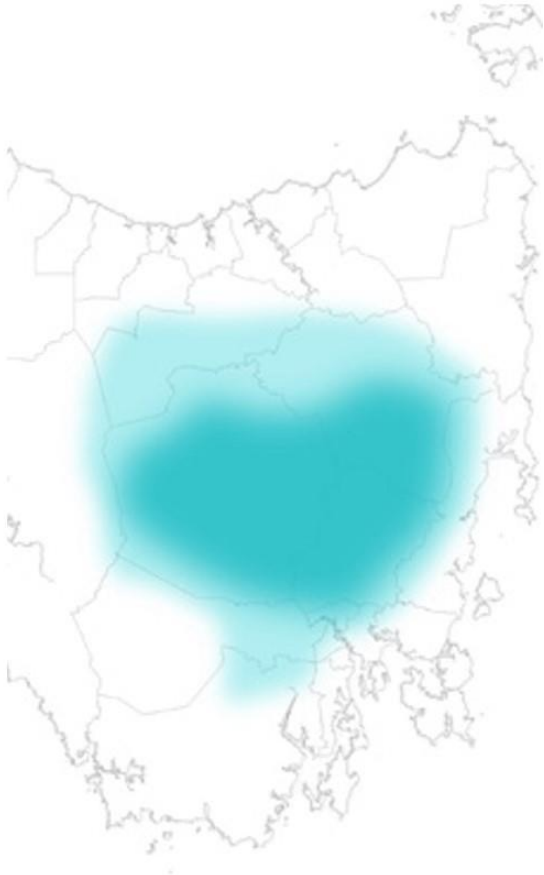
The future of local government review

Central and Midlands Community Catchment Information Pack

Review Stage 3 – May 2023



Let’s All Shape the Future
of Local Government.

This information pack has been prepared by the Local Government Board with the assistance of the Tasmanian Policy Exchange at the University of Tasmania and the Department of State Growth.

It draws on ABS Census, council, and the Office of the Valuer General data.

The Local Government Board has prepared this information pack as a data source and conversation starter for the upcoming Stage 3 consultation.

Contents

1. Introduction 4
2. An overview of the Central and Midlands Community Catchment 7
Central and Midlands: Scenario 1 10
Central and Midlands: Scenario 2 17
Central and Midlands: Scenario 3 25
Central and Midlands: Scenario 4 33
3. Comparison of Scenarios 41
4. Implications for neighbouring Community Catchments 44
5. Appendix 45

1. Introduction

During Stage 3 of the Review, the Board will be engaging with communities to look at how we might reshape Tasmania's local councils to increase scale and capability so they can better serve Tasmanian communities. The goal is to design local government in Tasmania in a way that allows all councils to develop and maintain the capability that communities need, while delivering services locally, keeping jobs in local communities, and ensuring that all Tasmanians have a strong voice in decisions being made on their behalf.

This information pack provides detailed insights into the Central and Midlands Community Catchment, outlining four possible structural reform scenarios. **These scenarios are not the only options for reform.** They are options designed to prompt a discussion about some of the possible pathways available to deliver a more capable and sustainable system of local government for the Central and Midlands community.

Communities and councils may have their own ideas about how local government could be better organised in their catchments. The Board welcomes alternative suggestions as part of the engagement process.

Where have these scenarios come from?

Each of the scenarios has been developed using the Board's structural reform principles (see text box on the following page) and the following four criteria.

1. **Place and Representation**
2. **Future Needs and Priorities**
3. **Financial Sustainability**
4. **Operational Capability.**

Scenario 1 – Establishing two separate councils to the north and south

Scenario 2 – Establishing a single Central and Midlands Council

Scenario 3 – Establishing three councils – a northern council encompassing the Meander Valley and Northern Midlands, a southern council encompassing Brighton and the Southern Midlands, and a western council encompassing the Derwent Valley and Central Highlands.

Scenario 4 – Establishing three councils: a northern council capturing the Meander Valley, Northern Midlands and the northern Central Plateau region; a south-western council incorporating the Derwent Valley and south-west of the Central Highlands; and a south-eastern council reaching into the Central Highlands

The Board – in collaboration with the University of Tasmania – has identified and applied a range of relevant data sets to assess the scenarios individually and in comparison to one another.

By doing this, we want to test how well the different scenarios meet the criteria. This should promote a conversation about various trade-offs and how these might be managed or addressed. For example, scenarios that propose a larger number of smaller councils may be construed as providing higher levels of representation and local connection but would need to be supported by more extensive shared services and partnership arrangements to achieve the operational scale necessary to deliver long-run capability and financial sustainability. On the other hand, scenarios that include council areas taking in much larger areas may require less in the way of service sharing and may be more 'self-sufficient'.

Structural Reform Principles

1. A Focus on Future Community Needs
2. Retaining Jobs and Service Delivery Locally
3. Preserving and Enhancing Local Voice
4. Smoothing Financial Impacts for Communities
5. Dedicated and Appropriate Resourcing for the Transition

The data and analysis presented in this Information Pack has been sourced from a range of authoritative sources, including councils, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Office of the Valuer General, the Department of State Growth and the University of Tasmania. The Pack also presents the results of modelling undertaken to estimate indicative rates for possible council areas presented in the scenarios. Detailed notes on the methods and assumptions used in this modelling are provided in the Supporting Paper (*Methods and Technical Background*).

The scenarios presented in this Information Pack, and the data and analysis that underpins them, are designed to inform community consultation about the future design of local government in Tasmania and are only one of multiple sources of information the Board will be considering when finalising its reform options.

What do we want councils and communities to tell us?

For each of the scenarios, we want councils and communities to consider four fundamental questions:

1. **What are the strengths?**
2. **What are the weaknesses or challenges?**
3. **Are there any adjustments that could be made to maximise the strengths and minimise the weaknesses?**
4. **Are there any other entirely different scenarios the Board should consider, which would still deliver against the Board's criteria and structural reform principles?**

Boundary changes are only one part of the equation. We also want councils and communities to think about options for complementary, supporting reforms, such as shared services and partnerships, options to improve local services and keep jobs in local communities, and new models of engagement and representation.

To support this conversation, we have prepared a number of *Supporting Papers*, which present a range of opportunities for councils and communities to consider. The Papers draw on research about new and evolving approaches in local government elsewhere, as well as the ideas that we have heard from talking with councils, state agencies, and the broader community, including from submissions we have received.

These papers focus on:

- **Supporting strong and empowered local communities (protecting and enhancing local voice and local services);**
- **State government partnership opportunities for local government; and**
- **Potential models, options, and key considerations for shared service opportunities in Tasmania.**

We want people to keep these opportunities in mind as they consider how they might work with or support the operation of new council boundaries and new models of service delivery. Some of the opportunities might only make sense or be effective under some scenarios, while others might work across the board.

At this stage, the Board wants to encourage creative thinking about how we build new council structures that are not just more capable, but which can deliver more equitable outcomes and access to services and technology for all of Tasmania, particularly in our rural and regional communities.

The intent here is consistent with the Board's approach to community centred consolidation - to more flexibly and genuinely reflect and support what communities will want and need into the future. Our aim is to look at how future councils can access the benefits of scale yet remain responsive to local needs. A large part of this is to consider how we reorient representation and services around citizens and the people who access services and build administrative structures that can deliver that flexibility.

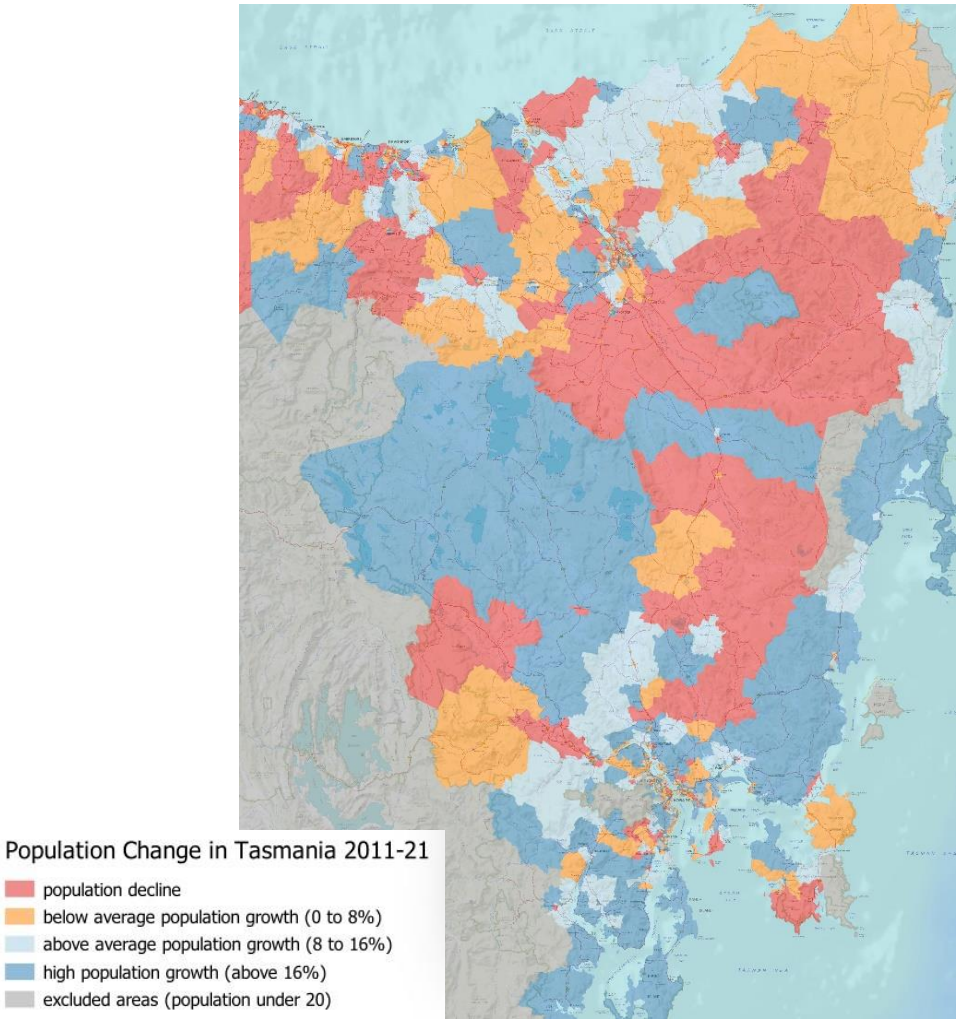
Please note: The Supporting Papers also include fact sheets which explain key data sets, data definitions and associated methodology.

