

Appendix 3.2

Case For Change: Proposal A1

Modification request based on Proposal A:
Amber Valley being split between the
northern and southern Unitary Councils

Appendix 3.2: Case for Change Proposal A1

Proposal A1: (Modification request based on Proposal A): Amber Valley being split between the northern and southern Unitary Councils

Compliance statement

Proposal A constitutes the Base Proposal and is based on whole district boundaries, prepared in accordance with Part 1 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the February 2025 invitation. It is a statutory base proposal and not the final proposal being advanced. Our substantive proposal is Proposal A1 described here.

Summary

Background to the base Proposal A proposes the creation of two balanced Unitary Councils in Derbyshire, using existing district and borough boundaries as the foundation. This approach helps preserve local identity, drawing on existing district boundaries as a foundation for Local Government Reorganisation. While new administrations and structures will be established from 1 April 2028, this proposal seeks to reflect existing communities and local identities, providing a degree of familiarity for residents. With Amber Valley included in the northern Unitary Council, this proposal meets the Government's criteria for population balance, offering a fair and deliverable model for reorganisation.

Public consultation results (unweighted¹) show strong support for Proposal A. Among all respondents, 36% favoured this proposal, more than any other alternative. Support is particularly strong in Amber Valley, where 54% of consultation respondents backed Proposal A. Notably, although Amber Valley represents only 11.9% of Derbyshire's population, it accounted for 24% of consultation responses. This is likely due to Amber Valley's unique position as the only area that could fall within either Unitary Council or potentially be divided between them.

Economically, Proposal A delivers a balanced foundation for growth. Fiscal sustainability is also strong and balanced in relation to both Council Tax and business rates per head, indicating that both councils would have robust revenue bases without over-reliance on any single area.

Proposal A would create two Unitary Councils with broadly similar levels of economic resilience and social wellbeing. While the northern area shows slightly lower deprivation (0.11 vs. 0.12), unemployment (3.6% vs. 4.0%), and crime rates (66 vs. 88 incidents per 1,000 residents), they retain similar levels of economic resilience and social wellbeing. This balance helps ensure both councils can deliver sustainable, high-quality public services without facing unequal levels of need or pressure.

Strategically, Proposal A is well-positioned to support devolution. It fits naturally within the geography of the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA), enabling the creation of four equal constituent members. This structure enhances Derbyshire's influence at the regional level, giving it a stronger voice in decisions on funding and strategy. The model also encourages cross-border collaboration between the two councils, particularly in areas such as labour markets, housing, and transport corridors, which are key drivers of economic growth.

Note: 1. All references to the consultation are based on the total number of respondents and are not weighted by the population of each council area. While weighting can help adjust for differences in population size or response bias, applying such weights could obscure variations in engagement levels between council areas.

Appendix 3.2: Case for Change Proposal A1 (cont.)

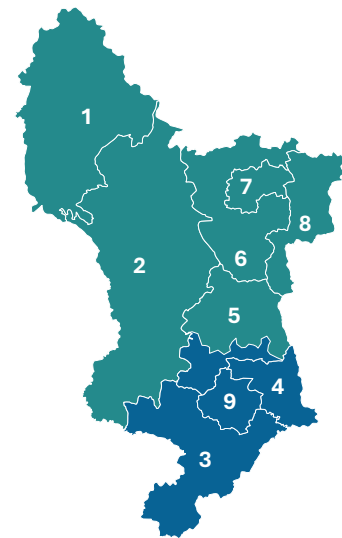
By reflecting established local identities, Proposal A fosters community cohesion and neighbourhood empowerment. It respects the character of place, aligning with transport links and economic geographies that shape opportunity. The councils are designed not as competitors, but as complementary partners that are financially sustainable, resilient, and committed to delivering for their communities. Proposal A aims to create councils that are fair, balanced, and future-ready, capable of unlocking investment and accelerating growth through devolution.

Proposal A stands out as a deliverable and low-risk path forward. With this model, Derbyshire is positioned to move quickly, attract investment, and deliver meaningful benefits to residents and businesses across the region.

Proposal A1 (consulted as Option C) is a request for a modification to the base case of Proposal A, re-drawing the boundary through Amber Valley, using parish councils as the building blocks (see table below).

