

Local government reorganisation survey key themes of responses

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10. What do you like about the area where you live, work, study or represent in East Devon?

A summary of the free text responses shows the key themes:

1. Natural Environment and Scenery

- Strong appreciation for the coast, countryside, green spaces, and scenic beauty.
- Value placed on the mix of rural and coastal landscapes, wildlife, and outdoor recreational opportunities.

2. Community and Quality of Life

- Positive views on the friendliness, community spirit, low crime rates, and peaceful atmosphere.
- Enjoyment of local events, cultural activities, and the area's distinctive character.

3. Accessibility and Location

- Liking the proximity to transport links (A30, M5, rail, airport) and access to both rural and urban amenities.
- Benefit of being close to Exeter and other towns while maintaining a quieter, less urban environment.

11. What would you like to be improved in this area?

A summary of the free text responses shows the key themes:

1. Infrastructure and Transport

- Widespread concern over poor road conditions, potholes, and lack of coordination in roadworks.
- Calls for better public transport — more frequent, reliable bus and train services, including evening and rural connections.

2. Managing Development and Protecting the Environment

- Strong opposition to overdevelopment, with requests to protect green spaces, rural character, and AONB areas.
- Concerns about water quality, sewage discharges, and the need for sustainable infrastructure before further housing growth.

3. Local Services and Facilities

- Desire for improved access to healthcare, dentistry, and policing.
- Requests for more community amenities — public toilets, leisure facilities, youth provision, and revitalised high streets.

12. What are your hopes and dreams for your local area?

1. Protecting Rural Character and Environment

- Strong desire to preserve green spaces, countryside, and village identities, avoiding overdevelopment and urban sprawl.
- Commitment to safeguarding biodiversity, improving water quality, and adapting to climate change through sustainable planning.

2. Balanced Development and Infrastructure

- Support for housing that meets genuine local needs, paired with timely investment in infrastructure such as roads, healthcare, schools, and public transport.
- Calls for regeneration of town centres, better job opportunities, and more cultural, leisure, and youth facilities.

3. Community, Identity, and Quality of Life

- Maintaining strong community spirit, safety, and local decision-making that reflects residents' needs.
- Ensuring the area remains welcoming, well-maintained, and a pleasant place to live for all generations.

13. What are the biggest challenges in your local area?

A summary of the free text responses shows the key themes:

1. Overdevelopment and Strain on Infrastructure

- Widespread concern about excessive or poorly planned housing developments, particularly on greenfield or sensitive sites, without matching investment in roads, schools, healthcare, drainage, and other essential services.
- Perceived loss of local character and risk to biodiversity, green spaces, and rural landscapes from urban sprawl and large-scale projects.

