

Dear Minister,

Local Government Reorganization: Oxfordshire

We are writing as representatives of Parish Councils and Meetings that would be incorporated into the Greater Oxford unitary authority proposed by Oxford City, as part of a 3-authority scheme for the County.

We strongly object to this proposal, in the first place because it does not meet your criteria.

1. At a population of only 240,000 it is less than half your proposed population size of 500,000+, to offer value for money and economic resilience.
2. The 3-Council option is the most expensive of the three for Oxfordshire. It will have the highest service set-up and on-going costs due to the small population.
3. It increases unnecessary fragmentation of service by splitting them into three for the County with tripled overheads.
4. Currently the County Council provides 80% of local-government services and it is questionable whether the current Oxford City Council has the expertise, skills and competence to take over social care, highways, transport infrastructure, education, and fire and rescue.
5. It does not use current district council boundaries as building blocks, instead it cuts up all the boundaries of the district councils surrounding Oxford.
6. It makes the other two unitary authorities it proposes for the County unviable, possibly causing lengthy delays in a boundary commission enquiry.
7. It does not represent a sensible geography which will help to increase housing supply and meet local needs. The Local Plans already provide housing greatly above local needs. It will create urban sprawl, significantly exacerbating access problems for commuters, journey times and traffic congestion and pollution.

We also object to the proposal because it will damage rural communities that currently do not see themselves as in any way part of Oxford City.

8. It creates an undue advantage for the urban City and disadvantage for the rural parishes. Oxford City's urban population of 165,200, will dominate and subsume the 48 rural Green Belt parishes with only 31% of the population.
9. We will receive no significant benefits in exchange.

Yours sincerely,

Signed by

Ginette Camps-Walsh, Chairman, Beckley & Stowood Parish Council
Jane Cranston, Chair, Besselsleigh Parish Meeting
Chris Luke, Chair, Cuddesdon & Denton Parish Council
Jenny Welham, Clerk, Dorchester Parish Council
Sue Cox, Clerk, Forest Hill with Shotover Parish Council

Chris Wright, Chair, Garsington Parish Council
Jacqueline Wren, Clerk, Great Milton Parish Council
Sonja Barter, Clerk, Holton Parish Council
David Slingo, Chair, Horton-cum-Studley Parish Council
Sarah Kearney, Clerk, Kidlington Parish Council
Peter Addyman, Chair, Sandford on Thames Parish Council
Andrew T. Clark, Chairman, Stanton St. John Parish Council
Karen Laister, Chair, Sunningwell Parish Council
Dawn McGiveron, Chair, The Baldons Parish Council
Peter Hore, Chairman, Woodeaton Parish Meeting
David Thornhill, Clerk, Yarnton Parish Council