Table 1: Parish Council split for Proposal A1 North and South

North	South
Aldercar and Langley Mill	Duffield
Alderwasley	Holbrook
Alfreton	Horsley
Ashleyhay	Horsley Woodhouse
Belper (in the South for B1)	Kedleston
Codnor	Kirk Langley
Crich	Mackworth
Denby (in the South for B1)	Mapperley
Dethick, Lea and Holloway	Quarndon
Hazelwood	Ravensdale Park (In the North for B1)
Heanor and Loscoe	Smalley
Idridgehay and Alton	Turnditch (in the North for B1)
Ironville	Weston Underwood (in the North for B1)
Kilburn (In the South B1)	Windley
Pentrich	
Ripley	
Shipley (In the South for B1)	
Shottle and Postern	
Somercotes	
South Wingfield	
Swanwick	



Unitary 1: High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North East Derbyshire Chesterfield, Bolsover, part of Amber Valley (567k)

Unitary 2: Derby City, Erewash, South Derbyshire, part of Amber Valley (511k)

A north/south split of the county, with Amber Valley being split between the northern and southern unitary

Appendix 3.2: Case for Change Proposal A1 (cont.)

In recognition of the advice offered by MHCLG in relation specifically to requests for a modification, Proposal A1 continues to demonstrate financial sustainability and delivery of strong public services. It is a better fit to the Government criteria because it builds on the strengths of the base Proposal A, whilst enhancing it further. The key benefits of this modification include:

- The southern Unitary having less geographic constraint, with Derby City able to grow in all directions particularly the northwestern border.
- A better overall balance of population.
- An almost equal level of GVA (gross value added) – stronger than all other proposals.
- A more balanced Council Tax base.
- More balanced 65+ populations.

Along with the important metrics detailed above, Proposal A1 also recognises the lived experience of the people of Amber Valley, taking cognisance of community ties, their functionality, social connection and integration. This proposal demonstrates a commitment to reflecting actual social and geographical realities, rather than relying solely on administrative convenience. Areas in southern Amber Valley share stronger cultural, economic, and infrastructural links with what will become, a southern Unitary. This modification helps to ensure that communities remain connected to the areas they naturally gravitate toward, preserving a sense of belonging and shared purpose into the future.

This proposal will also allow those residents in the south of Amber Valley who ‘gravitate towards Derby City for work, recreation or leisure, to benefit from and have a say in the running of the southern Unitary, Similarly, residents with a stronger affinity to northern Derbyshire will be able to do ‘likewise’ in the northern Unitary.

This proposal recognises that effective governance is not just about efficiency, it’s about fostering belonging, of pride and connection to place, it’s about demonstrating that communities are heard. This proposal demonstrates that our communities have been heard, and it shows adaptability and forward-thinking, a strengthening of Proposal A without compromising its integrity, based on real-world findings.

Overall, this proposal includes a more nuanced and community-sensitive boundary adjustment to Proposal A. It offers a well-reasoned, context sensitive alternative that recognises local realities are equally as important as other insights and information taken account of in the development of the proposals including technical metrics. It addresses specific community concerns without undermining the overall structure and intent of the Proposal A base proposal. In doing so, it enhances the base proposal’s credibility, demonstrating responsiveness, therefore making it more likely to gain support from both local stakeholders and central government. This more rounded, people-centred modification presents a compelling case for a bright future for decades to come.

Appendix 3.2: Case for Change Proposal A1 (cont.)

Criteria 1: The establishment of a single tier of local government for the whole area

Whilst building on the strengths of the base Proposal A, Proposal A1 better meets the Government's requirement for a minimum of 500k population for both Unitary Councils with a more balanced population between the North (567k) and the South (511k). This equilibrium extends beyond population: both councils show near parity in Gross Value Added (North: £13.3bn; South: £13.6bn), and the Council Tax Base split reflects a stronger, more equitable position than the base proposal (North: 188k; South: 155k).

