

Aims

- Better services, clearer accountability and stronger local leadership
- Financial resilience is paramount
- Local accountability will be strengthened, with decisions made closer to communities, empowering residents to shape their future.
- Stronger alignment with public sector partners, including health, policing and transport.
- Services are easier to access
- Support for our most vulnerable children is strengthened, bringing social care, education and SEND services together with housing and health services.
- Health and social care are better integrated, improving support for older people and those with complex needs.
- A unified approach to housing and planning- more affordable homes and sustainable development
- Economic growth is strengthened through investment in skills, strategic job creation and stronger business partnerships.
- Local democracy is enhanced with clearer accountability and greater community engagement in decision-making.

Options Presented

Option 1: *Plymouth* with existing boundary

Devon- combining the areas of the current 8 districts and Torbay

Option 2: *South Devon*, including Plymouth, Teignbridge, South Hams and Torbay

North Devon, includes Exeter, East Devon, North Devon, Torridge, West Devon and Mid Devon.

Option 3: *South West Devon* includes Plymouth, South Hams and West Devon

North East Devon includes Exeter, East Devon, Torbay, Teignbridge, North Devon, Torridge and Mid Devon

Option 4: *Plymouth* with existing boundaries

Greater Exeter, including Exeter, East Devon and Mid Devon

Rest of Devon, including Torbay, Teignbridge, North Devon, Torridge, South Hams and West Devon

Option 5: *Plymouth* with existing boundaries

North East Devon, includes Exeter, East Devon, Mid Devon, North Devon and Torridge

South West Devon, includes Torbay, South Hams, Teignbridge and West Devon

How

- Guided by the evidence and data and what's best for our residents
- Discuss with our partners
- Working closely with other councils, our other sector partners, town and parish councils, national parks, community and voluntary organisations, business and others.
- Sensible economic area with appropriate tax base, which does not create any undue advantage or disadvantage for one part of the area.
- Appropriate scale
- Deliver improved services... high quality, accessible and responsive.
- Achieve financial resilience
- Be locally accountable
- Align with wider public sector geography... health, policing, transport, and economic partnership operate at different levels and need coordination across boundaries.
- Single 'local plan', increase housing supply to meet local needs while make sure development is in the right place...
- Protect the county from the effects of climate change and natural events such as flooding or a pandemic
- Support future devolution.
- Impacts of partners' financial resilience in delivering council services.
- Responsible and prudent management of assets, liabilities, investments and capital financing
- Reduction of duplication...opportunity from economies of scale and optimisation of physical assets and operating systems
- Significant risks in local government reorganisation is the fragmentation of services...could lead to inefficiencies and increased costs.
- Boundary considerations must align with community identity, travel-to-work patterns and economic geographies.
- Evidenced and Collaborative approach... seek to build consensus where possible on a preferred option for the area.

Focus

- Co-design...working closely with our partners in the public sector
- View town and parish councils and our national parks as key partners in co-designing
- Work collaboratively with all 8 District Councils and Plymouth and Torbay unitary councils
- Financial resilience and sustainability.... Value for money, eliminated duplication, and reduces overhead costs.
- Smaller unitary authorities could be exposed to risk from the business rates reset and impacts from national funding reform

- Identity benefits and risks from aggregation and disaggregation of services and other issues.
- Council tax harmonisation is a critical consideration....harmonisation can significantly impact both council revenues and taxpayer contributions.
- Equity for residents
- Financial resilience
- How to transition...phased approach...considered against the risk of lost income that could undermine financial resilience
- Provide time for efficiency saving from reorganisation to materialise, offsetting any initial shortfalls
- Balances financial sustainability with fairness for taxpayers
- Harmonise other fees and charges such as for specific refuse collection, planning applications....
- Working together with partners across the whole county.. countywide strategies like adult social care and public health with local strategies such as leisure, housing and local plans.
- Simplifying future council services...easier to access and use
- Effective use of data and insight
- Workforce resilience (council)...reduction in local competition (other councils)..more consistent training and practice, broader career progression opportunities.
- Artificial intelligence...support administration and service delivery

Adult Services

- Strengthen partnerships between adult social care with the NHS, addressing gaps that are created because council and health boundaries don't currently align
- Improve strategic working and the ability to meet residents' needs...bringing together housing, community services
- Integration of housing and social care...enhancing planning for supported housing, extra care schemes and accessibility in new developments....maximise the use of existing housing stock
- Community based support
- Ageing population strategy

Homelessness and Housing Services

- Transform homelessness services by integrating housing, social care and health support...coordinated approach to prevention, faster response times and streamlined access
- Improved data sharing...better alignment...more effective long-term support....reducing duplication and enhancing partnerships with the voluntary sector
- Bringing together strategic infrastructure, transport, school planning functions with local planning and housing services.

