Appendix 6 – Collated consultation feedback summaries

Residents' engagement summary

Teignbridge residents were invited to share their views through a public survey that ran for nine weeks, from 24 June to 31 August 2025. The survey was promoted via multiple channels, including social media, newsletters, the Teignbridge District Council website, and through partner organisations such as town and parish councils.

To complement the survey, we hosted eleven informal drop-in sessions across the district throughout July. These events provided residents with the chance to speak directly with council representatives, ask questions, learn more about the proposals, and share feedback. Attendees could take part in the survey on-site using an iPad, by scanning a QR code, or by completing a paper copy.

The sessions were held in:

- Kingsteignton (11 July)
- Ipplepen (14 July)
- Bovey Tracey (14 July)
- Tedburn St Mary (15 July)
- Ashburton (16 July)
- Moretonhampstead (17 July)
- Chudleigh (18 July)
- Teignmouth (21 July)
- Dawlish (21 July)
- Newton Abbot (22 July)
- Exminster (23 July)

In total, 206 people attended the events and the survey received 1,753 responses.

Survey responses

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.

Respondents were from across Teignbridge, including Dawlish, Teignmouth, Shaldon, Starcross, Exminster, Newton Abbot, Kingsteignton, Bovey Tracey, Chudleigh, Buckfastleigh, Tedburn St Mary, Ashburton and Ipplepen.

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%).

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.

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.

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' (53 responses), '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

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).

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.

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).

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

What respondents like about their area

Key themes

- Community: many respondents appreciate the strong sense of community and friendliness.
- Countryside: the rural character and natural beauty of the area are highly valued.
- Sea/beach: proximity to the coast and seaside towns like Teignmouth and Dawlish is a major draw.
- Access: good transport links and accessibility to nearby towns and cities.
- Shops: local and independent shops are frequently praised.
- Quiet: the peacefulness and tranquillity of the area are appreciated.
- Nature: wildlife, green spaces, and scenic views are commonly mentioned.
- Safe: many feel the area is safe and secure.
- Friendly: the people and social atmosphere are described as welcoming.
- Walking: opportunities for walking and outdoor activities are popular.

What respondents would like improved in their area (this could include council services)

Key themes

- Infrastructure: road conditions, traffic, public transport, and cycling facilities.
- Environment: litter, pollution, flood prevention, and green space maintenance.
- Public Services: access to healthcare, education, social care, and public toilets.
- Safety: policing, crime prevention, and street lighting.
- Community Development: local shops, housing affordability, youth services, and cultural activities.

Respondents' hopes and dreams for their area

Key themes

- A desire to preserve the character of their towns and villages.
- Concerns about overdevelopment, especially housing.
- Aspirations for better services, shops, and community spaces.
- Emphasis on local decision-making and green space protection.

- Hopes for a safe, inclusive, and vibrant community.

Respondents' views on the biggest challenges in their local area

Key themes

- Overdevelopment and housing pressure, especially without matching infrastructure.
- Traffic and parking issues, particularly in growing towns and villages.
- Insufficient public services, including healthcare, education, and policing.
- Poor transport links, especially in rural areas.
- A general lack of local investment and responsiveness from councils.

Top 5 hopes for how LGR will impact the respondent and/or their community:

1. Good understanding of the issues facing your local area: 69%
2. Clear, open and honest decision making: 66%
3. Decisions that impact you will be made locally: 60%
4. Efficient services which offer value for money: 59%
5. Improved services: 50%

These results reflect a strong public desire for transparent governance, local accountability, and effective service delivery. Notably, "Understanding of local issues" ranked sixth, and its importance was echoed in open-ended comments, particularly regarding decision-making for rural and coastal communities, which face distinct challenges compared to cities and larger towns.

There was also a clear emphasis on community-focused governance, with many respondents calling for decisions to be shaped by the lived experiences and needs of local people.

