

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 8 January 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Appointment to the Devon and Torbay Housing Advisory Group

Report summary:

This report seeks endorsement for the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning to represent the Council on the Devon and Torbay Housing Advisory Group. This will play an important role in advising, informing and influencing the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority (DTCCA) to support the delivery of the housing aspects of the devolution deal.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

That Cabinet endorses the nomination of the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning to represent the Council on the Devon and Torbay Housing Advisory Group

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure that the strategic housing challenges and ambitions are clearly articulated through the work of the Devon and Torbay Housing Advisory Group

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Climate Action and Emergency Response
- ☐ Coast, Country and Environment
- ☒ Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- ☐ Communications and Democracy
- ☐ Economy
- ☐ Finance and Assets
- ☒ Strategic Planning
- ☒ Sustainable Homes and Communities
- ☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk;

Links to background information

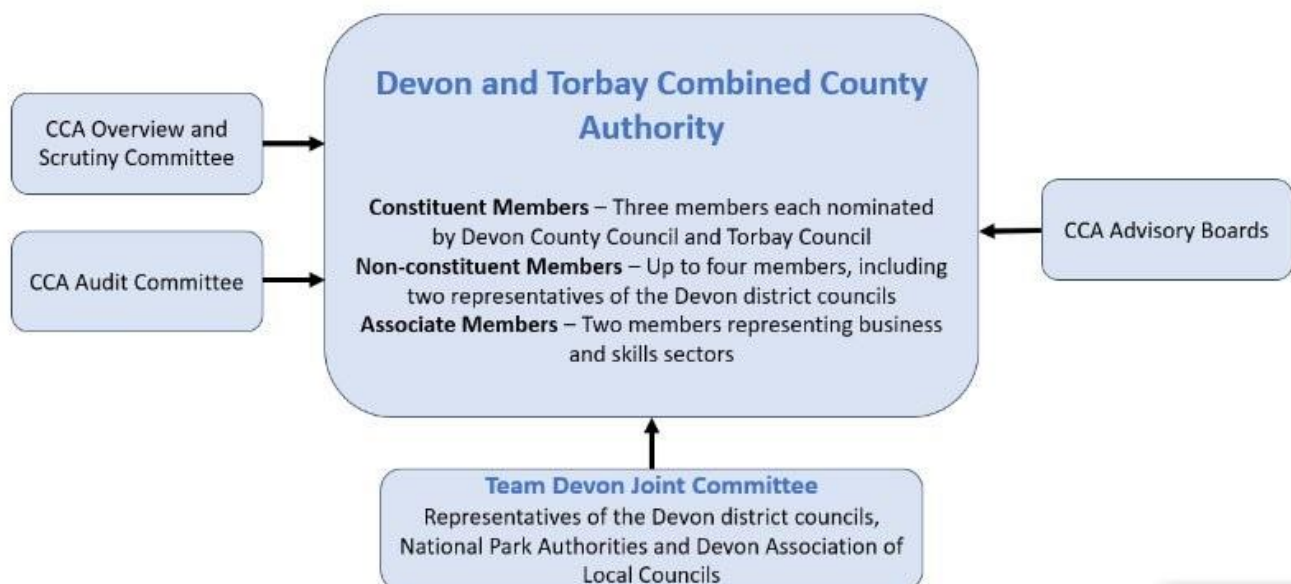
Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☒ A supported and engaged community
- ☐ Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
- ☐ Resilient economy that supports local business
- ☒ Financially secure and improving quality of services

Background

1.1 Cabinet last received a report on the proposed Devolution Deal for Devon and Torbay at the February 2024 meeting. A key aspect of this was the proposed creation of a Combined County Authority for Devon and Torbay. The relevant legislation necessary to enable the establishment of this body has recently been laid before the Houses of Parliament. The proposed architecture is set out below;



1.2 The Devon and Torbay Housing Advisory Group (DTHAG) will advise, influence, and inform the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority (DTCCA) to support the delivery of the housing aspects of the devolution deal. The group will also have a role in recommending annual priorities, securing investment, and designing appropriate programmes to address the housing needs of communities across the Devon and Torbay area.

1.3 The DTHAG is an advisory group with no formal powers or decision-making responsibilities. It will act in a shadow capacity until the Combined County Authority is formally constituted. The DTHAG will sit within the governance framework of the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority. It will be established through a nomination process with one elected member representing each of the nine local housing authorities.

Context

2.1 Strategic conversations about housing delivery across Devon have been taking place through the Devon Housing Task Force. This is a Member-led cross-party group representing Devon's local authorities looking at housing supply and demand challenges across the County. The council has been a member of the Task Force since it was established in May 2022. In September 2023, the Task Force set up the independent Devon Housing Commission, in partnership with the University of the Exeter.

2.2 The formation of the DTHAG follows a key recommendation of the Devon Housing Commission, namely: *The Commission recommends the CCA should establish a successor body to the Devon's Housing Task Force to provide ongoing monitoring of progress toward the Housing Strategy's goals.* The Devon and Torbay Housing Advisory Group Board (DTHAG) is the "Voice of the housing authorities" within the governance framework of the (DTCCA).

2.3 The overarching objective of the DTHAG is to improve access to safe, secure, high quality housing, across all tenure types, which enables our residents to lead happy and healthy lives, contributing positively to the communities of Devon and Torbay.

2.4 The detailed strategic and operational role of the DTHAG is to advise the DTCCA on matters pertaining to housing. A summary is set out below:

- To work with delivery partners and stakeholders to produce a shared investment pipeline delivering more social, affordable, and low Carbon homes
- To evidence the role that housing can play in delivering improved outcomes across major strategic policy areas such as health, economic growth, social and environmental policy
- To explore the common supply and demand side issues contributing to the Devon housing crisis in the social, affordable, and private housing markets and to consider the potential solutions that might be delivered by taking a collective, sub-regional approach
- To receive the recommendations from the Devon Housing Commission and advise on ways to implement these
- To understand community housing pressures and advise on ways to support, facilitate, and enable greater take up and proliferation of community-led solutions
- To advise the board on measures that could assist in addressing housing solutions for Devon's care leavers and other vulnerable groups
- To strengthen the voices of individual housing and planning authorities; to empower and add value
- To share examples of best practice and opportunities to learn from others at scheme or system level
- To consider strategic alignment of investment options in respect to additional revenues generated by the implementation of the second homes additional council tax charge
- To support the CCA board in any other related areas in order to deliver its ambition and aspiration on matters relating to housing.

2.5 It is important that East Devon's strategic housing challenges and ambitions are clearly articulated through the work of the Devon and Torbay Housing Advisory Group and captured as part of the DTCCA Action Plan.

Proposal

3.1 It is proposed that the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning is nominated to represent the Council on the DTHAG. If agreed, the nominated Member will attend at least four DTHAG meetings per year. Additional meetings can be requested by the Chair or Vice-Chair to discuss issues of significant importance or for urgent decisions. Task and Finish Groups may also be established to facilitate progress on specific themes and issues as required. Devon County Council will continue to provide the secretariat while in shadow form, but once the CCA is formally constituted, the ongoing secretariat responsibilities will need to be agreed by the DTCCA Board.

Financial implications:

There are no financial implications on which to comment.

Legal implications:

It is important that the Council is represented on the Devon and Torbay Housing Advisory Group