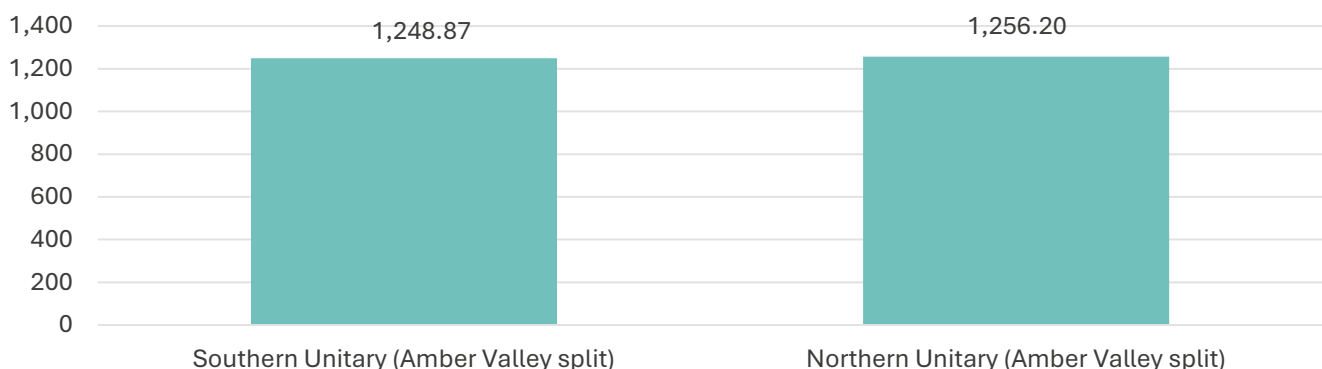
Crucially, Proposal A1 creates the potential for housing growth around Derby City. With fewer constraints and reduced administrative complexity, the City can expand outward in all directions, embracing opportunity rather than being held back by structural limitations. By thoughtfully dividing Amber Valley taking cognisance of community ties, their functionality, social connection and integration, Proposal A1 ensures that the southern Unitary remains proportionate to its northern counterpart, avoiding imbalance and fostering a fairer future for both northern and southern Derbyshire.

In addition, removal of the existing Local Planning Authority boundaries would eliminate the need for formal cross-boundary agreements such as Statements of Common Ground and Duty to Cooperate. Planning Applications and Local Plans could be processed more quickly under these single governance structures accelerating housing delivery.

Criteria 2: The right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks

Proposal A1 offers a strong foundation for financial stability and operational confidence. This modification to the base proposal slightly reduces the geographical size of the northern Unitary whilst slightly growing the southern Unitary, offering more in terms of balance. Both Councils are closely aligned in terms of resources per head, ensuring fairness and sustainability across the board. Each will have sufficient reserves, not only to support the reorganisation process but to drive transformation that benefits communities for years to come.

Total Resources (£ per head)



*data used in 2026/27 forecast funding allocations

Appendix 3.2: Case for Change Proposal A1 (cont.)

The breakeven analysis presents a positive picture. Whilst the disaggregation of services in Amber Valley introduces a slight increase in implementation costs, the impact is minimal compared to the benefits outlined within this proposal. Overall, Proposal A1 reaches breakeven in Year 4 with cumulative savings overtaking initial costs by Year 3.58. From that point forward, the financial benefits continue to grow, marking a turning point where investment begins to pay off in real, measurable ways.

Proposal A1 presents a future-proof structure that can weather financial storms, unlock efficiencies, and deliver better services with confidence and clarity.

Proposal A1	Unitary 1	Unitary 2	Total
Population	566,934	510,975	1,077,909
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Annual savings (from year 6)	21,910	22,086	43,997²
Implementation Costs (one off)	(31,078)	(31,328)	(62,406)²
Disaggregation Costs (one off)	(1,494)	(1,506)	(3,000)²
District Disaggregation (one off)	(660)	(381)	(1,042)²
Payback (years)	3.59	3.57	3.58

Criteria 3: the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services

Proposal A1 lays the groundwork for a future where public services remain not only high in quality but resilient and responsive to the needs of local communities. With both Unitary Councils closely matched in size, there is every reason to believe that the excellent services currently provided will continue seamlessly, ensuring consistency, reliability, and care for residents across both the north and the south. This balance enables both Unitary Councils to work as equal partners, building a system that is not just efficient, but transformative, agile, and driven by shared innovation and pace.

To understand the potential pressures on each council, we've looked at key indicators that reflect likely service demand. Proposal A1 reduces the population difference of the base Proposal A. While the north will still have a larger population of over-65s (133,000 compared to 93,000 in the south), the south sees a higher percentage of children living in low-income families (26% versus 22% in the north).

Criteria 4: a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views

Extensive engagement with both residents and stakeholders is captured in the case for change, offering a rich tapestry of perspectives. Overall, Proposal A emerged as the most supported choice (36%) through public consultation, receiving strongest support from Amber Valley residents, who made up 24% of all consultation responses across Derbyshire, despite representing just 11% of the county's population¹.

Note: 1. All references to the consultation are based on the total number of respondents and are not weighted by the population of each council area. While weighting can help adjust for differences in population size or response bias, applying such weights could obscure variations in engagement levels between council areas.

