



For immediate release

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Business boost for battle against ‘super council’

Businesses in West Oxfordshire are backing the battle against plans to create a ‘super council’ in the county.

West Oxfordshire District Council has launched its Too Good to Lose campaign highlighting how local services and benefits such as free parking, low council tax and proposed A40 improvements are at risk under Oxfordshire County Council’s plans to create a unitary authority.

The campaign has received strong support from local residents and businesses are also keen to pledge their support.



Becs Hinds, who owns the Eden Café on Wesley Walk, Witney, said: “I have had excellent support from West Oxfordshire District Council – there is always someone to talk to who understands the town and I think we would lose that service if the county took over.

“There are a good number of independent businesses in Witney and they really benefit from free parking as customers have more time and so

enjoy a better experience.”

Gemma Finch, owner of The Angel at Burford and Chair of Burford Chamber of Trade, said: “Tourism is hugely important to the town and free parking has a massive impact on visitor numbers. Losing it would be a major concern.”

And Rebecca Hogarty, manager of children’s clothing and accessories store Brown Bear on Mill Walk, Witney, added: “People value having local independent businesses and will travel to find them so free parking is a real positive.

“It was one of the reasons why we opened the shop in Witney in the first place.”

Oxfordshire County Council is promoting ideas for the creation of a single unitary authority, One Oxfordshire, that could sweep away existing district councils.

West Oxfordshire District Council leaders believe a unitary council would fail to recognise the specific needs of local residents

Instead, they are in favour of the creation of a combined authority model with a local mayor which would pave the way for devolution, unlocking central government funds for major infrastructure improvements.

Cllr Carol Reynolds, Cabinet Member for Car Parking and Transport, said: “The message from residents and businesses in West Oxfordshire is clear – they do not want to lose essential benefits such as free parking and low council tax which we have provided for many years.

“A remote single authority would not address local needs and our businesses and communities would suffer as a result.”

ENDS

Pic shows L-R: Becs Hinds, Cllr Carol Reynolds, Witney market trader Dave Edwards and Rebecca Hogarty

Further information:

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