



Supplement for

EXECUTIVE - THURSDAY, 13TH NOVEMBER, 2025

Feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Council

Agenda No	Item
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| 6. | <u>Reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee</u> (Pages 5 - 6) |
| 11. | <u>Local Government Reorganisation</u> (Pages 7 - 8) |

Purpose:

To provide the full proposals for the three unitary models covering the entire existing boundary of all Oxfordshire Councils and West Berkshire Council in response to the Government's formal invitation on the 5 February 2025.

Recommendation(s):

That the Executive resolves to:

1. Note that since the statutory invitation to all councils in two tier areas, significant work has been undertaken by all Oxfordshire Councils and that West Oxfordshire and Cherwell District Councils' officers have engaged with officers across Oxfordshire and West Berkshire.
2. Note that two other proposals will be submitted, one proposed by Oxfordshire County Council covering the Oxfordshire area and one from Oxford City Council covering the Oxfordshire and West Berkshire area.
3. Considers the views of Council at their meeting on the 12 November 2025 regarding the three unitary models.
4. Considers approving the submission of a full proposal for a two unitary model based on one new unitary council covering the entire existing boundaries of West Oxfordshire and Cherwell District Councils and Oxford City Council, with a working title of 'Oxford & Shires' and a second new unitary covering the entire existing boundaries of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils and West Berkshire Council, with the working title of 'Ridgeway'
5. Subject to approval, notes that Cherwell District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council will jointly submit the full proposal directly to Government in line with the Oxfordshire invitation letter.
6. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any final amendments to the full proposal and associated documents for the 2 unitary model prior to submission to Government.

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Executive response to recommendations on from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 November 2025 on Local Government Reorganisation

Recommendation	Agreed Y / N?	Comment	Responsible Executive Member
1. Strengthen the focus on addressing the specific challenges faced in rural areas (e.g. mental health, agriculture) within the Two Unitary Authority proposal.	Y	I would like to thank Overview and Scrutiny for their thoughtful, thorough and constructive contribution. They have raised really positive points on how we can further strengthen the two unitary proposal before we submit it to government. Officers have taken notes on the comments raised and I have asked the document is updated to reflect their feedback before it is submitted. Town and Parish Councils are the bedrock of our communities. A fundamental aspect of the two unitary proposal is creating councils that are locally responsive and will work closely with our local councils in future to meet the needs of our communities. We will engage with our town and parish councils over the coming years to support them during the transition period to whatever new structure the government decides.	Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council
2. Strengthen the mentions of the equality aspects (e.g. Housing, Social Care, SEND) within the Two Unitary Authority proposal.	Y		
3. Continue to engage with Town and Parish Councils to clarify the role they will have in the context of LGR and reflect this within the model and strengthen the mention of this within the Two Unitary Authority proposals.	Y		

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Comments from full Council on 12 November 2025 to Executive on 13 November 2025 on Local Government Reorganisation.

Full Council debated the three proposals and made the following comments and observations:

Proposal	Observations
1UA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on prestige. • Poses more questions than answers – more so than the alternative proposals. • Concern district councils would effectively be absorbed by the County Council. • Timeline for producing a county-wide local plan within one year is unrealistic. • Concern over local representation; Councillors would represent a very high number of electors. • Risks building on “the same old” in a bad way. • Similar proposal considered and rejected previously.
2UA -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low risk, high resilience and value for money. • Concern about urban interests overriding rural interests in Oxford and Shires. • City brings opportunities, assets and influence to Oxford and Shires e.g. improvements to the A40, trading company, housing company, housing revenue account, acceleration of affordable housing delivery. • Opportunity to build on what works well at the different councils and improve services. • Districts understand town and parish councils and how to progress those relationships. • Better for growth and development e.g. Carterton. • Has costs but minimises disruption to services. • Oxford and Shires has a good balance of urban areas, towns, villages and urban areas; brings different communities together. • Right size to protect and improve services to residents. • Supported by multiple authorities and builds on close partnership working. • Fewer unanswered questions than alternative proposals. • Better of the three options.
3UA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk to green belt. • Very Oxford-centric. • Unbalanced and unrealistic growth.

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