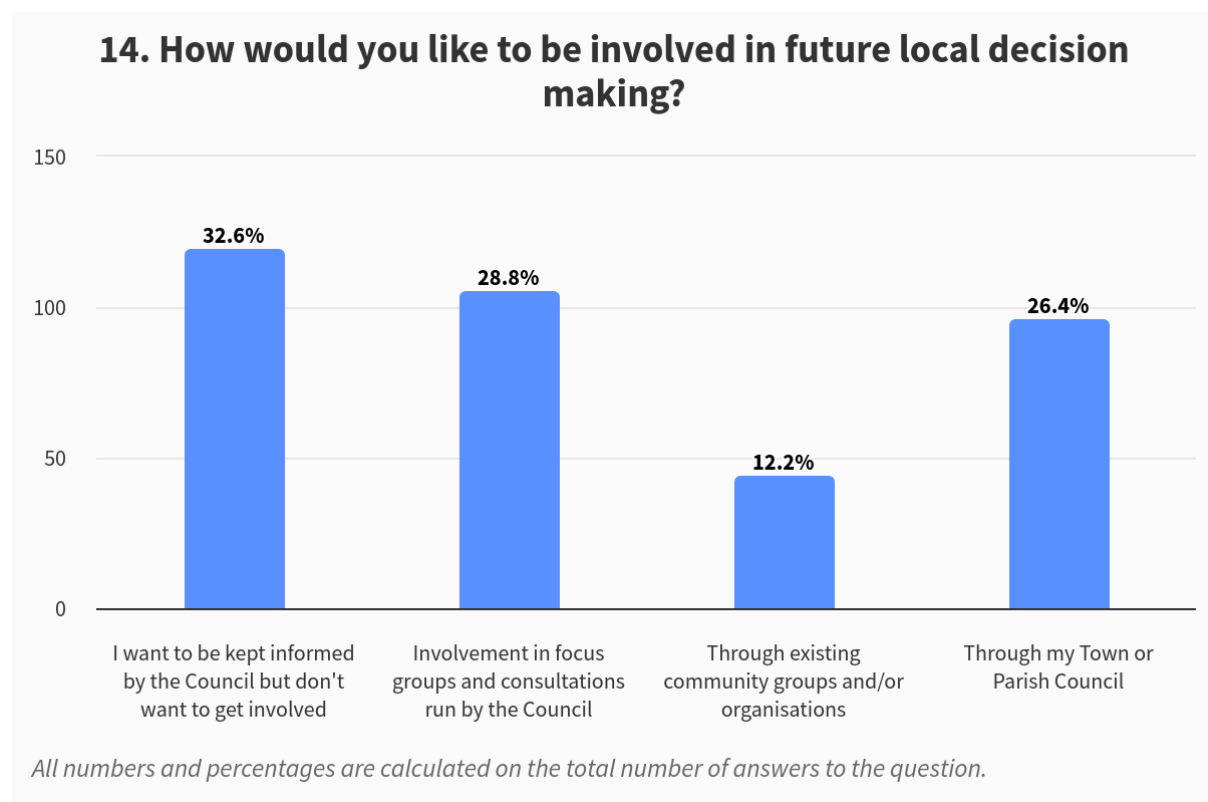
2. Transport, Roads, and Connectivity

- Poor public transport provision — infrequent, unreliable, and lacking coverage in rural areas, with limited evening or weekend services.
- Deteriorating road conditions, congestion, unsafe traffic speeds, and parking challenges across towns and villages.

3. Local Services, Community Wellbeing, and Environment

- Insufficient healthcare access (especially NHS dentistry and GP appointments), lack of facilities for young people, and decline of high streets and local amenities.
- Concerns over environmental issues, including sewage pollution, climate change resilience, and loss of community cohesion due to social and economic pressures.

14. How would you like to be involved in future local decision making?



15. How do you hope that Local Government Reorganisation will impact you and/or your community? (Please rank in order of importance with top being the most important)

A summary of the priority ranking:

Top priorities (most often ranked 1st–3rd):

- **Good understanding of the issues facing the local area** (pink) – consistently ranked highest.
- **Efficient services which offer value for money** (turquoise) – strong priority across the top rankings.
- **Clear, open and honest decision making** (orange) – also frequently placed in top positions.

Mid-level priorities:

