



Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation Sub-Committee Report 2025/2026

Prepared by: Cllr Paul Crabb

Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm sorry I cannot be with you this evening, but there is also an Annual meeting of North Devon Council, which I have to attend as a Council group leader.

Every local council has had strong opinions on LGR, with each council proposing maps that broadly speaking suit the council submitting the plans. Our Town Council, and indeed any other councils, apart from County and District councils, were not allowed to submit individual proposals, but rather we were allowed to comment on and lobby for any of the proposals submitted by other authorities.

We have met and formed a reply to the proposals, each of which is outlined below in the appendix.

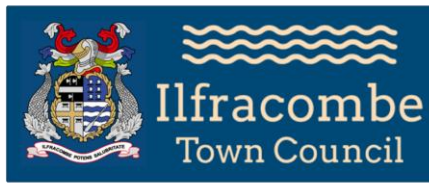
1 is proposed by Devon, where Devon County takes over everything.

2 & 3 are called 4.5.1 and 4.5.1+ and are from District councils, who propose taking everything over.

4 and 5 are from the cities, proposing they run themselves, and they don't care about anyone else.

Our response has been to broadly support the Devon proposal, or 4.5.1. We see difficulties in the city proposals, which simply lumps all of Devon except the cities into a massive rural hinterland.

We have undertaken much work in trying to bring together local parishes to talk to larger authorities with one voice. Some are more familiar with the concept than others. In order to ensure that new authorities don't dispose of land and assets, we have mooted taking over some of the District Council assets. We were hoping to undertake



some work in this area with Devon, but one of the early projects has stalled.

It is of note that the government originally wanted 500,000 councils, but in areas recently announced, have chosen councils much smaller, which is perhaps a view of things to come. We await a decision in July 2026.

APPENDIX 1 - SUMMARIES

Here are the five competing Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) proposals

1. Devon County Council proposal – 3 Unitary Councils

Model:

- **Devon Unitary Council:** East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon, North Devon, South Hams, Teignbridge, Torridge, West Devon
- **Plymouth:** unchanged
- **Torbay:** unchanged

Key idea: A single large Devon unitary (excluding Plymouth & Torbay), keeping existing city unitaries as they are. **Rationale:** Simpler to implement, protects vulnerable services, reduces duplication.

2. South Hams, Teignbridge & West Devon proposal – 3 Unitary Councils

Model:

- **Exeter & Northern Devon Unitary:** East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon, North Devon, Torridge
- **Plymouth:** unchanged
- **Torbay & Southern Devon Unitary:** South Hams, Teignbridge, Torbay, West Devon

Key idea: Two new Devon unitaries grouped by geography and service alignment, keeping Plymouth separate. **Notable feature:** Torbay merges with South Hams/Teignbridge/West Devon.

3. East Devon, Mid Devon, North Devon & Torridge proposal – 3 Unitary Councils with Boundary Changes

Model:

- **Exeter & Northern Devon Unitary:** East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon, North Devon, Torridge
- **Plymouth Expanded:** Plymouth + parts of Bickleigh, Brixton, Shaugh Prior, Sparkwell (taken from South Hams)
- **Torbay & Southern Devon Unitary:** Remaining South Hams + Teignbridge + Torbay + West Devon

Key idea: Similar to Proposal 2 but with **significant parish-level boundary changes**, especially expanding Plymouth.

■ 4. Exeter City Council & Plymouth City Council proposal – 4 Unitary Councils with Major Splits

Model:

- **Devon Coast & Countryside:** “The rest of Devon” (large rural unitary)
- **Exeter Unitary:** Exeter + 49 surrounding parishes (from Teignbridge, East Devon, Mid Devon)
- **Plymouth Unitary:** Plymouth + 13 South Hams parishes
- **Torbay Unitary:** Torbay + 22 parishes from Teignbridge & South Hams

Key idea: Strong city-region unitaries with **extensive redrawing of district boundaries**. **Most radical** in terms of splitting existing districts.

■ 5. Torbay Council proposal – 4 Unitary Councils

This proposal also seeks **four unitaries** and includes **splitting existing district areas**, but the consultation summary does not list the full boundary details in the snippet. It aligns broadly with the Exeter/Plymouth model but is Torbay-led.