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## **SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD - SUPPLEMENT**

Wednesday 12 November 2025  
9.30 am

**Members:**

Councillor Coker, Chair

Councillor Finn, Vice Chair

Councillors Allison, Blight, Freeman, Gilmour, Holloway, Murphy, Poyser, Ricketts and Steel.

Members are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business overleaf. For further information on attending Council meetings and how to engage in the democratic process please follow this link - [Get Involved](#)

**Tracey Lee**

Chief Executive

## **Scrutiny Management Board**

- 5. Plymouth City Council's Draft Local Government Reorganisation Proposal for Devon Appendices (Pages 1 - 108)**

# Plymouth City Council's Local Government Reorganisation Engagement Report

November 2025



Plymouth City Council Devolution  
and Local Government Reform Team

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Context

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is a UK Government initiative to simplify council structures and devolve more power to local areas. Plymouth City Council has responded to this call by proposing a modest expansion of its boundary to include 13 neighbouring parishes currently within South Hams District Council. This proposal aims to create a more sustainable, efficient, and strategically aligned local authority that better reflects the economic and social realities of the region.

The Council has already submitted its interim proposal to Government and is now developing a detailed proposal, due in November 2025. As part of this process, Plymouth City Council undertook a second phase of engagement to ensure the proposal is informed by local perspectives and reflects the needs and aspirations of communities across the proposed new boundary. At the time the engagement was undertaken Plymouth City Council was developing proposals for the wider Devon and therefore engagement was focused on Plymouth's immediate neighbours and City. Engagement was designed to respond to the Government's formal request that:

***“New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.”***

- ***Proposals will need to explain plans to make sure that communities are engaged.***
- ***Where there are already arrangements in place it should be explained how these will enable strong community engagement.”***

\*MHCLG invitation letter 5 February 2025

**This report summarises the engagement activity carried out with residents and other key stakeholders on the Council's LGR proposals and their vision for the future of their local areas. It provides an overview of the feedback received during the engagement period and the conclusions which can be drawn.**

### Overview of the engagement process

The engagement process section of this report sets out the detailed activities that were undertaken to raise awareness and gather feedback.

The awareness raising mechanisms included: social media posts by Plymouth City Council and through CAN-Digital; emails to stakeholder contacts; briefings with stakeholders, the local MPs, political parties and councillors; facilitated conversation events with residents, press releases, hardcopy surveys available on request; and poster and leaflet distribution to businesses, schools, community buildings, GPs, dentists and pharmacies.

Information was shared and feedback was gathered through the dedicated project website, 19 community facilitated conversations, a survey hosted online and in hard copy format; presentations and 1-2-1 meetings with stakeholders.

### The Gunning principles

The approach to the engagement was designed to be in-line with the Gunning principles:

#### 1. Was the engagement carried out a formative stage?

- **Yes:** The engagement is taking place while Plymouth City Council is still developing its detailed proposal for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), ahead of a formal submission in November. Therefore, the process is still open to influence.

#### 2. Was sufficient information provided?

- **Yes:** The communications provide a clear explanation of what LGR is, what the Council's proposal is, FAQs addressing concerns and queries from the initial round of engagement early in the year. Detailed web pages continued to be updated throughout the engagement when additional enquiries were submitted.

#### 3. Was there adequate time for consideration and response?

- **Yes:** Events were held over multiple weeks, in different venues, at different times of day, to enable people to attend at a time and location suitable for them. The survey was online for four weeks.

#### 4. Was their conscientious consideration of the feedback?

- **Yes:** Resident engagement activity in this phase had concluded before the summer period to give adequate time for evaluation so the feedback could influence the final submission in November.



## Summary of findings

The engagement process undertaken by Plymouth City Council between May and August 2025 has provided a rich and detailed picture of public sentiment across both Plymouth and the 13 South Hams parishes proposed for inclusion in an expanded Plymouth. The findings reveal a complex landscape of shared aspirations, divergent concerns, and clear expectations for how local government should evolve to better serve communities.

### The views from residents

#### Shared themes across Plymouth and South Hams

Across both Plymouth and the South Hams parishes, there is a strong sense of place and pride in local identity. Residents value their communities for their natural beauty, social cohesion, and access to essential services. There is widespread support for the principle of local decision-making, with many respondents expressing a desire for governance that is responsive, transparent, and rooted in local knowledge.

Service quality is a recurring theme. Waste and recycling services, healthcare access, education, and transport infrastructure are consistently highlighted as priorities. While digital services are appreciated for their convenience, there is a clear expectation that councils must continue to offer face-to-face and telephone options, particularly for vulnerable residents and those in rural or digitally excluded areas.

Environmental protection is another unifying concern. Respondents across both areas emphasise the importance of safeguarding green spaces, promoting sustainability, and ensuring that future development does not compromise the character or ecological integrity of their communities.

#### Differences in feedback between Plymouth and South Hams

The most striking difference in feedback relates to the proposed boundary expansion. From those we spoke to in South Hams, there was significant resistance to being absorbed into Plymouth City Council. Many residents fear that their rural identity will be diluted, that urban priorities will dominate decision-making, and that services tailored to small communities will be lost. There is also concern about planning pressures, overdevelopment, and the potential erosion of local representation.

In contrast, Plymouth residents are more focused on the opportunities that reorganisation might bring. They express a desire for improved infrastructure, more affordable housing, better public transport, and enhanced cultural and economic vibrancy. While concerns about service quality and governance persist, the tone is generally more optimistic and future-oriented.

These differences underscore the need for Plymouth City Council to approach the final proposal with sensitivity and nuance. The proposal must demonstrate how the needs of both urban and rural communities will be met, and how governance structures will ensure fair representation and service delivery across the expanded area.

### Youth perspectives

Young people in Plymouth provided thoughtful and forward-looking feedback. They value the city's green spaces, cultural venues, and sense of safety, but they also want more youth-led spaces, better transport, and improved mental health support. Their vision for Plymouth in 2050 includes a city that is inclusive, well-connected, and full of opportunity, with affordable housing, strong job prospects, and a vibrant cultural life.

This feedback highlights the importance of engaging younger residents in the planning process. Their priorities reflect long-term aspirations that should inform the design of services, infrastructure, and community engagement strategies.

### Local governance and representation

Feedback from South Hams residents strongly emphasised the importance of parish councils in maintaining local identity, accountability, and community cohesion. Many expressed concern about the future role of these councils under any new governance arrangements, seeking reassurance that their influence and autonomy would not be diminished. There was a clear desire to preserve the hyper-local governance that parish councils provide, especially in rural settings where community ties are strong. Additionally, the engagement revealed widespread confusion about the current two-tier system of local government. Many participants conflated the roles of parish, district, and county councils, often attributing responsibilities incorrectly. This highlights a need for clearer communication and education around governance structures, both in the current system and any proposed changes, to ensure residents feel informed and empowered.

