

Why you should care about the future of councils in your area

You've probably heard that there are major changes proposed for Buckinghamshire councils. If it happens, these will be the biggest changes facing your local government in Bucks for 40 years, affecting your council services and future opportunities for your community. Once made, the impact will last a lifetime – and it's really not too late to have your say.

Recently, the Rt Hon. Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, announced in parliament that he is minded to create "Buckinghamshire council", as proposed by Buckinghamshire County Council. This would cover all of Bucks, excluding Milton Keynes.

A "minded to" decision isn't actually a final decision and the four district councils in Bucks, including Wycombe District Council, think that there is a better way of providing local services for local residents and businesses.

Two new unitary councils, much like a new "Buckinghamshire Council", would result in the current county council and four district councils being abolished.

Cllr Katrina Wood, Leader of Wycombe District Council said: "We think that it would be better if there are two new, all-purpose councils that will recognise and build on the differences between the north and south of the county in terms of economic growth, jobs, the housing market, demographic and even the topographical geography.

"One of these councils would cover the area that is currently Aylesbury Vale and the other new council would cover the area that is currently Wycombe, Chiltern and South Bucks districts. But both of these councils would be "unitary" councils and each would provide the all of the services that you currently get from the district and county councils.

"The savings achieved by two new unitary councils, as a percentage of the total budget of the four districts and the county council, are comparable to those that could be achieved by a new "Buckinghamshire council". We think that two new councils will provide long-term financial stability and will be councils that are best able to provide for our future, bigger communities."

There are just a few weeks left in which you can give your opinion to the Government about what these changes could mean to you, your family or your business. Will a big Bucks council be best, or will a smaller, more local unitary council – one for the north and one for the south - be even better? The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has invited representations until **25 May 2018**.

To make your voice heard, email sajid.javid@communities.gsi.gov.uk or you can write to: The Rt. Hon. Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Fry Building, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF

Please also copy your views to your local Bucks MP.

For more information about the district councils' proposal for two new unitary councils, visit www.modernisingbucks.org