Navigating the Information Pack

The Information Pack is divided into five main sections:

1. **Introductory information about how to interpret and use the Information Pack (this section);**
2. **An overview of the Central and Midlands catchment, including key demographic, economic, and geographic features;**
3. **An explanation and analysis of each of the individual structural reform scenarios against evaluation criteria data;**
4. **A comparative summary of all the scenarios against the evaluation criteria data; and**
5. **An appendix, which presents analysis of existing councils within (or partially within) the catchment.**

2. An overview of the Central and Midlands Community Catchment



The broader midlands and central plateau area is a large and sparsely populated region. This Catchment area captures the Central Highlands Plateau with its many lakes, the agricultural land of the Midlands to the forested tiers that separate the area from the east coast. The western side largely consists of the mountainous Central Plateau Conservation Area and the eastern section of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. To the south, boundaries are formed by the limits of the existing Derwent Valley and Brighton LGAs. The north is bounded by the urban fringes of Launceston and the Tamar Valley, and Meander Valley's northern limits.

The region's economy is largely based on agriculture and tourism and the area also includes a number of hydro storages, wind farms and power stations. As well as their economic and industrial connections, the Midlands and Central Plateau have strong historical, demographic, and cultural similarities represented in physical links such as the 'Tasmania's Heartland' road network and tourist route.

While this grouping contains several geographically distant regional population centres, commuting and employment data indicate that these five current council areas have much stronger commuting links with each other than with any of their neighbours. Both Brighton and New Norfolk LGAs in the South have significant employment and commuting connections to the Central Highlands and Southern Midlands LGAs (as well as to greater Hobart), while Deloraine and Campbell Town are important regional hubs for the Northern Midlands and the upper half of the Central Highlands LGAs.

While parts of the Central Highlands and Northern Midlands LGAs are facing challenges serving ageing populations, other parts of the Catchment are growing relatively strongly. In particular, Meander Valley, Southern

Midlands, and Brighton LGAs have seen population growth above the state average in recent decades.

The main challenge confronting this grouping is that its population growth is concentrated in areas like Brighton, Perth, Evandale, Longford, and Westbury, whose functional economic connections are to Hobart and Launceston rather than to Central Tasmania.

Access to healthcare, education, and transport are also issues. The area includes large shack communities – over 60% of private dwellings in the Central Highlands LGA were unoccupied on the 2021 census night – with impacts for local governance. Part-time residents are of economic benefit to these communities, but also place stress on infrastructure and amenities during peak periods.

The recent 2022 floods and landslips, most notably in the north of the region, demonstrate the area's vulnerability to climate change related impacts, and the need for coordinated, cohesive action. As with other areas of the State, waste also presents challenges for the individual councils of this region, particularly given distances to appropriate landfill sites.

There are also important opportunities for the region, especially in tourism, energy and agriculture. Investment in major irrigation infrastructure and other innovative practices in particular is likely to support continuing growth in the agricultural output across the region making a significant contribution to the Tasmanian Government's goal of increasing the annual value of the sector to $10 billion by 2050.

In this catchment, the Board is seeking to establish a system of local government that can:

- maximise the community benefit arising from the energy and tourism industries in the region
- deliver to residents and businesses the range of regulatory services expected of all councils
- advocate effectively to State and Commonwealth Governments to play their part in providing infrastructure and to partner on economic development and job opportunities
- provide services to both older and younger residents, given the concentrations of both cohorts
- provide fair and equitable services and representation to the many residents living in remote locations.

Tasmania's changing community dynamics

Tasmanians are much more mobile than a generation ago and a growing number of residents cross at least one local government boundary every day. One widely accepted way of defining a 'community of interest' that provides insights into the appropriate scale for local government is to identify the areas in which most residents live, work, and use government services (Productivity Commission 2017). Reflecting this approach, the Board has produced a series of maps which illustrate commuting to major employment centres as one possible tool to help inform community discussions around boundary consolidation options.

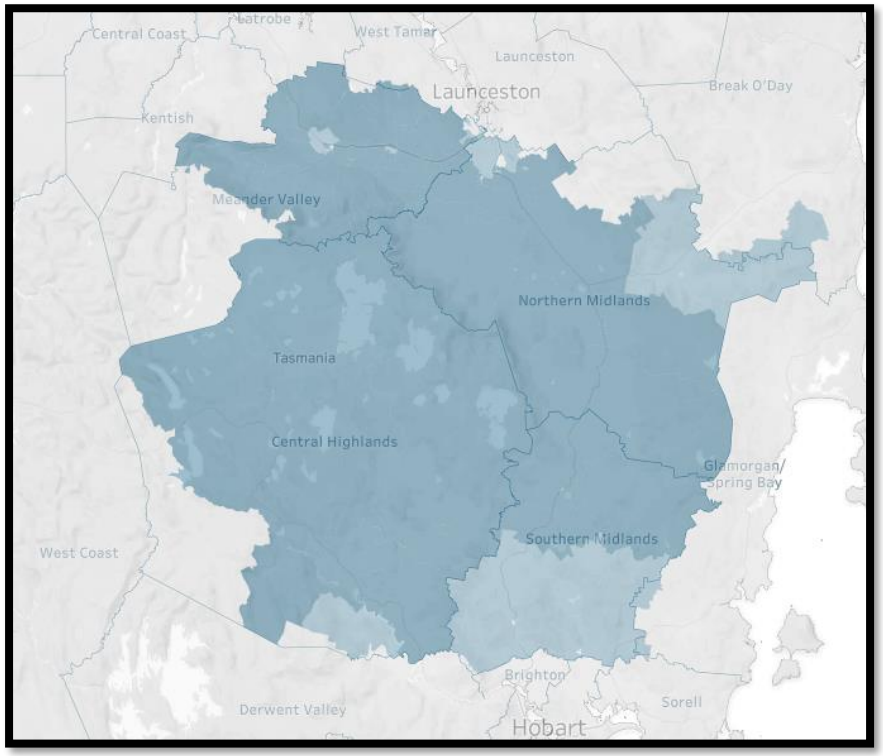
The Central and Midlands Community Catchment is large and features a diverse range of communities, from remote and relatively isolated rural and highland settlements to significant regional centres. As such, the degree to which the existing LGAs of this catchment are representative of their residents' daily movements varies considerably. On one hand, communities like Brighton, Bridgewater, New Norfolk, Perth, Evandale, and Longford are increasingly becoming 'satellite' outer suburbs of Greater Hobart and Launceston. Even some of the more traditionally regional areas of the Southern Midlands, such as Mangalore, Bagdad, Kempton, and Campania have developed strong commuting connections to Hobart and Clarence in recent years. On the other hand, settlements like Campbelltown, Ross, Bothwell, and Deloraine remain important hubs for their more dispersed and rural communities.

For this reason, special care must be taken to ensure that boundary changes in this Community Catchment accurately reflect the rapidly changing ways its residents live, work, and socialise.

One clear measure of the extent to which potential future council areas align with communities of interest is the proportion of workers in a council area who also live in that area – the local workforce ratio. As already noted, this area is subject to considerable variability in this regard. Given their strong commuter links to a major urban centre, only a small proportion of the residents of Derwent Valley (34%), the Southern Midlands (29.4%), and Meander Valley (28.5%) both live and work in the same LGA. Central Highlands (49.5%) and Northern Midlands (41.6%) score slightly higher but still remain under 50%. However, the reasonably strong connection of these five areas to each other means that when combined, 62.2% of the catchment's workforce live locally. If the settlements of Perth, Evandale, and Longford were to be consolidated into a potential Tamar Valley council as is contemplated in one of the scenarios in the Tamar Valley Information Pack, this figure would be higher still.