## Accessing services

The engagement revealed a clear preference for a blended model of service delivery. Residents want the flexibility to access services digitally, by phone, or in person, depending on the nature of the issue and their personal circumstances. Libraries and community hubs are seen as vital access points, particularly in rural areas.

Plymouth City Council must ensure that any future service model is inclusive and adaptable. This includes investing in digital infrastructure and skills, maintaining physical service locations, and designing systems that are intuitive and accessible to all.

## Communication and engagement preferences

Effective communication is essential to building trust and ensuring meaningful participation in local government. Throughout the engagement process, residents across both Plymouth and South Hams consistently expressed a desire to be genuinely involved in shaping decisions that affect their communities. There is a clear distinction made between meaningful engagement and what many perceive as tokenistic or “tick-box” exercises. People want to feel that their voices are not only heard but also acted upon, and that their input has a tangible influence on outcomes.

Face-to-face engagement was particularly valued. Many participants highlighted the importance of being able to speak directly with council officers in community settings, where conversations could be open, honest, and responsive. These interactions were seen as more personal and trustworthy than digital or written communications alone. The facilitated conversation events were widely praised for creating space for dialogue, and there is a strong appetite for these to continue beyond the current phase of engagement.

In the South Hams, Parish Councils emerged as a vital conduit for communication and representation. Residents view their Parish Councils as trusted, accessible, and deeply embedded in the fabric of local life. They want to see these councils empowered and actively involved in any future governance arrangements. Many respondents indicated that they would prefer to receive updates and participate in consultations through their Parish Councils, which they see as more attuned to local needs and concerns than larger, more centralised bodies.

To meet these expectations, Plymouth City Council must have an inclusive and flexible approach to engagement, recognising that different communities and individuals have different preferences and levels of access. Transparency, responsiveness, and follow-through will be critical. Residents want to see how their feedback is being used and to be kept informed of progress and decisions in a timely and accessible manner.

Ultimately, the success of the Local Government Reorganisation proposal will depend not only on the strength of the proposal but also on the quality of the relationships built with communities. Engagement must be ongoing, not episodic, and rooted in a genuine commitment to co-design and collaboration.



## **The views from stakeholders**

The feedback gathered from stakeholders throughout the engagement process reflects a wide range of perspectives, but can largely be grouped under a set of consistent themes. These themes; governance and representation, service equity, financial transparency, planning and development, and community engagement including youth voice, mirror those identified through resident engagement and provide a useful framework for understanding the priorities, concerns, and aspirations expressed by partners across sectors. While each stakeholder brought a distinct lens shaped by their role or industry, there is a clear convergence around the need for strategic clarity, inclusive decision-making, and a commitment to delivering tangible benefits for communities across the proposed expanded authority.

### **Governance and representation**

Stakeholders broadly recognised the potential for a more strategic and coherent governance model, with benefits in national influence and operational alignment. However, concerns were raised about democratic representation, particularly for rural communities, and the future role of parish councils. Questions around boundary choices and the risk of centralised decision-making highlighted the need for reassurance that local voices would remain influential.

### **Service equity**

There was strong support for improving service consistency across the region, especially in housing, education, health, and safeguarding. The expansion was seen as a chance to better coordinate delivery, but stakeholders warned that growth must be matched by infrastructure and funding. Concerns included the sustainability of emergency services, health inequalities, and the risk of rural areas being underserved. In education, particular emphasis was placed on the implications for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision, with questions around capacity, funding (including the High Needs Block), and the ability to meet statutory responsibilities. School leaders highlighted the need for clear planning to avoid delays in specialist placements, ensure continuity in Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) processes, and prevent resource dilution across a wider catchment.

### **Financial transparency**

Financial clarity was a recurring theme. Stakeholders sought reassurance that the reorganisation would deliver value for money, with clear plans for council tax harmonisation, funding allocation, and cost-efficiency. There were questions about whether the scale of change justified the investment, and whether rural service costs might outweigh projected savings.

### **Planning and development**

Planning was one of the most discussed areas. Stakeholders saw opportunities in unlocking land-led development, attracting investment, and aligning infrastructure strategies. However, there were concerns about the loss of rural planning expertise and the risk of marginalising smaller communities. The need for integrated planning across housing, health, and emergency services was widely emphasised.

### **Community engagement and youth voice**

The Council's engagement efforts were welcomed, with calls for continued dialogue and broader inclusion. Stakeholders encouraged the use of varied communication channels and more targeted forums, particularly for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and sector-specific groups. Youth voice was highlighted as a priority, with suggestions to embed generational perspectives into future planning and investment.

### **Additional considerations**

Some feedback extended beyond these core themes. Environmental and recreational partners called for better liaison and coordination, particularly around the coast path. The construction sector advocated for a local capability hub and stronger procurement strategies. Concerns were also raised about implementation timelines, regional collaboration, and the capacity of Plymouth's leadership to manage the expanded authority effectively.



## Considerations for the final proposal

As Plymouth City Council prepares its final submission to Government, it must address several critical considerations:

**Governance and representation:** The proposal must outline how rural communities will be represented within the expanded authority. This includes exploring models which maintain and enhance parish councils, or advisory fora.

- **Service equity:** The proposal should demonstrate how services will be maintained or improved across all areas, with particular attention to rural needs, transport connectivity, healthcare access, and waste management. In education, stakeholders highlighted the importance of ensuring sufficient capacity and resourcing to meet increased demand, particularly for SEND provision. The transition must be carefully managed to avoid disruption to statutory responsibilities and ensure continuity for families and professionals.
- **Financial transparency:** Concerns about council tax harmonisation, funding allocation, and debt inheritance must be addressed clearly and credibly. Stakeholders want to understand how resources will be managed, including the financial implications of absorbing additional responsibilities such as SEND, and whether the reorganisation will deliver value for money without compromising service quality.
- **Planning and development:** The proposal should promote strategic planning that respects local character, protects green spaces, and ensures infrastructure keeps pace with growth to meet the needs of the expanded authority.
- **Community engagement:** Ongoing engagement must be built into the governance model. Residents want to be part of the decision-making process, not just consulted at key milestones. Mechanisms for feedback, participation, and accountability should be embedded in the proposal.
- **Youth inclusion:** The views of young people must be reflected in the final proposal. Their priorities for housing, transport, education, and wellbeing are essential to shaping a future-ready city.
- **Local capability and procurement:** Consideration should be given to how the expanded authority will support local economic resilience through procurement and investment.

## ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

The engagement launched on 29 May 2025 with Plymouth City Council issuing a press release announcing the engagement. This also included the launch of the engagement platform ([Have Your Say Today - Big Community Conversation - Commonplace](#))

### Engagement website

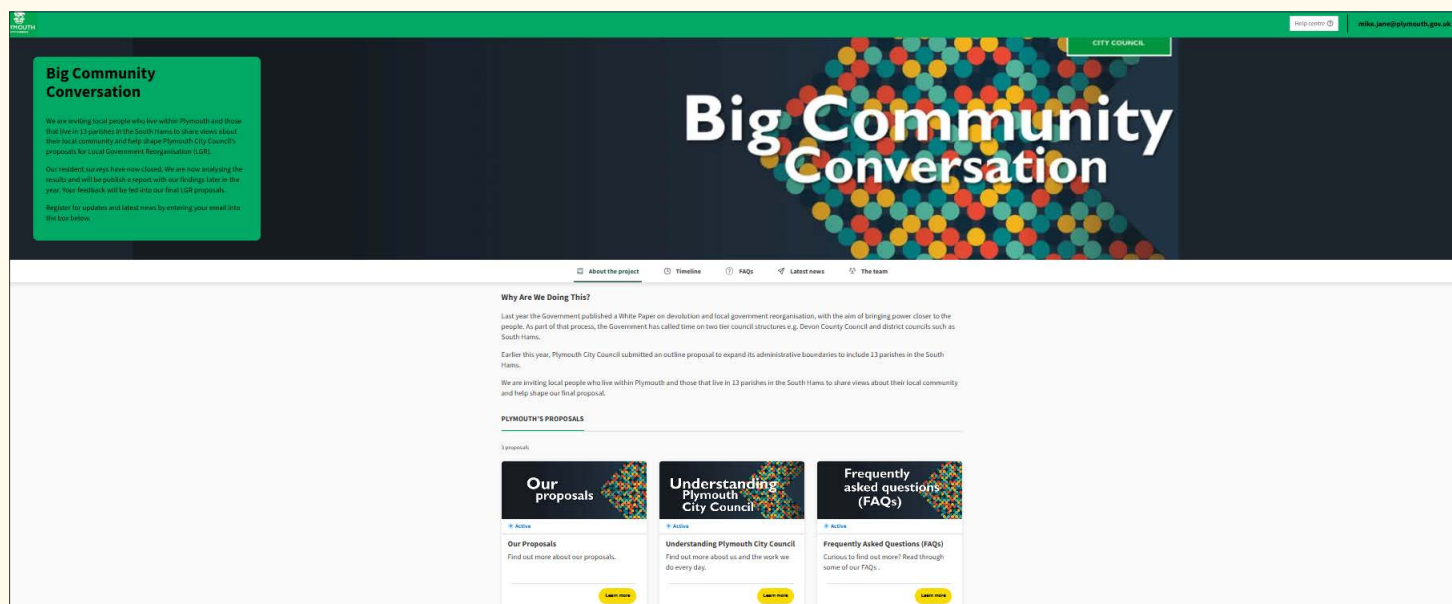
The LGR engagement website was launched on 29 May 2025 to communicate information about the Council's proposals and the engagement opportunities, including the online survey.

From the launch, anyone could register to stay informed on the Council's plans by subscribing to email updates. This was done through the project website homepage.

A detailed Frequently Asked Questions section was updated throughout the engagement in response to questions raised from the community. Project updates were communicated through a 'Latest News Post' and this was emailed to all registrants of the project website.

For example, on the 12 June, those signed up for updates received an alert signposting them to additional FAQs that had been added to the website regarding 'Understanding Local Government', 'More about Plymouth City Council' and the impact our proposals will have on the local parish/town councils in South Hams.

**From 29 May until 4 August there were 816 subscribers to the project website and 11,431 visitors.**



### Surveys

Two separate surveys were conducted, one for residents living within Plymouth's existing boundary, and another for those in the 13 South Hams parishes. The South Hams survey ran from 29 May to 10 July, while the Plymouth survey was open from 1 July to 3 August.

While both surveys were broadly similar, they were tailored slightly to reflect the different contexts and existing knowledge about each area. Their shared aim was to explore residents' perceptions of their local area and their aspirations for the future. Each survey gathered both quantitative and qualitative feedback, not only on the Council's proposals but also on wider community priorities.

Open-text responses were included throughout and have been thematically coded. The survey findings section includes tables showing the number of mentions for each theme.

An online survey was hosted on the Big Community Conversation website and printed copies of the survey were also available on request or at the facilitated conversation events.

**A total of 824 people had their say across both surveys.**

## Facilitated conversation events

A series of Big Community Conversation events were held between May and July 2025. These events were designed to gather insights from residents and stakeholders to help shape the Council's detailed proposal for submission to Government.

A total of **19 events** were held:

- **13 events** in each of the proposed parish areas in South Hams
- **6 events** in the centre / north / south / east and west of Plymouth city boundaries and a specific event for young people in Plymouth.

All events were held in accessible community venues and were open to any resident, regardless of location, allowing flexibility for attendees to choose the most convenient session.

### South Hams Parish Events

- **Shaugh Prior:** (Monday 9 June) at Lee Moor Village Hall, 10am to 12noon
- **Sparkwell:** (Tuesday 10 June) at Sparkwell Parish Hall, 6.30pm to 8.30pm
- **Cornwood:** (Monday 16 June) at Cornwood Village Hall, 6.30pm to 8.30pm
- **Harford:** (Tuesday 17 June) at Lukesland Gardens, 6.30pm to 8.30pm
- **Ugborough:** (Friday 20 June) at Ugborough Village Hall, 7pm to 9pm
- **Ivybridge:** (Saturday 21 June) at The Watermark Centre, 3pm to 5pm
- **Brixton:** (Tuesday 24 June) at Brixton Community Centre, 2.30pm to 4.30pm
- **Yealmpton:** (Wednesday 25 June) at Yealmpton Methodist Church, 6.30pm to 8.30pm
- **Ermington:** (Thursday 26 June) at Ermington Community Hub, 10am to 12noon
- **Wembury:** (Saturday 28 June) at Wembury War Memorial Hall, 10am to 12noon
- **Newton and Noss:** (Wednesday 2 July) at Newton and Noss Village Hall, 6.30pm to 8.30pm
- **Holbeton:** (Thursday 3 July) at Holbeton Village Hall, 6.30pm to 8.30pm
- **Bickleigh:** (Thursday 10 July) at Woolwell Centre, 6.30pm to 8.30pm

### Plymouth city events

- **City Centre:** (Monday 21 July) at the Council House, Armada Way, PL1 2AA
- **Plympton:** (Tuesday 22 July) at the Rees Centre Family and Wellbeing Hub, Mudge Way, PL7 2PS
- **Estover:** (Thursday 24 July) at the ELM Wellbeing Hub, Leypark Walk, PL6 8UE
- **Barne Barton:** (Monday 28 July) at The Barn Family Hub, Kit Hill Crescent, PL5 1EJ
- **Elburton:** (Tuesday 29 July) at Coombe Dean Academy, Charnhill Way, PL9 8ES

### Plymouth youth event

- **City Centre:** (Wednesday 16 July) at the Council House, Armada Way, PL1 2AA open for all young people aged 12-18 years old.

