delivered in a more joined-up way.

The second authority would cover the more rural parts of Nottinghamshire, giving those communities a structure designed around their distinct needs. Bii takes the best elements of alternative options (1b and 1e) while mitigating their weaknesses and limitations, offering a clearer, more balanced approach to how services could be delivered across both urban and rural areas in the future. The proposal would put the urban conurbation of Nottingham under a single Council and the towns, villages and more rural areas under another single Council focused on their needs.

This brings a number of key benefits over and above the other options:

- more efficient and effective services for residents through a simplified and clear split between predominantly urban and rural councils
- the most even distribution of demand for key services and income from council tax to enable equal service levels across Nottinghamshire and tackle inequalities
- greater opportunities for economic growth with a single economic vision for the Nottingham Conurbation bringing long-term economic benefits in jobs and investment for the region
- includes the majority of the East Midlands Combined County Authority’s economic transformation programme, Trent Arc, creating a new urban network between Nottingham and Derby
- the right choice for next 50 years of growth based on a long-term plan for the future that combines the best of both the other two proposals.

Read the full proposal at [lgrnotts.org](http://lgrnotts.org).

## Key principles of bii

### **A model tailored to real communities and existing economic geographies not outdated boundaries**

Bii (city conurbation model) is built around communities, reflecting their heritage, their economies and their sense of belonging, giving residents a democratic voice in the places where they live, work, and study.

- 72% of respondents to a recent LGR survey emphasised the importance of meeting local needs and ensuring fairness across all parts of the area. Bii delivers this by ensuring the most even distribution of demand and council tax income, clustering similar local communities together, building on communities' sense of belonging to create cohesion across the county's diverse requirements that will allow service delivery to be better tailored and focused on local needs.
- 51% of the people who work in Nottingham live outside the current city's boundaries, meaning they have no say in how the city is run, nor do they contribute financially through their Council Tax to support the infrastructure they use on a daily basis.
- Bii better reflects how people live their lives – incorporating 71.4% of the Nottingham Travel-to-Work Area (TTWA) within one new unitary council, compared with the 65.2% that is incorporated within 1b and the 66.7% within 1e.

### **Reduced duplication with services aligned to rural and urban communities in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire**

The north and east of the county combines market towns, ex-mining communities, and extensive rural landscapes.

The southern part of the county (the city conurbation) is dominated by the city of Nottingham and its wide commuter belt which reflects Nottingham's true urban conurbation – under Bii, the proposal, it is proposed the region adopts a rural-urban split, recognising the distinct needs of each area and enabling targeted interventions for each unitary's distinct demographics, allowing services to be tailored to a younger and more diverse population in the city, and an older adult in the county.



## Stronger alignment with the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA)

Bii is built to enable growth opportunities and will strengthen local industries, reflecting current work patterns and development priorities and ensuring required decision-making sits within sensible economic areas.

- The Southwest Unitary (city conurbation council) is positioned as a strategic growth corridor, aligning the Trent Arc under a single council more completely than 1b or 1e – better driving urban regeneration and economic growth between Derby and Nottingham including delivery of 30,000 new homes, creation of over 40,000 jobs, and adding £2.4 billion annually to the regional economy. It benefits from nearly £2 billion in transport investment to improve connectivity between Nottingham, Derby and major employment zones.
- The North and East Unitary (the rural/county council) will be able to leverage EMCCA initiatives tailored to its polycentric and rural character to drive economic growth, including the Supercluster - a clean energy and innovation hub centred on three former power stations, projected to deliver 6,800 new homes, 15,500 jobs, and £930 million in annual Gross Value Added (GVA). The Heartlands initiative will empower communities in Ashfield, Mansfield, and surrounding villages to shape their own development, with options for infrastructure upgrades, business support, and community-led projects, while the Canal Corridor will position the unitary as a national leader in advanced manufacturing, innovation, and sustainability, attracting investment and driving future growth.
- EMCCA are also looking to complete a feasibility study for extending Nottingham's Tram Network along the eastern route from Colwick to Gamston, and a further expansion with a Park and Ride.

Key principles  
of bii



## Key principles of bii

### Two new unitary councils that balance income and need across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Bii would see two new, balanced unitary councils across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire that could offer the most equal split of:

- Council tax band D properties
- Projected council tax receipts
- Projected social care to council tax receipts ratio

With social care being by far the largest service any unitary authority delivers, both councils are closely aligned in terms of population and net operating costs, ensuring fairness across the board.

### A combination of the strengths of models '1b' and '1e'

Bii (city conurbation model) is a proposal built on ward rather than district boundaries. It would create two balanced unitary councils – one for the Southwest (city conurbation), and one for the North and East (county/rural).

It builds on the stronger elements of 1b and 1e and mitigates their risks and limitations. Bii (city conurbation model):

- Ensures that each new unitary is optimally configured to deliver tailored services, foster local identity, and promote sustainable growth, ultimately leading to a more responsive and representative local government structure for all residents.
- Delivers the most even distribution of demand for key services and income from council tax to enable equal service levels across Nottinghamshire and tackle inequalities
- Is considered the 'most sensible and logical solution' by approximately half of Nottingham City respondents, validating the proposed boundary for Bii as being the best solution across all proposals.

While both Option 1b and Option 1e would leave the real conurbation of Nottingham split between two new unitaries, Bii (city conurbation model) would see the whole of the 'real' Nottingham sit in a single council.

Option 1b



Option 1e



# Key considerations of a city conurbation model

## It could be considered more complex

Bii (city conurbation model) would cost marginally more to deliver but only takes a few months more to achieve payback. It is considered that this small difference and short-term cost is far outweighed by the advantages. The model is based on ward rather than district boundaries as this creates a more balanced geography, better aligned services and future growth for both unitary councils. This may come with political, financial and practical considerations; however, these will be mitigated through extensive engagement and consultation with partners where the boundary changes may impact operationally.

## Payback time increases slightly

Disaggregating services from current district footprints may cause some one-time transition costs, but this only minimally extends the overall payback time (4-5 months compared to other options).