Top 5 priorities when deciding the future model of local government in Devon:

1. Good quality road, transport and infrastructure (e.g. road repairs, footpaths, streetlights, public toilets, car parks): 83%
2. Good quality environmental services (e.g. waste collection, recycling centres, street cleaning, flood protection): 80%
3. Good quality community services (e.g. libraries, parks, playgrounds): 56%
4. Good quality planning and building services (e.g. planning applications, affordable housing, protecting old buildings): 52%
5. Good quality adult social care services: 45%

Education services were a close sixth, followed by children's social care services in seventh place. These priorities highlight a strong public emphasis on infrastructure

investment, environmental sustainability and community wellbeing. They also reflect a desire for services that are accessible, responsive, and tailored to local needs.

Many respondents noted that all ten priorities listed were important, rather than selecting just a few. Additionally, there were frequent references to the need for better support for farmers, increased local police presence, and more community facilities, particularly youth services.

Homeless families engagement summary

Targeted engagement activities were undertaken to ensure the voices of hard-to-reach groups in Teignbridge were heard. In addition to working with community, voluntary, and social enterprise (CVSE) organisations, specific outreach was carried out with families experiencing homelessness in Newton Abbot and Torquay. This group represented a younger demographic than those who responded to the wider residents' survey.

With support from Teignbridge District Council's Housing Solutions team, these families were invited to take part in a tailored version of the residents' survey, helping to ensure their experiences and perspectives were meaningfully captured.

Demographics

Age

- 40% of respondents were aged 25-34 years
- 20% were aged 35-44 years
- 20% were aged 45-54 years
- 20% were aged 65+

Gender

- 60% male
- 40% female

Ethnicity

- 80% White (e.g. British, Irish, European)
- 20% mixed or multiple ethnic groups

Disability or long-term health condition

- 60% yes
- 40% no

Local area

Respondents from these areas commonly travelled to Newton Abbot, Dawlish, or Teignmouth for work, education, or social activities. For shopping, Newton Abbot, Torquay, and Exeter were the most frequently visited locations.

Many respondents appreciated the green spaces in their local area but expressed a desire for more cycle paths. While Newton Abbot and Torquay were praised for their good transport links to the beaches and Dartmoor, concerns were raised about the high cost of travel and the condition of the roads.

Feedback on local service, such as supported housing and drug support, was mixed. Some respondents spoke positively about the support they received and wanted these services to continue, while others felt improvements were needed, particularly in the availability of social housing and community-based services. One respondent highlighted the importance of creating more interconnected communities for people experiencing homelessness.

Looking ahead, respondents hoped for a safer local environment with reduced antisocial behaviour. They also expressed a strong interest in having more opportunities to partake in outdoor activities, including volunteering.

Top 5 hopes for how LGR will impact the respondent and/or their community:

1. Improved services: 100%
2. Good understanding of the issues facing your local area: 80%
3. Clear, open and honest decision making: 80%
4. Understanding of local issues: 80%
5. Decisions that impact you will be made locally: 60%
6. Efficient services which offer value for money: 60%

Top 5 priorities when deciding the future model of local government in Devon:

1. Good quality children's social care services: 80%
2. Good quality adult social care services: 80%
3. Good quality education services: 60%
4. Good quality environmental services: 60%
5. Public Health: 60%

Other comments

Participants expressed concern that, following the merger of local authorities, funding for services could be redirected to more challenging areas outside Teignbridge, potentially leading to reduced support and emerging issues within Teignbridge itself.

Youth engagement summary

To ensure young people's voices were heard in shaping local priorities, a series of age-appropriate, in-person engagement activities were held with young people aged 11-15 years at Chudleigh Youth Centre and with Newton Abbot's Youth Council. These aimed to explore how young people perceive their local area and their aspirations for the future.

Activities delivered

1. **Council Service Sorting Game**

Participants matched services to the correct council tier (county, district, town/parish), helping build understanding of local government roles and upcoming changes through Local Government Reorganisation.

2. **Local Area Mapping**

Young people identified places they visit to shop, socialise, and engage in activities. This prompted discussion around travel, accessibility, and future aspirations such as college, work, and living preferences.

3. **Love, Keep, Bin**

A reflective exercise where participants shared what they love about their area, what they'd like to keep or improve, and what they'd like to remove.

Key insights

Popular Areas

Young people in Chudleigh identified Newton Abbot and Exeter as preferred destinations for shopping and accessing services, citing better transport links and a broader range of amenities compared to their local area. Similarly, young people in Newton Abbot reported travelling to Exeter and Torquay for shopping.

Coastal towns including Dawlish, Teignmouth, Paignton, Torquay, and Dartmouth were popular leisure destinations for young people from both Chudleigh and Newton Abbot. While Exeter was seen as a place with strong potential for future employment, many respondents expressed a desire to move away from Devon and even the UK.

Young people expressed concerns about the accessibility of certain areas due to limited or non-existent bus services. In some cases, reaching a destination required multiple connections, making travel time-consuming and impractical. They described bus travel

as unappealing, citing frequent delays, cancelled services, and poor conditions—buses were often dirty, noisy, and unreliable.

Local likes

Young people appreciated local shops, though many expressed a desire for a greater variety and number of retail options within their communities.

They also spoke positively about parks, green spaces and 'quiet areas', which were frequently used for dog walking and spending time outdoors. These areas were seen as important for relaxation, socialising and spending time with their families, contributing to their overall sense of wellbeing.

Those who live in Newton Abbot liked the convenience and accessibility of shops and facilities.

Concerns

It was clear that high-quality outdoor spaces are important to young people. However, many expressed concern about the prevalence of vandalism, which negatively impacts the usability and enjoyment of parks and play areas. This issue was seen as a barrier to feeling safe and welcome in these spaces.

In addition, young people raised concerns about antisocial behaviour and noise disturbances, particularly in the evenings. Local pubs were frequently cited by both groups of young people as sources of disruption, affecting their sense of comfort and safety within the community.

Young people in Newton Abbot felt that individuals experiencing homelessness were often subject to discrimination. They emphasised the need for increased access to job opportunities and more suitable accommodation to better support homeless residents.

Teignbridge VCSE groups and organisations

Survey responses: 58 organisations

Survey shared through Teignbridge CVS database of approximately 600 VCSE groups and organisations, and at the following events:

- Newton Abbot Caring Alliance: 18 September 2025

- Teignbridge Cost of Living Network: 24 September 2025

- LGR online Q&A for VCSEs led by Teignbridge District Council: 29 September 2025

- Teignmouth Matters: 2 October 2025

Types of organisations represented

- Charities: 58.6%
- Community Groups: 25.9%
- Local Authority Services: 10.3%
- Social Enterprises & Health/Wellbeing Services: 6.9% each
- Faith-Based, Educational, Youth, and Transport Providers: 1.7% each

Geographic spread

- 29% of organisations are based in Newton Abbot
- Others span across Teignbridge, including Exminster, Tedburn St Mary, Teignmouth, Dawlish, Buckfastleigh, and Ipplepen
- 4 organisations operate Teignbridge-wide; 5 are Devon-wide

Services provided

Organisations deliver a wide range of community services, including:

- Support for vulnerable groups (elderly, families, youth, disabled)
- Management of community assets (centres, food banks)
- Grant funding and renewable energy initiatives
- Environmental stewardship (green spaces, wildlife)
- Education and skills development
- Community transport and healthcare

Client reach and access

- 31% serve clients across Teignbridge; others focus on local towns/parishes
- 81% of clients access services in person
- 44.8% access services via referral

Awareness and information on LGR

- 79.3% of respondents are aware of LGR (44.8% somewhat, 34.5% very aware)
- However, 84.2% have received no guidance or information on how LGR may affect their work

Perceived impact of LGR

- 39.6% expect some impact:
  - 18.9% anticipate minor changes
  - 20.7% foresee major changes
- 24% expect no impact
- 36% are concerned about reduced funding or support

- 22.4% see potential for new collaboration opportunities

Top 5 hopes for how LGR will impact CVS organisations' clients/service users:

1. Good understanding of the issues facing their area: 62.5%
2. Clarity of who is responsible for what service: 60.7%
3. Understanding of local issues: 55.36%
4. Easy access to the council services they need: 51.8%
5. Decisions that impact them will be made locally: 51.8%

Top 5 priorities when deciding the future model of local government in Devon:

1. Good quality community services (such as libraries, parks or playgrounds): 74.1%
2. Good quality adult social care services: 70.7%
3. Good quality education services (such as school admissions or transport and special educational needs): 65.5%
4. Good quality children's social care service: 56.9%
5. Good quality road, transport and Infrastructures (such as local road repairs, pavement/footpath repairs, streetlights, public toilets, car parks): 56.9%

Key risks, concerns and themes

Collated insights from survey and feedback gained at VCSE events:

1. **Loss of local knowledge and relationships**

   - Centralised structures may lack understanding of local needs.

