

Personal Data

1. Please read and tick the box before proceeding with the consultation

(Required) The next pages in this consultation include free text boxes. Please tick this box to confirm that you will not include information which may identify an individual in these boxes.

Consultation on the Proposal from Oxfordshire County Council

Consultation for one unitary council:

Oxfordshire: Cherwell, Oxford City, Oxfordshire County, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, and West Oxfordshire.

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal suggests councils that are based on sensible geographies and economic areas?

Somewhat disagree

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?

Somewhat disagree

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils are the right size to be efficient, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks?

Somewhat disagree

4. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?

Somewhat disagree

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal has been informed by local views and will meet local needs?

Somewhat disagree

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing the councils in this proposal will support devolution arrangements?

Neither agree nor disagree

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment?

Somewhat disagree

8. If you would like to, please use the free text box to explain the answers you have provided to questions 1-7 referring to the question numbers as part of your answer. You may also use the box to provide any other comments you have on the proposal.

Q1-3: The parish council does not support a single Oxfordshire-wide unitary authority because it does not provide a workable solution for West Berkshire. West Berkshire is excluded from the proposal, and the most likely consequence would be a merger with Reading. This would

combine a predominantly rural area with a major urban centre that has no parishes and a very different governance culture. Such an arrangement would not reflect the needs, identity or service patterns of rural communities like ours. At the same time, the single Oxfordshire model does not create a coherent geography for Oxfordshire itself, as it brings together very different urban and rural areas under one authority.

Q4-5: The proposal does not demonstrate how a single authority would deliver sustainable, high-quality services for areas with fundamentally different characteristics. West Berkshire has long-standing functional and rural links with South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse, including shared settlement patterns, market-town economies and similar rural service needs. These relationships would be lost under a single Oxfordshire authority, and a Reading–West Berkshire arrangement would not provide the rural focus required. The scale of a single Oxfordshire council also increases the risk that resources would be concentrated around Oxford City, leaving rural areas - both within Oxfordshire and neighbouring West Berkshire - at a disadvantage.

Q6–7: The proposal does not appear to reflect local views in either Oxfordshire or West Berkshire. Communities in both areas value local identity and the ability to influence decisions at a meaningful level. A single authority would reduce opportunities for neighbourhood-level engagement and make it harder for parishes to have a voice. For West Berkshire, the model offers no clear or appropriate place within the wider reorganisation, and it risks weakening rural representation rather than strengthening it. A structure that groups rural West Berkshire with rural South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse would provide a far more coherent and community-focused solution.

9. I confirm that I have not provided any information that identifies an individual in the free text box.

Yes

Consultation on the Proposal from Cherwell District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, and West Oxfordshire District Council

This is a proposal that is accompanied by a request that the Secretary of State considers boundary change or that affects wider public services. Please answer the questions on the proposal including the modifications. We will also ask you an additional question on whether you think there is a strong justification for these changes.

Consultation for 2 unitary councils:

- **Oxford and Shires Council:** Cherwell, Oxford City and West Oxfordshire.
- **Ridgeway Council:** South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, plus West Berkshire (outside of invitation area).

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal suggests councils that are based on sensible geographies and economic areas?

Somewhat agree

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?

Somewhat agree

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils are the right size to be efficient, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks?

Somewhat agree

4. To what extent do you agree or disagree that this proposal will put local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing, particularly given that some councils in the area in receipt of exceptional financial support?

Somewhat agree

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?

Somewhat agree

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal has been informed by local views and will meet local needs?

Somewhat agree

8. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment?

Somewhat agree

9. If you would like to, please use the free text box to explain the answers you have provided to questions 1-8 referring to the question numbers as part of your answer. You may also use the box to provide any other comments you have on the proposal.

Q1-3: The parish council strongly supports the creation of Ridgeway Council. This geography reflects long-standing links between West Berkshire and the Vale of White Horse area and provides a coherent footprint for rural communities. The scale is appropriate for effective service delivery and local representation.

Q4-5: A two-unitary model offers a realistic balance between financial resilience and local responsiveness. It provides a clearer opportunity to protect rural services and ensure fair funding for areas like ours, without the risks associated with a very large single authority.

