



Rationale document

Why Should Kidlington become a Town?

A. Here is a summary of the main arguments that have been put forward in the last few months.

- 1) How is this different from 1987 (the last time we became a town)?
 - a) Kidlington and our local area has continued to develop
 - i) Minimum 4400 houses across the PR sites
 - ii) Likely delivery over 5000 houses
 - iii) Will bring 12,000-15,000 new residents to the area
 - iv) The great majority will be outside Kidlington proper, but Kidlington will be the service centre for what is, effectively, a conurbation of well over 30,000 inhabitants. (Witney has a population of 30000, Census 2021)
 - b) The challenges we are facing in the future
 - i) Local Government Re-organization
 - Greater Oxford threat: in their proposal for Local Government Reorganisation, Oxford City want to absorb their surrounding villages
 - ii) The Green Belt Threat
 - Threat of further loss of the Green Belt and proposed 40000 homes
 - Land Behind the Moors, Frieze Farm
 - We can expect further applications for our Green Belt Land which as a village has little protection under the NPPF 2025
- 2) What becoming a town doesn't in itself change
 - a) Our boundaries
 - b) The status of our surrounding villages
 - c) How your Council Tax is calculated
 - d) The Services we (KPC) provide for our residents
 - e) The number of councillors on the council
 - f) The name on our signs
 - g) No Mayor
- 3) Why are we proposing Becoming a Town?
 - a) Kidlington is larger than a great many towns in Oxfordshire
 - i) 2021 Population Census Classification in Oxford : 8th in size Kidlington 13,719 followed by five towns: Wantage 13,106, Thame 12, 951, Henley-on-Thames 11,782, Faringdon 8,620, Wallingford 8,455. We are likely to move up to the 4th largest settlement with the population increase.
 - ii) A population range of 5,000-19,000 is classified as a Small Town
 - b) Towns and Cities have a stronger identity and voice
 - i) There is a reason this constituency is Bicester and Woodstock
 - c) The 2025 Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee emphasises towns and town centres as a focus.
 - i) Under the government's Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, police forces are required to provide guaranteed patrols in town centres at peak times.

- d) Greater Opportunities to secure funding and investment
 - i) There is currently a national agenda to support the development of towns. Examples of current funding streams include: National Lottery Heritage Fund – Future Parks Initiative, Pride in Place Initiative, UK Shared Prosperity Fund
 - ii) 2024 Investor Survey (Lambert Smith Hampton & Revo) found that 72% of investors plan to focus regeneration efforts on Town Centres

- e) Green Belt protection.
 - i) The National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF 2025) focuses on protecting Town Green Belt against urban sprawl in towns and protects the space between towns and cities
 - ii) Protection of Greenbelt in villages was downgraded

- f) Local Government Reorganisation
 - i) major opportunity for more control over services to residents
 - ii) risk of losing our voice in a larger unit is offset if as a town we have more control
 - iii) we are the Designated Local Service Centre (another name for a town) for the parishes of Kidlington, Gosford and Water Eaton, Yarnton, Begbroke, Shipton on Cherwell and Thrupp
 - iv) within the next few years, the combined population will increase to around 35,000-40,000.
 - v) we need to fight for the resources to serve that population Being fit to serve our surrounding population

- g) Greater Oxford proposal: KPC has agreed to strongly oppose it.
 - i) More difficult for Oxford to absorb us if we are a town: the current proposal only involves surrounding villages.

- h) Pride of place
 - i) Preserving our identity as Kidlington is important
 - ii) We want to have a sense of pride in our location
 - iii) We need to fight for better infrastructure and services

B. Engagement exercises in July 2025: views have been expressed on both sides

- 1) Discussion stands at Gala day and at Market
- 2) Open Poll on paper and online Aug-Oct 2025
- 3) Leaflet hand delivered to all residents in Kidlington Parish
- 4) Online Survey for residents from QR on leaflet only Oct 2025
- 5) In person drop-in clinics held at Exeter Hall for residents to ask questions Dec 2025
- 6) Residents Meeting: none of the residents attending argued against becoming a town.

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11 February 2026