

Government turns down Devon County Council request to postpone election

The Government has turned down Devon County Council's request to postpone its elections in May.

The council made the request following the publication of a Government's White Paper which set out its ambition for devolution.

The Government wants to see two-tier local government, where district councils and county councils deliver different public services in same areas, combined to become unitary councils that deliver all council public services in those areas, and for those unitary councils to work together under strategic authorities, led by elected Mayors.

This afternoon Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government Angela Rayner announced that the council's request was among those which have been rejected, meaning that the council's May elections will proceed as planned.

Devon County Council Leader James McInnes said: "I am disappointed that the Government has rejected our proposal to postpone May's elections so we could concentrate fully on developing our plans for local government reorganisation in Devon.

"However, we will still continue to work on our proposals for local government reorganisation that best meet the needs and aspirations of all Devon's communities."

Today's announcement coincides with confirmation that the Government has signed the necessary legislation to bring the Devon and Torbay's Combined County Authority (CCA) into being.

The Devon and Torbay CCA is the governance needed for devolved decision-making powers and funding to flow from Whitehall to local decision-makers in Devon and Torbay. Through the Devon and Torbay CCA, it means that decisions that were previously made in Whitehall will now be made locally on priority issues including housing, jobs and skills, transport and economy.