		Place of work (SA2)										
		New Norfolk	Deloraine	Central Highlands	Upper Derwent Valley	Southern Midlands	Bridgewater	Brighton	Perth - Evandale	Longford	Greater Hobart	Launceston
Place of usual residence (SA2)	New Norfolk	878	0	39	66	8	123	32	0	0	2405	13
	Deloraine	0	1618	0	0	0	0	0	22	15	11	299
	Central Highlands	54	4	499	44	14	13	11	0	0	222	17
	Upper Derwent Valley	302	0	29	271	4	56	23	0	0	992	4
	Southern Midlands	60	0	23	5	892	153	91	4	0	1336	4
	Bridgewater	69	0	4	9	20	431	45	0	0	1684	11
	Brighton	74	0	8	10	50	266	411	0	0	2389	14
	Perth - Evandale	0	17	0	0	0	0	0	543	126	23	1626
	Longford	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	137	565	28	821
	Local workforce ratio	42%	66.6%	63%	51.5%	71.2%	18.6%	40.2%	20.3%	38.3%	-	-

Commuting connections in the Central and Midlands region



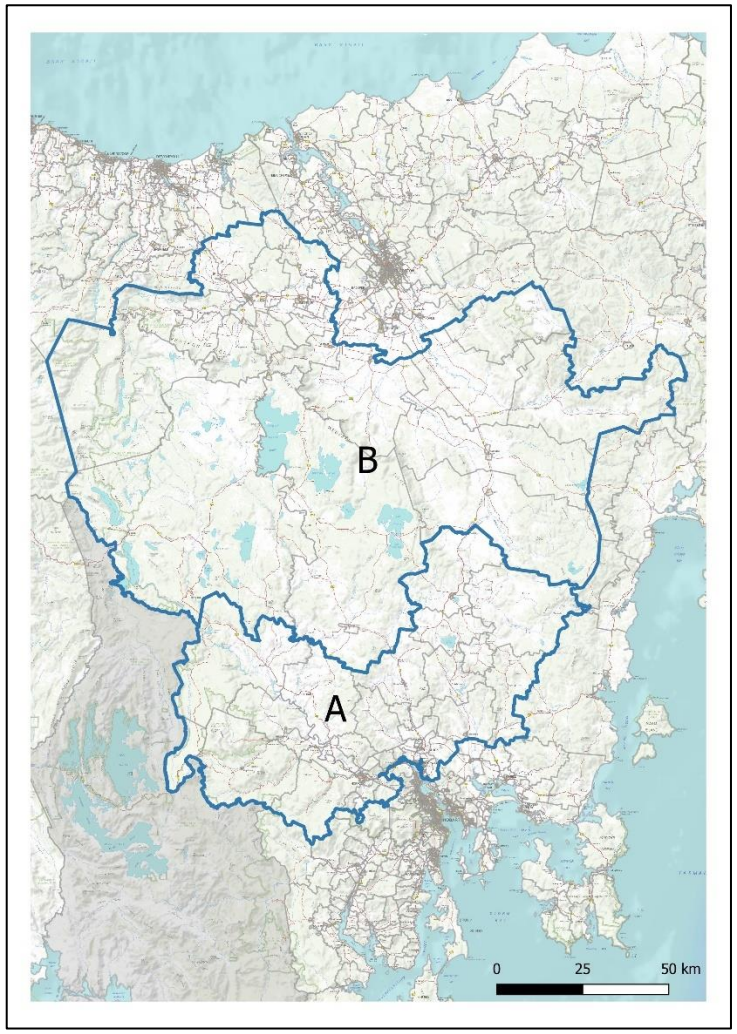
Key

Unshaded *– fewer than 30 workers (less than 13 %) work within the Central and Midlands community catchment*

Light blue *– between 30 and 100 (13%-40%) workers work within the Central and Midlands community catchment*

Dark blue *– more than 100 (40%) workers work within the Central and Midlands community catchment*

Central and Midlands: Scenario 1



Overview

Scenario 1 establishes two new council areas within the Central and Midlands Community Catchment. The first (A) combines the existing Brighton, Southern Midlands, and Derwent Valley LGAs, and a proportion of the Central Highlands including Hamilton, Ouse and Wayatinah. The second (B) captures the remainder of the Central Highland LGAs, Meander Valley minus Hadspen, Carrick, Prospect Vale and Blackstone Heights, and the Northern Midlands (minus Perth, Evandale and Longford).

The two councils have been identified on the basis of communities of interest, demographics and geographic links. Council A has a younger population, many living in the rapidly growing urban areas of Brighton and New Norfolk and working locally or in the Greater Hobart area. Council B has an older population mostly in smaller towns, with more working outside the area.

Under this scenario, the satellite towns around Launceston currently within the Meander Valley and Northern Midlands LGA are incorporated into the Tamar Valley Community Catchment.

There is potential to maintain the customer service centres and works hubs in New Norfolk, Hamilton, Old Beach, Oatlands and Kempton for Council A, and Westbury and Bothwell for Council B. These hypothetical councils may be further supported by shared service arrangements.

Council Area	2021 Population	% Growth 2011-21
Area A	37,551	16.7%
Area B	15,439	2.0%

Rationale and evidence

Scenario 1 would benefit the Central and Midlands region by increasing the scale and capability of the two proposed councils serving these communities, when compared to the existing councils. Council A has an approximate population of 37,500, and Council B 15,500. This scenario would have the potential to deliver better outcomes relative to the reform criteria and the status quo, albeit to differing degrees. The two new councils would have larger workforces, enhancing recruitment offerings and enabling career development and progression.

Under this scenario, there is strong correlation between council boundaries with communities of interest and the geography of the region. Both councils include dispersed rural communities connected with significant regional centres, which should help with operational sustainability. While Brighton and New Norfolk have strong commuter connections to Hobart, these communities have strong historical connections with their rural hinterland.

Communities will also need to consider whether it is appropriate to allocate Perth, Evandale, Carrick, Hadspen, and Longford (combined population of approximately 7,000) to the Tamar Valley Community Catchment, given the impact it has on the population and rate base of Council B.

This scenario would improve the streamlining whole-of-region cooperation and service sharing as well as collaborations with other tiers of government.

Alignment with the principles for successful structural reform

Focus on future community needs: Both potential councils include a number of significant regional towns and rural communities. Under this scenario, 96% of residents in Council A would be within a 30-minute drive of the larger service and administrative hubs of New Norfolk and Brighton, and 74% for Westbury and Bothwell in Council B. Maintaining these services hubs would ensure good access to services in what are geographically large councils while also highlighting the need to invest in digital services and other outreach and engagement strategies (especially in Council B).

Council A has experienced strong urban growth in recent years (16.7% 2011-21) and consolidation would support enhanced scope capabilities in areas such as strategic planning, development and environmental health assessment, and could help manage issues such as urban consolidation and infrastructure planning.

Retain local jobs and services: There is scope to retain council administrative and operations hubs in New Norfolk, Hamilton, Old Beach, Oatlands and Kempton, Westbury and Bothwell, thereby maintaining local employment while also supporting local engagement and service delivery. A potential model is provided by Devonport Council and Service Tasmania, which have fully integrated their customer service centres to make it simpler for residents to engage with state and local government services face to face (see Supporting Paper on *State Government Partnership Opportunities*).

Council A's scale would improve the prospects of recruiting and retaining technical and professional staff and improve the capacity to assess complex planning applications and address other technical challenges. There has been a history of service sharing arrangements in the southern part of this community catchment, particularly in regard to development and planning services, which suggests a strong collective capacity in the region. Brighton and Southern Midlands councils have provided services to each other, to Central Highlands Council, and to other councils outside the area. Given its

smaller size, Council B would need to continue to rely on external service sharing arrangements for some of its technical and regulatory services.

The integration of centralised or standardised corporate 'back-office' systems or services for council finance and administration may reduce staff time spent on administrative tasks, allowing them to focus on improving services to council staff and communities (see Supporting Paper on *Shared Services models*). In combination with the increased workforce size of these new entities, this is likely to lead to significant economies of scope.

While consolidated councils could lead to greater sharing of road maintenance teams and equipment, there would still be a need to maintain regional depots across the council area. Larger regulatory services teams should provide greater capacity to manage workloads, allow for business continuity during periods of leave, and help to attract and retain specialist staff – all of which currently present challenges to existing councils in this area.

Preserve and enhance local voice: The two new, larger councils would have the capacity to invest in new and more systematic approaches to community engagement to ensure all communities within the larger council areas are heard and represented, particularly those in the rural and remote highlands areas. If required, there would also be scope to introduce community advisory panels regularly consulted by council to ensure constituents enjoy enhanced formal representation and direct influence in the decision-making process, including community budget priorities (see Supporting Paper on *Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities*). Operations hubs could also be used for a program of scheduled regional council meetings in different locations.

Fair funding models: Applying existing rates and funding models to the new council areas, their total rates revenue in 2021 dollars would be an estimated $22m for Council A and $12.7m for Council B. The areas would have access to rates revenue from a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural land, although both Councils would continue to rely on grant income given their scale and the road networks and other infrastructure they would have to manage. A range of approaches to rating are currently applied across the Catchment which would have to be considered in any transition. Brighton uses a flat, two-tier model for residential rates, while both Derwent Valley and Central Highlands Councils apply higher residential rates per capita than the other Councils in the Catchment. One option for enhancing the sustainability of both Councils in the Catchment would be to establish an alternative governance and funding model for the remote and sparsely populated highland communities reflecting the approach adopted in other Australian states. Further information is provided in the Supporting Paper on *Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities.*

Appropriate resourcing for transition: Transition arrangements for this scenario would need to consider how services provided by the Northern Tasmania Development Corporation and the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority, both to member councils and other councils across the broader region, would be undertaken under the new arrangements. Similarly, the future status of the significant number of shared or joint arrangements would need to be considered, including any financial and staff commitments these councils have made to other councils. All of the Councils within the Catchment hold net financial assets which would have to be considered as part of any transition plan.

Community data and alignment with reform criteria

The table below presents demographic, household, employment and operational council data for hypothetical councils established under Scenario 1. These data have been produced by modelling 2021 ABS Census (SA1 level) and other relevant data sets to align with the hypothetical boundaries of the new areas proposed in each scenario.

As we have indicated, these data are indicative and are designed to inform community discussions about the merits of different structural reform options. Structural reforms adopted by the Tasmanian Government based on the Board's recommendations will likely be subject to a detailed technical review and implementation plan. While every effort has been made to ensure consistency and accuracy, variation between SA1 and LGA boundaries may mean that some of the figures below may differ slightly from existing council statistics. Detailed methodological notes are presented in the *Methods and Technical Background* Supporting Paper.