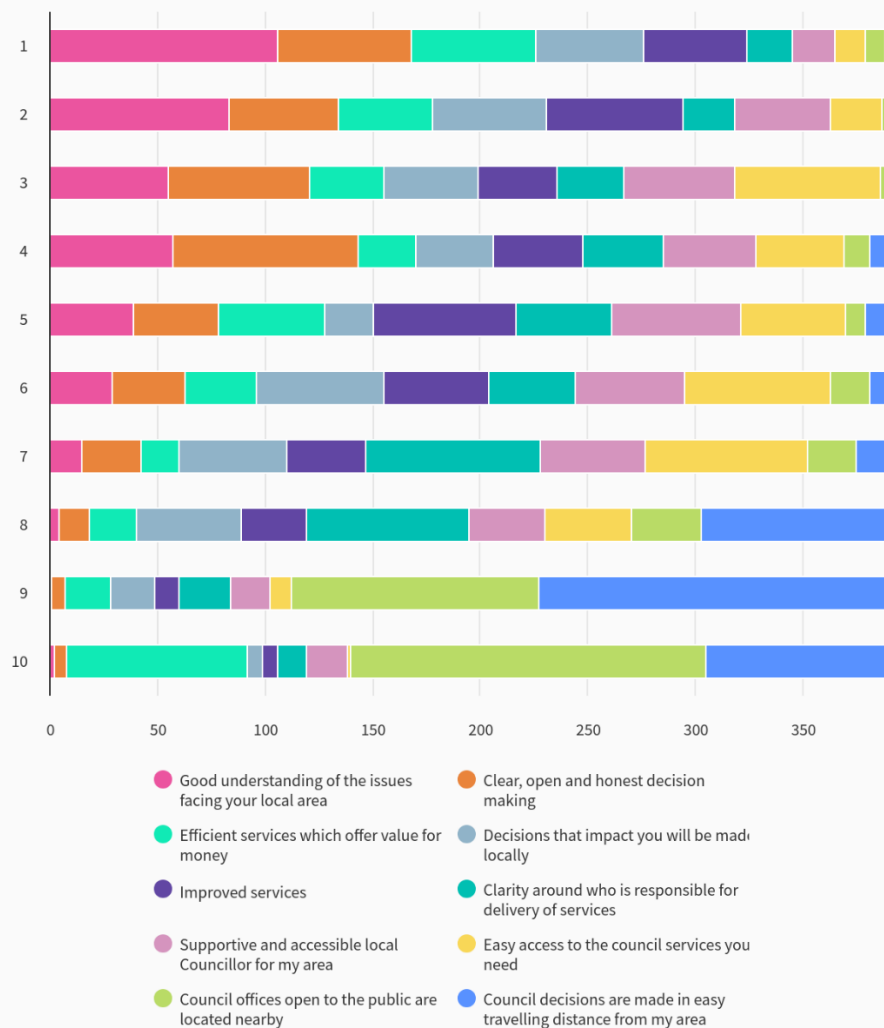
- **Decisions that impact you will be made locally** (light blue) and **Improved services** (purple) – generally mid-range rankings.
- **Supportive and accessible local Councillor for my area** (light pink) and **Clarity around who is responsible for delivery of services** (teal) – moderate importance.

Lower priorities (most often ranked near the bottom):

- **Easy access to the council services you need** (yellow).
- **Council offices open to the public are located nearby** (green).
- **Council decisions are made in easy travelling distance from my area** (blue) – heavily concentrated in the lowest rankings.

Overall: Respondents care most about **local understanding, transparency, and service efficiency**, while the physical proximity of council offices or meetings is much less important.

15. How do you hope that Local Government Reorganisation will impact you and/or your community? (Please rank in order of importance with top being the most important)



16. What should be the top priorities when shaping the future model of local government for Devon? (Please rank in order of importance with the top being the most important)

A summary of the priority ranking:

Top priorities (most often ranked 1st–3rd):

- **Keeping children safe from harm** (purple) – the most consistently top-ranked priority.
- **Care and support for older people and vulnerable adults** (pink) – frequently placed near the top.

- **Protecting the environment and keeping it clean** (orange) – strong presence in higher rankings.
- **Safe and well-maintained roads, pavements, lights, parking and cycle paths** (green) – often prioritised in early rankings.

Mid-level priorities:

