

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 4 March 2026

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Local Government Reorganisation – Response to Consultation

Report summary:

This report seeks delegated authority to enable a response to the current consultation on the options for local government reorganisation in Devon to be submitted by the deadline of the 26th March. The response is being developed in conjunction with the other District Councils and will be consistent with the Council's support for the 4-5-1 plus option.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

That Cabinet delegates authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Council, Corporate and External Engagement to develop the Council's response to the current consultation in relation to local government reorganisation and to submit this by the requisite deadline.

Reason for recommendation:

To enable the Council to respond to the current consultation on the options for local government reorganisation.

Officer: Andy Wood, Director of Place, email andy.wood@eatdevon.gov.uk

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Assets and Economy
- Communications and Democracy
- Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- Environment - Nature and Climate
- Environment - Operational
- Finance
- Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: High Risk; The future shape and form of local government structures will be a key determinant of how funds and powers flow from central government which will ultimately impact directly upon how services are delivered to residents. Responding to the current consultation will enable the Council's position to be conveyed.

Links to background information [Local government reorganisation in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay - GOV.UK](#) www.devonlgr.co.uk

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
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Background and context

Cabinet has, over the past 15 months, received a series of reports in relation to proposals for local government reorganisation. This anticipates the replacement of the current two tier structure of County and District Councils with a single tier of unitary authorities. The Council confirmed its support for the 4-5-1 plus option last November. This is one of five potential options that were put forward that anticipate a variety of three or four unitary models moving forward.

Consultation

The current consultation on the five options is being conducted by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). It began on the 5th February and ends on the 26th March. The relevant consultation materials are available through the background links.

In order to enable a response to this consultation to be submitted by the deadline, this report seeks delegated authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Council, Corporate and External Engagement to develop and finalise this response. This will be in line with the Council's position in relation to supporting the 4-5-1 plus option and will be developed in conjunction with the other District Councils in Devon.

Next Steps

The next steps following the end of the consultation period are set out below;

- July 2026: Expected final decision from the Secretary of State.
 - Autumn 2026: Legislation (Structural Changes Order) to be enacted.
 - May 2027: Elections for the new "shadow" authorities.
 - April 1, 2028: "Vesting Day"
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Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal implications:

The legal issues are dealt with in the body of the report.