Summary Data – Scenario 1

Category		Measure	Council A	Council B
Overview	Demographics	Population	37,551	15,439
		Median age	39.1	47.6
		SEIFA[1] (decile)	1	3
	Housing	Total dwellings	15,074	8,366
		No. of single person households	3,376 (24.4%)	1,863 (30.3%)
		% dwellings vacant	8.1	14.8
		Indicator		
1. Place and Representation	Alignment with local communities of interest	% area workforce residing locally	69.4%	36.8%
	Established administrative, commercial and service hub/s	% of population within 30 mins of administrative hub	96%	74%

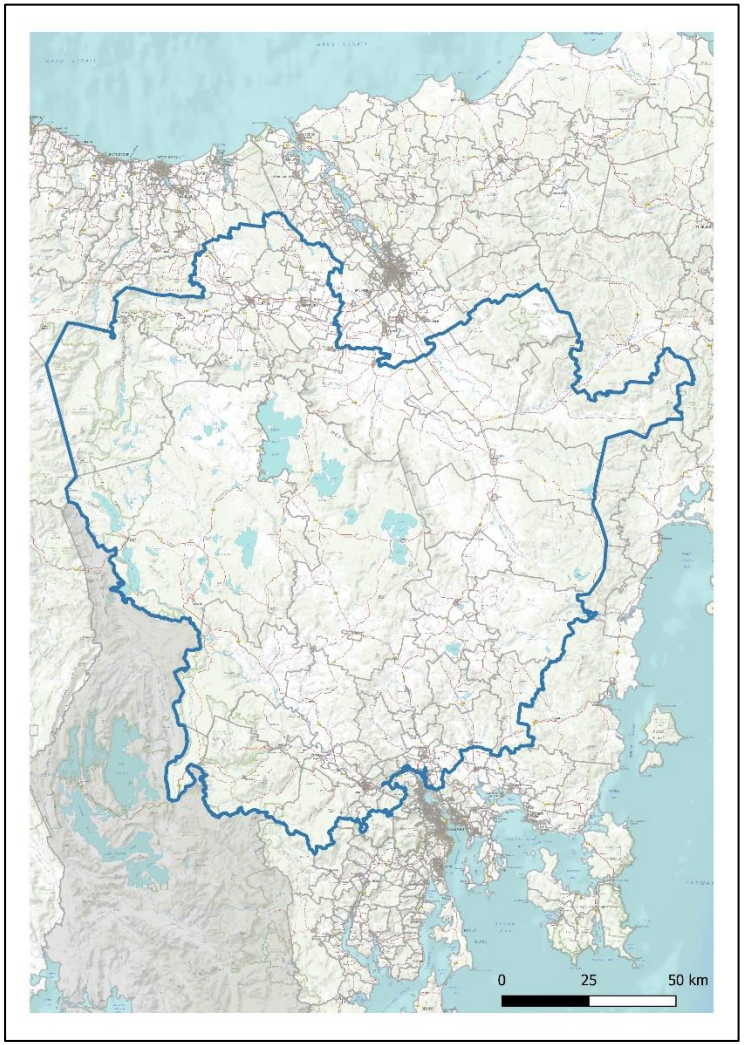
[1] SEIFA', or 'Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas', is an index developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics which ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage or disadvantage.

Category		Measure	Council A	Council B
	Urbanisation	% of population in urban areas of population 10,000 or greater	42%	0%
	Mobility/Migration	% of population living at a different address 5 years ago	30.2	30.8
2. Future Needs and Priorities	Population growth	Population change *2011-21*	5,384 (16.7%)	303 (2.0%)
	Housing supply and infrastructure demand	Change in occupied dwelling numbers (2011-21)	2,154	113
		% Change in occupied dwelling numbers (2011-21)	18.4%	1.9%
	Employment growth	Change in labour force 2011-21 by place of residence	26%	6%
	Older/ageing communities	% Population over 65	12%	19%
	Younger communities	% Population under 15	23%	19%
3. Financial Sustainability	Value of rateable land	Value of rateable land - residential	$6,644,900,000	$2,645,200,000
		Value of rateable land - primary production	$1,648,400,000	$3,774,400,000
		Value of rateable land - industrial	$243,200,000	$76,100,000
		Value of rateable land - commercial	$286,600,000	$175,700,000
		Value of rateable land - vacant	$474,000,000	$227,000,000
		Value of rateable land - other	$735,700,000	$453,500,000
		Value of rateable land - total	$10,032,926,300	$7,351,766,000
	Estimation of theoretical rate	Estimated rate revenue - residential	$15,100,000	$5,800,000

Category		Measure	Council A	Council B
	revenue applying current rates[2]	Estimated rate revenue - commercial	$1,100,000	$500,000
		Estimated rate revenue - industrial	$800,000	$300,000
		Estimated rate revenue - primary production	$3,300,000	$5,100,000
		Estimated rate revenue - vacant	$1,300,000	$700,000
		Estimated rate revenue - other	$300,000	$200,000
		Estimated rate revenue - total	$22,000,000	$12,700,000
	Road Infrastructure	Km of council roads - unsealed	935.2	1,014.2
		Km of council roads - sealed	544.0	900.6
4. Operational Sustainability	• Council A would have a relatively large population base and ongoing growth that should give it the capacity to service its community. • Council B would have a smaller rates and population base, as well as significant areas of low growth or population decline. It is more likely to need to rely more on external shared service arrangements for some specialist functions.			

[2] There are limitations involved with this analysis, and it is acknowledged that the modelled revenues underestimate actual council revenues in some instances. The modelled revenues are a superior measure of relative fiscal capacity between council scenarios, and caution is advised for any comparison between modelled revenues for scenarios and existing councils. More information is provided in the Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper.

Central and Midlands: Scenario 2



Overview

Scenario 2 establishes a single council for the Central and Midlands Community Catchment.

Under this scenario, the existing LGAs of Derwent Valley, Brighton, Southern Midlands, Central Highlands, Northern Midlands, and Meander Valley are combined, minus the Launceston satellite commuting towns of Carrick, Hadspen, Perth, Longford, and Evandale.

A single council model would maximise potential scale and capability benefits be incorporating central Tasmania into once consolidated council. The scenario would support higher and more consistent service delivery across central parts of rural Tasmania and would deliver more financially sustainable model of local government for these communities.

The primary challenge for this model, given the size of the LGA, would be ensuring local voices are heard with equal representation across the entire region.

This scenario would require the continuation of a number of customer service and administration centres with supporting works hubs in other areas to maintain regional employment opportunities.

2021 Population	% Growth 2011-21
52,990	14.1%

Rationale and evidence

Scenario 2 establishes one single council area, combining the current Derwent Valley, Brighton, Southern Midlands, Central Highlands, Northern Midlands and Meander Valley Councils, but without the commuting towns south of Launceston.

The council would be geographically large by Tasmanian standards, but less populous than some other councils in the State, with approximately 53,000 people. It would have a hypothetical revenue of $34.7m. In addition to creating significant scale, a further rationale for establishing a whole-of-region council is that it would represent a significant portion of rural Tasmania and lessen the need for many regional organisations and structures to promote collaboration across councils.

The challenge for the single council model will be ensuring local representation, employment and service delivery across the entire area, although the consolidated council would have the resources to invest in community engagement and establishing administrative and service delivery hubs across the community. Consideration would also have to be given to balancing the needs or the fast-growing urban communities in the south of the Catchment with rural communities further north.

There are two specific issues that warrant further investigation and consideration by communities and councils under this scenario:

- Given the commuter links between Brighton, New Norfolk and Hobart, are these communities more oriented towards the more urban areas to their south, or do they identify more strongly and perform as service hubs for their rural hinterlands?
- In the north of the catchment, communities similarly should consider the allocation of Perth, Evandale, Carrick, Hadspen, and Longford (also given their commuter links to Launceston) to the Tamar Valley Community Catchment.

Alignment with the principles for successful structural reform

Focus on future community needs: The council established under this scenario would have better resources and capabilities to respond to emerging community needs. In terms of accessing services, if existing council offices across the Community Catchment were maintained as a part of a network model, then 85% of residents would be within a 30-minute drive of the major service and administrative hubs. The trade-off which the community will have to consider is whether a single council model is the most effective and sustainable model for providing local representation and services across the Central and Midlands.

As described in the overview of this *Information Pack*, areas of this region are experiencing significant urban growth. Other areas have seen, and will see, major infrastructure projects such as wind farms and irrigation. These changes will require further and increased strategic planning and infrastructure.

Under this model, there would be less of a need for regional shared services arrangements than for the status quo or under other scenarios included under this catchment. The necessity for the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority (STCA) would need to be reconsidered given the capability of the resulting council, although it may have a clear ongoing role in areas not traditionally considered core to local government (e.g. natural resource management). A larger regional council will be well placed to advocate for the Central and Midlands community and rural interests more generally

and enter strategic partnerships with other spheres of government. Likewise, it will be well placed to deliver effective land use and strategic planning.

Retain local jobs and services: Establishing a single consolidated council to represent the Central and Midlands region would deliver scale benefits including the ability to attract and retain specialist staff and invest in productivity-enhancing equipment and 'back-office' systems. There would need to be a clear strategy of retaining jobs and teams across the region to maintain local employment and knowledge and provide community members with ready access to council services.

The Southern Midlands Council and Service Tasmania have integrated their customer service centres in Oatlands, making it simpler for residents to engage with state and local government services face to face. There is potential to expand this approach across the Catchment (see Supporting Paper on *State Government Partnership Opportunities*).

While a single council would facilitate greater sharing of road maintenance teams and equipment, there would still be a need to maintain several regional depots across the council area given the Council would be responsible for managing 3,500 km of roads – the most in Tasmania. A larger regulatory services team would likewise provide greater capacity to manage workloads, allow for business continuity during periods of leave, and help to attract and retain specialist staff.

While the new council would have significant scale, capacity and purchasing power, there would be benefits in it centrally sourcing some basic common services, such as cloud-based ICT systems, to support council finance and administration and enable employees to access systems from across this large LGA. (see Supporting Paper on *Shared Services Models*). This would reduce staff time on administrative tasks and system management and help provide consistent and sustainable services across the region.

Preserve and enhance local voice: The greatest challenge under this scenario would be ensuring that a single regional council is able not only to preserve but also enhance local voice, representation, and engagement. Despite its increased size, a single consolidated council would, however, have the capacity to invest in new and more systematic approaches to community engagement to ensure all communities within the larger council areas are heard and represented, particularly those in the rural hinterland areas. In a local government area of this size, there would also be merit in considering mechanisms to ensure all areas were afforded localised representation by the new council.

If required, there would also be scope to introduce community advisory panels regularly consulted by council to ensure constituents enjoy enhanced formal representation and direct influence in the decision-making process, including community budget priorities (see Supporting Paper on *Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities*).

Fair funding models: Applying existing rates and funding models to the new council area, total rates revenue in 2021 dollars would be an estimated $34.7m. The consolidated council would have access to a significant rate base drawn from a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural land although the new Council would continue to rely on grant income to maintain its large road network and other infrastructure.

As noted in Scenario 1 above, a range of approaches to rating are currently applied across the Catchment which would have to be considered in any transition. Brighton uses a flat, two-tier model for residential rates, while

both Derwent Valley and Central Highlands Councils apply higher residential rates per capita than the other Councils in the Catchment. One option for enhancing the sustainability of this council would be to establish an alternative governance and funding model for the very remote and sparsely populated highland communities reflecting the approach adopted in other Australian states. Further information is provided in the Supporting Paper on *Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities.*

Appropriate resourcing for transition: As with other scenarios, transition arrangements would need to consider the need for existing regional structures and how best to adapt and integrate the systems across six existing councils into an integrated framework to meet the future needs of the Central and Midlands community.

Areas of focus for transition would include:

- The ongoing role of the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority, particularly the services it provides to other councils in Tasmania;
- treatment of the debts and surpluses held by all councils;
- IT systems, including Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and asset management platforms.

Community data and alignment with reform criteria

The table below presents demographic, household, employment and operational council data for hypothetical councils established under Scenario 2. These data have been modelled using 2021 ABS Census (SA1 level) and other relevant data sets to align with the hypothetical boundaries of the new areas proposed in each scenario.

As we have indicated, these data are indicative and are designed to inform community discussions about the merits of different structural reform options. Structural reforms adopted by the Tasmanian Government based on the Board's recommendations will be subject to a detailed technical review and implementation plan. While every effort has been made to ensure consistency and accuracy, variation between SA1 and LGA boundaries may mean that some of the figures below may differ slightly from existing council statistics. Detailed methodological notes are presented in the *Methods and Technical Background* Supporting Paper.

Summary Data - Scenario 2

Category		Measure	Council
Overview	**Demographics**	Population	52,990
		Median age	41.6
		SEIFA[3] (decile)	2
	Housing	Total dwellings	23,440
		No. of single person households	5,239 (26.2%)
		% dwellings vacant	10.3
		Indicator	
1. Place and Representation	Alignment with local communities of interest	% area workforce residing locally	51.6%

[3] SEIFA', or 'Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas', is an index developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics which ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage or disadvantage.

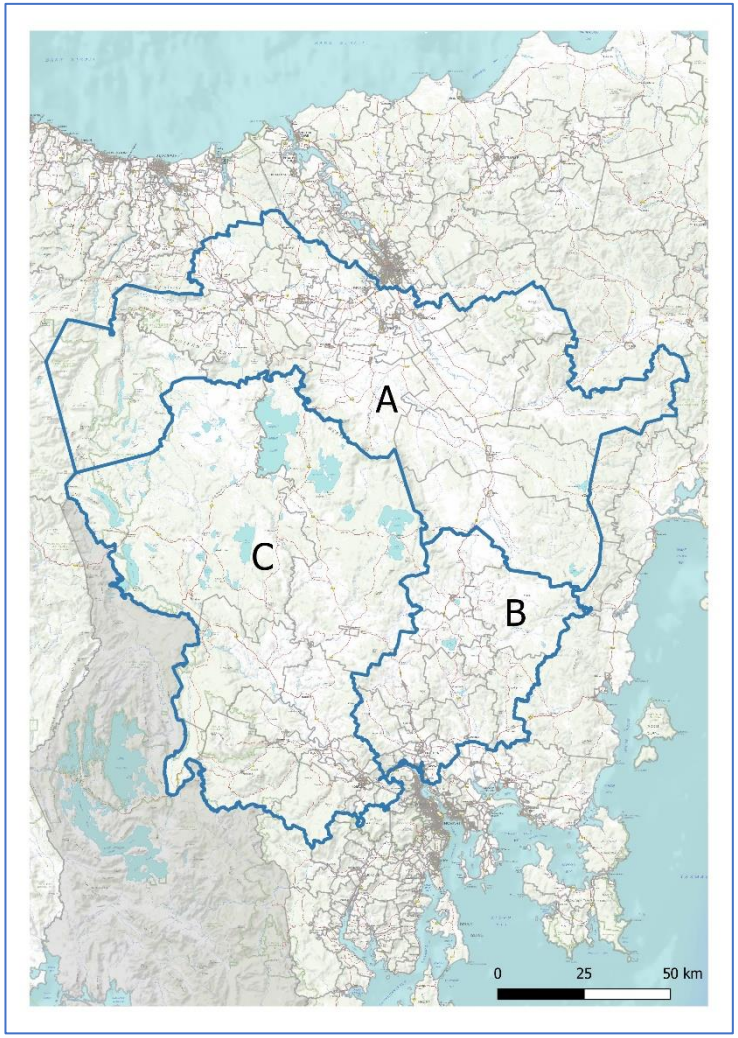
Category		Measure	Council
	Established administrative, commercial and service hub/s	% of population within 30 mins of administrative hub	85%
	Urbanisation	% of population in urban areas of population 10,000 or greater	30%
	Mobility/Migration	% of population living at a different address 5 years ago	30.4
2. Future Needs and Priorities	Population growth	Population change *2011-21*	6,552 (14.1%)
	Housing supply and infrastructure demand	Change in occupied dwelling numbers (2011-21)	2,644 (15.3%)
		% Change in occupied dwelling numbers (2011-21)	15.3%
	Employment growth	Change in labour force 2011-21 by place of residence	21%
	Older/ageing communities	% Population over 65	14%
	Younger communities	% Population under 15	22%
3. Financial Sustainability	Value of rateable land	Value of rateable land - residential	$9,290,100,000
		Value of rateable land - primary production	$5,422,800,000

Category		Measure	Council
		Value of rateable land - industrial	$319,300,000
		Value of rateable land - commercial	$462,300,000
		Value of rateable land - vacant	$701,000,000
		Value of rateable land - other	$1,189,200,000
		Value of rateable land - total	$17,384,692,300
	Estimation of theoretical rate revenue applying current rates[4]	Estimated rate revenue - residential	$21,000,000
		Estimated rate revenue - commercial	$1,700,000
		Estimated rate revenue - industrial	$1,100,000
		Estimated rate revenue - primary production	$8,400,000
		Estimated rate revenue - vacant	$2,000,000
		Estimated rate revenue - other	$500,000
		Estimated rate revenue - total	$34,700,000
	Road Infrastructure	Km of council roads - unsealed	1,949.4
		Km of council roads - sealed	1,444.6

[4] There are limitations involved with this analysis, and it is acknowledged that the modelled revenues underestimate actual council revenues in some instances. The modelled revenues are a superior measure of relative fiscal capacity between council scenarios, and caution is advised for any comparison between modelled revenues for scenarios and existing councils. More information is provided in the Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper.

Category	Measure	Council
4. Operational Sustainability	• This council would have a relatively large population base and ongoing growth that should give it the capacity to service its community. • Despite the capability that would come with scale, this council would have a large geographic area and dispersed community to service from different work hubs. • This council would need to invest in robust engagement processes to ensure that it was reflecting community priorities across the council area equitably. It would also need to invest in strong management systems to ensure community priorities were being delivered.	

Central and Midlands: Scenario 3



Overview

Scenario 3 creates three new council areas for the Central and Midlands Community Catchment. Council A combines the existing Northern Midlands and Meander Valley LGAs, minus the suburbs of Prospect Vale and Blackstone Heights. Council B merges Brighton and the Southern Midlands LGAs, and Council C captures Derwent Valley and the Central Highlands LGAs.

This scenario establishes Councils with populations between 13,000 and 28,000 and aligns communities of interest with significant regional towns as important service hubs.

This proposal enhances possible scale capabilities and the scope for cohesive coordination in the region, although not to the same extent as Scenario 1 or 2 of this information pack. This scenario has the potential to host several administration and service centres and works hubs to maintain regional employment opportunities.

Council Area	2021 Population	% Growth 2011-21
Area A	27,831	11.3%
Area B	25,646	19.2%
Area C	13,038	12.5%

Rationale and evidence

The three council areas established under this scenario each combine two existing councils, almost entirely following existing local government boundaries. The exception is Meander Valley's boundary with Launceston, which has been adjusted to incorporate the continuously connected suburbs of Prospect Vale and Blackstone Heights into the Tamar Valley Community Catchment.

