

Councillor Barry Wood  
Chair  
Arc Leadership Group

**Councillor David Rouane  
Leader of the Council**

David.Rouane@southoxon.gov.uk

Via email: [Barry.Wood@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk](mailto:Barry.Wood@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk)

Tel: 01235 422693  
135 Eastern Avenue  
Milton Park  
Oxon  
OX14 4SB

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Dear Barry,

South Oxfordshire do not support the proposal to continue to seek to develop a pan-regional partnership across the Oxford – Cambridge Arc.

South Oxfordshire are strong supporters of working in partnership, and recognise that we already operate in several 'regional' groupings, one being the South East Region, which demonstrated its value to us through-out COVID as a strong voice to Government and continues to do so for a wide range of issues, others include the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and of course the new BOB-wide ICS.

Partnerships, whilst vital, need to have a purpose, as they can be time-consuming and can incur significant cost to the public purse in both their creation and maintenance and so my test of them is always to ask 'what value do they add'. I must admit that any added value of the Arc is not obvious to me, and my recollection from the recent plenary discussion was that it was far from clear that a majority of the Councils, who's democratic mandate is unique, within the proposed geography of the Arc were in favour of pursuing a pan-regional partnership. This was the case, of course, without Buckinghamshire even being present, whose views are well known on this matter. I believe that point is essential to make to Government in any correspondence on this matter.

My Council has recently declared a Cost of Living Emergency, I would therefore respectfully suggest that any available government funding at this time would be better spent addressing the cost of living crisis, and supporting our most vulnerable residents, rather than pursuing the creation of another large scale partnership body on a geography that does not seem, to my council at least, to be inherently coherent.

Yours sincerely



Councillor David Rouane  
Leader of the Council