

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Council held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 9 January 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.41 pm

1 Apologies

Apologies list at end of document.

2 Declarations of interest

Agenda Item 4:

Councillors Jess Bailey, Iain Chubb, Marcus Hartnell and Stuart Hughes declared an ORI as they were elected councillors at Devon County Council.

Councillors Sarah Chamberlain and Matt Hall declared an ORI as they were employees at Exeter City Council.

Councillor Anne Hall declared an ORI as her partner was an employee at Exeter City Council.

3 Confidential/exempt item(s)

None.

4 English Devolution White Paper

The Council received a report setting out details of the English Devolution White Paper with the new governments approach to deepening and widening devolution in England. Members noted that the White Paper placed an emphasis on areas adopting a mayoral model to access additional powers and greater financial flexibility. The White Paper set out plans to reorganise local government, with an aim to establish larger unitary authorities in two tier areas and where smaller unitary authorities were unable to meet local needs. Members were also informed that the proposals also included changes to how strategic planning was dealt with across wider geographies.

Members acknowledged that the publication of the Devolution White Paper marked a very important milestone. As well as moving to a position of devolution by default, it also set out a twin pronged approach with local government reorganisation. There was considerable emphasis placed on the role of Mayors, with associated structures able to access the most far reaching and flexible powers including integrated financial settlements. Universal coverage of Strategic Authorities would provide delineation between strategic decisions and front line service delivery.

Members noted that there were a number of different options that future local government structures could take in Devon in conjunction with wider devolution proposals and it was important that close partnership working, with our peers and

stakeholders in order to consider and develop these options including how they best serve the needs of East Devon communities moving forward, was maintained.

The Council received details of a joint statement from the Leaders of the Devon District Councils and endorsed the statement.

Councillor Paul Arnott proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor John Loudoun.

Cllr Colin Brown proposed that a recorded vote was taken for all recommendations contained in the report and having been put to the vote was carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED: That a recorded vote was conducted for each recommendation.

During discussion it was recognised that consultation with local communities, town and parish councils was carried out and to support this an amendment was proposed by Councillor Vicky Johns and seconded by Councillor Steve Gazzard

To lobby the government on the importance of a Devon-wide consultation to ensure that any revised local government structures meet the principles of devolved powers to local communities, town and parish councils, rather than being imposed by Whitehall.

The Leader of Council as the proposer and Councillor John Loudoun as the seconder of the motion accepted this additional recommendation.

The Chair moved to the recorded vote and members subsequently agreed that 1a, 1b and 1c were taken as a recorded vote.

Recommendation 1 a. Joint Leaders Statement from the Devon Districts Forum

For: Councillors Paul Arnott, Kevin Blakey, Kim Bloxham, Chris Burhop, Bethany Collins, Olly Davey, Tim Dumper, Paula Fernley, Charlotte Fitzgerald, Steve Gazzard, Del Haggerty, Anne Hall, Matt Hall, Sam Hawkins, Paul Hayward, John Heath, Nick Hookway, Sarah Jackson, Richard Jefferies, Vicky Johns, Geoff Jung, John Loudoun, Duncan Mackinder, Tony McCollum, Todd Olive, Marianne Rixson, Eleanor Rylance, Andrew Toye, Joe Whibley, Daniel Wilson and Eileen Wragg.

Against: Councillors Aurora Bailey, Brian Bailey, Colin Brown, Jenny Brown, Maddy Chapman, Mike Goodman, Marcus Hartnell, Stuart Hughes, Ben Ingham, Cherry Nicholas, Helen Parr and Henry Riddell.

Abstained: Councillors Roy Collins and Peter Faithfull.

For 31, Against 12 and 2 abstentions.

Recommendation 1 b. Potential to promote the establishment of a Mayoral Combined Authority for the peninsular to cover Devon, Plymouth, Torbay and Cornwall.

For: Councillors Paul Arnott, Aurora Bailey, Brian Bailey, Kevin Blakey, Kim Bloxham, Colin Brown, Jenny Brown, Chris Burhop, Maddy Chapman, Bethany Collins, Olly

Davey, Tim Dumper, Peter Faithfull, Paula Fernley, Charlotte Fitzgerald, Mike Goodman, Del Haggerty, Anne Hall, Marcus Hartnell, Sam Hawkins, Paul Hayward, John Heath, Nick Hookway, Stuart Hughes, Ben Ingham, Richard Jefferies, Vicky Johns, Geoff Jung, John Loudoun, Duncan Mackinder, Tony McCollum, Cherry Nicolas, Todd Olive, Helen Parr, Henry Riddell, Marianne Rixson, Eleanor Rylance, Andrew Toye, Daniel Wilson and Eileen Wragg.