   - Long-standing relationships with council staff risk being lost.

   - Services may become less personal and harder to access.

   - Risk of losing effective council–VCSE partnerships.

2. **Disruption to services and operations**

   - Contracts, leases, and partnerships could be disrupted.

   - Financial pressures may lead to service reductions or closures.

   - Uncertainty about who will deliver services and how to communicate with them.

   - Smaller organisations may struggle against larger Devon-wide providers.

3. **Financial impact**

- High cost of reorganisation seen as wasteful, diverting funds from essential services.

- Risk of council tax increases without corresponding service improvements.

- Concern that only statutory services will be funded, leaving VCSEs vulnerable.

- Worry that locally raised funds (e.g. car parks) will be centralised and not retained in communities.

4. **Impact on the VCSE sector**

- Fears of reduced funding and support for VCSE organisations.

- Uncertainty over the future of community-used assets.

- Increased competition for limited resources.

- VCSEs continue delivering vital services despite underfunding.

5. **Operational challenges**

- Boundary changes may hinder collaboration and service delivery.

- Risk of reduced service quality due to limited capacity and resources.

- Expectation that Town and Parish Councils will take on more responsibilities without adequate support.

- No single boundary solution fits all organisations.

6. **Democratic and strategic concerns**

- Perception that LGR is driven by cost-cutting rather than community benefit.

- Fears of reduced democratic accountability through centralisation.

- Concern that climate and environmental priorities may be deprioritised.

- Support for streamlined representation only if it strengthens democracy.

- Calls for proportional representation to improve fairness.

7. **Uncertainty and communication gaps**

- Lack of clarity around future structures, roles, and contacts.

- Concerns about maintaining effective communication and coordination.

- Some respondents unsure about LGR details.

- Others resigned to decisions being made without community input.

8. **Impact on services and communities**

   - Fear that LGR will delay action on climate and social care.

   - Centralisation may reduce service access, especially for older and rural residents.

   - Risk of losing the local voice and community responsiveness.

   - Larger organisations may not offer the same level of localised service.

   - Preference for investing in existing VCSE infrastructure over new pilots.

9. **Funding and Asset Transfer**

   - Strong support for transferring council-owned assets to community groups at no or low cost.

   - Concern over the future of assets currently used by the VCSE sector.

10. **Concerns about the process and rationale**

   - Scepticism about the benefits of devolved powers, especially for rural areas.

   - Perception of political motivations and lack of transparency.

   - Frustration over limited consultation and informal communication.

11. **Alternative approaches**

   - Preference for improved collaboration between existing government tiers.

   - Emphasis on transparency, cooperation, and local responsiveness.

Positive Views

   - Minority view sees potential efficiencies in aligning services like housing and education under one authority.

Business owners engagement summary

Business owners across Teignbridge were invited to take part in the Residents and Business Survey, which ran for nine weeks from 24 June to 31 August 2025. The survey was promoted through a range of channels, including social media, newsletters, the Teignbridge District Council website, 11 in-person drop-in sessions held across the county, and via partner organisations such as town and parish councils.

In total, the survey received 1,753 responses, including 131 from individuals who identified as running a business in Teignbridge. These business respondents were based in locations throughout the district—from Tedburn St Mary, Ashburton, and Bovey

Tracey to Newton Abbot, Dawlish, and Teignmouth. Some also indicated that their businesses operated across Devon or had a national reach.

Key themes respondents appreciate about their area

Natural environment

- Countryside, Dartmoor, coastline, and green spaces.

- Access to nature, rivers, sea, and walking trails.

- Peaceful, quiet, and scenic surroundings.

Community and lifestyle

- Strong sense of community and friendliness.

- Community events and spirit.

- Small town charm with independent shops.

Accessibility and connectivity

- Good road and rail links.

- Proximity to Exeter, Plymouth, and Torbay.

- Easy access to amenities and other towns.

Local character

- Vibrant cultural life in places like Ashburton.

