

Berrynarbor Parish Council

County Councillors report

March 2025

Local Government Reorganisation

The update is that Devon County will have a full council meeting on 21st March where we will vote on the County Submission, while the report has not been published yet, it is anticipated that because there is an election and councillors will change the likelihood is that we will submit several options so that the new council after May 1st can work on what is the best option for the whole of Devon.

Background below;

The English Devolution White Paper was published just before Christmas.

Extract from the ministers letter probably gives some explanation as to where we are heading as residents in a two tier area;

Local government reorganisation My intention is to formally invite unitary proposals in January 2025 from all councils in two-tier areas, and small neighbouring unitary councils. In this invitation, I will set out further detail on the criteria I will consider when taking decisions on the proposals that are submitted to Government. I intend to ask for interim plans by March 2025. As set out in the White Paper, new unitary councils must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks. For most areas, this will mean creating councils with a population of 500,000 or more. However, there may be exceptions to ensure new structures make sense for an area, including on devolution. Final decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. We will ask you to work with other councils in your area to develop unitary proposals that are in the best interests of the whole area, rather than developing competing proposals.

Statement from Andrea

Following publication of the Governments Devolution White paper it is clear that considerable change is going to happen in Local Government in Devon.

We have two options;

1. Do nothing and the government will impose changes
2. Engage with government to get the best result for the residents of Devon.

I believe that engagement with the government is the best option.

While I may not agree with all the government's proposals, I need to do everything I can to ensure that the changes will make local government sustainable for the long term and able to withstand shocks like the pandemic and the world financial crisis. At the heart of all this must be a stronger voice to inform the government of the issues my residents in Combe Martin Rural and the residents in the wider area of Devon face.

Update 05.02.25- The Government has turned down Devon County Council's request to postpone its elections in May.

This afternoon Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government Angela Rayner announced that the council's request was among those which have been rejected, meaning that the council's May elections will proceed as planned.

The announcement coincides with confirmation that the Government has signed the necessary legislation to bring the Devon and Torbay's Combined County Authority (CCA) into being.

The Devon and Torbay CCA is the governance needed for devolved decision-making powers and funding to flow from Whitehall to local decision-makers in Devon and Torbay. Through the Devon and Torbay CCA, it means that decisions that were previously made in Whitehall will now be made locally on priority issues including housing, jobs and skills, transport and economy.

Letter received from minister Wednesday 5th February

We ask for an interim plan to be submitted on or before 21 March 2025, in line with the guidance set out in the attached Annex. My officials will provide feedback on your plan to help support you to develop final proposals. I will expect any full proposal to be submitted by 28 November. If I decide to implement any proposal, and the necessary legislation is agreed by Parliament, we will work with you to move to elections to new 'shadow' unitary councils as soon as possible as is the usual arrangement in the process of local government reorganisation. Following submission, I will consider any and all proposals carefully before taking decisions on how to proceed.

301 Bus

Tomorrow I am proposing in the cabinet report on buses that councillors support improvement to our 301 service, I will let you know how that goes. I'm hoping we get the approval, rest assured I will be putting our case!

DCC Budget 2025-2026

There will be a 4.99 percent increase in council tax in Devon for the coming financial year: 2.99 percent for general services with an extra two percent for adult social care.

The annual council tax for an average Band D home will rise by £85.59 – or £1.64 a week – to £1,801.26.

There will be increases in spending of

- 8.2 percent on adult services and
- 5.5 percent for children's services.
- Reductions in other departmental spending and increased income will mean an overall rise of 5.9 percent in the budget with a total spend of over £784.1 million.
- An extra £4 million to boost highways and repair potholes since the target budget was set last month.
- Additional £5 million for children's social care to provide a range of services to allow vulnerable children to be cared for closer to their families and communities.
- An extra £500,000 to support the work of district councils and homeless organisations which brings Devon County Council's homelessness budget up to £1 million.

The extra cash has come from the new additional council tax being levied on second homes.

Council leader James McInnes sharply criticised the Government's decision to end the Rural Services Delivery Grant which helps councils with the extra cost of providing services in rural areas. This had cost Devon over £10 million, he said, with funding switched to more urban areas.

In addition Devon had received the lowest financial settlement of all 21 county councils.

The DCC website is very useful for reporting highway problems and the reports go straight to the contractor.
[Report a problem - Roads and transport](#)

Alternatively, the highway contact number is 0345 155 1004

If it's a river flooding the environment agency can be contacted on 0345 988 1188

Winter road updates; <https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/safe-travel/winter-travel/>

Travel Devon website; [home - Travel Devon](#)

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