

Cllr Liz Leffman  
Council Leader  
Oxfordshire County Council

**Councillor Bethia Thomas**  
Leader of the Council

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Dear Liz,

### **English Devolution White Paper**

I wanted to formally write to you to encourage you, as the County Council Leader, to contact the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government as soon as possible to express a strong view, on behalf of Oxfordshire, that we wish to seek their formal support and assistance to move forward at the earliest opportunity with their devolution and local government reorganisation agenda, as outlined within the English Devolution White Paper.

This request is supported by all political Groups within the Vale of White Horse.

My preference for any future combined authority footprint involving the Vale of White Horse would be to seek to base this on an existing partnership geography, such as the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board or the Thames Valley Police area, although I appreciate that an exact geography will need to be the subject of wider conversations with Partners and that Government may have strong views on this matter.

Sometimes, it is not always possible to achieve consensus to do the right thing, but I believe that the Government's agenda, which is comprehensively outlined with the White Paper can best be achieved by Oxfordshire and its partners moving forward positively and quickly with the support of Government. Our residents, our businesses, our partners - as well as our staff - all deserve the clarity this approach would bring, assuming it is supported by Government.

Prevarication and delay will only serve to create instability, confusion, and uncertainty, all of which would be barriers to good decision making and our collective financial sustainability. Delay is likely to harm the vital services we deliver for our communities as well as failing to provide certainty across the unique global hotspot for enterprise and innovation represented by 'Science Vale'.

I will separately copy this letter to the MPs who have constituencies that include the Vale of White Horse.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Bethia Thomas  
Leader of the Council

cc: Martin Reeves, Chief Executive, OCC  
Mark Stone, Chief Executive, VWHDC