- No large corporate presence—local businesses thrive.

- Historical and rural identity preserved.

Safety and tranquillity

- Safe and secure village/town environments.

- Low crime rates and relaxed atmosphere.

What respondents would like to see improved in their area

- Infrastructure: Roads, potholes, public transport, cycle paths, and parking.
- Housing: Concerns about overdevelopment and lack of affordable homes.
- Healthcare: Access to GPs, NHS dentists, and mental health services.
- Environment: Cleanliness, litter, pollution, and protection of green spaces.
- Council Services: Planning enforcement, policing, maintenance, and public toilets.

Hopes for the future of their area

- Support for Local Enterprise: Strengthen local businesses and boost tourism through targeted support and investment.
- Transparent, Accountable Governance: Ensure decision-making is open, honest, and rooted in local accountability.
- Environmental Sustainability: Champion a greener future by protecting nature, enhancing biodiversity, and promoting eco-friendly practices.
- Thriving Communities: Build stronger, safer, and more inclusive neighbourhoods where everyone feels welcome and supported.
- Affordable, Well-Planned Housing: Deliver housing that meets local needs while respecting the character of the area.
- Opportunities for Young People: Expand access to education, activities, and support services for children and young adults.
- Cultural Vitality: Enrich local life through vibrant arts, heritage, and community events.

The top 5 hopes for how Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) will impact respondents and/or their community are:

1. Good understanding of the issues facing your local area – most frequently selected hope.
2. Clear, open and honest decision making
3. Efficient services which offer value for money
4. Decisions that impact you will be made locally
5. Clarity on who is responsible for what service

These reflect a strong desire for transparency, local accountability, and effective service delivery under any new governance model.

The top 5 priorities identified by respondents when deciding the future model of local government for Devon are:

1. Good quality road, transport and infrastructure services

2. Good quality environmental services

3. Good quality community services

4. Good quality planning and building services

5. Good quality education services

Overall, these priorities suggest that residents and business owners want a local government model that is:

- Practical and service-oriented
- Environmentally conscious
- Community-focused
- Responsive to growth and development
- Invested in future generations

However, several respondents said it was impossible to prioritise out of the 10 options provided because they were all as important as each other, and many the statutory responsibilities of the council.

Other comments:

Many respondents mentioned the importance of maintaining or improving services, particularly those provided by the council.

There were multiple references to public spaces, suggesting concerns or hopes related to their upkeep, accessibility, or development.

Town and parish council engagement summary

The Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) was asked to engage with its members to find out their views and concerns regarding LGR. As part of this, councils were invited to send in pen portraits of their councils and communities. The information gained has contributed to the DALC Position Statement produced in May 2025.

DALC Position Statement

Many councils are willing to take on assets and provide local services to their communities which might otherwise be lost under LGR.

Some smaller parishes currently rely on delivery for some services from their district and the county council. If these arrangements are going to change under a new unitary authority, they need to know.

Some district councils have started to engage with town councils on asset transfer. However, our sector cannot be regarded as a handy drop off point for loss-making assets and services.

The sector needs to know what statutory services any new unitary will provide under any proposal and what that will look like in practice

The sector needs to know what the vision is for town and parish engagement under any unitary proposal.

The town and parish sector must be included in the discussions on arrangements for future engagement, cooperation and collaboration with any proposed unitary.

LGR is an opportunity to deliver effective localism, with Devon's communities determining the services they need and a locally accountable and accessible body to deliver them. DALC supports the establishment of new parish councils in areas which are currently unparished, and can offer advice on this process.

DALC will not support any specific proposal for LGR unless it is clearly the view of towns and parishes in our membership but it will use the evidence coming from members and continue to work with members to identify the extent to which any proposals meet the aspirations of towns and parishes to play an effective as opposed to side-lined role in local government.

We prefer to see proposals that set out clearly the way in which towns and parishes will not only be included in discussions but also be seen as a crucial conduit for conveying community messages to unitary and public sector delivery structures on services provision and design and to be actively used to convey messages back to the community. This implies a need for appropriate mechanisms to be built into any network or partnership proposals. For example, there could be clear consultation and involvement methods resourced with simple accessible structures, in which the local council sector is seen as the natural partner in innovation, initiation and monitoring of services to communities and be engaged with the unitary as a key partner in achieving them.