- Consistency across planning policies...a planning approach that can shape the type of housing brought forward.
- Devon-wide Housing Strategy and implementation approach
- Common approach to recruiting and retaining planners and a skilled workforce
- Single approach to use of public sector assets...support options for accommodating vulnerable individuals
- Single approach to developing construction skills
- Local community engagement and opportunities...community land trusts and other community-led approaches
- Improved data sharing

Children's Services and SEND

- Securing and maintaining a permanent workforce and a single approach to supplementing this when needed...standard rates...social services, education under a unitary structure, at the right scale with housing services...improve supporting care leaver accommodation and transition planning. Bringing together leisure centres, with bus services, harmonised council tax systems and employment policies....single and consistent local offer...covering access to transport, housing, leisure and council tax exemptions to our young people, foster families and young carers...remove data sharing barriers between revenue and benefits and social services...underpin needs assessments for placements and sufficiency planning...help implement auto enrolment of free school meals etc.
- SEND sufficiency for families...one of the most challenging Local Government priorities...SEND will be a priority area for consideration in LGR

Future Governance

- In all the options appraised, a significant reduction in the number of councillors from the current arrangements will be achieved.
- Strategic Authority arrangements
- Strategic working with our neighbouring authorities....maximise our economic potential, deliver investment, and create a stronger and more sustainable economy.....high growth business sectors such as marine engineering, defence, photonics and digital...tourism, agritech and food production...address housing pressures, improve local transport and meet net zero ambitions.

Heritage and Culture

- Reflects the historic and cultural identities of the county's diverse communities...work collaboratively...across our rural, coastal and urban geography to safeguard and celebrate the unique character of Devon's cities, towns, villages and rural areas.
- Strengthen civic engagement, enhance place-based decision-making, and support the distinct traditions and identities that make each community

unique....strategic planning, tailored service delivery, and a commitment to preserving Devon's rich heritage while creating a modern, effective and financially resilient system of local government.

- Public and Stakeholder engagement
- Changes are right for local people, are developed collaboratively and are implemented effectively.

Our Devon

- Devon is a great place to live and work with a good quality of life...sense of connection to their place, and specifically to where they live, where many benefit from strong and thriving communities.
- Challenges...ageing population....significant pockets of deprivation, low skills, low wages...need for more opportunities and improvements in public transport across the county
- Younger adults with more complex needs
- Challenges in our natural environment. Climate change...erosion and flooding.
- Challenges in providing opportunities for our young people
- Sustained financial pressures on children's services
- Critical shortage of affordable housing...felt most keenly by younger generations, vulnerable families and public sector workers.
- Conditions for sustainable economic growth...many businesses reliant on seasonal tourism and agriculture

Geography

- Mix of urban, coastal and rural...33% of Devon's population is classed as rural, compared with 17% nationally
- Population grew by around 4%...faster rate than the average in England (3.2%)....projected growth between 2023 and 2043 is expected to be higher in Devon 12.8% than national growth 9.2%.

Health care and wellbeing

- Individuals, families and communities experiencing rural and coastal deprivation, individuals, more vulnerable communities...Devon has both hotspots of urban deprivation...many rural and coastal areas....higher levels of deprivation, impacted by low wages and a high cost of living.
- Much lower mental health outcomes than the national average....rural and coastal deprivation also contribute to mental health and wellbeing.

Economic indicators

- Strongly recognised external inward investment and visitor identity and brand...people identify strongly with both their local towns, cities and villages and with the wider county....Economy worth £31.4bn, the size of Manchester and larger than the economies of Edinburgh and Bristol.

- Shaped by its coastlines, protected landscape, national parks, a large rural and agricultural area and a broadly spread and diverse manufacturing base across the county.
- Faster growing area than Cornwall, Bristol, Oxfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Berkshire, Milton Keynes, the City of London and Camden and Essex Thames Gateway.
- Wealth of opportunities in terms of its offshore energy resource in the Celtic sea and the second largest Tungsten deposit globally at Hemerdon...strong advanced manufacturing, digital and creative, agricultural, agritech, fishing and tourism sectors.
- Areas of Devon...nationally significant levels of poverty.
- Unemployment below the national average, with productivity and earnings levels being of more concern. Social mobility and youth aspiration and progression are particular areas of concern...challenges with skills and educational performance.

Environment

- Mix of habitat, such as its iconic hedgerows, ancient woodlands, orchards, heathlands and parkland...internationally important populations of species
- Diverse marine life...15 Marine Conservation Zones...outstanding natural coastal environment...monitored bathing waters, 82% rated as 'Excellent' and 13% as 'Good'
- Historic environment...archaeological sites, historic buildings, towns, villages and ancient landscapes...notable for the density and quality of this heritage.
- Devon faces several environmental challenges. Habitats are fragmented and threatened by pollution, invasive species, and climate change....risk of flooding from surface water...further risk from tidal flooding, as well as coastal erosion.
- Environment is a vital asset for health and well-being...Important access to high-quality, wildlife and heritage-rich green spaces that support physical and mental wellness...outdoor classroom for our children...attracts visitors while offering diverse recreational opportunities and enriching cultural heritage...ongoing conservation and recovery efforts...restored and thrive

Planning and Transport

- Number of major national transport links...however, transport connectivity varies significantly across the County.
- Cycling and walking infrastructure plans. In rural areas, ambitious plans of multi-use trail networks...attractive to people walking, wheeling, cycling and, where possible horse riding.
- Bus...most used form of public transport.
- Rural accessibility challenges means many Devon residents remain reliant on their cars

- Road improvements have focused on the most economically significant routes...is targeted at better connecting communities to the major road corridors.

Housing

- Higher average full-time salary to house price ration...rental affordability...less than anywhere else in the country outside of London and the South East...high costs...as well as a shortage of...impacting on the social and economic viability
- Age of the housing stock
- 14.3% of households classed as 'fuel poor' vs 13.1% for England.
- Across Devon and Plymouth housing completions are below the national average.... affordability of housing which has knock on impacts to local labour markets.