This scenario would benefit the Central and Midlands community by increasing the scale and capability of the three proposed councils although not to the extent of the first and second reform scenarios outlined in this *Information Pack*. The three new councils would each have larger workforces enhancing recruitment opportunities and enabling career development and progression although would still rely on a range of shared services and partnership arrangements.

Under this Scenario, Longford and Westbury could be retained as administrative, customer service and works hubs to service the communities in Council A.

While a three-council model would require greater regional coordination and cooperation relative to other reform scenarios, it represents an improvement on current council scale (and therefore capability) relative to the status quo. The existing Central Highlands and Southern Midlands communities would benefit from their connection to the fast-growing towns of New Norfolk and Brighton. The model will help coordinate development and services including the implementation of existing strategic planning initiatives, such as the Southern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy (STRLUS).

Alignment with the principles for successful structural reform

Focus on future community needs: The three councils established under this Scenario include at least one significant regional town connected to surrounding rural and highland communities. These towns host important services for their communities (such as healthcare, education, and retail).

In terms of accessing services, if existing council offices across the Community Catchment were maintained as a part of a network model, then between 87 and 97% of residents would be within a 30-minute drive of the major service and administrative hubs. The trade-off which the community will have to consider is whether a three-council model is the most effective and sustainable model for providing local representation and services to the Central and Midlands region.

As described in the other scenarios in this Community Catchment Information Pack, areas of this region are experiencing significant urban growth (most notably Councils A and B). Other areas have seen, and will see, major infrastructure projects such as wind energy and irrigation. These changes will require further and increased strategic planning and infrastructure.

Each of the three councils under the Scenario represent communities with a degree of demographic and economic diversity which should help ensure financial sustainability. However, these councils would likely still need to share services on a local or regional scale. For example, all three councils would have to cooperate to support existing or expanded shared services and regional emergency management committees. The three councils may also need to jointly advocate for their communities to other spheres of government. Likewise, they will need to collaborate to deliver effective land use and strategic planning. The coordination of regional strategy and

economic development, currently undertaken by the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority, would be an ongoing need.

Retain local jobs and services: There is significant scope to retain multiple existing council administrative centres and operations hubs in the different councils to maintain local employment and to support local engagement and service delivery.

Southern Midlands Council and Service Tasmania have integrated their customer service centres in Oatlands, making it simpler for residents to engage with state and local government services face to face. There is potential to apply this in each council area (see Supporting Paper on *State Government Partnership Opportunities*).

Given the relatively small size of Council C in particular (serving a population of approximately 13,000), there would be an ongoing need to share specialist and technical staff with neighbouring councils at a regional level. Regulatory services (building, environmental health, plumbing) and asset construction and maintenance are prime candidates for this approach.

The integration of centralised or standardised corporate 'back-office' systems or services for council finance and administration may reduce staff time spent on administrative tasks, allowing councils to reallocate resources towards improving the scope and quality of service provision (see Supporting Paper on *Shared Services Models*).

Preserve and enhance local voice: The three new, larger councils in this scenario would have enhanced capacity to invest in new and more systematic approaches to community engagement, ensuring that all communities within the larger council areas are heard and represented. If required, there would also be scope to introduce community advisory panels regularly consulted by council to ensure constituents enjoy enhanced formal representation and direct influence in the decision-making process, including community budget priorities (see Supporting Paper on *Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities*). Operations hubs could also be used for a program of scheduled regional council meetings in different areas of the municipality.

Fair funding models: Applying existing rates and funding models to the new council areas, their total rates revenue in 2021 dollars would be an estimated $21.7 for Council A, $13.7m for Council B, and $10.56m for Council C. Establishing new funding models would be easier under this scenario as the two highest rating councils in the Catchment would be combined in the proposed Council C although all three councils would continue to rely on grant funding for a significant proportion of their revenue. One option for enhancing the sustainability of Council C would be to establish an alternative governance and funding model for the remote and sparsely populated highland communities reflecting the approach adopted in other Australian states. Further information is provided in the Supporting Paper on *Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities*.

Appropriate resourcing for transition: Given this scenario involves less change to council structures than other scenarios, the transition costs would be expected to be lower. Careful consideration would need to be given to the status of shared services arrangements, including any financial and staff commitments made to other councils (such as the provision of plumbing services by Brighton to the Tasman Council).

Transition arrangements for this scenario would need to consider the role of the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority, both in relation to member councils and other councils across the broader region, under the new arrangements. As we have noted, variations in the financial assets held by councils would need to be considered as part of the transition arrangements when establishing new councils.

Community data and alignment with reform criteria

The table below presents demographic, household, employment and operational council data for hypothetical councils established under Scenario 3. These data have been modelled using 2021 ABS Census (SA1 level) and other relevant data sets to align with the hypothetical boundaries of the new areas proposed in each scenario.

As we have indicated, these data are indicative and are designed to inform community discussions about the merits of different structural reform options. Structural reforms adopted by the Tasmanian Government based on the Board's recommendations will likely be subject to a detailed technical review and implementation plan. While every effort has been made to ensure consistency and accuracy, variation between SA1 and LGA boundaries may mean that some of the figures below may differ slightly from existing council statistics. Detailed methodological notes are presented in the *Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper*.

Summary Data - Scenario 3

Category		Measure	Council A	Council B	Council C
Overview	**Demographics**	Population	27,831	25,646	13,038
		Median age	46	37.5	43.7
		SEIFA[5] (decile)	4	1	2
	Housing	Total dwellings	12,163	10,030	6,935
		No. of single person households	3,074 (28.0%)	2,126 (24.6%)	1,461 (25.2%)
		% dwellings vacant	9.1	7.2	13.6
		Indicator			
1. Place and Representation	Alignment with local communities of interest	% area workforce residing locally	63.2%	58.4%	70.6%

[5] SEIFA', or 'Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas', is an index developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics which ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage or disadvantage.

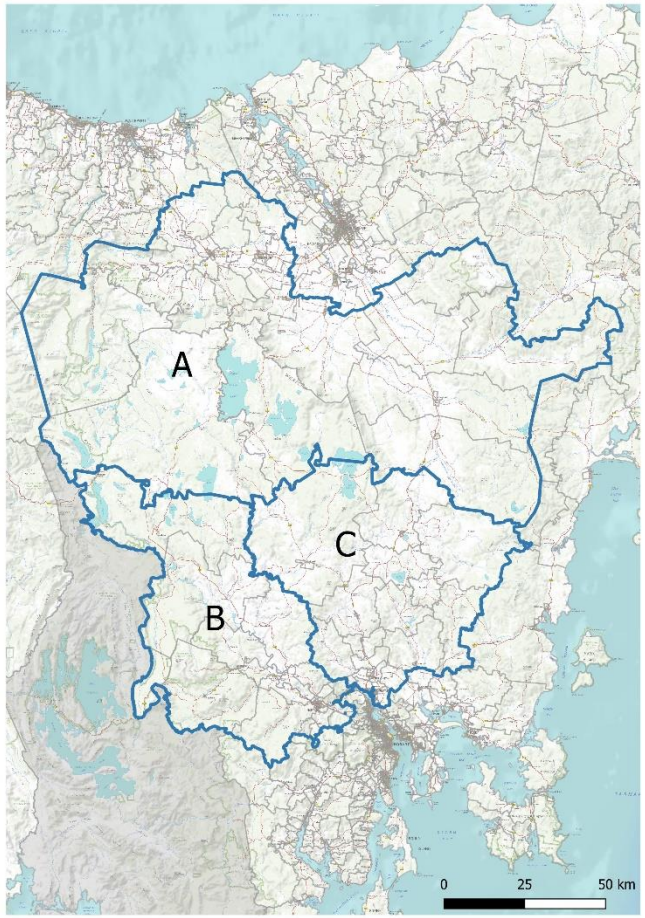
Category		Measure	Council A	Council B	Council C
	Established administrative, commercial and service hub/s	% of population within 30 mins of administrative hub	87%	92%	89%
	Urbanisation	% of population in urban areas of population 10,000 or greater	0%	62%	0%
	Mobility/Migration	% of population living at a different address 5 years ago	30.4	30.1	30.5
2. Future Needs and Priorities	Population growth	Population change *2011-21*	2,819	4,132	1,450
		% population change 2011-21	11.3%	19.2%	12.5%
	Housing supply and infrastructure demand	Change in occupied dwelling numbers (2011-21)	1,291	1,715	505
		% change in occupied dwelling numbers (2011-21)	13.3%	24.8%	9.8%
	Employment growth	Change in labour force 2011-21 by place of residence	14%	30%	18%
	Older/aging communities	% Population over 65	17%	11%	15%
	Younger communities	% Population under 15	19%	24%	20%

Category		Measure	Council A	Council B	Council C
3. Financial Sustainability	Value of rateable land	Value of rateable land - residential	$4,943,474,800	$ 4,643,040,700	$ 2,460,216,200
		Value of rateable land - primary production	$4,102,701,800	$1,005,255,000	$1,162,898,100
		Value of rateable land - industrial	$338,533,500	$167,721,000	$76,618,900
		Value of rateable land - commercial	$268,326,100	$142,552,300	$144,415,600
		Value of rateable land - vacant	$350,453,500	$175,115,600	$242,682,300
		Value of rateable land - other	$628,854,100	$281,166,700	$148,882,900
		Value of rateable land - total	$10,632,343,800	$6,414,851,300	$4,235,714,000
	Estimation of theoretical rate revenue applying current rates[6]	Estimated rate revenue - residential	$12,278,171	$9,463,928	$6,822,685
		Estimated rate revenue - commercial	$1,001,420	$198,480	$504,379
		Estimated rate revenue - industrial	$1,813,926	$529,585	$299,403
		Estimated rate revenue - primary production	$5,531,617	$2,117,229	$1,903,333
		Estimated rate revenue - vacant	$841,827	$677,383	$806,874

[6] There are limitations involved with this analysis, and it is acknowledged that the modelled revenues underestimate actual council revenues in some instances. The modelled revenues are a superior measure of relative fiscal capacity between council scenarios, and caution is advised for any comparison between modelled revenues for scenarios and existing councils. More information is provided in the Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper.