Other engagement activity

Town and parish councils were invited to take part in one of eleven public drop-in sessions held across the district, as well as to complete the online survey shared with residents, businesses, and local organisations.

Around 60 councillors from across Teignbridge attended the sessions, actively contributing their views and helping to support the events through their engagement and presence.

Key themes

Understanding and communication of LGR

Many councillors expressed uncertainty about what Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) means for their councils. There is a need for clearer communication and engagement to help local representatives understand the implications and opportunities.

Role and value of town and parish councils

Councillors highlighted the vital role town and parish councils play in serving their communities, often with very limited resources.

There is a shared view that this role may expand if a unitary authority becomes more centralised within the county. In such a scenario, it is essential that local needs continue to be met and that local knowledge is retained and valued.

Opportunities and resourcing

Some councillors see LGR as a potential opportunity to strengthen local governance, provided that any additional responsibilities are properly resourced.

Concerns

A key concern is that the creation of unitary authorities could reduce local decision-making power and weaken community representation. Councillors fear that this may lead to a disconnect between governance and the specific needs of local areas.

Collaborative models and local solutions

Positive examples of collaboration were shared, such as the cluster model involving Exminster, Kenn, Kennford, Shillingford, and Ide. This approach is seen as effective and potentially scalable.

Councillors suggested that similar clustering arrangements could be a viable solution across Devon, especially if parish councils are expected to take on more responsibilities.

Partners and heads of service engagement summary

Feedback summary

One-to-one online interviews were conducted with key partners and heads of service to gather their perspectives on Local Government Reorganisation and its potential impact on their projects and service delivery.

Challenges of LGR

Operational complexity

- Differences in systems, tools, and service models across councils could make integration complex and resource-intensive.

- Shared services like Strata may be disrupted if council groupings change.

Project delays

- Uncertainty around LGR is causing stagnation in decision-making and delaying key projects (e.g. depot redevelopment).

Recruitment & retention

- Difficulty recruiting due to short-term contracts and uncertainty.

- Risk of losing experienced staff without structures in place to replace them.

Maintaining local knowledge

- Services like licensing and cemetery management require local knowledge and personal interaction, especially for older residents.

- Centralisation must not compromise local pride, ownership, and responsiveness.

Risks of LGR

Loss of service quality

- Teignbridge's high standards in waste collection and digital services could be diluted if merged with councils with lower performance.

- Risk of losing trusted relationships with partners and the community.

Increased bureaucracy

- Experience from other areas (e.g. Scarborough to North Yorkshire) shows LGR can lead to slower approvals, reduced autonomy, and more bureaucracy.

Disruption to critical services

- Hosting arrangements for programmes like the South West Coastal Monitoring could be jeopardised, risking delays in contract renewals and service continuity.

Loss of strategic focus

- Larger councils may not prioritise specialised programmes or services currently valued by smaller authorities.

Implementation timeline

- Evidence from Northamptonshire shows full integration post-LGR can take over five years, requiring realistic planning and sustained effort.

Staff engagement feedback

Staff have responded positively to the current communication methods, particularly the briefings and newsletter updates, which are seen as sufficient while LGR still feels distant. However, additional staff briefings dates should be scheduled in advance so employees know when to expect updates.

Staff not based at Forde House feel less engaged. To address this, consider hosting drop-in lunch sessions with the senior leadership team at various locations. These informal gatherings would:

- Encourage open, casual conversations
- Increase visibility and approachability of senior leaders
- Foster stronger connections across the organisation

The senior leadership team is currently most visible in the Comms and Strategy office, with limited presence elsewhere. More frequent walkarounds across all departments are required.

