

Councillor Barry Wood  
Chair  
Arc Leadership Group

**Councillor Emily Smith**  
Leader of the Council

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Dear Barry,

I write to confirm that the Vale of White Horse District Council does not support the proposal to continue to seek to develop a pan-regional partnership across the Oxford – Cambridge Arc.

I, and my Council, believe that the proposals do not represent value for money. At a time when budgets are more constrained than ever, we cannot justify continuing to spend money and time on a project that does not guarantee tangible benefit to our residents.

We also believe that the partner Councils, Local Enterprise Partnerships and Universities across the proposed 'region' do not sufficiently all share the same goals in relation to growth and the environment, and nor do they represent a shared and consistent geography.

Following consultation with Vale members and officers my position is that we should not continue to work on the Arc project as a pan-regional partnership and, instead, should seek to work through existing partnerships within Oxfordshire, the wider south-east and more fully engage with England's Economic Heartland.

My recollection from the recent plenary discussion was that there was not a clear majority of Councils across the Arc who were in favour of continuing to pursue a pan-regional partnership and I believe that point should be made to Government in any further correspondence on this matter. Buckinghamshire were also not present, and their views are well known on this matter and represent a large geographical part of the Arc, and crucially for Oxfordshire, are part of the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System (BOB ICS). I believe that engagement with the new ICS and partnerships across it, are of far more direct relevance to our residents than the Arc as the BOB ICS is a Government defined 'area' within which our future health, social care and prevention agendas will be developed and delivered.

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Like many other Councils, the Vale has recently passed a motion calling on the Government to do more to address the cost-of-living crisis. I would suggest that at this time, with unprecedented economic challenges being faced by so many residents and businesses, any additional government funding that can be made available would be far better targeted on supporting our most vulnerable residents and our rural communities and this view was reflected in our recent Council motion. I believe that this view is shared by other Councils, including South Oxfordshire.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Emily Smith  
Leader of the Council