

Teignbridge District Council
Executive
9th September 2025
Part i

Local Government Reorganisation

Purpose of Report

To provide an update in relation to the proposals for both Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution.

Recommendation(s)

The Executive RESOLVES to:

1. Note the update on local government reorganisation.
2. Delegate authority to the Managing Director, in consultation with the Executive Member for Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution, to continue to develop proposals for the form and coverage of future principal authorities.
3. Report back to the next Executive meeting with an update on the preparation of the Business Case.

Financial Implications

These are as set out in section 3.1.

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Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. See section 3.2 for more details on potential implications.

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Risk Assessment

These are as set out in section 3.3.

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Environmental/ Climate Change Implications

There are no direct environmental or climate change implication arising from this report. Broader implications are outlined in section 3.4

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Executive Member

Cllr Charles Nuttall - Executive Member for Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution

Appendices

Background Papers

1. [Report for Extraordinary Full Council 9th January 2025](#)
2. [MHCLG Letter to Leaders - Publication of English Devolution White Paper](#)
3. [English Devolution White Paper: Power and partnership: Foundations for growth - GOV.UK](#)
4. [English Devolution White Paper - Briefing for DCN Members December 2024 FINAL](#)
5. [Local Government Reorganisation Report - Full Council 25th February 2025](#)
 - a. [Appendix 1 to above report - Devon wide thematic maps](#)
 - b. [Appendix 2 to above report - Population data and profile based on current local authority areas](#)
6. [Interim Plan Submission of 21st March 2025](#)
7. [Getting it right for Devon - Interim plan - Devon County Council](#)
8. [LGR Interim Plan feedback letter by government - 15 May 2025 - Teignbridge District Council](#)
9. [Devon councils unite behind devolution push - News](#)

1. Purpose

- 1.1.** The purpose of this report is to update the Executive on the status of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), including the position of authorities around Devon, the work undertaken by officers and commissioned companies on LGR, the financial implications of this, alongside the results of the consultation work undertaken by TDC to date. The report further seeks continuing authority for the Managing Director, in consultation with the Executive Member for Local Government Reorganisation, to continue to develop proposals for the form and coverage of future principal authorities.

2. REPORT DETAIL

2.1. Overview

- 2.1.1.** The government white paper, published in December 2024 (appendix 3) set out future policy for local government in the United Kingdom, including the proposal to create unitary authorities in all remaining two-tier (district and county council) areas.
- 2.1.2.** Following the extraordinary Full Council meeting of the 9th of January 2025 and the report taken to Full Council on the 25th of February Teignbridge District Council was a signatory to an interim submission on 21st March 2025 proposing the examination of a '1-4-5' option for future unitary council structure in Devon.
- 2.1.3.** The majority of district councils (bar Exeter) and Torbay Council were signatories to this interim submission, but authorities across Devon have outlined alternatives and are working towards final proposals on different boundaries.
- 2.1.4.** North Devon Council have begun work on a Northern Devon Council option, proposing a unitary council which covers North Devon, Torridge and Mid-Devon, with a second option under review which also includes West Devon.
- 2.1.5.** Devon County Council submitted an interim proposal to examine six options, as shown in Appendix 7.
- 2.1.6.** Torbay Council proposed three options in order of preference, their first choice being to remain with their existing boundaries, the second choice

being to expand to the boundaries of the South Devon Local Care Partnership, taking in approximately 80% of Teignbridge and 50% of the South Hams by area, with their third preference being the 1-4-5 model.

- 2.1.7. Plymouth City Council have proposed an expanded city-based council incorporating the 13 parishes below from South Hams. At present they have proposed no solution for the remainder of the county.

13 Parishes from within South Hams District Council		
Bickleigh Shaugh Prior Sparkwell Brixton Wembury	Cornwood Harford Ugborough Ivybridge	Ermington Yealmpton Holbeton Newton and Noss

- 2.1.8. Exeter City Council have proposed an expanded city based unitary council, taking in the parishes below from Teignbridge, East Devon and Mid Devon. Their proposal includes the Plymouth expansion described above, with the remainder of Devon becoming a single horseshoe shaped unitary.

