

Report to: Council



Date of Meeting 15 October 2025

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## Questions on Notice

### Report summary:

The constitution provides that members of Council may ask: the Chair, the Leader or a Portfolio Holder Member of the Cabinet; or the Chair of any Committee or Sub Committee a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the district.

A member may only ask a question if either:

(a) they have given at least 3 working days' notice in writing of the question to the Chief Executive; or

(b) the question relates to urgent matters, they have the consent of the Chair to whom the question is to be put and the content of the question is given to the Chief Executive by noon on the day of the meeting.

In response to a question on notice an answer may take the form of:

(a) A direct oral answer;

(b) Where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or

(c) Where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner.

In accordance with the Constitution two questions on notice have been received and they are set out in the report with the responses.

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

### Recommendation:

To note the responses to the questions on notice.

### Reason for recommendation:

In accordance with the Council's Constitution Rules Part 4, 9.2 Questions on notice at full Council; 9.3 Notice of questions.

Question	Question from	Question	Response
1	Cllr Stuart Hughes	<p><b>Question to the Chair of Council</b></p> <p>As a serving District Councillor and long-time community advocate, I am concerned by the Council's apparent departure from the respectful tradition of publicly acknowledging the passing of all former members who served with distinction. The recent death of Graham Troman, who represented Sidmouth Sidford for eight years, passed without any formal recognition — despite his dedicated service and local impact.</p> <p>Can the Leader explain whether this reflects a change in Council protocol, and if so, what rationale underpins the decision to no longer honour former Councillors in this way?</p>	<p><b>Chair of Council</b></p> <p>Unfortunately, the Council was not notified of the recent passing of the former councillor.</p> <p>Where a notification of the passing of a former councillor is notified to the Council arrangements will be put in place to mark the sad news. A recent review of procedures has resulted in a protocol being put in place to mark the passing of both former/ current councillors. This protocol ensures that such events are marked, including lowering the flag to half mast at Blackdown House and the Councils' condolences being sent from the Chair of Council, a short statement issued through our Comms Team, and marking the passing of former or current councillors with a minutes' silence being observed at the next available Council meeting.</p> <p>I would welcome councillors notifying the Chair's Office or Democratic Services in such circumstances to ensure the appropriate tributes can be made.</p>
2	Cllr Mike Goodman	<p><b>Question to Portfolio Holder for Finance</b></p> <p>At the cabinet meeting on October 1st, agenda item 10 highlighted the potential challenges for EDDC when setting the budget for 2026. Can I ask the leader will he agree with me that there is a benefit to our council to consider working closely with other Councils in Devon to potentially reduce costs and will he start to discuss these benefits with other districts.</p>	<p><b>Portfolio Holder for Finance</b></p> <p>Yes, working with other Councils is a way to help reduce costs and to give greater resilience, capacity, and capability particular in difficult to recruit to specialist areas.</p> <p>The Council has used this approach in several areas already including the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) for its internal audit function, STRATA for its IT provision, Devon County Council for procurement services, Teignbridge District Council for coin cash counting and more recently a shared service agreement with BCP (Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole) for flood and coastal risk management.</p>

