

Wiltshire's Journey to Unitary



Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE

Our journey ...

- More than 10 years ago we believed unitary was the best option for the people of Wiltshire
- Our vision to create stronger and more resilient communities has been the focus
- 5 councils merged – 1 county and 4 districts
- Huge support from partners and key stakeholders - MOD and business community
- Our case was based on:
 - Devolution and working locally
 - Improved customer focused
 - More efficient – save millions
- Council budget spend - approx. £865 million



Our journey - we had to change...

- Money and resources getting tighter
- Change in demographics – more older people and young people needing services
- Public confusion – who did what?
- We know that we could improve public confidence and satisfaction levels
- Partnerships and working together challenging in two-tier system
- Wanted local communities to engage and influence
- We knew we had to create stronger communities that would be more resilient for the future and less reliant on public services



One Wiltshire Campaign

- Campaign gained support from one district, businesses, diocese and parish and town councils
- More than 250 meetings in communities - supermarkets, leisure centres, libraries etc.
- Published leaflets on issues of particular interest - development control and community area partnerships
- Commissioned Ipsos MORI to host a citizens' workshop
- Highlighted variations across the county - Housing Benefit admin cost variance £1.19 to £11.87, Planning £9.86 to £21.28 and Local Tax collection where cost varied from £3.47 to £12.68 ➔
- Partners lobbied government – Police, Fire, Army, Chambers, Business
- Went from 5 chief executives to one (NO CEO now 3 corporate directors)
- Five management teams to one



Wiltshire Council...

- Ninth largest council and third largest planning authority
- 500,000 residents and 15,000 businesses – third largest collector of local income
- 99,490 people 65yrs + (third largest older population)
- 113,100 young people between 0 and 19 years of age
- Largest MOD rebasing, one third of British Army by 2020
- 18 towns and Salisbury City
- Average house prices 11 x local income



