

Response ID ANON-ETR5-X88N-P

Submitted to Consultation on Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Oxfordshire
Submitted on 2026-03-12 13:05:21

Tell us about yourself

1 What is your name?

Name:
CPRE - Campaign to Protect Rural England

2 Are you responding as an individual or providing an official response on behalf of an organisation?

Official response on behalf of an organisation

3 Are you providing the official response from a named consultee?

No

4 In which council area is your address? (if you are responding as an individual this is your home address. If you are responding as an organisation this is your organisation address)

Oxfordshire County Council

5 If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please let us know the organisation's name:

Organisation:
CPRE - Campaign to Protect Rural England

6 If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please let us know your position within the organisation:

Position in organisation::
Director

7 If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please select the type of organisation from the options below:

Other

8 What is your email address?

Email address::
director@cpreoxon.org.uk

Personal Data

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

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

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

Dropdown answers:
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?

Dropdown answers:
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?

Dropdown answers:
Somewhat agree

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

Dropdown answers:

Somewhat agree

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

Dropdown answers:

Somewhat agree

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

Dropdown answers:

Somewhat agree

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

Dropdown answers:

Strongly agree

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.

Text box to add further comments:

CPRE supports whichever of the proposed options, the single-county unitary or the two-unitary option, that best balances strategic planning needs with strong protection for our rural areas. Both the One Oxfordshire (single unitary) and the Two Unitary options offer the opportunity to plan housing, transport and infrastructure in a coherent, county-wide way. Either of these alternatives would spread development more evenly across the county, align growth with transport, infrastructure and service planning, and reduce pressure on the Green Belt and rural areas. In practical terms, this means new homes can be built where needed (for example, by making use of high-density brownfield sites) without sacrificing the integrity of our surrounding landscapes.

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

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

Dropdown answers:

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?

dropdown answers:

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?

dropdown answers:

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?

Dropdown answers:

Neither agree nor disagree

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

Dropdown answers:

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?

Dropdown answers:

Somewhat agree

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

Dropdown answers:

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?

Dropdown answers:

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.

Text box to add further comments:

CPRE supports whichever of the proposed options, the single-county unitary or the two-unitary option, that best balances strategic planning needs with strong protection for our rural areas. Both the One Oxfordshire (single unitary) and the Two Unitary options offer the opportunity to plan housing, transport and infrastructure in a coherent, county-wide way. Either of these alternatives would spread development more evenly across the county, align growth with transport, infrastructure and service planning, and reduce pressure on the Green Belt and rural areas. In practical terms, this means new homes can be built where needed (for example, by making use of high-density brownfield sites) without sacrificing the integrity of our surrounding landscapes.

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?

Dropdown answers:

Neither agree nor disagree

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

Text box to add further comments:

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

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

Dropdown answers:

Strongly 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?

dropdown answers:

Strongly 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?

dropdown answers:

Strongly disagree

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?

Dropdown answers:

Strongly disagree

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

Dropdown answers:

Strongly disagree

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

Dropdown answers:

Strongly disagree

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

Dropdown answers:

Strongly disagree

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

Dropdown answers:

Strongly 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.

Text box to add further comments:

CPRE Oxfordshire is strongly opposed to this option as set out by Oxford City Council. This option would comprise of a population of only 240,000 which is less than half the proposed population size of 500,000+, to offer value for money and economic resilience. It is the most expensive option of the three for Oxfordshire and it will have the highest service set-up and on-going costs due to the small population. It increases unnecessary fragmentation of services by splitting them into three for the County with tripled overheads. It does not use current district council boundaries, instead it cuts up all the boundaries of the district councils surrounding Oxford and extends the city boundary across virtually the entire Oxford Green Belt and much of the surrounding rural area. In effect, it would swallow up large parts of the Oxford Green Belt. This is nothing less than a Green Belt land grab: it would transfer long-term planning controls over protected countryside to a single urban-centric authority. We have repeatedly stressed that reorganisations must not become a pretext to weaken existing safeguards. The Green Belt in Oxfordshire was established to protect our historic city, farmland and wildlife from sprawl, and it provides critical environmental benefits from biodiversity and flood mitigation to carbon storage and public access to nature. Trampling on these protections for the sake of development targets would be a grave mistake.

On these grounds, CPRE Oxfordshire calls on the Government to ensure that any reorganisation is conducted in a way that respects long-term strategic protections and democratic accountability, and is fully guided by environmental sustainability. In practice, this means leaving the Green Belt and other designated landscapes intact. For example, CPRE's guidelines stress that any new governance must embed "a duty to protect the rural environment including landscapes, biodiversity, green spaces and heritage" and should only consider development on best-quality land "as a last resort". It also calls for stronger community involvement and oversight – in other words, "stronger, not weaker, community voice" in line with our countryside's needs.

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?

Dropdown answers:

Strongly disagree

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

Text box to add further comments:

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

Yes