



BLEDLOW-CUM-SAUNDERTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Martin Tett
Leader
Buckinghamshire County Council
County Hall
Walton Street
Aylesbury
HP20 1UA

Dear Mr Tett

Unitary authority proposals for Buckinghamshire

I am writing on behalf of Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Parish Council to express our support for the single county-level unitary authority proposed by Buckinghamshire County Council and as documented by EY.

The Parish Council has received presentations from both BCC proposing a county-wide unitary authority and from WDC proposing a structure splitting the county into three unitary authorities. On the Parish Council's behalf I also attended the Town and Parish Councils' Conference held in Aylesbury on 12 December 2016, which confirmed in my mind that the approach of a single authority for Buckinghamshire would be the best solution both for the Parish and for the County as a whole.

- In times of financial pressure it is clearly preferable to achieve the maximum budgetary savings.
- A county-wide approach is also easier for people to understand. Many do not know whether to contact the District or County on specific issues. This is time consuming for those seeking to resolve an issue and must impose an overhead on the officers of both the district and county councils.
- With fewer authorities Bledlow-cum-Saunderton and many other Parishes will experience fewer of the complications which inevitably arise near the boundaries of public authorities.

In their paper WDC give great weight to the borders of various public organisations coinciding with the proposed area of their new unitary authority e.g. the area covered by hospital trusts. Against this I believe the area of the clinical commissioning group serving Bledlow-cum-Saunderton would fall mainly within a new Aylesbury district-level authority.

We understand under either proposal that education will remain under a single county-wide authority. We strongly support this as for grammar schools the catchment for the Parish is split between schools at High Wycombe and Aylesbury. For non-grammar schools, were the education authority to be split a worse issue would arise with Princes Risborough School where the entire Parish lies within this upper school's catchment.

Are you able to give us any help by providing a consolidated list of such public organisations of whose boundaries the Parish Council should be aware?

The Practical Parish Perspective

We have direct experience of public sector boundaries proving troublesome. An excellent example of this was a flood on the B4009 where it crosses Cuttle Brook which at this point defines the county boundary. Buckinghamshire highways claimed the flood was the responsibility of Oxfordshire and vice versa. This caused about an 18 month delay before responsibility for the flood was acknowledged or apportioned, let alone until the necessary remedial action was taken. The more public sector boundaries we have the more frequently such problems will arise.

Apart from the problems already mentioned above, another natural effect is that transport initiatives perhaps understandably tend to centre on the largest town in any authority's area. There will be many other disadvantages for the larger number of Parishes which find themselves on the boundary between multiple ex-Buckinghamshire authorities – thus from a simply parochial perspective the Parish Council firmly supports a single Buckinghamshire-wide unitary authority.

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Simon Breese.

Simon Breese
Chairman, Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Parish Council

c.c. Katrina Wood, leader of Wycombe District Council