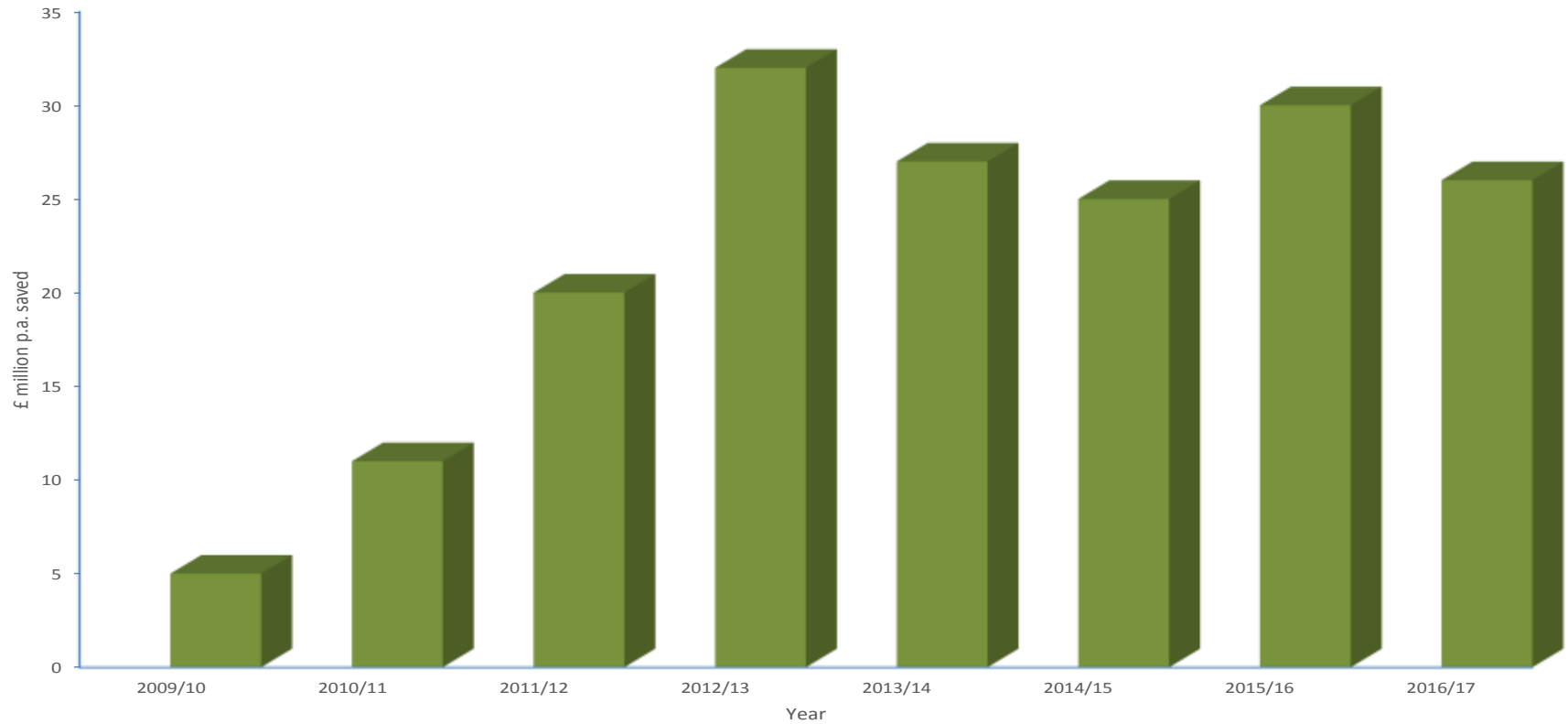


Our journey – the changes

- £25m savings pa recurring and non-cashable savings in more efficient processes
- Back office costs reduced to 9% (now 7%) of total budget - 19% for predecessor bodies
- Procurement savings - £36 million through increased buying power and stronger market position
- Rationalised 105 premises to 3 modern office hubs – saving £5m pa in running costs and generating £85m capital receipts
- Share space - police stations at 2 main hubs and Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Service HQ at Salisbury campus
- 250 county and district councillors to 98 unitary councillors
- Service teams amalgamated and harmonisation programme completed
- Culture – framework for values and behaviours agreed

