



February 2025

Rt Hon Jim McMahon OBE MP

Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution

**Re: Concerns Regarding the Government's White Paper on Local Government Reorganisation**

*We, the members of Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe & Acresford Parish Council, are writing to express our deep concern regarding the proposals outlined in the Government's recent White Paper on local government reorganisation. As representatives of a small parish comprising the villages of Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe, and Acresford, situated on the periphery of our county, we are apprehensive about the implications of becoming part of a unitary authority.*

*Our parish has historically benefitted from the strong and supportive relationship we have developed with Northwest Leicestershire District Council. This partnership has been instrumental in ensuring our residents' needs and voices are heard and addressed. The proposed reorganisation threatens to dismantle these established relationships, and we fear that our small parish will lose its voice amidst the broader and more dominant concerns of larger parishes and town councils within a unitary authority framework.*

*The distinct identity and unique needs of our parish may be overshadowed and marginalised in such a reorganisation. The sense of community and local representation that our residents have come to rely upon is at risk of being diluted in a sea of competing interests. The ability to directly influence decisions that affect our local area is a cornerstone of our democratic process, and we believe this will be significantly compromised if our parish is subsumed into a larger unitary authority.*

*At present, it is clear whom we need to contact within our district to address our concerns. However, the proposed reorganisation would create a situation where all parishes are trying to contact one department that no longer knows our specific area. This is especially worrying given the geographical challenges we face; it takes half an hour (without traffic) to drive to county hall and over an hour by bus. Moreover, there is no direct bus service available from our parish to the county hall.*

*We have significant concerns about the size of our county and the potential for our local parish to be overlooked. The funds allocated for our area could be easily siphoned off to address the substantial budget deficit that the county council is expected to face in the coming years. This would further marginalize our small parish and undermine the progress we have made in improving the quality of life for our residents.*

*We urge you to reconsider the proposals in the White Paper and to acknowledge the potential adverse effects on small parishes like ours. It is vital that any reorganisation of local government retains the essence of local representation and ensures that smaller communities do not lose their ability to have a meaningful and impactful voice.*



*We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our concerns further and to work collaboratively with the Government to find a solution that preserves the integrity and effectiveness of local governance for all parishes, regardless of size.*

*Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.*

*Yours sincerely,*

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