



LGR Consultation
Fry Building 2NE
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

25th March 2026

Dear Sir or Madam

Local Government Reorganisation in Devon – Newton Abbot Town Council Representation

In the absence of an overwhelming consensus among its Members, Newton Abbot Town Council feels it would not be appropriate to speak as one voice in support of any of the models proposed for the review of Local Government in Devon. Nevertheless, while recognising that town and parish councils do not feature in the list of statutory consultees, we strongly wish to raise the following concerns:-

- the lack of a credible economic driver in the ‘Devon Coast and Countryside’ part of the model proposed by Exeter City Council and Plymouth City Council;
- the disproportionate size – both geographically and demographically – of the ‘Single Devon unitary’ option proposed by Devon County Council, which would serve roughly 840,000 residents, making it one of the largest councils in England and resulting in a loss of local representation;
- the risk of services and assets being ‘pushed down’ to town & parish councils without adequate funding or appropriate asset income streams;
- the convoluted, almost arcane nature of a new multi-layered system which, far from simplifying Local Government for the people it serves, as the December 2024 white paper promised, instead makes way for ill-defined and/or unaccountable bodies (potential mayoral combined authorities, Combined County Authorities, Neighbourhood Advisory Committees, Local Community Networks), rendering Local Government even harder to understand for residents as proposed for example in the Districts’ 4-5-1 proposal;
- the erosion of the power of town & parish councils as a consequence of the creation of unelected, potentially unrepresentative and powerless Neighbourhood Advisory Committees/Local Community Networks;
- the relatively limited consultation time for such complex proposals.

TOWN CLERK: **P. A. Rowe**

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Furthermore, we note with interest that, upon conclusion of the consultation, “the Secretary of State can refer proposals to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England for advice and subsequently choose to implement an entirely different alternative proposal recommended by the Commission” and that “Ministers will decide, subject to Parliamentary approval, which, if any, proposal is to be implemented, with or without modification.”

Finally, for the avoidance of doubt, Newton Abbot Town Council is not opposed to the concept of Local Government Reorganisation and understands the importance and necessity of reform – as well as of local representation. Above all else, the welfare and economic viability of Devon’s communities *must* be at the forefront of any decision taken with regard to the future make-up of our county.

Yours sincerely,



Phil Rowe
Town Clerk



Cllr Colin Parker
Mayor



Cllr Mike Joyce
Chair, LGR Working Group

Copied to:-

The Rt Hon. Steve Reed OBE MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government
Alison McGovern MP, Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness
Martin Wrigley MP, Member of Parliament for Newton Abbot
Cllr Julian Brazil, Leader, Devon County Council
Cllr Richard Keeling, Leader, Teignbridge District Council

Also by email: lgrconsultationresponse@communities.gov.uk