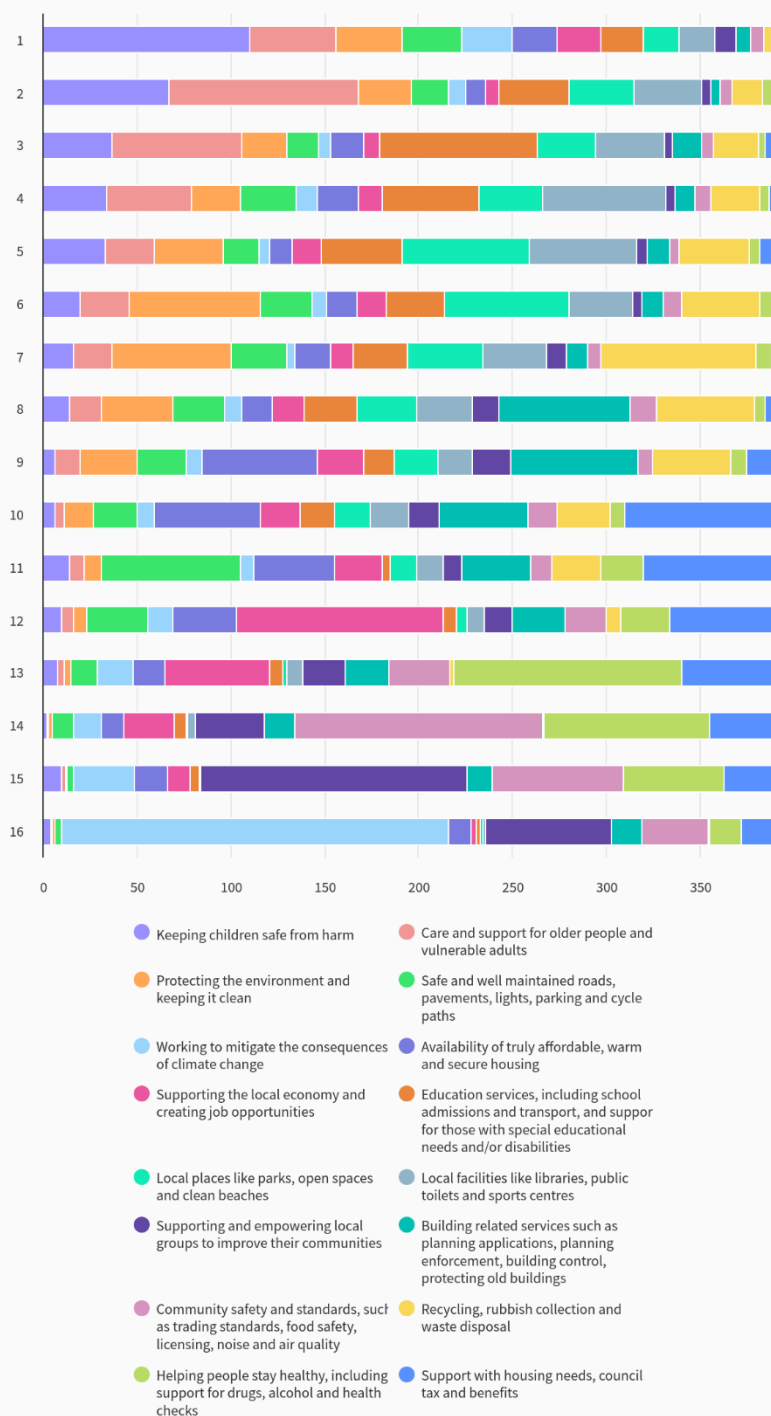
- **Availability of affordable, warm and secure housing** (dark blue) and **Supporting the local economy and creating job opportunities** (red) – generally in the middle range.
- **Education services** (orange-red) and **Local places like parks, open spaces and clean beaches** (teal) – steady mid-tier positioning.

Lower priorities:

- **Working to mitigate the consequences of climate change** (light blue) – most frequently ranked in the lowest positions overall.
- **Building-related services** (green), and **Community safety and standards** (light pink) – commonly lower ranked.
- **Recycling, rubbish collection and waste disposal** (yellow) and **Support with housing needs, council tax and benefits** (blue) – most often placed towards the bottom.

Overall: Respondents see **protecting vulnerable people, environmental cleanliness, and safe infrastructure** as the most important priorities, while **climate change mitigation, specific facilities, and some support services** are seen as least important.

16. What should be the top priorities when shaping the future model of local government for Devon? (Please rank in order of importance with the top being the most important)



All numbers and percentages are calculated on the total number of answers to the question.

17. Do you have any further comments?

A summary of the free text responses shows the key themes:

1. Opposition to Exeter-led Unitary Authority / Support for Localised Decision-Making

- Strong concerns that merging East Devon with Exeter and other districts will reduce rural influence, prioritise city needs, and erode local identity.
- Preference for keeping decision-making and service delivery as local as possible, empowering town and parish councils instead of centralising power.

2. Desire for Evidence and Clarity on Proposals

- Calls for clear financial information, including costs of reorganisation, projected savings, and how those savings would be reinvested.
- Requests for a stronger explanation of why the proposed “1-4-5 Plan” is the best option compared to other possible models.

3. Expectations for Council Priorities and Services

- Calls for better infrastructure, public transport, policing, waste management, and support for rural communities without cutting services.
- Requests to focus on statutory duties, cost efficiency, and tangible improvements rather than perceived political agendas or non-core initiatives.