

Oxfordshire

Personal Details:

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Comment text:

Dear LGBCE,

Please find attached the Labour & Co-operative Group Submission to LGBCE's Consultation on its Draft Proposals for New Electoral Arrangements for Oxfordshire County Council.

I would be grateful if you could confirm receipt.

Best wishes,

Brad

Attached Documents:

- Draft Proposals Submission.pdf

Oxfordshire County Council Labour & Co-operative Group Submission to LGBCE's Consultation on its Draft Proposals for New Electoral Arrangements

Cherwell

The Labour & Co-operative Group supports the LGBCE's Draft Proposals for the following proposed electoral divisions in Cherwell: Bicester East, Bicester North, Bicester South, Bicester West, Kidlington East, Kidlington North & Otmoor and Kidlington West.

We would support the name of the proposed Bicester South division to be amended to Bicester South & Ambrosden, as this better reflects the inclusion of the community of Ambrosden in the proposed division. The name is also shared with the mostly coterminous district ward.

Labour reiterates its support for the initial arrangement boundaries submitted by the County Council on 28 March 2023 for proposed Cropredy and Wroxton, Adderbury, Bloxham and Bodicote, Deddington and Hook Norton, and Fringford and Heyfords electoral divisions. This allows for electoral equality to be better preserved, whilst allowing for new divisional arrangements to reflect the results of the 2021 Cherwell Community Governance Review. This added new developments bordering Banbury to be added to the town area.

Whereas in the rest of North Oxfordshire, Labour wholeheartedly supports the original Council Council submission, in Banbury itself we feel that the LGBCE proposals are much more appropriate than the original County Council submission. With the caveat that we would like those areas added to Banbury in the recent Community Governance Review to be added to the appropriate county divisions. This includes the new properties west of Warwick Road, which are accessed which accessed via Greville Road and Walker Road, and the 250 planned properties at Drayton Lodge Farm in the proposed Banbury Hardwick division. Similarly, we would propose that the new development south of Sycamore Drive be included within the proposed Banbury Calthorpe division.

Labour supports the LGBCE's view of the value of coterminous boundaries. The LGBCE's draft proposals in Banbury closely resemble the current recognised district boundaries. There is only one major variation from this, in Easington, with part of Easington going into the proposed new Ruscote division. Other than this, the LGBCE proposals preserve the District Council Wards of Banbury Cross, Banbury Hardwick, Banbury Grimsbury & Hightown, Banbury Ruscote and Banbury Calthorpe & Easington.

This is good for local democracy and good for residents' sense of which area they belong to. It is already difficult enough for residents to know who to contact about local issues, we should not make it any more difficult by making the County division

boundaries vastly different to the district wards in Banbury. Especially when these already well reflect existing communities.

The LGBCE's draft proposals in Banbury reflect contiguous communities that make sense to the residents which would live in them. Alternative proposals would carve up Town centre and Neithrop communities, which have significant deprivation and share common interest and access common facilities. They would instead be split up and combined with larger distinct suburban communities, such as those in Calthorpe and Easington. This would undermine objectives to accurately reflect existing communities in electoral arrangements and would undermine electoral representation – with Banbury's deprived communities having a more limited voice after being carved up. Often these residents already do not have a voice at County Hall. Electoral arrangements should not make this worse by dividing up these contiguous Town centre communities.

The last District Council Boundary Review rightfully recognised the similarities and shared community links, interests and amenities between the communities of Calthorpe and Easington in the south of the town. This should be reflected in the new County divisional arrangements. Labour would support the renaming of the proposed Banbury Calthorpe division to Banbury Calthorpe & Easington in line with the name of the mostly coterminous district ward.

Oxford

The Labour & Co-operative Group supports the LGBCE's Draft Proposals for Oxford City aside from those areas discussed below.

Regarding the proposed Jericho & Osney electoral division, Labour would instead support 96 to 118 Walton Street forming part of the new Parks electoral division (the successor the current University Parks division, in which these properties currently fall). This would ensure that the new boundaries are coterminous with the current City Council boundaries between the Carfax & Jericho ward and Walton Manor ward. The centre of Walton Street is an established political boundary and is understood by residents, even if the community boundary between Jericho and Walton Manor is unclear and disputed.

Labour supports the LGBCE's decision to include the Broad Street area within the new Jericho & Osney division. This would improve electoral equality and make the new boundary between the Jericho & Osney division and (University) Parks division coterminous with the boundary between the City Council wards of Carfax & Jericho and Holywell.

South Oxfordshire

The Labour & Co-operative Group supports the LGBCE's Draft Proposals for South Oxfordshire.

Some concerns have been raised regarding the suggested recreation of a single-member Didcot Town Council 'Orchard' ward, which was previously abolished in the 2022 South Oxfordshire Community Governance review and absorbed as part of a new larger Northbourne & Orchard ward. This was considered to improve electoral and community representation, as these areas are very interlinked, demographically similar and have similar interests.

Three new single-member Didcot Town Council wards of Broadway, Jubilee and Orchard are being proposed by the LGBCE. We suggest they reflect on the findings of the 2022 South Oxfordshire Community Governance review.

Vale of White Horse

The Labour & Co-operative Group supports the LGBCE's Draft Proposals for Vale of White Horse.

West Oxfordshire

The Labour & Co-operative Group supports the LGBCE's Draft Proposals for West Oxfordshire.

10/12/2023

Cllr Brad Baines
[REDACTED]