15 Parishes from within Teignbridge District Council	28 Parishes from within East Devon District Council		6 Parishes from within Mid Devon District Council
Dawlish Town Ashcombe Mamhead Starcross Kenton Chudleigh Town Powderham Exminster Kenn Dunchideock Shillingford St George Ide Holcombe Burnell Whitestone Tedburn St Mary	Exmouth Woodbury Lympstone Otterton East Budleigh Budleigh Salterton Colaton Raleigh Bicton Upton Pyne Brampford Speke Stoke Cannon Nether Exe Rewe Huxham	Poltimore Broadclyst Clyst Hydon Clyst St Lawrence Whimble Cranbrook Rockbeare West Hill Aylesbeare Farringdon Clyst Honiton Sowton Clyst St Mary Clyst St George	Cheriton Bishop Hittisleigh Colebrook Credition Town Credition Hamlets Newton St Cyres

2.2. Interim Submission Feedback

- 2.2.1. MHCLG provided written feedback on the 15th of May to all Devon authorities following the submissions of interim plans in March (Appendix 8). The feedback highlighted that any proposal should meet these six key criteria:

1. A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.
2. Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.
3. Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.
4. Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.
5. New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.
6. New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.

2.3. Mayoral Strategic Authority

- 2.3.1. The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, introduced to Parliament in July 2025, represents a landmark shift in the governance of England, aiming to decentralise power from Whitehall to local leaders. Building on the 2024 English Devolution White Paper, the Bill establishes a statutory framework for devolved governance, enabling local authorities to take greater control over public services, economic development, and community assets.
- 2.3.2. It introduces a new category of governance—Strategic Authorities—structured into three tiers: Foundation, Mayoral, and Established Mayoral. These tiers determine the scope of devolved powers available to each authority. The Bill also includes reforms to local government structures, neighbourhood governance, and community rights, such as expanding the community right to bid into a community right to buy.
- 2.3.3. The powers conferred upon these Strategic Authorities are extensive and categorised under seven key areas of competence: transport and infrastructure, skills and employment, housing and planning, economic development, environment and net zero, health and public service reform, and public safety.

- 2.3.4. Mayoral Strategic Authorities will have access to broader powers, including the ability to appoint commissioners for each area of competence and to raise revenue through mayoral precepts. They will also be granted borrowing powers, subject to initial approval by the Secretary of State.
- 2.3.5. Established Mayoral Strategic Authorities, meeting additional governance criteria, will have the right to request further devolved powers and funding. This tiered approach ensures flexibility while promoting consistency and equity across England's devolved regions.
- 2.3.6. The leaders of all Devon authorities submitted a letter to government ministers calling for the creation of a South West Peninsula Mayoral Strategic Authority, covering the whole of Devon and replacing the current Devon and Cornwall Combined Authority. The creation of such a body would follow local government reorganisation in 2028 or later.
- 2.4. **Engagement Activities**
 - 2.4.1. In line with the interim feedback letter and where appropriate in collaboration with other Devon authorities we have carried out engagement with stakeholders from across the district.
 - 2.4.2. This has included a Member Workshop, an all-staff briefing, public engagement events at 11 locations across Teignbridge, and a survey which has been promoted through our social media platforms and partners such as Town and Parish Councils.
 - 2.4.3. Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) has carried out engagement work with Towns and Parishes on our behalf.
 - 2.4.4. Key organisational stakeholders, such as Dartmoor National Park Authority, Police, and the health service, have and are being met on an individual basis, with larger meetings scheduled for stakeholders such as further education Colleges, secondary schools and representatives of the community and voluntary sector.
 - 2.4.5. At the closing date of the 26th of August, the consultation has received a total of 1,753 responses, indicating strong public engagement. A substantial majority—96.18%—of respondents reported living in Teignbridge, while 23.16% work in the district and 7.42% run a business there.