Note 2: The differences in population and council tax base between Proposals A1 and B1 do not result in material changes to the overall savings and disaggregation costs arising from LGR hence the figures shown are the same as Proposal B1.

Appendix 3.2: Case for Change Proposal A1 (cont.)

This perhaps highlights the depth of interest /concern within the community about the potential disruption to local ties caused by reorganisation. Proposal A is a proposal that both preserves these connections, while establishing two balanced councils capable of delivering efficiencies, fostering economic growth, and transforming frontline services

Of those who responded in favour of Proposal A, key themes emerged for their reasoning including Proposal A's logical geographic split, alignment with existing local identities, and a fair balance of size and resources. Concerns about rural areas being dominated by urban centres like Derby City also drove support for Proposal A, which was seen as protecting rural priorities. Support was notably higher among those who favour reducing the number of councils and back broader Government plans for reorganisation.

Proposal A1 is a slight modification to the base proposal of Proposal A. The rationale for this modification includes the southern Unitary having less geographic constraint, with Derby City able to grow in all directions, and a better overall balance of population, GVA, Council Tax base and 65+ populations, between the two Unitary Councils. This modification is a thoughtful, community-sensitive variation that also addresses the technical and financial imbalance that the base proposal presents.

Criteria 5: support devolution arrangements

Proposal A1 creates the basis for a more unified and empowered future. With two Unitary Councils of similar size, both would stand as equal partners within the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA). This balance ensures that no voice is louder than another, each council contributing meaningfully to regional priorities, shaping policy, and driving progress together.

Proposal A1 offers a model of governance that is balanced, collaborative, fair, and capable of delivering effective devolution. This balance creates a strong foundation for the two Unitary Councils to work side by side to build a new, forward-looking system, aligned to the strategic priorities of EMCCA. It promotes not only similarities of efficiency but also the potential for joined-up transformative change, with both councils acting as equal partners - agile, innovative, and aligned in pace and purpose.

Criteria 6: enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment

Proposal A1 places people and lived experience at the heart of its design, reflecting the everyday realities of communities. It acknowledges the strong ties residents in the southern part of Amber Valley have with Derby City, whether for work, leisure, or daily life, and ensures they not only benefit from being part of a southern Unitary Council but also have a meaningful voice in shaping its services and priorities. At the same time, those in the north of Amber Valley would maintain their deep-rooted connections with the northern part of Derbyshire, safeguarding local identity, heritage, and continuity.

Appendix 3.2: Case for Change Proposal A1 (cont.)

This approach aligns closely with the Government's ambition to strengthen neighbourhood-level decision making. Local Authorities bring a wealth of experience in engaging residents, partners, and stakeholders, and this will be embedded into the fabric of the new unitary authorities from the outset. By building on this foundation, both councils will be well-positioned to foster genuine local empowerment.

Proposal A1 offers a clear opportunity to deepen democratic participation through mechanisms such as Neighbourhood Area Committees. These committees would enable communities to influence decisions that directly affect their lives, ensuring that local voices are heard and acted upon. In doing so, the new councils can harness the goodwill and civic energy of Derbyshire's residents to create a more responsive, inclusive, and community-led model of local governance.

Council size

The proposed Council size for the Northern Unitary is 89 councillors and the Southern Unitary is 73 councillors.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Proposal A1 represents a thoughtful and community-sensitive modification to the original Proposal A proposal for Local Government Reorganisation in Derbyshire. By splitting Amber Valley between the northern and southern Unitary Councils along these parish boundaries, Proposal A1 achieves a more balanced distribution of population, economic strength, and Council Tax base, while also respecting the lived experiences and social connections of local communities. This approach not only meets Government criteria for effective, efficient, and sustainable governance, but also fosters stronger community engagement, neighbourhood empowerment, and opportunities for growth for both Unitary Councils. By prioritising both technical metrics and the voices of residents, Proposal A1 offers a credible, future-ready model that enhances the integrity of the base proposal and is well-positioned to gain support from stakeholders and central government alike.

Appendix 3.2: Case for Change Proposal A1 (cont.)

The following Councils invite the Secretary of State to use their powers of modification to make the changes to council boundaries as indicated in this Proposal A1 as their Final Proposal for Local Government Re-organisation in Derbyshire. Proposal A is the base case for Proposal A1.

This is proposed by:

Bolsover District Council

Signed



Leader: Councillor Jane Yates



North East Derbyshire District Council

Signed



Leader: Councillor Nigel Barker



**North East
Derbyshire**
District Council