

Proposal Comparison

Here we have provided a summary of each proposal, highlighting key elements that we believe may be of interest to member councils. Please note that the proposals differ significantly in structure and presentation, so direct comparison is not always possible.

To avoid paraphrasing or misrepresenting views, we have used concise quotations taken directly from the full submissions. Relevant page numbers have been identified to support this. However, we **strongly encourage member councils to review the full proposals when forming their own views and to identify which topics may be of importance to their communities.**

Both proposals submitted by district councils are outlined within the Reimagining Devon proposal as potential options for consideration.

Whichever proposal is ultimately selected, DALC looks forward to working closely with all partners and authorities to secure the best possible outcomes for Devon's towns and parishes.

Our own response to the consultation is being written and will be circulated to our membership in advance of final approval by our Board of Directors. As always, we welcome views and thoughts from our member councils; please do [contact us](#).

Relevant acronyms:

- NACs – Neighbourhood Area Committees. The government has suggested that *“Neighbourhood Area Committees, led by frontline ward councillors, offer a model of place-based engagement and leadership which maximises the structural efficiencies brought about by Local Government Reorganisation and strengthens localism and community participation across all areas. Neighbourhood Area Committees help councils fulfil their commitments to working in partnership with communities at the neighbourhood level. They can also include other service providers, such as town or parish councillors, when applicable.”*
- VCSE sector – the Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise sector.
- [DTCCA – Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority](#)
- [CCA – Combined County Authority](#)
- MSA – [Mayoral Strategic Authority](#)

	DCC	Districts (two proposals)	Exeter/Plymouth	Torbay
No. of unitaries	3	3	4	4
Boundary changes	No	Only in one of the proposals	Yes	Yes
Parish/Town Council seat on NACs	Yes	No (role on Local Community Networks)	Yes	Implied
Delegated powers of NACs defined	Yes	Partially	Yes	Not defined
Support for NACs specified	Yes	No	Yes	No

Devon County Council

Devon County Council proposed 3 unitary councils which would comprise the current areas of:

- Devon Unitary Council: East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon, North Devon, South Hams, Teignbridge, Torridge, and West Devon. Approx. population 842,000.
- Plymouth to remain unchanged
- Torbay to remain unchanged

See Devon's full proposal

Some key points

- **Changes to existing district council boundaries requested:** No.
- **Neighbourhood Governance Model:** *"16 Neighbourhood Area Committees (NACs), including three within Exeter"* pg 45



- **Population covered by neighbourhood governance model:** *"Each NAC will serve as an average, around 50,000 residents"* pg 46
- **Area covered by neighbourhood governance model:** *"aligned to the established health and social care neighbourhood footprints...exact boundaries will be developed in the next stage of implementation"* pg 46
- **Membership of neighbourhood governance model:** *"Each committee will be chaired by a Devon council member for the area and include all councillors whose divisions fall within that geography."*

Membership would also include representatives from:

- *town and parish councils, with selection processes to be agreed locally*
- *the VCSE sector, nominated through the Torbay, Plymouth and Devon (TPD) VCSE Assembly*
- *local businesses and chambers of commerce*
- *health and care partners, including integrated neighbourhood teams*
- *neighbourhood police officers and community safety representatives*
- *fire and rescue service local representatives*
- *national park authorities where relevant"* pg 47

- **Role of town and parish councils on neighbourhood governance model:** Sit on Neighbourhood Area Committees.
- **Support planned for neighbourhood governance model:** *“Each committee will be supported by a dedicated locality team comprising a locality lead officer, a project and engagement officer, a data and insight officer and a democratic services officer. These teams will be supported by specialist officers from key service areas including highways, children and adults services, economy and regeneration, housing, planning, licensing and public health, as needed depending on local issues identified”* pg 47
- **Purpose and functions of neighbourhood governance model:** *“In their early phase, the committees ... will advise on local service priorities, feeding into the council’s strategic planning and budget-setting cycles, and play a key role in holding local elected members to account for delivery in their area. As they mature, subject to regulations and powers, it is intended that the committees will gain powers and budgets to support local delivery.*

Over time the ambition is that they would take on devolved functions such as:

- *allocation of locality grants and small-scale capital projects*
- *management of local parks, community centres, sports grounds, allotments, cemeteries and crematoria*
- *responsibility for local highways, parish path partnerships, public rights of way and verge maintenance*
- *local environmental services including street cleaning, recycling awareness and community transport*
- *collaboration on community safety and health prevention initiatives*
- *local event organisation and placemaking activities to strengthen identity and belonging*
- *aspects of licensing, planning and other regulatory functions where appropriate*

