Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Jim McMahon OBE MP
Minister for Local Government, Devolution and Regional Growth
2 Marsham Street
London
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Council Leaders in
Oxfordshire and West Berkshire
By email

23 November 2026

Dear Leaders,

On 29 October, the Secretary of State and I set out that following a review interrogating the key pillars and framework underpinning the local government reorganisation programme, we remain committed to delivering local government reorganisation and that we will continue to move forward with the programme based on the existing criteria.

I also set out as part of that announcement that in respect of Oxfordshire, we have carefully considered the proposals received, their merits, and all relevant evidence and views against the existing criteria. Following this consideration we were minded to implement:

- Three unitary proposal submitted by Oxford City Council, including the adjoining area of West Berkshire Council – with the boundary change Oxford City Council requested alongside the proposal.

Before reaching a final decision on which proposal, if any, to implement, with or without modification, I committed that there would be a further period of a minimum of three weeks for representations for any additional material that may be relevant to that provisional decision. Any final implementation decision would also be subject to Parliamentary approval.

The call for representations will be an evidence-gathering exercise following the earlier statutory consultation. It does not reopen that consultation and respondents should not repeat material already submitted. All responses to this call for evidence will be carefully considered alongside all previous consultation responses and any other relevant information. A decision will then be taken on how to proceed.

This is an important opportunity to help shape Local Government Reorganisation in your area. As a principal council affected by the proposal I would like to invite you to respond with anything not previously submitted. Responses are also welcome from anyone with relevant evidence including neighbouring councils, Members of Parliament, public bodies, local residents, businesses and the voluntary and community sector.

Representations in response to this call should be submitted through the department's platform 'Citizen Space' in the first instance, available online through the Local Government Reorganisation page on gov.uk, though responses can also be made by email to

LGRcallforevidence@communities.gov.uk and post. Responses can be made from 23 November 2026 until 23:59 on 14 December 2026.

With regard to the detailed matters for inclusion in the legislation that establishes new councils (the Structural Changes Order), such as the implementation model, council names or joint committee membership, I know that you have already made representations on these elements. Once a final decision is reached, I will also consider how the decision should be implemented, including consideration of these matters. I will consider all representations already made as part of this including those made earlier in the summer, and any additional information received following the previous decision.

Please do let me and my officials know, through your named local government reorganisation delivery lead, in parallel to the call for evidence process, if there is anything you would like to add or change in the representations you have already made. This will enable the Secretary of State and I to reach initial decisions on implementation alongside a final decision on which proposal, if any, to implement.

I am grateful for your continued commitment to local government, and the patience you have shown through this process. If any proposals are to be implemented, we would expect new unitary councils to take on full council roles from April 2029, with transitional arrangements in 2028-29 to support a smooth implementation. The final decisions will be communicated as soon as practicable.

I welcome your further representations, and any additional evidence you wish to submit, to support a final decision being made.

I am copying this letter to your Chief Executives, MPs, Chief Fire Officers and the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner.

Yours sincerely,



JIM MCMAHON OBE MP
Minister for Local Government, Devolution and Regional Growth