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31/07/2025

Subject: Community Priorities for the Local Government Review for Devon – Representation from Wembury Parish Council

Dear Mr McMahon,

On behalf of the residents of Wembury Parish, Devon, we write to you in response to the ongoing Local Government Review (LGR).

Our community has participated in the early consultation phase conducted by our council (in person and online, using data summaries to inform the public easily and a survey based upon extracted data from the proposals). Therefore, we ask that central government gives due consideration to the expressed priorities of our community when determining which proposal to take forward.

Wembury Parish is a peaceful and beautiful rural community of three villages and numerous hamlets, surrounded by farms and coastline. The community really values the rural identity of the parish as well as its connection to nature and has a strong attachment to the area.

The community recognises that LGR is an opportunity to make much needed improvements that can bring great benefits to our communities, while respecting that strong rural identity. From conversations had with members of the public, they believe that the needs of a rural community are best met by a local government infrastructure that is already experienced in delivery of such services in a rural environment.

The following issues were identified as top priorities by our survey and also conversations with residents:

Environmental Protection and Climate Action

Wembury lies in a coastal area of high environmental significance. Protecting the rural identity and our green spaces is of huge importance to the residents. Residents wish to see stronger protections for our coastlines, biodiversity, and heritage landscapes (including the generational farming communities), alongside action on flooding risks and further investment in renewable energy.

Transport and Connectivity

Road maintenance, road safety for vulnerable road users, and improving rural public transport are significant concerns.

Health, Social Care and Integration

Our community supports more joined-up care services, community-based support, and investment in person-centred, preventative approaches—especially for older residents and those with complex needs.

Economic Development and Growth

Our residents want to see a strong focus on creating local jobs, particularly through addressing skills shortages in both rural and urban settings and supporting Devon's growing clean energy sectors. Investment in infrastructure and key industries like defence, digital, and marine is also considered vital for our county's long-term prosperity.

Children's Services and SEND

Ensuring that a unitary authority can recruit and retain a skilled workforce for children's services and improve support for families of children with SEND, are high priorities.

Water

Failings in both the ageing water supply and sewage treatment infrastructure, regular untreated waste water discharges, water pollution and beach safety are of great concern to our communities.

Community Wellbeing and Inclusion

Addressing rural and coastal deprivation, preventing homelessness, and a lack of local and truly affordable housing are key issues. Supporting the mental health of our community is a high priority, especially with regard combatting rural isolation.

Housing and Planning

There is support for truly affordable housing that meets the local need, whilst being sustainable, well-planned and carefully located, so that it does not damage the rural nature of the parish. This is also shown in the community's engagement with the council's work in developing a Neighbourhood Plan. People value the effective use of public land and support community-led housing initiatives.

We understand the complexity of the decision ahead but urge you to ensure that the final structure of our local government hears our community's voice and therefore, reflects the above clearly expressed local priorities.

In terms of the initial governance proposals, respondents in our area expressed the strongest preference for the plan put forward by the District Councils (known as the 1,4,5 plan), followed by the Devon County council proposals, and lastly the Plymouth City Council plan. We do appreciate that the plans submitted were only the initial ideas and that more detail will come out in November, where we shall again consult with our communities and feed the results back to central government. However, we feel it is helpful for you to have a clear understanding of which draft plan is the preferred option for our community.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters. We would welcome the opportunity to engage further as plans progress.

Yours sincerely,



Anne Towill
Proper Officer to Wembury Parish Council