**In total: 489 people attended events**

## Meetings with other stakeholders / representatives of organisations, businesses and groups

A series of meetings with representatives of organisations, businesses and groups in the South Hams and within Plymouth who were willing to provide qualitative feedback on the proposals. Notes of these meetings were captured and fed into this report. This included:

- Parish Councils
- Devon Chamber of Commerce
- Plymouth Regeneration Forum
- Plymouth Growth Board
- Plymouth Housing Development Partnership
- Plymouth Manufacturers Group
- Local Care Board Executive Group and Delivery Group
- Local universities / schools
- Fred Thomas MP
- Luke Pollard MP
- Rebecca Smith MP

## Media and building awareness

A media and digital communications campaign was launched, which included issuing press releases to the local media, inclusion in resident newsletters, organic social media campaign. The aim of the campaign was to raise awareness and to encourage attendance at the events and the completion of survey responses by using targeted digital advertising across Facebook, Instagram and Google Ads.

Our multi-channel approach ensured broad visibility and effective targeting, significantly boosting participation in the LGR consultation. For example:

Thirteen Parishes: Delivered via CANN Digital and in-house ads, with strong performance on Meta and Google Display.

Plymouth Residents: Area-specific ads (e.g. Estover, Barne Barton, Elburton) generated high reach and engagement.

Youth Engagement: Snapchat ads reached over 30,000 users, with the highest impressions among 18–24s and most clicks from 25–34s.

Community Promotion: Posts in 19 local Facebook groups supported in-person event attendance.

This resulted in:

- Platforms Used: Meta (Facebook and Instagram), Google Display, Snapchat, Nextdoor, LinkedIn, and local Facebook groups.
- Total Impressions: Over 2.1 million across all platforms.
- Total Reach: Over 100,000 individuals engaged.
- Total Clicks: More than 9,000 direct link clicks to the consultation.

In addition:

- Three press releases were issued, resulting in media coverage in publications e.g. The Herald and online at Plymouth Live / Devon Live / BBC Spotlight etc.
- Promotion was included in four editions of Plymouth City Council's weekly e-newsletter, which is distributed to 26,000 residents
- Social media posts on Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn and Nextdoor.
- Staff communications to encourage Plymouth City Council staff to participate in the consultation in their capacity as residents who live and work in Plymouth or the South Hams.
- Posters and flyers were distributed to community venues, schools, dentists, GP surgeries, libraries and pharmacies.

## STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

A series of meetings have been held with stakeholder to capture their views on the proposals. Industry specific presentations were created to outline the benefits of LGR to each sector. A number of the meetings, due to the large number of people attending, interactive feedback software was also used to capture feedback. Below is a summary of the discussions:

### Parish Councils

Over the course of our engagement programme, Plymouth City Council has held one-to-one meetings with clerks and chairs from all 13 affected parish councils – Bickleigh, Shaugh Prior, Sparkwell, Brixton, Wembury, Cornwood, Harford, Ugborough, Ivybridge, Ermington, Yealmpton, Holbeton, and Newton and Noss. These discussions were followed by a Parish Conference on 19 March 2025, providing a platform for collective dialogue and feedback.

Over the past few months, Plymouth City Council also encouraged further participation, with many Parish Council's attending the Big Community Conversation events held in their local area. Some parish councils have expressed dissatisfaction with the LGR process and have formally requested that Plymouth City Council cease future direct engagement. Whilst efforts to build an ongoing relationship have not been successful there has been productive dialogue.

While an initial approach to neighbourhood governance proposals was discussed, further announcements from the Government relating to "Area Committees" means that our approach will be developmental, which parish councils will be welcomed to join. The parishes we met expressed a preference for a parish council forum with their future principal authority, along the same lines as was recently started by the South Hams District Council.

While there was recognition of the potential for improved service delivery – particularly in areas such as transport, housing, and economic development – they emphasised the importance of maintaining a rural-urban balance. The Parish Councils acknowledged the strategic economic ties between Plymouth and surrounding areas but stressed the need for any transition to respect the distinct character of rural communities. Practical concerns were also raised around council tax harmonisation, service continuity, and staffing, highlighting the need for clear planning and communication throughout the reorganisation process.

### Luke Pollard MP (22/08/25)

Luke Pollard MP expressed strong support for Plymouth City Council's LGR proposals. He welcomed the engagement efforts, particularly the Big Conversation events, and appreciated the Council's coordination with other medium-sized, boundary-constrained cities. Mr Pollard also emphasised the importance of Plymouth remaining a Continuing Authority.

### Marjon University (28/08/25)

Marjon's feedback sought clarity on the regional picture and raised questions about devolved skills funding, which is particularly relevant to them as an education provider. While they acknowledged the potential benefits of economies of scale and coherent planning, they cautioned that boundary changes might simply shift existing problems. Specific concerns were raised around education, including school places and SEND provision.

### Plymouth Manufacturers Group (29/08/25)

The Plymouth Manufacturers Group provided a pragmatic and strategically focused perspective on the LGR proposals reflecting its businesses are located in Plymouth and the 13 parishes. Their feedback centred on the potential implications for business operations, future business support packages, investment confidence, and infrastructure development. A key concern was the continuity of services during the transition, particularly regarding planning applications, and how the reorganisation might affect access to central government grants. The group also highlighted a perceived tension between urban and rural priorities, questioning how the proposal would support future planning opportunities, including energy provision and hydrogen infrastructure.

Participants saw opportunities in clearer governance structures, reduced bureaucracy, and more joined-up infrastructure planning. Concerns were raised about the cost of delivering rural services potentially outweighing efficiency gains. There was strong interest in improving transport links, both regionally and nationally, to support industrial growth and international connectivity. The potential to leverage the Freeport, attract Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) investment, and develop industrial business parks on the city's fringes was seen as a positive step toward economic resilience.



The group emphasised the importance of maintaining and enhancing existing communication channels with the Council. They praised current engagement mechanisms and relationships with Council officers, and recommended continued support for forums and roundtables that include SMEs as well as larger firms.

Suggestions included appointing dedicated liaison officers, developing a well-informed online business hub, and ensuring that procurement practices support local companies. Overall, the group expressed cautious optimism, with a clear desire for strategic clarity, inclusive engagement, and tangible benefits for the business community.