Q6-8: The proposal aligns with local views expressed within our parish. A Ridgeway authority would strengthen community identity and provide better opportunities for engagement than a county-wide model. It delivers the benefits of reorganisation without unnecessary boundary disruption.

10. This is a proposal that affects wider public services. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal sets out a strong public services and financial sustainability justification for these changes?

Somewhat agree

11. If you would like to, please use this free text box to explain your answer to question 10

The parish council considers that the two-unitary proposal provides a reasonable and proportionate justification for changes affecting wider public services. The scale of the proposed Ridgeway Council appears appropriate for maintaining service quality while improving financial sustainability, particularly for rural areas such as ours. The model offers a clearer opportunity to protect local services without the disruption associated with larger or more complex reorganisations. While further detail would be helpful, the overall case for public service resilience is stronger than in the alternative proposals.

12. I confirm that I have not provided any information that identifies an individual in the free text box.

Yes

Consultation on the Proposal from Oxford City Council

This is a proposal that is accompanied by a request that the Secretary of State considers boundary change or that affects wider public services. Please answer the questions on the proposal including the modifications. We will also ask you an additional question on whether you think there is a strong justification for these changes.

Consultation for 3 unitary councils:

- **Greater Oxford Council:** Oxford City plus 15 parishes from Cherwell, 25 parishes from South Oxfordshire and 9 parishes from Vale of White Horse
- **Northern Oxfordshire Council:** Cherwell less 15 parishes and West Oxfordshire
- **Ridgeway Council:** South Oxfordshire less 25 parishes, Vale of White Horse less 9 parishes, plus West Berkshire (outside of invitation area)

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal suggests councils that are based on sensible geographies and economic areas?

Somewhat agree

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?

Neither agree nor disagree

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils are the right size to be efficient, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks?

Somewhat agree

4. To what extent do you agree or disagree that this proposal will put local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing, particularly given that some councils in the area are in receipt of exceptional financial support?

Neither agree nor disagree

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?

Neither agree nor disagree

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal has been informed by local views and will meet local needs?

Somewhat disagree

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing the councils in this proposal will support devolution arrangements?

Somewhat agree

8. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment?

Neither agree nor disagree

9. If you would like to, please use the free text box to explain the answers you have provided to questions 1-8 referring to the question numbers as part of your answer. You may also use the box to provide any other comments you have on the proposal.

Q1-3: The parish council supports the principle of a Ridgeway Council, as it reflects the long-standing rural links between West Berkshire, the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire. These areas share similar settlement patterns, market-town economies and service needs. However, the three-council proposal introduces significant boundary changes across Oxfordshire that create uncertainty and disrupt established community identities. While Ridgeway itself is a sensible geography, the wider restructuring required to create the other two councils makes the overall proposal less coherent.

Q4-5: The proposal does not clearly demonstrate how such extensive boundary changes would improve financial resilience or service sustainability. West Berkshire's rural communities rely on stable, predictable service arrangements, and the scale of reorganisation proposed here risks diverting attention and resources away from frontline delivery. The two-unitary model achieves the same benefits for Ridgeway without the disruption associated with redrawing district boundaries.

Q6-8: The parish council does not believe that the boundary changes proposed reflect local views in either West Berkshire or rural Oxfordshire. Communities value continuity, local identity and the ability to influence decisions at a meaningful level. Splitting existing districts and moving parishes between new authorities risks weakening neighbourhood-level engagement rather than strengthening it. While we support the creation of Ridgeway, we do not consider the wider restructuring in this proposal to be necessary or beneficial for our area.

10. This is a proposal that is accompanied by a request that the Secretary of State considers boundary change or that affects wider public services. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal sets out a strong public services and financial sustainability justification for these changes?

Somewhat disagree

11. If you would like to, please use this free text box to explain your answer to question 10

The proposal does not provide a clear or compelling justification for the scale of boundary changes required. Ridgeway can be created without redrawing district boundaries, as demonstrated in the two-unitary model. The additional disruption proposed here does not appear to offer financial or service benefits for rural communities in West Berkshire or neighbouring areas, and risks undermining established local relationships and service arrangements.

12. I confirm that I have not provided any information that identifies an individual in the free text box.

Yes