



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.