			<p>We will continue with this approach, and it is likely leading up to LGR there will be more opportunities available to us to pursue.</p>
3	Cllr Mike Goodman	<p><b>Question to Portfolio Holder for Council, Corporate Coordination &amp; External Engagement</b></p> <p>In March the Council last formally discussed LGR and various recommendations were agreed by EDDC. Since this, there have been statements made by the Leader regarding LGR which are different, could the Leader please inform members and the public what the current options are and when residents and members will be able to discuss these.</p>	<p>When the Leader announced his appointments to Cabinet at Annual Council, Members were advised I was taking over the responsibility of working on and being this council's lead Member for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).</p> <p>Since this council agreed in March that its preferred Devon-wide restructuring model was for a 4-5-1 arrangement officers from this council, along with the other District and Borough Councils in Devon and alongside Torbay Council have been working to develop this model and to evaluate it against the government's six reorganisation evaluation criteria – establishing a single tier of local government; efficiency, capacity and withstanding shocks; high quality and sustainable public services; working together to understand and meet local needs; supporting devolution arrangements and stronger community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment.</p> <p>The 4-5-1 model anticipates unitary authorities being configured as follows;  4: South Hams, Teignbridge, West Devon and Torbay;  5: East Devon, Mid Devon, North Devon, Torridge and Exter City Council;  1: Plymouth City Council.</p> <p>The work that this council, along with its partner authorities, has undertaken since the Council decision in March has been to build upon, and evaluate the Interim Plan submission (as set out in the 26-page proposal document presented to Council). Members are reminded of the debate and decisions that this council made on 19 March, and which are recorded in Minute 95 of that meeting. Members are also reminded of the documentation that supported the decision –  <u><a href="#">Agenda for Council on Wednesday, 19th March, 2025, 6.00 pm - East Devon</a></u></p>

			<p>Currently the publicly announced Devon-wide restructuring proposals have come from Plymouth City Council, Exeter City Council and Devon County Council. Each of their respective proposals may be found at –</p> <p>Plymouth City Council:  <a href="#">250317LocalGovernmentReorganisationFullCouncilReportFINAL.pdf</a>  <a href="https://democracy.plymouth.gov.uk/documents/s152193/250317LocalGovernmentReorganisationFullCouncilBriefingPaperFINAL.pdf">https://democracy.plymouth.gov.uk/documents/s152193/250317LocalGovernmentReorganisationFullCouncilBriefingPaperFINAL.pdf</a>  <a href="#">250317 Plymouth Local Government Reorganisation Interim Plan FINAL.pdf</a></p> <p>Exeter City Council:  <a href="#">APPENDIX A - Exeter City Council Interim Submission FINAL.pdf</a></p> <p>Devon County Council:  <a href="#">Getting it right for Devon - Interim plan - Devon County Council</a></p> <p>This council's Members will determine this council's required Devon-wide local government reorganisation submission to government at the Extraordinary Council meeting on 26 November.</p> <p>The government, having at that point received reorganisation submissions from all 11 tier one and tier two Devon councils, has indicated that, at some point before its determination is made probably in the summer of 2026, that there will be a public consultation exercise on all of the proposed options.</p>
4	Cllr Mike Goodman	<p><b>Question to Portfolio Holder for Council, Corporate Coordination &amp; External Engagement</b></p> <p>With the drive by the government to move councils to become a unitary or unitaries, does the Leader agree that Devon becoming unitary should be about improving services for our residents and reducing costs. In no communications have I</p>	<p><b>Portfolio Holder for Council, Corporate Coordination &amp; External Engagement</b></p> <p>The government's stated objectives behind requiring councils in Devon to be restructured is in part, as you indicate, to bring about service improvements whilst making better use of resources. This council, along with the other District and Borough Councils in Devon and alongside Torbay Council has over recent months been working to develop restructuring proposals for submission to government that can be evaluated against the</p>

		<p>seen any financial figures that tell residents or members what the savings are if Devon were to have one, two or three unitaries for Devon. Is the Leader able to confirm what the savings are for Devon if we became one unitary, two unitaries or three unitaries.</p>	<p>governments six required reorganisation evaluation criteria – establishing a single tier of local government; efficiency, capacity and withstanding shocks; high quality and sustainable public services; working together to understand and meet local needs; supporting devolution arrangements and stronger community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment.</p> <p>It is through this process that a range of possible Devon-wide restructuring options have been considered by this, and the other District and Borough Councils in Devon and alongside Torbay Council. This work is underpinned by comprehensive financial analysis. The final detailed evaluated proposals will be considered by Council on 26 November as a submission must be made to government by 28 November. This will include the details of expected financial savings.</p> <p>Members will receive an initial briefing on these evaluated proposals on 15 October.</p>
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