

## **Monthly Exe Valley Report, April 2025 – EDDC Cllr Fabian King**

District Councils are due to be replaced! In talking with Parish Council members, I realised it would be useful to report on the progress of Devon's devolution journey. If the links don't work, email [fabian.king@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:fabian.king@eastdevon.gov.uk) for a live electronic version. Now – here we go:

The Minister for Local Government and Devolution (**LG&D**), Jim McMahon, invited the 11 Devon authorities to work together to develop interim plans to form a unitary council across Devon. The purpose for devolution across England is for “strong unitary councils that can form the building blocks to support effective mayoral strategic authorities.”

Altogether there were 4 separate “Interim Plans” submitted on 21st March. They must be finalised by 28th November 2025, for consultation to occur over the following couple of months.

**Torbay Unitary Authority** and **7 of the 8 District Councils in Devon** propose a joint Unitary Authority in Devon. (*n.b.* Exeter City Council is the 8th district which wants to follow its own Interim Plan) [https://news.eastdevon.gov.uk/letter-to-minister-of-state-for-local-government-and-english-devolution/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://news.eastdevon.gov.uk/letter-to-minister-of-state-for-local-government-and-english-devolution/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

**Plymouth** proposes a preferred option to extend its Unitary Authority area by adding 13 parishes from the **South Hams District Council** Area. This consists of an extra 12,000 households and 29,000 people. They call this Interim Plan the “Plymouth Growth Area”.

<https://democracy.plymouth.gov.uk/documents/s152178/250317+Plymouth+Local+Government+Reorganisation+Interim+Plan+FINAL.pdf>

**Exeter City Council** is proposing to become a new Unitary Authority to “include the City of Exeter and some areas around”. The proposal is continuing to develop

<https://committees.exeter.gov.uk/documents/s98437/APPENDIX%20A%20-%20Exeter%20City%20Council%20Interim%20Submission%20FINAL.pdf>

**Devon County Council** is examining 6 different options with careful modelling of their justification and likely outcomes. The 6 options which include variations of the above, plus others based on other geographical/authority groupings. The 6<sup>th</sup> option, Devon County Council claims, is for benchmarking purposes, namely a single unitary authority covering the whole of Devon.

<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/documents/s51601/Appendix%203%20-%20Interim%20Plan.pdf>

**NEXT STEPS:** The LG&D Minister, Jim McMahon, is pushing hard to achieve one large Devon Unitary Authority. Indeed, the devolution white paper clearly states that a “ministerial directive” would be used to impose devolution in any areas where local leaders have not been able to agree. Full devolution to be in place Phase 1 - April 2027, Phase 2 - April 2028.

**CURRENT DEVOLUTION EXAMPLES:** If you are interested in how current examples of devolution and new Mayoral Authorities are unfolding, a good starting point is with the Local Government Association's article “Devolution Deals”, using this URL link

<https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/devolution/devolution-hub/devolution-deals>

Cllr Fabian King 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025