### **Plymouth Housing Development Partnership (01/09/25)**

The Plymouth Housing Development Partnership (PHDP) identified clear opportunities in aligning infrastructure, housing, and service delivery across a wider geography. The expansion was seen as a chance to unlock land-led development, improve coordination with utility providers, and build investor confidence, particularly in the delivery of affordable housing and strategic planning for schools, SEND provision, and homelessness services.

There was strong support for the idea that a larger authority could enable more consistent and efficient service delivery, with better economies of scale and shared learning. Stakeholders highlighted the potential for new towns and larger-scale developments, while also emphasising the importance of maintaining a focus on smaller rural sites that make a meaningful difference to local communities. The proposal was viewed as a way to extend Plymouth's proactive and "can-do" approach to planning and development across a broader area.

However, concerns were raised about the pace and sequencing of infrastructure delivery, with fears that housing growth could outstrip essential services such as transport, utilities, and education. The potential loss of rural planning expertise and the centralisation of decision-making in Plymouth were seen as risks, particularly for smaller villages. The identity of rural communities was a recurring theme, with some stakeholders expressing discomfort at the idea of being absorbed into a city-led authority that may not reflect their distinct character or priorities.

There were queries around the implications for Local Housing Allowance (LHA) calculations and the continuity of services during the transition. The partnership called for enhanced collaboration with developers and service providers, and for mechanisms such as S106 agreements to be used strategically to support local priorities. Communication was a key theme, with strong support for the existing PHDP forum and calls to use a range of channels, including social media, local media, interactive mapping tools, and in-person meetings - to keep stakeholders informed and engaged. The group also urged the Council to consider the generational dimension of the project, ensuring that the needs of young people are reflected in future planning and investment.



### **Devon and Cornwall Police (03/09/25)**

Chief Constable Vaughan provided a clear endorsement of unitary local government from a policing perspective. He noted that single tier governance could simplify operations and partnerships, particularly safeguarding, and enable clearer alignment. While some structural adjustments would be needed, such as estate planning and some safeguarding service reconfiguration, the overall assessment was that unitary governance was operationally sound.

### **Plymouth Regeneration Forum (04/09/25)**

Participants explored the rationale behind the use of parish boundaries rather than district ones, queried the minimum population size required by government, and asked whether there was sufficient political consensus to support the proposal. Concerns were voiced about the democratic implications of reorganisation, the potential impact on staffing and service continuity, and the risk of smaller communities being overlooked during the transition.

A recurring theme was the frustration within the construction sector regarding the lack of recognition of local capability. Stakeholders called for the creation of a Construction Capability Hub and a more strategic approach to procurement that prioritises local expertise and protects the “Plymouth pound.”

Participants identified opportunities for a stronger collective voice at the national level, improved infrastructure planning, and more cohesive development across the region. The proposal was seen as a chance to reduce duplication, streamline service delivery, and attract both government and private investment - particularly in housing, jobs, and environmental infrastructure.

However, concerns remained about resourcing, the time lag for implementation, and the risk of decision-making vacuums. Participants warned that prioritising cost savings could undermine service delivery if not matched by adequate staffing and investment.

Participants emphasised the need for a joined-up regional approach that fosters collaboration rather than competition between cities like Plymouth and Exeter and stressed the importance of balancing growth with sustainability and resilience.

### **LCP Delivery Group (NHS) (04/09/25)**

NHS colleagues raised important questions about population growth, funding settlements, and health inequality. They queried whether the government would increase funding to match the expanded population and whether the proposal would genuinely reduce deprivation or simply shift statistics. Concerns were also raised about wellbeing hub capacity and the need for ongoing involvement in planning.

### **South West Coast Path Association (04/09/25)**

The association welcomed the opportunity for improved engagement with Plymouth City Council, noting that the expanded boundary would include more of the coast path. They highlighted missed grant opportunities and the need for better liaison arrangements.

### **University of Plymouth (09/09/25)**

The University appreciated the briefing and expressed a strong civic commitment to the city. They asked detailed questions about governance, boundaries, and political implications, including whether parts of West Devon had been considered and how services would be managed post-expansion. They were interested in whether formal support was being sought and offered to engage further.

### **Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (12/09/25)**

The Fire Service found the meeting helpful but raised concerns about the sustainability of services and the lack of coterminous boundaries. They noted that this could be costly in the long term. However, they saw opportunities in a more aggregated service model and expressed interest in strategic partnerships, including with Cornwall.

### **Rebecca Smith MP (11/09/25)**

Rebecca Smith MP expressed scepticism about the proposal and raised concerns about the timetable. She highlighted worries about the status and impact on parish council assets and services, particularly around precepts and service duplication and reflected a preference for a smaller expansion.

### **Plymouth Growth Board (18/09/25)**

The Plymouth Growth Board expressed clear and unequivocal support for Plymouth City Council's proposals around Local Government Reorganisation. Members highlighted that the move would simplify service delivery and infrastructure development, particularly in areas where people live and work across current administrative boundaries. The proposal was seen as a logical step that aligns with the city's economic footprint, housing targets, and travel-to-work patterns. It was also noted that the inclusion of the 13 parishes made geographical sense and would help reduce duplication and complexity in services such as planning, education, and care.

While there was some concern about the logistics of transitioning to a unitary authority and the potential disruption to statutory services, the Board acknowledged that financial modelling and risk assessments were underway to address these issues. Questions were raised about the overlap with devolution plans, particularly the proposed Peninsula Mayoral Strategic Authority, and the exclusion of Cornwall from current discussions. Despite these complexities, the Board concluded that the Plymouth proposition is well-founded and should be unequivocally supported, as it complements the city's long-term economic strategy and ambitions for growth.

### **Arts University Plymouth (AUP) (22/09/25)**

Expressed strong support for the proposals. The university welcomed the opportunity for greater coordination between Plymouth's three universities and City College and saw potential for a more unified regional approach to education.

They considered this critical, noting that while institutions are national providers, there is a risk of overlooking regional needs. Strengthening reach into the wider region and engaging a broader demographic was seen as fundamental, and the expansion of Plymouth aligns well with this priority. AUP would support further consolidation of education provision, believing the proposals could help broker deeper collaboration between universities and colleges.

They also recognised wider issues affecting Plymouth as a coastal city, particularly transport challenges that impact students' ability to access education. There was hope that the proposals could accelerate improvements to city centre links and infrastructure, especially for those from rural communities. The university highlighted that its current 9 to 4 culture is shaped by these limitations, and expanding the city's borders could create opportunities to make studying more accessible. They also noted the potential for job creation and improved ability to service employment needs across a larger area. AUP encouraged consideration of the positive implications for the wider region, suggesting that even a modest population increase could reflect the city's ambition.