- 2.4.6. In terms of response capacity, 94.12% of participants responded as residents, with smaller proportions identifying as businesses (1.71%), parish or town councils (1.31%), and voluntary or community, or other organisations such as schools, health providers etc. (2.86%).
- 2.4.7. The age profile of respondents was notably older than the district average. Individuals aged 65 and over comprised 47.65% of responses, compared to 27% of Teignbridge's overall population in that age group. Those aged 55 to 64 made up 26.22% of respondents, further highlighting the predominance of older adults in the consultation. This may reflect higher civic engagement among older residents or the relevance of the consultation topics to this demographic.
- 2.4.8. Ethnically, 97.10% of respondents identified as White, closely aligning with the district's demographic, where over 96% of residents are White. Regarding health and disability, 23.9% of respondents reported having a disability or long-term health condition, which is slightly higher than the district's age-standardised rate of 18.6% for residents reporting some level of disability. This may reflect increased engagement from individuals with lived experience of health-related challenges, particularly in consultations concerning community services and accessibility.
- 2.4.9. Residents were asked place-based questions on locations where they worked, shopped and socialised. The table below gives summary details of how responses mapped to existing local authority districts. The 'unmapped/other' category contains those responses which could not be mapped to an existing local authority, such as people who socialise in 'Dartmoor', 'South Devon', 'Coastal Areas', people whose work locations were 'Various' or 'Mobile', and people who shopped 'Online'.

Local authority district	Total mentions	Work/ Education	Shopping	Social/Culture
Teignbridge	3,963	681	1,717	1,565
Exeter	977	194	426	357
Unmapped/Other*	862	170	249	443
Torbay	375	69	143	163
South Hams	152	20	56	76

Plymouth	103	15	22	66
East Devon	33	3	11	19
West Devon	19	3	10	6

2.4.10. Looking at commuting flows, most respondents live in the TQ12 outward area (Newton Abbot/Kingsteignton/Kingskerswell; 556 entries), followed by TQ13 (Bovey Tracey/Ashburton/Moretonhampstead; 265), TQ14 (Teignmouth/Shaldon; 229), EX7 (Dawlish; 156), and EX6 (Exminster/Teign Valley; 142).

2.4.11. Work/education locations are dominated by Newton Abbot (273 mentions) and Exeter (194), with Teignmouth (91), Dawlish (73) and Torquay (42) forming the next tier.

2.4.12. Looking at how residence and work pair up:

- TQ12 residents most often cite Newton Abbot (162), then Exeter (33) and Torquay (21);
- TQ14 residents lean to Teignmouth (50), then Exeter (25) and Newton Abbot (15);
- EX7 residents split between Dawlish (43) and Exeter (26);
- EX6 residents mainly list Exeter (48).

2.4.13. Overall, that points to strong intra-Teignbridge flows with Exeter as the principal external pull.

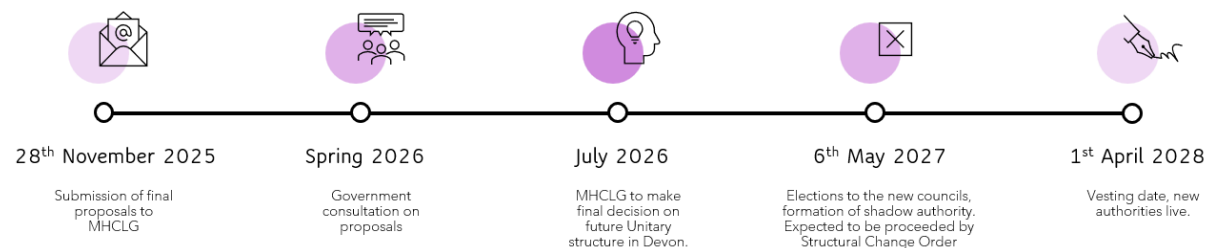
2.5. Programme and next steps

2.5.1. In collaboration with district authorities across Devon, we have jointly commissioned KPMG to assist with the development of a final proposal submission.

