

Cllr Liz Leffman
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Dear Liz,

I understand that you met this week with all the Leaders of the Berkshire councils to discuss devolution.

As you know I have been extremely keen for all Leaders across Oxfordshire and Berkshire to agree a position in relation to geography, particularly in relation to the question as to whether Swindon is included in the proposal.

Whilst I appreciate it is the view of some Leaders, I believe it would be wrong to rely on the strategic planning maps from government to make a decision, for a couple of reasons.

Firstly, these maps were first promised pre-summer recess and are now being suggested as to be published in the "autumn". With such an uncertain timeline it would be wrong to pause all work on our collective devolution proposal and risk missing the government deadline of December.

Secondly to await a map that may or may not align with devolution areas seems to be contrary to the view MHCLG are giving to my officers.

I was hoping that at the summit on 12th September we could have finally moved forward to discuss our collective pitch to government on an agreed geography. To not have agreed geography by the 12th September makes the proposed summit pointless.

I urge you to progress urgently a decision on geography that reflects the views of Oxfordshire in order to not miss this significant opportunity of achieving devolved powers and funding for Oxfordshire.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Bethia Thomas
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