### **Schools Headteacher and Trust Leads Briefing (26/09/25)**

Schools expressed a mix of cautious optimism and a number of questions regarding the potential impacts of Plymouth City Council's Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) on education delivery, particularly in relation to SEND provision. There was recognition that the reorganisation could simplify processes for families living on the fringes of Plymouth, who currently navigate between two local authorities.

A key theme is the anticipated increase in the number of pupils with SEND and the potential transfer of SEND schools from Devon to Plymouth. Headteachers identified the need for clarity on whether these schools will remain under Devon's jurisdiction or move to Plymouth, and the implications for existing plans to expand specialist placements. The timing of these developments in relation to needs assessment and planning processes was noted as requiring careful consideration.

The financial implications were discussed, particularly around the High Needs Block (HNB) of the Designated Schools Grant (DSG), which is under pressure due to costly independent placements. The transfer of Devon's HNB deficit and the approach to managing this within the new authority structure formed part of the discussion.

Operational considerations were also highlighted, including the increased demand on school transport, the transition of EHCPs to Plymouth's system, and the associated statutory responsibilities. The capacity and resourcing requirements for the Plymouth Education Team to manage a wider geographical remit, including outreach, health services, and multi-agency coordination, were identified as areas requiring planning. The need for clear processes during the transition period - particularly around EHCP reviews and funding agreements - was noted to ensure continuity for families and professionals.

**Fred Thomas MP (03/10/25)**

Fred Thomas MP was supportive of the proposals and highlighted the positive impact that Plymouth's expansion could have on the work being undertaken around HM Dockyard. He emphasised the importance of ensuring that the future expanded council maintains its focus on all communities across Plymouth, recognising that growth should not come at the expense of existing residents and neighbourhoods. He stressed the need for balanced investment and attention to both new and established areas within the expanded Plymouth.

**Chamber of Commerce (08/10/25)**

The overall sentiment from businesses attending the Devon and Plymouth Chamber of Commerce meeting was cautiously optimistic, with many recognising the potential benefits of Plymouth City Council's Local Government Reorganisation proposal, while also raising important concerns about implementation and long-term impact.

Businesses saw clear potential in the proposal to streamline public services and achieve economies of scale, particularly in transport, housing, and infrastructure.

Many welcomed the idea of a stronger, more unified voice for Plymouth at the national level, which could attract greater investment and improve regional visibility. There was enthusiasm for improved support for start-ups, apprenticeships, and local procurement, alongside hopes for a more joined-up skills agenda and better access to business support across the wider geography. Some also highlighted the opportunity to simplify service structures and reduce red tape, making it easier to do business locally.

Despite the optimism, several concerns were raised. Businesses questioned whether Plymouth City Council could effectively represent and support rural areas, noting the risk of urban-centric decision-making. There were worries about the financial implications of absorbing new areas, particularly around debt and infrastructure costs. Some feared a dilution of focus on growth and innovation during the transition period, and others highlighted the need for inclusive governance structures to ensure all voices are heard. The potential for disruption to existing business support services and the need for clearer strategic alignment across the region were also noted.

Looking ahead, businesses expressed a desire for more global-facing opportunities, improved transport links, and a stronger regional brand that benefits all areas. There was a call for greater collaboration between unitary authorities, consistent support for multi-location businesses, and a focus on local recruitment and skills development. Importantly, businesses want to see continued engagement, with open channels for feedback, early involvement in decision-making, and communication that is inclusive, responsive, and transparent.



## SOUTH HAMS SURVEY (DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS)

The following section presents the demographic information that was collected from respondents to the full survey. The survey recorded key demographic data that aids the project team's understanding of who took part in the engagement exercise. Demographic data was collected in an optional personal information section of the survey.

**It is important to note that none of the below questions were compulsory.**

### Which parish do you live in?

When completing the questionnaire, respondents were asked to provide their postcode. The total number of survey respondents for this question was 403. Most respondents were from Ivybridge (which has the largest population of the 13 parishes).

Your Parish	Count	Percentage
Ivybridge	104	25.81%
Newton and Noss	50	12.41%
Brixton	47	11.66%
Ugborough	33	8.19%
Bickleigh	32	7.94%
Wembury	30	7.44%
Ermington	24	5.96%
Holbeton	21	5.21%
Yealmpton	14	3.47%
Cornwood	12	2.98%
Plymouth	10	2.48%
Sparkwell	9	2.23%
Shaugh Prior	6	1.49%
No parish identified	4	0.99%
Harford	2	0.50%
Modbury	1	0.25%
Cullompton	1	0.25%
South Brent	1	0.25%
Kingsbridge	1	0.25%
Saltash	1	0.25%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>403</b>	

### Age

The table below demonstrates a wide range of respondents from different age groups. Of those who provided their age, the age groups with the largest number of respondents were people aged between 55-64 (21 per cent) and people aged between 65-74 (15 per cent)

Age	Count	Percentage
Not given	95	23.57%
16-19	1	0.25%
20-24	3	0.74%
25-34	18	4.47%
35-44	38	9.43%
45-54	55	13.65%
55-64	85	21.09%
65-74	62	15.38%
75-84	36	8.93%
85+	4	0.99%
Prefer not to say	6	1.49%
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>403</b>	



## Work status

The table below demonstrates the working status of each participant. Of those who responded to this question in the survey, the majority (37 percent) are working full time. However, many (32 per cent) were retired.

Work status	Count	Percentage
No answer	54	13.40%
In full-time education	4	0.99%
In part-time education	1	0.25%
Not in employment	8	1.99%
Not in employment but actively looking	2	0.50%
Retired	127	31.51%
Working full time	148	36.72%
Working part time	59	14.64%
Grand Total	403	

## Care experience

Plymouth City Council recognises that care experience is an additional protective characteristic. Of those who answered the question, 35 people stated that they have experience of the children's social care system.

Care experience?	Count	Percentage
No answer	80	19.85%
No	267	66.25%
Prefer not to say	21	5.21%
Yes	35	8.68%
Grand Total	403	

## Armed Forces

As part of our commitment to the Armed Forces, Plymouth City Council asks people if they currently or have previously served in the Armed Forces. Of those who answered the question nearly eight per cent have served, or are currently serving in the Armed Forces.

Armed Forces	Count	Percentage
No answer	93	23.08%
No	266	66.00%
Prefer not to say	12	2.98%
Yes	32	7.94%
Grand Total	403	

## Sex

We asked all participants what their sex at birth.

Sex	Count	Percentage
Female	164	40.69%
Male	137	34.00%
Prefer not to say	12	2.98%
No answer	90	22.33%
Grand Total	403	

## Gender

We asked all participants if their gender identity is the same as the sex they were registered with at birth.