Category		Measure	Council A	Council B	Council C
		Estimated rate revenue - other	$275,361	$690,648	$136,497
		Estimated rate revenue - total	$21,742,322	$13,677,253	$10,473,171
		Estimated rate revenue as a % of area total rateable property value	0.20%	0.21%	0.25%
	Road Infrastructure	Km of council roads - unsealed	630.0	577.7	785.0
		Km of council roads - sealed	1,090.3	364.9	221.6
4. Operational Sustainability	• Councils A and B would have relatively large rates and population bases that should give them the capacity to service their communities. • Council C would have a smaller rates and population base, as well as significant areas of low growth or population decline. It is more likely to need to access external shared service arrangements for some specialist functions.				

Central and Midlands: Scenario 4



Overview

Scenario 4 also creates three new council areas, but with different boundaries to Scenario 3. Here, Council A combines: Meander Valley (minus Hadspen and Carrick areas), Northern Midlands (minus Perth, Evandale, and Longford), and Central Highlands, from just north of Derwent Bridge, the Steppes and Interlaken. Council B merges the Derwent Valley with the southwestern portions of the Central Highlands (retaining Derwent Bridge, Bronte Park and Waddamana, but excluding Bothwell and Interlaken). Council C combines Brighton, Southern Midlands and the south-eastern portion of the Central Highlands (Bothwell and Interlaken). The boundary between the three council areas in the Central Highlands is indicative because the proposed boundary doesn't align with ABS SA1 geography.

The three council areas attempt to more closely group communities of interest and regular travel/ mobility patterns. For example, in this scenario Bothwell is included in Council C reflecting the township's commuting links to Brighton and Hobart. Like Scenario 3, it also connects dispersed rural communities with larger regional service hubs. There is also the potential to strengthen existing coordination and shared service arrangements, and to identify a number of service, administrative and works hubs for the individual councils.

Council Area	2021 Population	% Growth 2011-21
Area A	15,060	6.9%
Area B	11,955	11.1%
Area C	26,386	20.8%

This scenario is designed to test the view that the community in the northern part of the Central Highlands is more closely connected to the Meander Valley and Northern Midlands regions. This scenario also recognises the commuter and service connections to Greater Hobart from the Southern Midlands and Brighton in Council C, and from the Derwent Valley in Council B.

Rationale and evidence

This scenario would establish three councils. Although this scenario is more complex than others in this Community Catchment as the proposed councils are largely independent of existing council boundaries, it merits consideration given it is the most tailored to communities of interest.

This model would increase the scale and capabilities of councils serving the Central and Midlands region, with approximate populations of 15 000, 12 500 and 26 000 for Councils A, B, and C respectively.

This scenario would help most closely connect rural communities with regional towns and accommodate the distinctive needs of the rural hinterlands. It recognises the close connections between Perth, Evandale and Longford and Launceston by allocating these towns to the Tamar Catchment. Despite their rural character, each of the proposed council areas has experienced population growth of between 7 and 20 percent over the past decade.

This Scenario would benefit the Central and Midlands community by increasing the scale and capability of the three proposed councils although not to the extent of Scenarios 1 and 2. The three new councils would each have larger workforces enhancing recruitment opportunities and enabling career development and progression.

Under this scenario, most administrative, customer service, administration and works hubs could be maintained to service the Catchment.

While a three-council model would require greater regional coordination and cooperation relative to other reform scenarios, it represents an improvement on current council scale (and therefore capability) relative to the status quo. It would assist in streamlining coordination in the implementation of strategic planning initiatives, such as the Southern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy (STRLUS).

Alignment with the principles for successful structural reform

Focus on future community needs: Under this scenario there is strong alignment between council boundaries and communities of interest. It observes the significant interaction and engagement between the urban centres of this region. This consolidation of councils would improve whole-of-region cooperation and service sharing as well as collaborations with other tiers of government.

Under this scenario, 76% of residents would be within a 30-minute drive of key service and administrative hubs for Council A, and 97% and 96% for Councils B and C respectively.

The trade-off which the community will have to consider is whether a three-council model is the most effective and sustainable model for providing local representation and services to the Central and Midlands Catchment.

Urban areas within this region are experiencing significant growth (most notably Councils B and C). Such changes will require further and increased strategic planning and infrastructure.

Under this model all three councils would need to cooperate to support existing or expanded shared services and regional emergency management committees. The coordination of regional strategy and economic development, currently undertaken by the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority, would be an ongoing need.

Each of the three councils under the Scenario represent communities with a degree of demographic and economic diversity which should help support financial sustainability.

Retain local jobs and services: There is significant scope to retain multiple existing council administrative centres and operations hubs in the different councils to maintain local employment and to support local engagement and service delivery.

Southern Midlands Council and Service Tasmania have integrated their customer service centres in Oatlands, making it simpler for residents to engage with state and local government services face to face. There is potential to apply this in each council area (see Supporting Paper on *State Government Partnership Opportunities*).

There would be advantages in sharing specialist and technical staff with neighbouring councils at a regional level. Regulatory services (building, environmental health, plumbing) and asset construction and maintenance are prime candidates for this approach.

The integration of centralised or standardised corporate 'back-office' systems or services for council finance and administration may reduce staff time spent on repetitive transactional tasks, allowing councils to reallocate resources towards improving the scope and quality of service provision (see Supporting Paper on *Shared Services Models*).

Preserve and enhance local voice: The three new, larger councils in this scenario would have enhanced capacity to invest in new and more systematic approaches to community engagement, ensuring that all communities within the larger council areas are heard and represented. If required, there would also be scope to introduce community advisory panels regularly consulted by council to ensure constituents enjoy enhanced formal representation and direct influence in the decision-making process, including community budget priorities (see Supporting Paper on *Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities*). Operations hubs could also be used for a program of scheduled regional council meetings in different areas of the municipality.

Fair funding models: Applying existing rates and funding models to the new council areas, their total rates revenue in 2021 dollars would be an estimated $12.5m for Council A, $8.3m for Council B, and $14.7m for Council C. Like Scenario 3, establishing new funding models would be easier under this scenario as the two highest rating councils in the Catchment would be combined in the proposed Council C although all three councils would continue to rely on grant funding for a significant proportion of their revenue. One option for enhancing the sustainability of the council A and B would be to establish an alternative governance and funding model for the remote and sparsely populated communities reflecting the approach adopted in other Australian states. Further information is provided in the Supporting Paper on *Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities*.

Appropriate resourcing for transition:

Careful consideration would need to be given to the status of shared services arrangements, including any financial and staff commitments made to other councils (such as the provision of plumbing services by Brighton to the Tasman Council).

Transition arrangements for this scenario would need to consider the role of the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority, both in relation to member councils and other councils across the broader region, under the new arrangements. As we have noted, variations in the financial assets held by councils would need to be considered as part of the transition arrangements when establishing new councils.

Community data and alignment with reform criteria

The table below presents demographic, household, employment and operational council data for hypothetical councils established under Scenario 4. These data have been produced by analysing 2021 ABS Census (SA1 level) and other relevant data sets to align with the hypothetical boundaries of the new areas proposed in each scenario.

As we have indicated, these data are indicative and are designed to inform community discussions about the merits of different structural reform options. Structural reforms adopted by the Tasmanian Government based on the Board's recommendations will likely be subject to a detailed technical review and implementation plan. While every effort has been made to ensure consistency and accuracy, variation between SA1 and LGA boundaries may mean that some of the figures below may differ slightly from existing council statistics. Detailed methodological notes are presented in the *Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper*.

Summary Data – Scenario 4

Category		Measure	Council A	Council B	Council C
Overview	Demographics	Population	15,060	11,955	26,386
		Median age	47.4	43	37.8
		SEIFA[7] (decile)	3	2	1
	Housing	Total dwellings	6,475	5,044	10,711
		No. of single person households	1,652	1,250	2,233
		% dwellings vacant	11.7	11.0	11.0
		Indicator			

[7] SEIFA', or 'Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas', is an index developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics which ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage or disadvantage.