NACs will also be responsible for monitoring progress against their local action plans, sharing good practice across the network of area committees, and participating in an annual conference to review impact and innovation.” pg 46

“The NACs will work collaboratively with and support the work of town and parish councils and local community groups and partnerships with the opportunity to transfer assets and services to these bodies, where there is a demonstrated desire from both the devolving and receiving party. The ambition will be that the devolving of any assets or services will be cost neutral, but each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. There is no intention to remove any previously devolved assets or powers from local councils” pg 46

- **General working with parish and town councils:** *“This includes opportunities for the devolution to the town and parish councils, where there is a desire to do so”* pg 42,

“Town and parish councils are a vital part of Devon’s democratic life. The Devon Unitary Council will retain a strong commitment to their autonomy and development, ensuring that they remain central to local governance. Within the Neighbourhood Area Committee framework, their voices will be represented, but they will also retain the ability to engage

bilaterally with the Devon authority outside Neighbourhood Area Committees. Working with the Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC), the council will provide training, capacity building and support for members and officers of local councils as requested.

Where town and parish councils wish to take on greater responsibility for services and assets, the Devon Unitary Council will facilitate this, managing transfers on a broadly cost-neutral basis so that neither the local council nor the unitary council is placed under financial strain. This will involve balancing assets with income potential alongside service responsibilities and costs. In this way, locally valued services can be sustained and often enhanced through local ownership and innovation.” pg 51

- **Unparished areas:** Appears undefined in proposal.

Further resources: Devon County Council has agreed to provide an update for circulation to DALC members. This will be uploaded when available.

A briefing from Devon County Council was held with our members in October 2025 and the [recording is available here](#).

South Hams DC, Teignbridge DC, West Devon BC

South Hams District Council, Teignbridge District Council, and West Devon Borough Council proposed 3 unitary councils which would comprise the current areas of:

- Exeter and Northern Devon Unitary: East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon, North Devon, and Torridge. Approx. population 546, 738.
- Plymouth to remain unchanged. Approx. population: 268, 736.
- Torbay and Southern Devon Unitary: South Hams, Teignbridge, Torbay and West Devon. Approx. population: 426, 155.

[See the district's full proposal*](#)

East Devon DC, Mid Devon DC, North Devon DC, Torridge DC

East Devon District Council, Mid Devon District Council, North Devon District Council, and Torridge District Council proposed 3 unitary councils. This includes a request to split existing district council areas between the proposed new councils which would comprise the current areas of:

- Exeter and Northern Devon Unitary: East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon, North Devon, and Torridge. Approx. population 546, 738
- Plymouth Expanded: parts of the parishes of Bickleigh, Brixton, Shaugh Prior, and Sparkwell. Approx. population 275, 336
- Torbay and Southern Devon Unitary: South Hams, Teignbridge, Torbay and West Devon. Approx. population 419,555

[See the district's full proposal*](#)

**Please note: both these proposals are contained within the 'Reimagining Devon' which proposals as separate options so are being treated as one for the purposes of this guidance.*

Some key points

- **Change to existing district council boundaries requested:** No, for first proposal (South Hams DC, Teignbridge DC, West Devon BC). Yes, for second proposal (East Devon DC, Mid Devon DC, North Devon DC, Torridge DC).
- **Neighbourhood Governance Model:** *"a layered structure, beginning with Neighbourhood Area Committees (NACs) that reflect the distinct identities and needs of communities across each new unitary footprint. These NACs will be co-designed with partners and communities to operate at a scale that is close enough to be local, while being embedded in a wider system that is big enough to stay strong. Building on this foundation, Local Community Networks (LCNs) will act as an extension of NACs bringing together key stakeholders such as town and parish councils, ward members, police, health services, and voluntary sector partners to focus on place-based issues."* pg 232-233

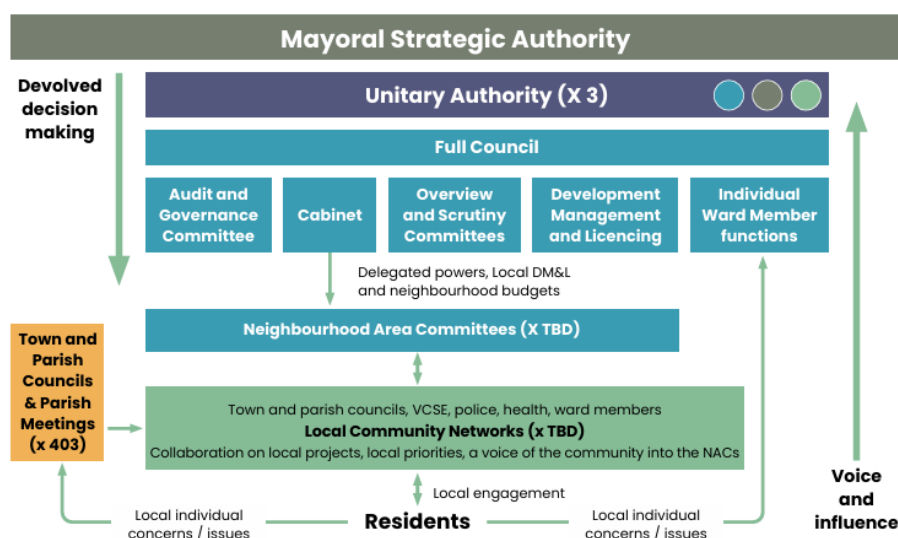


Figure: Model showing the future relationship between the resident and governance structures

- **Population covered by neighbourhood governance model:** Appears undefined in proposal.
- **Area covered by neighbourhood governance model:** Appears undefined in proposal, but engagement suggests geographies will be determined in the future in collaboration with communities.
- **Membership of neighbourhood governance model:** Neighbourhood Area Committees - membership comprises of unitary councillors. Local Community Networks - *“Local Community Networks (LCNs) will act as an extension of NACs—bringing together key stakeholders such as town and parish councils, ward members, police, health services, and voluntary sector partners to focus on place-based issues. This dual structure ensures that neighbourhood governance is not only representative but also operationally effective”* pg 233
- **Role of town and parish councils on neighbourhood governance model:** Sit on Local Community Networks. Do not sit on Neighbourhood Area Committees.
- **Support planned for neighbourhood governance model:** Appears undefined in proposal.
- **Purpose and functions of neighbourhood governance model:**
“While NACs will provide democratic oversight and a potential forum for participatory budgeting and service co design, LCNs will enhance this by enabling collaborative delivery of local projects and fostering community cohesion. These networks (LCNs) will serve as vital conduits for local intelligence, ... provide a platform for joint commissioning, strategic planning, and integrated service delivery—particularly in areas such as transport, housing, and health...Over time, the design and function of both NACs and LCNs will be reviewed and refined in partnership with communities, ensuring that governance remains dynamic, inclusive, and responsive to changing needs.” Pg 233
- **General working with parish and town councils:**
“We too see Town and Parish Councils as a crucial conduit for conveying community messages to the new unitary councils and see them playing a key role of helping shape the design of future service delivery models. Our proposal sets out new mechanisms for consulting and engaging including through the new Local Community Networks which will see Town and Parish Councils as core and influential members.” Pg 234

“Local Community Networks (LCNs) will extend NACs by bringing together key stakeholders to address place-based issues, ensuring governance is both representative and effective, alongside an enhanced role for towns and parishes” Pg 65

“Participatory budgeting and devolved funding arrangements will further empower communities to influence how resources are allocated in their area.” Pg 107

- **Unparished areas:** *“DALC has set out that it is supportive of the establishment of new parish councils in areas that are currently unparished and have offered to support new unitaries with this process, support which we will welcome during implementation.” Pg 234*

Further resources: Mid Devon District Council provided the following slides for circulation to DALC members.

Exeter City Council and Plymouth City Council

[Exeter City Council and Plymouth City Council proposed 4 unitary councils](#). This includes a request to split existing district council areas between the proposed new councils. These would comprise the current areas of:

- Exeter: plus 15 parishes from within Teignbridge (*Ashcombe, Chudleigh, Dawlish, Dunchideock, Exminster, Holcombe Burnell, Ide, Kenn, Kenton, Mamhead, Powderham, Shillingford St George, Starcross, Tedburn St Mary, Whitestone*), 28 parishes from within East Devon (*Aylesbeare, Brampford Speke, Broadclyst, Budleigh Salterton, Cyst Honiton, Cyst Hydon, Cyst St Lawrence, Cyst St George, Cyst St Mary, Colaton Raleigh, Cranbrook, East Budleigh with Bicton, Exmouth, Farringdon, Huxham, Lympstone, Netherexe, Otterton, Poltimore, Rewe, Rockbeare, Sowton, Stoke Canon, Upton Pyne, West Hill, Whimble, Woodbury*), and 6 parishes from within Mid Devon (*Cheriton Bishop, Crediton, Crediton Hamlets, Colebrooke, Hittisleigh, Newton St Cyres*) Approx. population 260,000.
- Plymouth: plus 13 parishes from South Hams (*Bickleigh inc. Woolwell, Brixton, Cornwood, Ermington, Harford, Holbeton, Ivybridge, Newton and Noss, Shaugh Prior, Sparkwell, Ugborough, Wembury, Yealmpton*). Approx. population 305,000.
- Torbay: plus 22 parishes from within Teignbridge District Council and South Hams District Council (*Abbotskerswell, Berry Pomeroy, Bishopsteignton, Broadhempston, Coffinswell, Denbury and Torbryan, Haccombe with Combe, Ideford, Ipplepen, Kingskerswell, Kingsteignton, Kingswear, Littlehempston, Marldon, Newton Abbot, Ogwell, Shaldon, Stoke Gabriel, Stokeinteignhead, Teigngrace, Teignmouth*). Approx. population 232,000.
- Devon Coast and Countryside: The rest of Devon. Approx. population 455,000.

[See Exeter's full proposal](#)

[See Plymouth's full proposal](#)

- **Changes to existing district council boundaries requested:** yes
- **Neighbourhood Governance Model:** *"Neighbourhood Area Committees are the forum in which partners come together in an area, using data and insights from communities to develop local strategies for addressing the specific needs of each place. This is then used to inform budget and service delivery decisions by the new unitary councils."* Pg 110



Proposed Future Model

- **Population covered by neighbourhood governance model:** *"Typically, NACs or other similar local governance structures serve anywhere between 30,000 and 60,000 residents⁷. Although it will be for each new unitary authority to define the number of NACs based on real*

community identities and existing partnership footprints. The exact number of committees will be determined as part of the co-design process to ensure that boundaries reflect meaningful community or neighbourhood identities.” Pg 108

- **Area covered by neighbourhood governance model:** *“The four proposed new unitary councils will follow a four-step process illustrated below, establishing new NACs immediately after vesting day, beginning with local engagement to define the boundaries and recruit members.” pg 108*
- **Membership of neighbourhood governance model:** *“Local councillors and partners will be represented on the committee, providing an inclusive forum for partners to come together to agree priorities on behalf of their communities. Local organisations or bodies such as National Park Authorities might also be included where this is appropriate or other statutory members specified in the new government regulations.” pg 108*
- **Role of town and parish councils on neighbourhood governance model:** *“As independent elected institutions, town and parish councils are valued by their local communities and have a vital contribution to make towards meaningful community engagement and neighbourhood working. In our proposed model below, they play an invaluable role as key partners of the newly created NACs, ensuring they are locally grounded and representative.” Pg 109*
- **Support planned for neighbourhood governance model:** *“Neighbourhood Area Committees will be supported in their work through the development of resources such as:*
 - *Neighbourhood Data Packs*
 - *Community Planning Toolkits*
 - *Digital Engagement Platforms*
 - *Training for Committee Members” pg 109*
- **Purpose and functions of neighbourhood governance model:** *“The Government has been clear on its ambitions for greater devolution of powers. Over time, as NACs become embedded into the fabric of locality-based governance structures, and once appropriate mechanisms have been developed, the intention is to devolve even greater powers and responsibilities to the committees, including but not limited to:*
 - *Discretionary annual budget for local projects*
 - *Allocation of local community grants and small-scale capital projects*
 - *Management of local parks and green spaces, allotments, community centres etc.*
 - *Involvement in local planning, highways, licencing and environmental health etc.*
 - *Partnership working to improve community safety and cohesion.” pg 109*
- **General working with parish and town councils:**
 - “Local empowerment: devolution of powers to town and parish councils and community groups to run assets and services where they want to.” pg 106*
 - “Town and Parish Councils are the vehicles through which local delivery happens, with functions and assets devolved (with the necessary resource) to the most local level. This is agreed in consultation with each local unitary council.” pg 110*
 - “Where Town and Parish Councils already exist, NACs will not replace or duplicate their work, nor is there any suggestion that any assets or powers will be removed. Instead, NACs will work collaboratively with Town and Parish Councils as part of the new local governance arrangements.” pg 111*
- **Unparished areas:** *Exeter which currently holds ceremonial status but is unparished. To ensure that historic rights and traditions are not lost during administrative restructuring, and*

until such time as a Community Governance Review⁸ can be undertaken, it is anticipated the Charter Trustee Model will be used. pg 113

Further resources: Exeter City Council and Plymouth City Council have been offered the opportunity to provide an update for circulation to DALC members. This will be uploaded if made available.

Torbay Council

Torbay Council proposed 4 unitary councils. This includes a request to split existing district council areas between the proposed new councils. These would comprise the current areas of:

- Exeter Council: plus 15 parishes from within Teignbridge (*Ashcombe, Chudleigh, Dawlish, Dunchideock, Exminster, Holcombe Burnell, Ide, Kenn, Kenton, Mamhead, Powderham, Shillingford St George, Starcross, Tedburn St Mary, Whitestone*), 28 parishes from within East Devon (*Aylesbeare, Brampford Speke, Broadclyst, Budleigh Salterton, Clyst Honiton, Clyst Hydon, Clyst St Lawrence, Clyst St George, Clyst St Mary, Colaton Raleigh, Cranbrook, East Budleigh with Bicton, Exmouth, Farringdon, Huxham, Lympstone, Netherexe, Otterton, Poltimore, Rewe, Rockbeare, Sowton, Stoke Canon, Upton Pyne, West Hill, Whimble, Woodbury*), and 6 parishes from within Mid Devon (*Cheriton Bishop, Crediton, Crediton Hamlets, Colebrooke, Hittisleigh, Newton St Cyres*). Approx. population 260,000.
- Plymouth Council: plus 13 parishes from South Hams (*Bickleigh inc. Woolwell, Brixton, Cornwood, Ermington, Harford, Holbeton, Ivybridge, Newton and Noss, Shaugh Prior, Sparkwell, Ugborough, Wembury, Yealmpton*). Approx. population: 300,000.
- Rural Devon Coast and Countryside: The rest of Devon. Approx. population: 550,000
- Torbay Council: to remain unchanged. Approx population: 140,000

See Torbay's full proposal.

- **Changes to existing district council boundaries requested:** yes
- **Neighbourhood Governance Model:** *"neighbourhood empowerment across Devon with the existing network of parish and town councils as a strong and established foundation"* pg 65

"Our proposal will use the existing democratic and partnership structures, such as Torbay's Community Partnerships and the strong parish networks across Devon, as foundations for neighbourhood level engagement under the new arrangements" pg 122

"Whilst awaiting detailed regulation referenced in the English Devolution and Empowerment Bill, we will work flexibly to support locally appropriate governance solutions whilst maintaining consistent standards and values over each area" pg 122

- **Population covered by neighbourhood governance model:** Appears undefined in proposal
- **Area covered by neighbourhood governance model:** Appears undefined in proposal
- **Membership of neighbourhood governance model:** Appears undefined in proposal
- **Role of town and parish councils on neighbourhood governance model:** *"neighbourhood empowerment across Devon with the existing network of parish and town councils as a strong and established foundation"* pg 65
- **Support planned for neighbourhood governance model:** Appears undefined in proposal
- **Purpose and functions of neighbourhood governance model:** Appears undefined in proposal
- **General working with parish and town councils:** *"there is a need for flexible, locally driven interventions that harness the strengths of voluntary groups, parish councils, and community organisations . Initiatives such as place based pilots and community led partnerships have already demonstrated the value of listening to residents and co-designing support that reflects local realities"* pg 106

“Existing partnerships, including parish councils, which are valued by residents as trusted and accessible will be strengthened, not sidelined . Their deep local roots make them central to future engagement, ensuring neighbourhood governance remains grounded in community identity and trust” pg 141

“Within those areas proposed to form part of the expanded Plymouth City Council and the new Exeter Council, there is a strong desire to retain local decision making through empowered parish and town councils, as well as broader community forums” pg 121

- **Unparished areas.**

“Plymouth City Council has existing voluntary and community sector partnerships, but would need neighbourhood forums to represent local voice” pg 55

“consider new area governance arrangements which balances the needs of parished and unparished areas.” pg 55

Further resources: Torbay Council has agreed to provide an update for circulation to DALC members. This will be uploaded when available.