Money saved since 2009

Recurring savings 2009-17 = £176 million



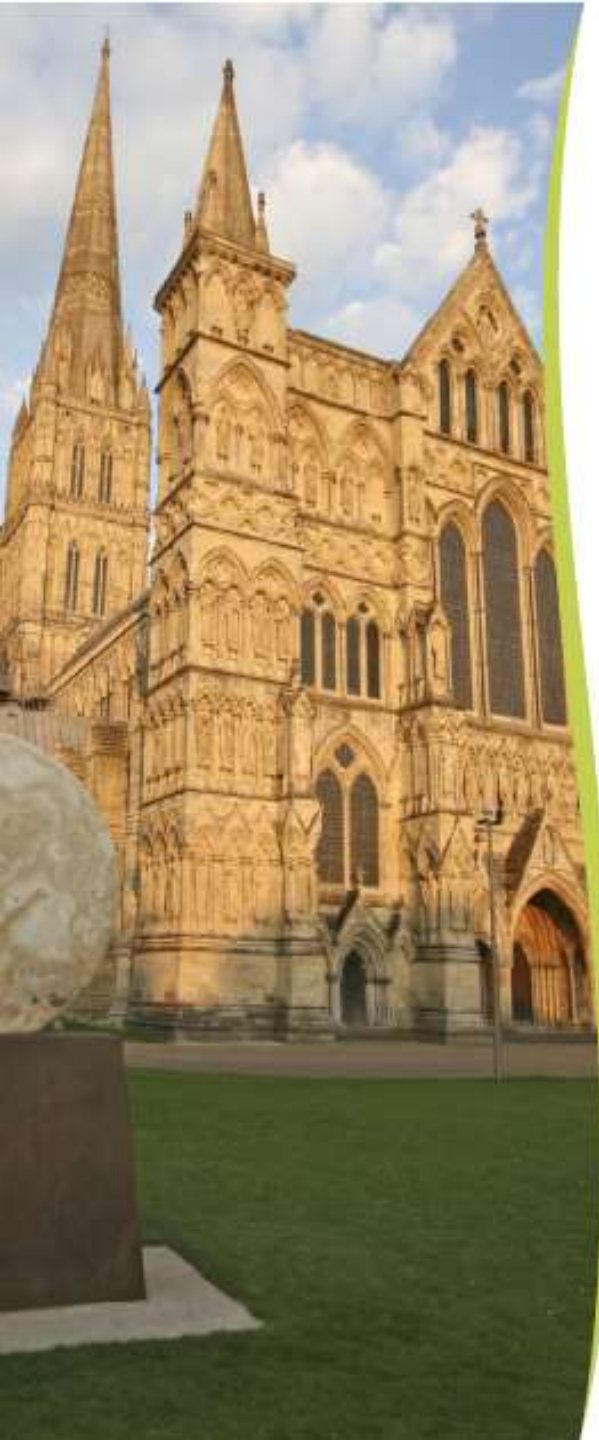
Our journey - how we changed

- Established 18 Community Area Boards – devolved funding and services – youth activities, highways, older people wellbeing – looking at link schemes and lunch clubs
- Engaged and empowered communities to deliver local services and assets
- Managed decrease in central government funding
- Froze council tax and delivered over £100m of savings to pay for this
- Customers – increase in performance and satisfaction
- Created Salisbury City Council
- Published long term vision and plan



Other benefits

- Harmonised waste collection and disposal
- Transformed development services - single core strategy and development of neighbourhood plans
- 15% reduction in CO² emissions - council buildings
- Created IT solutions for remote and flexible working
- Opportunity for devolution to towns and parishes and communities
- Abolition of chief executive post in 2011 and restructured senior management team in 2013 - £831,000 saving



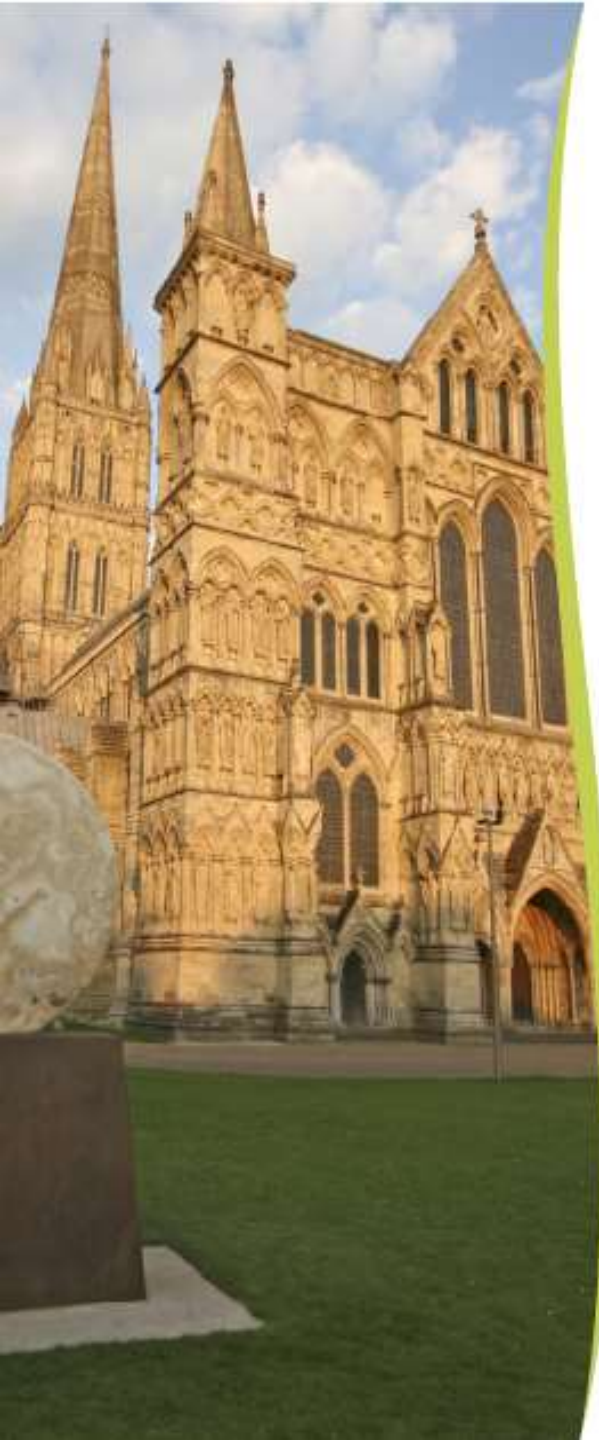
Delivered innovative projects

- Seven new campuses - £80m investment – services in one place
- Strategic partnership with police – joint services and co-location in Chippenham, Salisbury, Corsham and MASH in Trowbridge - Salisbury Police Station converted to £8.5m UTC
- Army basing – preparation for 4,000 troops and their families from Germany to Salisbury Plain
- One Public Estate partnership set up - £700k from cabinet office
- 6,000 volunteers - libraries (868), children's centres, working with refugees, footpaths, digital literacy



