

# Structural reviews

# Devon

3 March 2008

## Introduction

- In this briefing we will
  - set out our intended approach to providing advice
  - Outline our time-table
  - Outline how we intend to work with local authorities

## What is the Boundary Committee for England?

- Statutory Committee of Electoral Commission
- Independent from Government
- Chaired by Electoral Commissioner
- Successor to Local Government Commission for England
- 2003-04: Local Government Reviews in three northern regions

## The impetus for a structural review

- **Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act:** legislative basis for structural review, now enacted
- **25 July 2007** – DCLG announcement – Norwich
- **5 December 2007**– DCLG announcement - Exeter and Ipswich
- **Request made 6 February 2008:**
  - BC agreement to provide advice
  - 31 December 2008

## Secretary of State's request for advice

- Provide advice on alternative to Exeter bid
- Unitary local government for the county
- Plymouth and Torbay

## Secretary of State's request for advice

- 5 criteria:
  - Broad cross-section of support
  - Strategic leadership
  - Neighbourhood empowerment
  - Value for money in provision of services
  - Affordability

## Boundary Committee approach

- Exeter the 'trigger' for the review
- Alternative unitary proposals for the whole county

## Boundary Committee approach

- Work in partnership with local government in identifying concepts
- Boundary Committee decision on unitary pattern
- May differ from concepts identified

## Boundary Committee approach

- Cross-border issues
  - We have been asked by the Secretary of State to consider possible options for unitary local government within the Devon county area
  - Options may, if necessary, entail changes to the boundaries of the existing Plymouth and Torbay unitary authorities
  - Plymouth and Torbay to continue as unitary authorities

## Boundary Committee approach

- Open-minded, accessible and consultative
- Cross party/authority agreement on locally-generated concepts.
- Looking for evidence-based argumentation
- Wish to take account of public opinion but only one factor
- Duty on Boundary Committee to identify alternative proposals
- No pretence of having all the answers - we need your help and support

## Review process • **Stage One**

- Background information provided
- Concepts identified
- Dialogue with local authorities
- Broad questions answered

- Review process • **Stage One (continued)**
- Affordability
    - Reasonable expectation criterion can be met
    - Must be able to meet criterion later
    - Section 151 officer briefing in Stage One
  - **Stage Two**
    - Further dialogue with local authorities
    - Boundary Committee decision on draft proposals

## Boundary Committee review – cont.

- **Stage Three**
  - Draft Proposals published
  - One or more possible patterns identified
  - Consultation on specific boundaries
  - Detailed financial information required from all local authorities
  - More dialogue with authorities
- **Stage Four**
  - Final Boundary Committee deliberation
  - Advice provided

## Advice provided

- Advice where requested
- May provide alternative proposal
- Further 4 week period for representations to be made direct to Secretary of State
- Secretary of State may
  - Implement
  - Reject
  - Ask for further information
- Electoral Reviews to follow
  - Council size

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>		

# Any questions?