Gender	Count	Percentage
Yes	296	73.45%
No	2	0.50%
Prefer not to say	8	1.99%
No answer	97	24.07%
Grand Total	403	

## Disability

We asked all participants if day-to-day activities are limited due to a health problem or disability expected to last 12+ months.

Disability	Count	Percentage
Yes, limited a lot	11	2.73%
Yes, limited a little	35	8.68%
Prefer not to say	14	3.47%
No	250	62.03%
No answer	93	23.08%
Grand Total	403	

## Ethnicity

We asked all participants to define their ethnicity.

Ethnicity	Count	Percentage
White	288	71.46%
Prefer not to say	5	1.24%
Other (not stated)	6	1.49%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	2	0.50%
Asian or Asian British	2	0.50%
No answer	100	24.81%
Grand Total	403	

## South Hams survey key LGR questions (Online and Paper)

The total number of responses to the full survey was 403. The following section sets out the full analysis. Any demonstrable differences in findings by respondent type are stated within the commentary for those questions.

Qualitative data has been coded for themes and one response may contain multiple themes. This means that the number of themes mentioned in a thematic table may exceed the number of responses to that question.

Responses in this section include feedback received from the online and paper survey.

**Again, none of these questions were compulsory.**

### What do you consider your local area?

This was a free text question, to enable the participants to define the ‘place’ in which they live and identify with. While the survey was targeted at residents in South Hams, the responses show that people tend to define their local area in terms of specific parishes and towns rather than broader regional labels – highlighting a place-based identity rooted in immediate communities.

Answer	Count	Additional commentary provided
<b>Ivybridge and Surrounding Areas</b>	122	Ivybridge is overwhelmingly the most frequently cited local area. However, it was often mentioned alongside nearby villages: Bittaford, Ugborough, Ermington, Modbury, Cornwood, Lee Mill, and South Brent. Indicates a strong sense of local identity tied to the town and its immediate rural surroundings.
<b>South Hams (General or Multiple Locations)</b>	84	Many respondents refer to “South Hams” either generally or in combination with specific towns and villages. Reflects a regional identity that encompasses multiple communities. Some explicitly state “South Hams NOT Plymouth,” showing resistance to urban association.
<b>Brixton, Yealmpton, Wembury, and Newton and Noss Cluster</b>	63	These villages are frequently grouped together, suggesting a shared community or travel-to-work area. Newton and Noss and Yealmpton are often mentioned with Holbeton and Battsborough Cross.
<b>Plymouth and Surrounding Urban Areas</b>	27	A minority of respondents identify Plymouth or its suburbs (Plymstock, Crownhill) as their local area. Some mention the “Plymouth travel-to-work area,” suggesting functional ties rather than cultural ones. A few responses explicitly reject Plymouth as part of their local identity.
<b>Woolwell, Roborough, Bickleigh</b>	22	Woolwell is a prominent local identifier, often linked with Roborough and Bickleigh. Some respondents associate Woolwell with Plymouth, while others distinguish it from the city. Reflects a semi-urban fringe identity.
<b>Modbury, Kingsbridge, Totnes, Salcombe</b>	18	These towns are often mentioned in combination. Reflecting a broader South Devon identity, especially in coastal and market town contexts.
<b>Holbeton and Surrounding Villages</b>	17	Holbeton is frequently grouped with Newton and Noss, Yealmpton, and Battsborough Cross. Indicates a strong rural community cluster.
<b>South Devon / Dartmoor / National Landscapes</b>	12	Some respondents refer to South Devon or Dartmoor National Park as their local area. Highlights environmental and landscape-based identity.
<b>Other Villages and Parishes</b>	11	These are often mentioned in combination with larger towns like Ivybridge or grouped by parish. Reflects dispersed rural identities.
<b>Sherford</b>	8	Sherford is emerging as a distinct local area, often mentioned with Elburton, Brixton, and Plympton. Reflects its growing role in regional development.
<b>General Radius-Based Definitions</b>	5	A few respondents define their local area by proximity rather than named locations. Indicates a functional or travel-based understanding of locality.
<b>Not Plymouth</b>	4	This was where people are explicit in their answer and don’t provide any other detail.
<b>Other</b>	2	Didn’t provide an exact location – but said ‘countryside’ or ‘moors’

## Where is your work or education based?

This was a free text question, to enable the participants to define where they work and identify the links between the parishes and Plymouth. The majority of respondents who are in work or education are based in Plymouth, underscoring the city's role as a key employment and education hub for South Hams residents. This highlights strong functional ties between rural parishes and the urban centre. However, a notable number also work from home or in nearby towns like Ivybridge, reflecting the impact of hybrid working and the importance of local centres. The diversity of responses, including national and online roles, shows that while Plymouth dominates, work and education are increasingly decentralised and flexible.

Answer	Count	Additional commentary provided
<b>Plymouth</b>	76	Many respondents gave further details (eg Derriford)
<b>Other named locations outside of South Hams or Plymouth</b>	60	Numerous other locations are mentioned, including towns, villages, and institutions across the UK such as Paignton, Teignbridge, Tavistock, Torbay, London, and nationwide or online roles.
<b>Work from home</b>	27	A substantial number of respondents work or study from home, showing the impact of remote arrangements and hybrid working models.
<b>Ivybridge</b>	24	Ivybridge is a significant local centre for work and education, with many respondents based here, including voluntary and hybrid roles.
<b>Other South Hams towns and villages</b>	14	Many respondents work or study in South Hams towns and villages such as Modbury, Brixton, Yealmpton, Wembury, Holbeton, and Newton Ferrers, indicating strong local ties.
<b>Kingsbridge</b>	6	Kingsbridge is mentioned as a work or education base, showing its role in the local economy and services.
<b>Totnes</b>	7	Totnes and Dartington are cited for work and education, reflecting their cultural and educational institutions.
<b>Cornwall</b>	4	Cornwall appears in a few responses, indicating cross-border commuting or study.
<b>Exeter</b>	3	Exeter is mentioned occasionally, likely due to its university and regional services.

## Where do you do most of your shopping?

Shopping habits show a strong reliance on Ivybridge and Plymouth, with Ivybridge slightly ahead as the most frequently cited local destination. Lee Mill also features prominently, especially for supermarket access. The results highlight a blend of local loyalty and urban convenience, with many respondents also shopping online or in nearby towns and villages. This suggests that while South Hams residents value local options, they also depend on larger centres and digital platforms for variety and accessibility.