Delivered innovative projects

- Working with the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership secured £45m in Local Growth Funding to benefit communities in Wiltshire
- Wiltshire is a good place to do business – 15% increase in workforce jobs, thousands of jobs safeguarded, low unemployment
- Local companies growing and staying in Wiltshire - Good Energy
- Internationally recognised companies: Dyson, Boeing, Apetito, TJ Morris, Hermann Miller, Babcock
- We've provided superfast broadband to more than 83,000 homes and businesses



Lessons learnt

- Financial imperative to drive change
- Clear vision throughout
- Build a broad base of support - prepared for opposition
- Deliver quick wins (savings in transition phase)
- It takes time – to embed one council culture and transformation
- Early and on-going engagement with local MPs to ensure best outcomes at national level
- Have as much direct contact with the Secretary of State, as possible
- Local public consultation and stakeholder involvement will mobilise public opinion
- Build a team with the right skills, knowledge and capability to deliver a complex mergers



Lessons learnt

- You need strong, consistent and effective communication and media management
- Have sufficient leadership capacity to manage the critical relationships and 'champion' the change
- You will need robust programme management to deliver a major change programme
- Share resources (One Public Estate) with the NHS, Fire and Police
- Enable greater digital access to all services – we are shifting to 24/7, on line, digital by choice
- We are working with communities to encourage them to do more for themselves
- We are focusing on commercialisation opportunities



Almost 10 years on –
our journey continues...



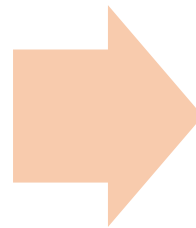
Voluntary Action Leicestershire

Presentation to Scrutiny Commission
14 November 2018

Voluntary Action Leicestershire

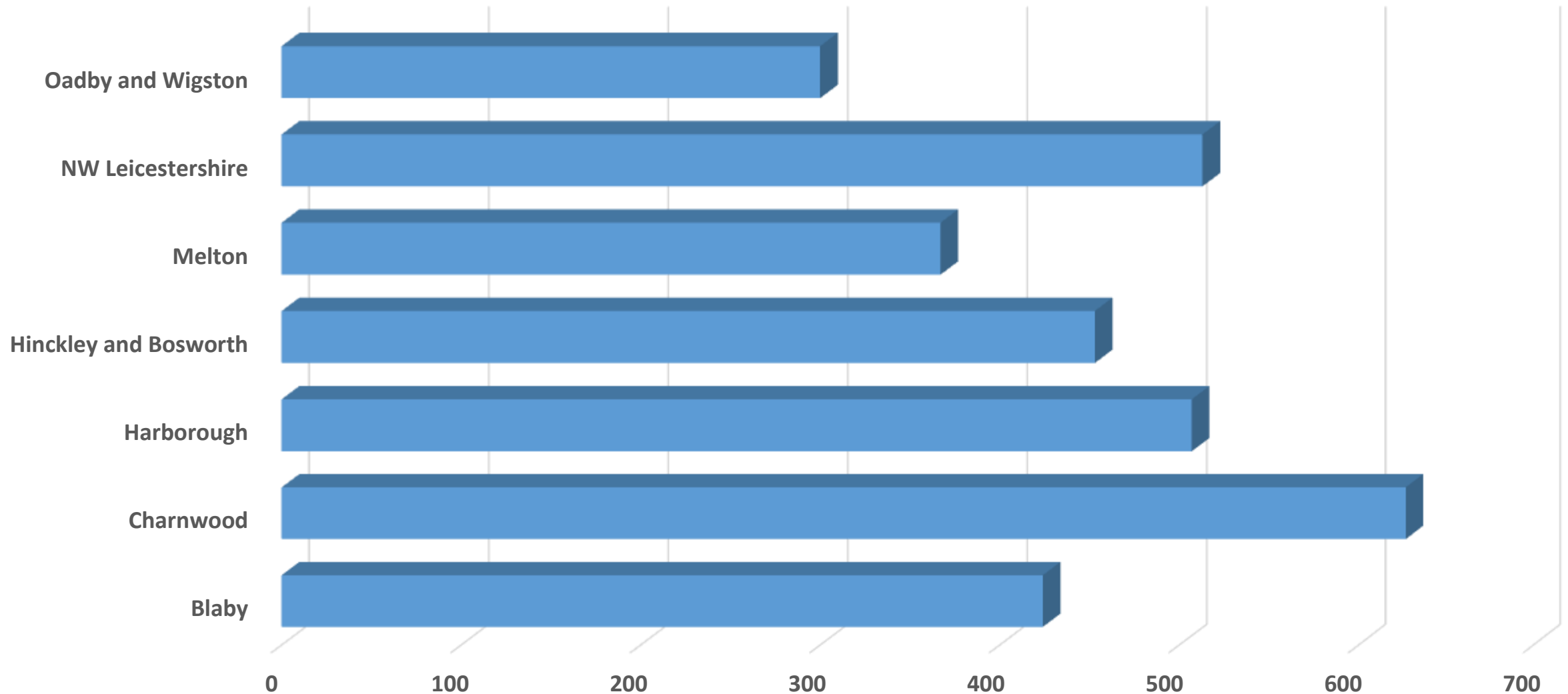
- Established in Leicester in 1965 as Council for Social Service.
- Supported the establishment of many County Community Groups
- In 2009 contracted by County Council to provide countywide support

