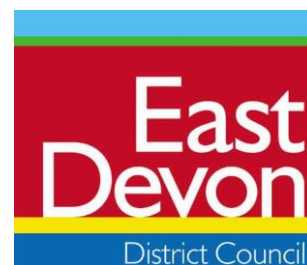




INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



# News Service

**4 March 2008**

REVIEW BODY MUST REPORT TO GOVERNMENT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

## **Ideas for changes to council structure in Devon are invited**

WORK on deciding the future structure of local government in Devon has started, following a visit to the county on Monday by representatives of the Boundary Committee, who have been appointed by the Government to look at alternative council formations.

As a result, East Devon District Council will be consulting with councils and business partners throughout the district to canvass their views on what changes, if any, they would want. This will help EDDC decide what future shape it prefers to see for local government across Devon.

Once the Boundary Committee has received submissions from all Devon's councils, it will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in December.

On Monday, the Boundary Committee representatives explained the format and timetable for their review, which involves investigating unitary proposals for the whole county. This follows the Government's rejection last year of a bid by Exeter City Council to become a stand-alone unitary council, taking on responsibility for functions currently performed by Devon County Council. These include education, highways and social services.

Any alternative system of local government in Devon must meet five criteria:

- A broad cross-section of support from the community
- Strategic leadership
- Neighbourhood empowerment
- Value for money in provision of services
- Affordability

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The Boundary Committee says it wants to work with councils in Devon to identify “concepts” for a new unitary pattern across the county. Torbay and Plymouth, currently the county’s only two unitary authorities, would not be abolished, but might see changes to their boundaries.

The Committee will want to see initial ideas from existing councils, including EDDC, by the middle of April. It will then come back for further discussions before publishing draft proposals in July. These ideas – and any new boundaries proposed – will be taken to the local community for consultation, with a deadline of late September for feedback.

The Boundary Committee will send through its findings to the Secretary of State in December, to be followed by a four-week period when local authorities may send their own representations to the Minister, who may decide to implement, reject or amend the proposals.

The Boundary Committee says it currently has an open mind about the future shape of local government in Devon and is looking for “locally-generated concepts” and “evidence-based argumentation”. Public opinion is one of several factors it wishes to take into account.

### **Protecting East Devon**

Commenting on the review exercise this week, Councillor Miss Sara Randall Johnson, Leader of EDDC, said: “We are happy to assist the Boundary Committee in carrying out its duty to identify alternative proposals for local government in Devon. We will be consulting extensively with district and parish councillors, as well as other partners, including business-people, as we put together our own proposals for the future shape of our county. People can rest assured that uppermost in our minds will be protecting the unique environment and ambience of East Devon and in particular the interests of the people who live, work and raise their families in this delightful part of the world”.

As we have stated before, our initial preference would be to maintain the status quo. But if that is not possible, we wish to see East Devon play its full part in a larger and more effective constituency that takes in some of the surrounding districts.

“East Devon is a major growth area for the region, in terms of jobs and housing. It is Exeter’s land bank for residential and business development and has a great deal to offer the region’s economy. We fully intend to make the most of the advantages that this position offers for the benefit of our residents – of all ages and political persuasions”.

You can read more about the review in a dedicated section on the EDDC website at:

[http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/new\\_councils\\_for\\_devon\\_-\\_have\\_your\\_say.htm](http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/new_councils_for_devon_-_have_your_say.htm)

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The timetable for the Boundary Committee's review is as follows:

Stage One	3 March – 11 April	Concepts for new unitary authorities relating to five criteria. Finance briefing for section 151 officers
Stage Two	14 April – 4 July	BC considers concepts and seeks information from local authorities and other stakeholders
<b>Draft Proposals Published</b>		
Stage Three	7 July – 26 Sept.	Consultation on draft proposals, including boundaries Affordability information provided by Local authorities
Stage Four	29 Sept. – 19 Dec.	Stage Three information considered by BC. Further information requested, as necessary
<b>Advice provided to Secretary of State</b>		

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