

25 July 2007

Chief Executive  
Wiltshire County Council

Our Ref:  
Your Ref:

BY EMAIL

*Dear Chief Executive,*

## **PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE UNITARY STRUCTURES**

In response to the Invitation to councils in England issued by the Secretary of State on 26 October 2006, your council submitted on 25 January 2007 a proposal for future unitary structures. I wrote to you on 8 February 2007 informing you that your council's proposal conformed to the terms of the Invitation and on 27 March 2007 informing you that your proposal, together with further information that you provided to explain and clarify it, would be proceeding to stakeholder consultation.

I am now writing to inform you that, in the Secretary of State's judgement, there is a reasonable likelihood that, if implemented, the proposal would meet the outcomes specified by each of the criteria set out in the invitation. Consequently, she is minded to implement your proposal if and when the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill is enacted.

This decision was reached having regard to your council's proposal, the further information that you have submitted, the responses to the stakeholder consultation and all relevant information available. In relation to each of the five criteria the Secretary of State reached the following views on your council's proposal.

P Rowsell  
Deputy Director Local Democracy  
Department for Communities and Local Government  
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### Strong, Effective and Accountable Strategic Leadership

She considers that the proposals for the establishment of a reinvigorated strategic partnership – a “Wiltshire Assembly” – and a public sector board appointed with key public service partners will deliver strong and effective strategic leadership of the public service agenda for the county. She also recognises that the strong link to place, through the establishment of 20 “Community Area Boards”, provides compelling evidence that a unitary council would not be too remote from all of its communities. Accordingly, she concluded that there was a reasonable likelihood of the proposal achieving the outcomes specified by this criterion.

### Neighbourhood Flexibility and Empowerment

She considers that the role of the Community Area Boards in determining strategic direction and service delivery at the local level will ensure that local people have a real opportunity to influence local services and shape the communities in which they live. She concluded that there was a reasonable likelihood of the proposal achieving the outcomes specified by this criterion.

### Value for Money and Equity on Public Services

She considers that the proposal’s commitment to service redesign involving service users and customers, together with the commitment to rationalise management and back office service delivery functions, mean that local people will benefit from more efficient and effective services. She concluded that there was a reasonable likelihood of the proposal achieving the outcomes specified by this criterion.

### Affordability

She considers that, if implemented, the financial case looks reasonably robust and there is little risk that the proposal would be unaffordable. She concluded that there was a reasonable likelihood of the proposal achieving the outcomes specified by this criterion.

## Supported by a Cross Section of Partners and Stakeholders

She considers that, if implemented, the proposal would command a broad cross-section of support from a range of stakeholders, both public and private sector, as well as some support from the general public. She concluded that there was a reasonable likelihood of the proposal achieving the outcomes specified by this criterion.

## Conclusion

If you have any queries about the substance of the decision you should write in the first instance to Terry Willows at [terry.willows@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:terry.willows@communities.gsi.gov.uk) .

*Yours sincerely,*

**P Rowsell**