Support for Community
Groups



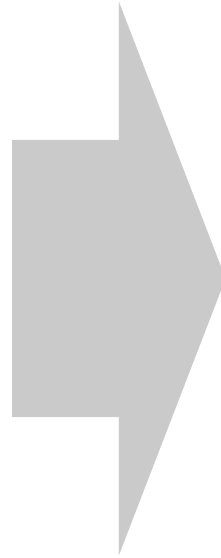
Support to volunteers and
volunteering

Voluntary and Community Groups in Leicestershire



Issues faced by VAL in delivering countywide

- Staying in touch with grassroots (Local Area committees proposal)
- Becoming part of a common bond
- Districts felt deserted (even though we had District based staff)



But

- VAL recruited many more volunteers
- Better and stronger support for VCS groups – raised the game
- Able to be more flexible with resources

Impact on Leicestershire VCS of proposals

- 75% of VCS groups have a local focus
- Not all services should be countywide (e.g. Community Managed Libraries)
- Area Committees should seek to serve 'natural communities'
- Success helped if have ambition of improved community engagement from the outset (EY Report 2016)
- Make discussion bigger than medium term savings targets

 **VAL** Helping people change
their lives for the better

Citizens Advice LeicesterShire

Richard Evans
Chief Executive



Citizens Advice LeicesterShire

- Significant, consistent support from Districts and County councils
- Free, independent, confidential and impartial advice
- Services in Leicester City and six County Districts: Blaby, Harborough, Hinckley & Bosworth, Melton, North West Leicestershire, Oadby & Wigston
- Face-to-face, email and telephone
- Generalist advice: debt, benefits housing, family issues, discrimination, employment, immigration, energy bills
- Specialist services: Macmillan, Money Advice, Pension wise, Europe Direct, Mesothelioma, Prevent, Money Matters

Citizens Advice LeicesterShire

2010: Merger Hinckley, North West Leicestershire and South Leicestershire (Market Harborough and Blaby)

2010: Won contract in Oadby & Wigston

2012: Melton and City office joined

2013: Won City contract

- 50+ paid staff
- 200 volunteers
- 1 trustee board

Outcomes

- Simpler governance unit – one trustee board and senior leadership
- Work to same standards of protocols and practices
- Simplified reporting (outcome frameworks agreed with districts and county)
- Allows for joined-up funding approach for external funding
- Allows for reciprocal arrangements with the Districts (clients can seek advice across borders)
- Staffing and governance financial rationalisation
- Diverting resources to frontline services

Challenges to overcome

- Maintaining localised service delivery model costly
- Senior leadership becoming removed from local issues
- Some staff and volunteers did not want to feel part of a bigger “machine”
- Initial reluctance to change (especially around rebranding)
- Uneasy relationship with surrounding Citizens Advice (incremental process)
- Communications needed special consideration
- Cost savings not immediately achieved
- Infrastructure required significant re-thinking

Reassurances required

As a local authority stakeholder

As a lead for an organisation invested in the local community

- Protection of community-based delivery
- Preservation of local knowledge
- Engagement of the voluntary sector
- Pounds, shillings and pence



LeicesterShire

Any questions?

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