South West Coastal Monitoring

- The South West Coastal Monitoring Programme is funded by DEFRA, with funding distributed via the Environment Agency to a competent local authority—currently Teignbridge District Council. The scientific team is based at Plymouth University, but their location and the hosting authority are not critical, as the programme operates across Devon and the funding is ringfenced. Therefore, financial pressures on local authorities should not directly affect the programme, and LGR is not expected to have a major operational impact.
- However, experience from other areas undergoing LGR—such as the transition from Scarborough District Council to North Yorkshire Council—has shown some negative consequences:
    - Increased bureaucracy
    - Slower project approvals
    - Reduced autonomy for programme leads
- One of the strengths of being hosted by a smaller council like Teignbridge is the established trust and understanding of the programme. This results in fewer questions, faster sign-off, and the ability to respond quickly to funding opportunities.
- The programme lead, is accountable to a regional stakeholder board that oversees project approvals and spending. The supportive relationship with Teignbridge enables her and the team to work efficiently and with confidence.
- LGR will inevitably introduce additional work for the team, including adapting to new legal and procurement frameworks. A significant concern is the renewal of the six-yearly contract due in March 2027. Uncertainty around future hosting arrangements could delay approval, which would have serious implications for critical services—such as the wave buoy network that provides 24/7 storm data used by the EA for flood warnings. These contracts must not lapse.
- Teignbridge recognises the value and prestige of hosting the programme. While there are modest financial benefits, these may be less attractive to a larger council, raising concerns that the programme may not be prioritised. However, if a larger authority fully embraces the programme's importance, it could present a valuable opportunity for growth and support.

- Another risk is the potential loss of the existing framework of pre-approved contractors. If not adopted by the new authority, project delivery could be significantly delayed.

South Devon and Dartmoor Community Safety Partnership

- The Safer Devon Partnership operates at the county level and encompasses four local Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs):
    - East and Mid Devon
    - Exeter
    - North Devon and Torridge
    - South Devon and Dartmoor (covering Teignbridge, South Hams, and West Devon)
- The South Devon and Dartmoor CSP is managed by Teignbridge.
- Each CSP is structured and operates differently, resulting in varied approaches to delivery across the county.
- Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) will necessitate changes to the structure and staffing of each CSP. However, until the details of LGR in Devon are confirmed, it is not possible to plan effectively.
- Despite structural differences, there is already strong collaboration across CSPs, including data sharing and joint working. Efforts are not duplicated, and all CSPs align with strategic assessments and police and crime strategies. This will remain consistent post-LGR.

Opportunities and risks of LGR

LGR presents opportunities for greater collaboration, but also poses several risks that must be carefully considered:

- **Preserving effective partnership working**
  Teignbridge District Council has a strong reputation for effective partnership working and delivery. It is vital that this is not lost through reorganisation. However, LGR could offer an opportunity for other authorities to learn from Teignbridge's successful model.

- **Recognising localised issues**
  Community safety issues vary by area—whether it's antisocial behaviour, drug misuse, or rural crime. These local nuances must be understood and addressed appropriately. Funding is needs-led, and rural areas like Teignbridge and West Devon may risk losing out if merged with more urban areas such as Torbay, which may not share the same challenges or attract the same funding.

- **Maintaining strong relationships**
  Teignbridge Council benefits from trusted relationships with colleagues and

external partners, including the local police. These connections enable swift responses and better outcomes. There is a risk that such relationships could be diluted in a larger, reorganised council structure.

- **Protecting the value of CSPs**
CSPs provide an essential service to their communities. Their value must not be diminished during reorganisation. Once LGR is confirmed, a comprehensive work programme should be developed to:

    - Assess available resources

    - Understand community needs and perceptions

    - Identify service gaps

    - Design a new structure

    - Establish clear priorities

Head of Neighbourhoods

Impacts of LGR on projects and services

- **Project delays and decision-making stagnation**
Several projects are currently on hold due to the uncertainty surrounding LGR. This uncertainty is also affecting member decision-making, leading to delays and a lack of progress.
- **Procurement and contracting limitations**
Contracts, such as those for parking, are being renewed on a like-for-like basis, with no scope for innovation or improvement. While there may be opportunities to collaborate with other local authorities for better value, these cannot be explored until the future structure under LGR is known.
- **Challenges with shared services (e.g. Strata)**
Strata, which currently serves Teignbridge, Exeter and East Devon, presents a challenge. If Teignbridge is not grouped with these authorities post-LGR, it may impact how shared services are managed and delivered.
- **Opportunities to lead and share best practice**
Teignbridge has a strong track record of effective service delivery. LGR presents an opportunity to lead by example and share our expertise and successful approaches with other authorities.
- **Learning from existing county-wide models**
Devon Emergency Planning is a good example of a county-wide model that works well—providing consistent advice, training, and delivery across all councils. This could serve as a blueprint for future service integration under LGR.

