

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Council held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 26 November 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.48 pm

65 Apologies

A list of apologies is set out at the end of these minutes.

66 Declarations of interest

Agenda Item 7: Local Government Reorganisation - Full Proposal

Councillor Mike Goodman, Personal, declared, whilst not an interest, his son was employed by KPMG but had not been involved in the drafting of the business case and that he (Cllr Goodman) came to the matter with an open mind free from bias and predetermination.

Councillor Nick Hookway declared an interest as a county councillor but confirmed that he had been granted a dispensation to enable him to fully take part and that he came to the matter with an open mind free from bias and predetermination.

Councillor Paul Hayward declared an interest as a county councillor but that he had been granted a dispensation to enable him to fully take part and that he came to the matter with an open mind free from bias and predetermination.

67 Public speaking

No members of the public had registered to speak at the meeting.

68 Matters of urgency

There were none.

69 Announcements from the Chair and Leader

There were no announcements.

70 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There were no items of confidential/exempt business.

71 Local Government Reorganisation - Full Proposal

The Portfolio Holder for Council Coordination and External Engagement, introduced the report reminding councillors of the process that had been undertaken relating to the Council's submission to Government based around the Reimagining Devon: Believe in Better, which proposed the 4-5-1 model of local government reorganisation in response to the Secretary of State's invitation.

The Portfolio Holder reported that Cabinet and Council had received a series of reports over the course of the year on the topic of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Devolution. These followed the publication of the English Devolution White paper in December 2024, which committed to ending the current two-tier system of District and County Councils, and the subsequent invitation from the Secretary of State to submit proposals for a single tier of government.

Councillors noted that the final submission represented the culmination of the process that had been undertaken, in collaboration with the other District and Borough Councils across Devon, over the course of this year to respond to the Secretary of State's invitation. The final proposals submitted through Reimagining Devon addressed the six criteria and applied them to how future services could be efficiently and effectively delivered and structured. Council further noted that the full proposal for the 4-5-1 model of local government reorganisation in conjunction with a proposed modification to extend the current boundary of Plymouth City Council.

Council acknowledged that over the course of the summer considerable time and effort had been invested in to developing this model into a complete full proposal. This had included securing input from over fifty officers drawn across the District and Borough Councils in Devon together with Torbay Council. Specialist support had also been commissioned in relation to financial matters and to develop the case more widely.

Council welcomed that alongside the collaboration between this group of Councils there had been extensive consultation and engagement with external stakeholders. This engagement campaign had received nearly 6,000 responses from residents, businesses, and community groups, helping to directly shape the final proposals. A series of briefings and engagement events had also been undertaken with statutory organisations, Members of Parliament, local businesses and parish and town councils.

Council acknowledged that whichever option was ultimately progressed, it would be important for the local government family in Devon to pull together to ensure the best possible outcomes for Devon residents and businesses with the focus needing to quickly shift to preparatory work to support successful implementation. Further reports would come to Cabinet and full Council as key milestones were reached.

Councillors endorsed the submission of the Reimagining Devon: Believe in Better by the 28 November 2025 as the Council's response which put forward a vision to transform local government and secure a better, more prosperous future for all communities across Devon.

Having been proposed by Councillor John Loudoun and seconded by Councillor Ian Barlow the motion was put to the vote and carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Council endorse the submission to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government of the full proposal for the 4-5-1 model of local government reorganisation as set out in the Reimagining Devon: Believe in Better as the Council's response to the Secretary of State's invitation, together with the proposing of the 4-5-1 + option to the Secretary of State through a modification.
2. That Council endorses the next steps in terms of the progression of work by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Deputy Leader.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

A Bailey	T Dumper	D Ledger
B Bailey	P Faithfull	Y Levine
I Barlow	P Fernley	J Loudoun
K Blakey	C Fitzgerald	D Mackinder
K Bloxham	S Gazzard	M Martin
V Bonetta	M Goodman	J O'Leary
C Brown	M Hartnell	T Olive
J Brown	P Hayward	H Parr
A Bruce	J Heath	M Rixson
C Burhop	N Hookway	E Rylance
S Chamberlain	M Howe	S Westerman
M Chapman	B Ingham	J Whibley
B Collins	S Jackson	E Wragg
R Collins	G Jung	
O Davey	F King	

Officers in attendance:

Simon Davey, Director of Finance
Tracy Hendren, Chief Executive
Catrin Stark, Director of Housing and Health
Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Andrew Wood, Director of Place
Andrew Melhuish, Democratic Services Manager

Councillor apologies:

P Arnott
J Bailey
I Chubb
A Hall
M Hall
S Hawkins
S Hughes
R Jefferies
V Johns
T McCollum
C Nicholas
H Riddell
S Smith
D Wilson

Chair

Date: