

Cllr Liz Leffman
Leader
Oxfordshire County Council

Councillor Emily Smith
Leader of the Council

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Via email:
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Dear Liz,

I am writing to raise my concern about any submission to Government to establish Investment Zones within Oxfordshire.

I am particularly concerned about the loss of local planning powers that Investment Zones represent. Vale of White Horse District Council has consistently argued for more local democratic decision making and more tools to ensure that development delivers truly affordable homes, alongside the infrastructure required for people to live healthy lives. Investment Zones will remove local powers and weaken our position to negotiate zero carbon development that meets genuine local need.

As you are aware, Oxfordshire has low unemployment and a desperate need for affordable housing. Our county is already a high growth area and we are struggling to ensure infrastructure keeps pace therefore I do not believe incentives for investment are required in Oxfordshire. As I understand it the purpose of Investment Zones is to level up growth across the country not to create more growth in areas that are already growing strongly.

Vale of White Horse District Council is not putting forward any suggested Investment Zone sites as we do believe they are in line with Oxfordshire Strategic Vision, Good Growth Principles and we believe it will make it harder to deliver corporate plan objectives, particularly around climate and the environment.

We are not aware of any evidence that innovation and science is currently space constrained in Oxfordshire.

If Oxfordshire County Council is minded to put forward sites elsewhere in the county, I urge you to please ensure that the impact on Vale residents and businesses is fully considered

I would ask you to consider what further pressures any Investment Zone designations in Oxfordshire would put on the already stretched transport

infrastructure position and how it would impact your Local Transport and Connectivity Plan?

Any zones in neighbouring districts with whom we share a boundary (West Oxfordshire and Oxford City) will have an impact on Vale residents and businesses and I urge you to consider these impacts carefully before submitting any Expression of Interest.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E Smith', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Emily Smith
Leader of the Council