Category		Measure	Council A	Council B	Council C
1. Place and Representation	Alignment with local communities of interest	% area workforce residing locally	35.2%	63.0%	58.7%
	Established administrative, commercial and service hub/s	% of population within 30 mins of administrative hub	76%	97%	96%
	Urbanisation	% of population in urban areas of population 10,000 or greater	0%	0%	60%
	Mobility/Migration	% of population living at a different address 5 years ago	30.7	30.0	30.0
2. Future Needs and Priorities	Population growth	Population change *2011-21*	970 (6.9%)	1,194 (11.1%)	4,542 (20.8%)
	Housing supply and infrastructure demand	Change in occupied dwelling numbers (2011-21)	424	457	1,811
		% Change in occupied dwelling numbers (2011-21)	7.6%	10.9%	23.7%

Category		Measure	Council A	Council B	Council C
	Employment growth	Change in labour force 2011-21 by place of residence	11%	16%	33%
	Older/aging communities	% Population over 65	18%	19%	16%
	Younger communities	% Population under 15	19%	18%	21%
3. Financial Sustainability	Value of rateable land	Value of rateable land - residential	$2,806,600,000	$2,001,900,000	$4,826,300,000
		Value of rateable land - primary production	$1,339,800,000	$643,200,000	$1,378,600,000
		Value of rateable land - industrial	$77,400,000	$75,500,000	$168,300,000
		Value of rateable land - commercial	$153,000,000	$111,500,000	$182,700,000
		Value of rateable land - vacant	$223,300,000	$192,800,000	$302,400,00
		Value of rateable land - other	$427,800,000	$119,200,00	$157,800,000
		Value of rateable land - total	$5,027,918,000	$3,144,100,000	$7,016,100,000
	Estimation of theoretical rate	Estimated rate revenue - residential	$5,700,000	$5,600,000	$9,900,000

Category		Measure	Council A	Council B	Council C
	revenue applying current rates[8]	Estimated rate revenue - commercial	$500,000	$500,000	$700,000
		Estimated rate revenue - industrial	$300,000	$300,000	$500,000
		Estimated rate revenue - primary production	$5,100,000	$1,200,000	$2,600,000
		Estimated rate revenue - vacant	$700,000	$600,000	$800,000
		Estimated rate revenue - other	$200,000	$100,000	$200,000
		Estimated rate revenue - total	$12,500,000	$8,300,000	$14,700,000
	Road Infrastructure	Km of council roads - unsealed	1,013.5	357.5	803.1
		Km of council roads - sealed	891.3	179.2	403.3
4. Operational Sustainability	• Councils A and B would have relatively smaller rates and population bases. They are more likely to need to access external shared service arrangements for some specialist functions. • Council C would have a relatively large rate and population base that should give it the capacity to service its community.				

[8] There are limitations involved with this analysis, and it is acknowledged that the modelled revenues underestimate actual council revenues in some instances. The modelled revenues are a superior measure of relative fiscal capacity between council scenarios, and caution is advised for any comparison between modelled revenues for scenarios and existing councils. More information is provided in the Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper.

3. Comparison of Scenarios

Criteria and Indicator	Metric								
	Scenario 1 Council A	Scenario 1 Council B	Scenario 2	Scenario 3 Council A	Scenario 3 Council B	Scenario 3 Council C	Scenario 4 Council A	Scenario 4 Council B	Scenario 4 Council C
Place and Representation									
Alignment with local communities of interest ***% area workforce residing locally***	69.4%	36.8%	51.6%	63.2%	58.4%	70.6%	35.2%	63.0%	58.7%
Established administrative, commercial and service hub/s ***% of population within 30 minutes of administrative hub***	96%	74%	85%	87%	92%	89%	76%	97%	96%
Urbanisation ***% of population in urban settlements***	42%	0%	30%	0%	62%	0%	0%	0%	60%
Mobility/Migration ***% of population who have moved in last 5 years***	30.2	30.8	30.4	30.4	30.1	30.5	30.7	30.0	30.0
Future Needs and Priorities									
Population growth 2011-21 ***% growth and absolute number***	5,384 (16.7%)	303 (2%)	6,552 (14.1%)	2,819 (11.3%)	4,132 (19.2%)	1,450 (12.5%)	970 (6.9%)	1,194 (11.1%)	4,542 (20.8%)

Criteria and Indicator	Metric								
	Scenario 1 Council A	Scenario 1 Council B	Scenario 2	Scenario 3 Council A	Scenario 3 Council B	Scenario 3 Council C	Scenario 4 Council A	Scenario 4 Council B	Scenario 4 Council C
Housing supply and infrastructure demand ***Ten-year change (2011-21) in occupied dwelling numbers (absolute and per 1000 pop)***	2,154 (57.4 per 1000)	113 (7.3 per 1000)	2,644 (49.9 per 1000)	1,291 (46.4 per 1000)	1,715 (66.9 per 1000)	505 (38.7 per 1000)	424 (28.2 per 1000)	457 (38.2 per 1000)	1,811 (68.6 per 1000)
Employment growth ***% growth in employment since 2011***	26%	6%	21%	14%	30%	18%	11%	16%	33%
Older/ ageing communities population aged over 65 years (% of total)	12%	19%	14%	17%	11%	15%	18%	19%	16%
Younger communities population aged under 15 years (% of total)	23%	19%	22%	19%	24%	20%	19%	18%	21%
Financial Sustainability									
Value of rateable land ***Total $ value within region***	$10,032,926,300	$7,351,766,000	$17,384,692,300	$10,632,343,800	$6,414,851,300	$4,235,714,000	$5,027,918,000	$3,144,100,000	$7,016,100,000

Criteria and Indicator	Metric								
	Scenario 1 Council A	Scenario 1 Council B	Scenario 2	Scenario 3 Council A	Scenario 3 Council B	Scenario 3 Council C	Scenario 4 Council A	Scenario 4 Council B	Scenario 4 Council C
Estimated total rate revenue[9]	$21,983,200	$12,691,300	$34,674,600	$21,742,300	$13,677,253	$10,473,171	$12,514,900	$8,300,000	$14,700,000
Estimated rates as share land value. Report %	0.22%	0.17%	0.20%	0.20%	0.21%	0.25%	0.25%	0.26%	0.21%
***Road infrastructure** Length and type of council roads in new region* *Kms by type*									
Unsealed	935.2	1,014.2	1,949.4	630.0	577.7	785	1,013.5	357.5	803.1
Sealed	544.0	900.6	1,444.6	1,090.3	364.9	221.6	891.3	179.2	403.3
Additional Key Metrics									
Population	37551	15439	52990	27831	25646	13038	15060	11955	26386
Median Age	39.1	47.6	41.6	46	37.5	43.7	47.4	43	37.8
SEIFA (decile)	1	3	2	4	1	2	3	2	1

[9]There are limitations involved with this analysis, and it is acknowledged that the modelled revenues underestimate actual council revenues in some instances. The modelled revenues are a superior measure of relative fiscal capacity between council scenarios, and caution is advised for any comparison between modelled revenues for scenarios and existing councils. More information is provided in the Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper.

4. Implications for neighbouring Community Catchments

Community Catchments have been presented to facilitate discussions about options for council consolidation at a regional level. We are also mindful that the design of the reforms in one community catchment will have impacts on neighbouring regions and the local government system as a whole. Given this, it is important to note how the design of the Central and Midlands catchment may have implications for neighbouring Community Catchments and councils therein.

Specific observations and implications include:

- The far western and eastern boundaries of this catchment are comparatively clear, being primarily formed by/in national parks to the west and following forested tiers in parallel with the east coast. In comparison, the northern and southern boundaries produce several implications for the neighbouring catchments, as detailed below.
- Although there are strong commuter links between Brighton, New Norfolk and Hobart, it will need to be established whether these communities are more oriented towards the more urban areas to their south, or whether they identify more strongly and perform as service hubs for/with their rural hinterlands.
- In the north of the Catchment, the relocation of Perth, Evandale, Carrick, Hadspen, and Longford (also given their commuter links to Launceston) to the Tamar Valley Community Catchment should also be considered.

5. Appendix

Analysis of existing Councils within (or partially within) community catchment[10]

Council	Population	No. of employees	Average Residential Rates & Annual Charges per Residential Property ($)	Current ratio (10 yr average)	Cash Expense Cover Ratio	Own source revenue coverage ratio (10 yr average)	Underlying surplus ratio (10 yr average)	Debt service cover ratio (8 yr average)	Asset sustainability ratio (7 yr average)
Brighton	18995	68.7	1160.47	3.25	3	87%	0%	0.0	91%
Central Highlands	2520	28	821.52	6.93	22	62%	-5%	1.6	91%
Derwent Valley	10942	57.67	Not provided	1.44	3	75%	1%	11.8	137%
Meander Valley	20709	82.15	1094.4	8.54	13	79%	3%	5.0	126%
Northern Midlands	13745	64.5	1141.91	4.71	18	75%	-2%	6.0	101%
Southern Midlands	6662	42.1	918.34	5.35	20	64%	-3%	28.8	86%

[10] Definitions of data items can be found *Existing Council Data Definitions Supporting Paper*.

Council	Asset renewal funding ratio (7 yr average)	Asset consumption ratio (7 yr average)	Cash and investments held ($'000s)	Net Financial Liabilities Ratio (%)	Interest bearing liabilities ($'000s)	No. of discretionary development applications received	Value of all development approvals ($)	No. of councillors
Brighton	92%	87%	5,172	32%	720	293	69,389,023	9
Central Highlands	99%	81%	11,145	116%	-	47	5,919,850	9
Derwent Valley	104%	68%	4,853	-62%	3,864	167	298,166,440	8
Meander Valley	91%	79%	24,323	50%	3,600	278	85,081,713	9
Northern Midlands	115%	81%	26,152	5%	9,570	248	59,101,247	9
Southern Midlands	92%	70%	14,636	91%	4,415	124	38,781,622	7

Summary of Updates

Version	Date	Change
V1.1	7/7/2023	• Scenario 3 map has undergone minor updates to align with the correct current boundaries between Central Highlands and Southern Midlands councils, and between Derwent Valley and Brighton councils. • Consequential adjustments associated with this boundary correction and other minor corrections were made to the Summary Data for scenarios 3B, 3C, 4B and 4C, and to the Comparison of Scenarios table. • Total dwelling numbers were updated for all scenarios to include unoccupied dwellings. Clarified that 2011-21 dwelling change figures refer to occupied dwellings. No impact on financial data such as rateable land estimations, which were calculated separately.