



For immediate release

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Residents back battle against 'super council' plans

Thousands of residents have overwhelmingly backed West Oxfordshire District Council's 'Too Good to Lose' campaign opposing plans to create a unitary authority.

A survey asking for residents' views was completed by 4,364 people with 97 per cent agreeing they wanted to see more options to improve and safeguard local services than the single proposal put forward by Oxfordshire County Council.

And a further 92 per cent said they wanted to see greater savings than the 2.4 per cent identified in the County proposal which could be secured through initiatives such as councils working together and more efficiently without cutting frontline services.

Cllr James Mills, Leader of West Oxfordshire District Council, said: "It is crystal clear from this survey that our residents do not want to see the creation of a unitary authority devised by Oxfordshire County Council.

"We all recognise there is far too much at risk in the District including free parking and low council tax which are of huge benefit to everyone."

As well as the survey, Cllr Mills has received 160 letters, more than 250 emails and almost 200 telephone calls of support.

He believes the County's proposals which will involve creating a whole new council and sweeping away existing district councils, would take at least two years.

"We have been feeling the effect of the County's cuts including potholed roads, shrinking social care and disappearing rural bus services for years and it is getting worse," he said.

"Creating a new council would be hugely expensive for the tax payer and there is no guarantee key services would be maintained and restored let alone improved."

Cllr Mills is in favour of creating a combined authority model with a local mayor which would pave the way for devolution, unlocking central government funds for major infrastructure developments.

He added: "We know we can continue to provide efficient services and great benefits as well as delivering the homes and road improvements that are so urgently needed."

ENDS

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