Against: Councillors Roy Collins Steve Gazzard and Matt Hall.

Abstained: Councillors Sarah Jackson and Joe Whibley.

For: 40, Against 3 and 2 abstentions.

Recommendation 1 c. Need to engage with our communities, partners and stakeholders to develop considered and coherent proposals around changes to the current model of 10 councils in Devon to a smaller number of suitably sized unitaries rather than defaulting to a single unitary approach.

For: Councillors Paul Arnott, Kevin Blakey, Kim Bloxham, Chris Burhop, Bethany Collins, Roy Collins, Olly Davey, Tim Dumper, Paula Fernley, Charlotte Fitzgerald, Steve Gazzard, Del Haggerty, Anne Hall, Matt Hall, Sam Hawkins, Paul Hayward, John Heath, Nick Hookway, Sarah Jackson, Richard Jefferies, Vicky Johns, Geoff Jung, John Loudoun, Duncan Mackinder, Tony McCollum, Todd Olive, Marianne Rixson, Eleanor Rylance, Andrew Toye, Joe Whibley, Daniel Wilson and Eileen Wragg.

Against: Councillors Aurora Bailey, Brian Bailey, Colin Brown, Jenny Brown, Maddy Chapman, Peter Faithfull, Mike Goodman, Stuart Hughes, Ben Ingham, Cherry Nicholas, Helen Parr and Henry Riddell.

Abstained: Councillor Marcus Hartnell.

For: 32, against 12 and 1 abstention.

A vote by way of a show of hands was taken on recommendations 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 and these were carried by a majority show of hands.

RESOLVED:

That Council;

Notes the key proposals arising from the English Devolution White Paper, including the proposed introduction of a new devolution framework and the plans for local government reorganisation

Endorses the;

1. a. Joint Leaders statement from the Devon Districts Forum
 - b. Potential to promote the establishment of a Mayoral Combined Authority for the peninsula to cover Devon, Plymouth, Torbay and Cornwall
 - c. Need to engage with our communities, partners and stakeholders to develop considered and coherent proposals around changes to the current model of 10 councils in Devon to a smaller number of suitably sized unitaries rather than defaulting to a single unitary approach.
2. Belief that a preferred pathway should be explored which would create two Devon Unitary Authorities, one of which should be focused around the North Devon, Mid

Devon, East Devon and Teignbridge District Councils, along with Exeter City Council.

3. Belief that the people of Devon would be best served after the abolition of the county council by the two new unitaries, containing a city in each this being Plymouth to the west, and Exeter to the east.
4. Grants delegated authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Council and Corporate Co-ordination to advance discussions around the form and coverage of future Principal Authorities.
5. Receives a further report in February providing an update on the discussions before interim proposals are submitted to central government.
6. To lobby the government on the importance of a Devon-wide consultation to ensure that any revised local government structures meet the principles of devolved powers to local communities, town and parish councils, rather than being imposed by Whitehall.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

P Arnott	P Fernley	R Jefferies
A Bailey	C Fitzgerald	V Johns
B Bailey	S Gazzard	G Jung
J Bailey	M Goodman	J Loudoun
K Blakey	D Haggerty	D Mackinder
K Bloxham	A Hall	T McCollum
C Brown	M Hall	C Nicholas
J Brown	M Hartnell	T Olive
C Burhop	S Hawkins	H Parr
M Chapman	P Hayward	H Riddell
I Chubb	J Heath	M Rixson
B Collins	N Hookway	E Rylance
R Collins	M Howe	A Toye
O Davey	S Hughes	J Whibley
T Dumper	B Ingham	D Wilson
P Faithfull	S Jackson	E Wragg

Officers in attendance:

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

Councillor apologies:

I Barlow
V Bonetta
A Bruce

S Chamberlain
D Ledger
Y Levine
M Martin
J O'Leary
S Richards
S Smith
S Westerman

Chair

Date: