

## **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT**

### **CRANBROOK TOWN COUNCIL MEETING - 20th January 2025**

**CLLR KIM BLOXHAM, CLLR KEVIN BLAKEY, CLLR SAM HAWKINS.**

#### **PROPOSED DEVOLUTION DEAL FOR DEVON**

Just before Christmas, central government issued an instruction to the remaining County and District councils in England to propose a preferred pathway for future local government following the abolition of the current local government structure.

Central government intend to replace County and District councils with new Unitary Authorities, each of which should serve a minimum of 500,000 people. The population of Devon is approximately 1 million.

It is also intended that elected mayors will stand above 3 such unitary authorities, thereby governing 1.5m people.

It seems likely that this change will happen in early 2027, although no specific date has been set. The proposals from the current authorities were required by 10.1.25.

On 9.1.25 EDDC, following lengthy discussions between the leaders of DCC and the 10 Devon District Councils, voted to accept (having virtually no alternative) a proposal that EDDC and others be replaced by a Unitary Authority to cover the geographical areas currently covered by North Devon DC, Mid Devon DC, Teignbridge DC, East Devon DC and Exeter City Council.

Devon's local governance would therefore be split into 2 areas with a north-south dividing line.

It is perhaps logical that the mayoral area would include Devon and Cornwall (Cornwall Council is already unitary, and the county has a population of around 500,000) but we understand that Cornwall are not keen on the idea, so it may be that parts of western Somerset and/or Dorset may be the government's preference.

We understand that differing proposals will be tabled by Devon CC, Exeter City Council and perhaps others, and it should be noted that this is only an idea at this point. Much more work is needed.

What is clear is that the number of councillors representing residents, both at county and district level, will be drastically reduced, probably by as much as 90%. This is the current government's view on improving local democracy.

We will provide updates when we know more.