2.5.2. An element of work which needs to be completed at the earliest opportunity is the completion of an Options Appraisal, which will examine the alignment of the different proposed models for future unitary authorities in Devon against the six criteria laid down by the government.

2.5.3. Following this options appraisal, officers will be in a stronger position to prepare a formal submission.

- 2.5.4. Pixel Financial Management have been commissioned to examine the levels of income and expenditure, along with the levels of debt and options to service this, across any new authority.
- 2.5.5. Officers will continue, in conjunction with the Executive Member for Local Government Reorganisation, the work to analyse the proposals coming forward for new unitary authorities.
- 2.5.6. This is the anticipated timeline for the major milestones in Local Government Reorganisation.



3. Implications, Risk Management and Climate Change Impact

3.1. Financial

- 3.1.1. Central government has provided to local authorities in Devon £383,326 to assist with the cost of developing new unitary structures. This has been split equally across all councils. Teignbridge's share is £34,484.
- 3.1.2. This has been used to meet the costs of commissioned work as set out below. The total paid and commissioned to date is £31,910. Further costs may yet arise as the 1:4:5 model is tested or as further models are developed. Additional funds will have to be sought for this.

	£ Paid	£ Commitment	Description
East Devon DC	2,806	9,354*	Project management
Pixel	1,000	0	Financial Modelling
KPMG	0	18,750^	Business Case production
	3,806	28,104	

*The total of the amount paid, and the amount committed to EDDC is equal to twelve months project management support. Costs could accrue beyond the twelve-month period.

^The amount shown as committed to KPMG is equivalent to an equal split of the estimated cost of producing the Business Case (£150,000) divided between the eight contributing partners.

3.1.3 In addition to the costs shown in the table there are direct costs to Teignbridge that have arisen as a consequence of the engagement work. This has currently been funded by the service, but a corporate contribution may yet be required.

3.2. Legal

3.2.1. There are no specific legal implications arising from the report. The request for proposals to be brought forward are done under the Secretary of State's powers under Part 1 (Structural and Boundary Change) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

3.2.2. The final decision on a proposed restructure is made by the Secretary of State. A restructure does not require the affected councils to give formal consent. There is no mechanism for the public to support or oppose restructuring through a petition or a referendum.

3.3. Risks

3.3.1. If we do not engage with the process, the design of the form and coverage of future unitary authorities will be completed without sufficient input from Teignbridge residents and stakeholders.

3.4. Environmental/Climate Change Impact

3.4.1. There are no direct climate impacts arising from this report. Any future authority would be expected to address the climate emergency and work to reduce carbon emissions in the district.

3.4.2. As devolution proposals progress, there is an opportunity to explore how strategic delivery and planning for homes, employment, energy supply, transport and other services over larger geographies could produce good outcomes for the environment and people living in Teignbridge

4. CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1. The alternative options to the proposed recommendation are:

- Do not engage with development of a final submission. This is not recommended as the best interests of the district will not be represented in the design of any new authority.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1. There are varied options currently proposed by authorities across Devon and work is needed to understand the detailed impact of these options on Teignbridge residents in terms of both efficient and effective of delivery of essential services.
- 5.2. There will be competing demands for the design of any new authority, having economies of scale and financial resilience whilst maintaining a connection to place and local approach, and providing efficiency savings whilst improving the delivery of children's and adults' services.
- 5.3. The delegation of authority to the Managing Director in collaboration with the Executive Member for Local Government Reorganisation to continue work to develop proposals for future unitary authorities in Devon will enable this work to progress at the necessary speed to return to Full Council later this year with a recommendation for submission in November.