- **Established relationships across the county**
  Teignbridge already works in partnership with other local authorities and has strong relationships in place. These can be maintained and potentially strengthened through LGR.
- **Recruitment challenges**
  Recruitment is currently difficult due to the uncertainty of LGR and the limitation of offering only 12-month contracts. The biggest risk is losing experienced staff without having the right structures in place to replace them. Attracting and retaining the right talent is a growing concern.

Opportunities for service integration

- **Parking services**
  There is a clear opportunity to integrate off-street parking (managed by district councils) and on-street parking (managed by the county council) into a single, streamlined service. This would reduce duplication and generate cost savings.
- **Licensing services**
  Licensing applications could be processed centrally, while retaining local officers for site visits and inspections. However, local knowledge is essential. Officers who know their area are better placed to identify new businesses and maintain community trust. Local intelligence, pride, and ownership must be preserved.
- **Community-facing services**
  Services that work directly with communities, such as those addressing antisocial behaviour, must remain locally managed. Strong local relationships are key to resolving issues quickly and effectively.

Risks and Considerations

- **Decision-making paralysis**
  The ongoing uncertainty is leading to deferred decisions and stagnation across multiple service areas.
- **System and tool compatibility**
  Merging with other local authorities could create significant challenges due to differences in systems and tools, potentially resulting in a complex and resource-intensive transition.
- **Stakeholder engagement**
  Engagement with key partners such as Teign Housing and local businesses is essential. For example, Paramount 24 in Heathfield, responsible for producing thousands of airline meals certified for export by the council, must be included in LGR discussions to understand their views and the working relationship with the council.

Head of Environmental Services

A convergence project has already taken place to map out waste and recycling services, to see who does what and why, and where joint working could take place.

Opportunities, challenges and risks

- **Split responsibilities and interdependence**
  Teignbridge District Council is responsible for household waste collection, while Devon County Council handles waste disposal, creating a necessary interdependence. In contrast, Torbay Council manages both functions, which highlights the variation in service models across the county.

- **Existing and limited joint working arrangements**
  Long-standing partnerships exist with other local authorities for some services. However, areas such as grounds maintenance and greenspaces currently lack joint working arrangements, presenting potential opportunities for collaboration under LGR.

- **In-house service delivery strengths**
  Teignbridge delivers many services in-house, including:

    - Recycling facilities

    - Street cleaning

    - Workshop and fleet maintenance (with an external contract for vehicle provision)

  This model has proven cost-effective and efficient. Under LGR, these in-house capabilities could be expanded to serve a wider area, offering economies of scale and improved service delivery. For example, Teignbridge's workshops could increase and support a merged authority.

- **Staffing flexibility and resilience**
  A larger, combined authority would offer access to a broader pool of staff, helping to mitigate shortages and improve operational resilience.

- **Larger contracts and better value**
  A combined authority could negotiate larger contracts for items such as bins, uniforms, and vehicles, potentially achieving better value and consistency.

- **Project stagnation**
  Uncertainty around LGR is causing delays in key projects, such as the redevelopment of the depot and service changes. Given the potential disruption to customers and the additional upheaval expected post-LGR, now is

not the right time to proceed. These changes would also involve significant cost and effort.

- **Reputation and service quality risks**
  Teignbridge has a strong reputation for its waste collection services. Merging with councils that have lower performance standards could jeopardise this. Additionally, Teignbridge is ahead of some councils in digital service delivery, which could either be diluted or leveraged to benefit a wider area.

- **Need for local hubs**
  Maintaining local operational hubs is essential. It is not practical or cost-effective for waste collection vehicles to travel long distances, so localised infrastructure must remain in place.

- **Cemetery services and customer care**
  The cemetery service requires a sensitive, personal approach. Local staff must remain accessible, especially for older customers who may not engage with digital platforms. Reorganisation must preserve this human touch.

- **Time to implement**

  Northamptonshire's experience shows that post-LGR service integration can take over five years, highlighting the need for realistic timelines and careful planning.