# District Council Report 2/11/2026

**Local Government Reorganisation Restarted**
The Government has confirmed its position on local government reorganisation in Oxfordshire and West Berkshire, following the review announced last month.

The Government has confirmed its preferred option is a three-unitary council (3UA) model, which include Greater Oxford, North Oxford, and Ridgeway Councils. Elections to the new councils will take place in May 2028 and the implementation date will be 1st April 2029. The Government is putting in place a short period to enable any representations to be made over the next month and following consideration of the representations, the final decision will be made.

Oxfordshire are threatening to take the proposal to judicial review.

The local election in May 2027 will now be for West Berkshire Council, which will have a life of two years.

**Thames Valley Mayoral Authority**
John Healey, MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced in his Autumn Budget Statement that the Thames Valley region, alongside nine others across the country including Surrey, Hertfordshire and Wessex, will progress with plans for a mayoral strategic authority.

The announcement also came with a proposed allocation of £9.1 million of funding from the government's "Good Growth Funds" for investment in growth priorities as the MSA is developed.
The region will include Swindon, but not Buckinghamshire (at least yet).

A Thames Valley MSA will give local leaders more funding and control over areas like transport, skills and employment support, inward investment and affordable housing.
Subject to approval of the proposal for consultation by councils across the region in December and consideration of the consultation response, the formal proposal would then be submitted to government in spring next year.

A new MSA in shadow form would then be established later in 2027 following the statutory decision-making process. This would then be followed by mayoral elections in 2028.

A new MSA would be led by an elected mayor and board comprised of representatives from all upper tier authorities.

The MSA would bring new powers and funding opportunities to the region.
Local councils would continue to be responsible for delivering day to day services such as waste collections, social care, housing, schools, leisure and local planning.

**Planning Committees**
The new government-imposed regime controlling which planning applications can be determined by committee has now come into force.

Householder applications (such as extensions) can now only be determined by officers. Only major housing and business applications are eligible for committee determination, but must still pass tests that they involve planning, employment or environmental issues. This will be determined by a nominated officer and nominated councillor
This is likely to mean that far fewer applications will go to committee. Therefore, the two area planning committees and the District Planning Committee have been replaced by a single Planning Committee. I am a member of the committee. The chairman of the committee will be the nominated councillor.

**Alan Macro**
**Councillor for Theale**
**West Berkshire Council**