Answer	Count	Commentary
<b>Ivybridge</b>	84	Ivybridge is a key local shopping destination, frequently mentioned for its convenience and range of stores including Tesco and local shops.
<b>Plymouth</b>	78	Plymouth is a major urban shopping centre, cited for its city centre, supermarkets, and retail parks including Plymstock and Plympton.
<b>Lee Mill</b>	61	Lee Mill is popular for its large Tesco store and proximity to surrounding villages, often mentioned alongside Ivybridge.
<b>Online</b>	56	Online shopping is widely used for convenience, accessibility, and delivery services, especially among those with mobility needs or preferences for remote shopping.
<b>Remainder; local, own village, smaller town</b>	28	Many respondents shop locally in South Hams villages such as Modbury, Yealmpton, Wembury, Newton Ferrers, and South Brent, supporting small businesses and local convenience.
<b>Plymstock/ Plympton</b>	22	These suburban areas within Plymouth are popular for supermarket shopping and are often mentioned alongside Plymouth or Lee Mill.
<b>Other named locations</b>	18	Includes less common or more dispersed shopping areas such as Saltash, Yelverton, Elburton, and Marsh Mills, as well as general terms like "local" or "varied."
<b>Totnes</b>	14	Totnes is known for its independent shops and market town atmosphere, attracting shoppers from nearby areas.
<b>Exeter</b>	10	Exeter is a regional shopping destination with large retail outlets and services, mentioned by those willing to travel further.
<b>Woolwell/ Roborough</b>	10	Woolwell and Roborough serve as local shopping hubs for nearby communities, with mentions of Tesco and Lidl.
<b>Tavistock</b>	7	Tavistock is mentioned occasionally, likely for its market and traditional shopping experience.
<b>Kingsbridge</b>	7	Kingsbridge offers local shopping options for nearby rural communities and is occasionally mentioned alongside Totnes and Modbury.
<b>Not Plymouth</b>	2	This is where people have been explicit with their answers.

## Where do you spend the most time socialising or taking part in cultural activities?

The responses show a balance between local engagement and regional travel, with many participants socialising or taking part in cultural activities across Devon, including Plymouth and Ivybridge. This suggests that while local towns and villages provide accessible options, residents are willing to travel for broader cultural experiences - highlighting both the value of nearby amenities and the importance of regional connectivity for leisure and social life.

Answer	Count
Across Devon for restaurants, pubs, theatres, beaches, outdoors etc	67
Ivybridge	63
Plymouth	59
Wider South Hams	48
Stay local for pubs, walks, cafes, beaches	24
Not Plymouth	3

## What is good about the area where you live?

This was a free text question. The responses highlight a deep appreciation for community spirit and the natural environment, with many residents valuing the friendliness, supportiveness, and social cohesion of their local areas. The beauty and tranquillity of the countryside, coastline, and Dartmoor are also central to people's sense of place. A strong rural identity, combined with access to essential amenities, contributes to a balanced lifestyle. While fewer respondents mentioned governance or transport, the overall sentiment reflects pride in living in a safe, clean, and well-connected area with a strong sense of belonging.

Theme	Count	Commentary
<b>Community spirit</b>	114	Residents consistently praised the friendliness, supportiveness, and strong social bonds within their communities. Many highlighted local groups, activities, and the sense of knowing one another, which contributes to a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere.
<b>Natural environment</b>	100	The beauty of the countryside, coastline, Dartmoor, and green spaces was a dominant theme. Respondents valued the peacefulness, access to nature, and the unspoilt character of their surroundings.
<b>Rural identity</b>	85	Many emphasized the importance of maintaining a distinct rural character, separate from urban development. Living in small towns or villages, away from city noise and congestion, was seen as central to their lifestyle and identity.
<b>Access to amenities</b>	38	Respondents appreciated being close to essential services such as shops, schools, healthcare, leisure facilities, and public transport. The balance of rural living with convenient access to amenities was seen as a key strength.
<b>Safety and cleanliness</b>	24	Low crime rates, clean and tidy environments, and a general sense of safety and peace were frequently mentioned. These qualities were seen as vital to the quality of life in South Hams communities.
<b>Local Services and facilities</b>	11	There was recognition of the value of well-maintained local services such as GPs, schools, recycling, and council-run amenities. Respondents appreciated the role of the council in maintaining these facilities and ensuring they meet community needs.
<b>Transport and connectivity</b>	5	Some respondents highlighted the importance of good transport links, particularly to the A38 and nearby cities, as well as ease of commuting while maintaining a rural lifestyle.
<b>Governance and representation</b>	3	A few comments touched on the role of South Hams District Council, expressing satisfaction with its governance and concern about being absorbed into Plymouth City Council.



## What is not so great (about the area in question) and you would like to see improved, including Council Services?

This was a free text question. The most common concerns raised by residents relate to public transport and road conditions, highlighting a need for improved connectivity, infrastructure maintenance, and safer travel options. Access to services and amenities – particularly healthcare, leisure, and youth facilities – was also frequently mentioned, alongside frustrations with council coordination and governance. Issues around housing development, safety, and environmental stewardship reflect deeper anxieties about preserving rural identity and quality of life. These insights suggest that future planning should prioritise transport, infrastructure, and community services, while ensuring that growth respects the character and needs of South Hams communities.

Theme	Count	Commentary
<b>Public transport</b>	93	Dissatisfaction with infrequent and unreliable bus and train services, particularly in evenings and weekends. Poor connectivity to Plymouth and key destinations like hospitals and cultural venues. Limited options for non-drivers and elderly residents, and lack of footpaths or cycle paths.
<b>Roads and potholes</b>	92	Widespread concern about potholes, poor road surfaces, and lack of maintenance. Requests for bypasses (e.g. Lee Mill), safer walking and cycling conditions, better traffic management, and improved road layouts (especially in Ivybridge). Speeding traffic, congestion, and inadequate infrastructure such as slip roads and roundabouts were frequently mentioned.
<b>Access to services and amenities</b>	38	Lack of shops, leisure facilities, healthcare services, and community spaces. Poor internet and postal services, limited recycling options, and concerns about affordability and rising costs. Desire for more community events, youth clubs, and better use of local parks and green spaces.
<b>Governance and Council services</b>	28	Frustration with multiple overlapping councils and lack of coordination. Concerns about poor communication, planning enforcement, and representation. Resistance to merging with Plymouth City Council and fears of losing rural priorities and identity.
<b>Housing and development</b>	17	Concerns about overdevelopment, urban sprawl (especially in Sherford and Newton), and the impact on infrastructure and the environment. Frustration with second homes, lack of affordable housing, and insufficient planning for supporting services like schools and roads.
<b>Safety and anti-social behaviour</b>	9	Issues included rising crime, lack of police presence, anti-social behaviour, vandalism, and poor waste management in communal areas. Pavement parking and unsafe traffic conditions were also noted.
<b>Healthcare</b>	6	Limited access to GP appointments and broader health services. Long referral times, lack of dental provision, and concerns about merging healthcare services with Plymouth.
<b>Financial concerns</b>	4	High council tax, parking fees, and general cost of living were mentioned as areas needing improvement. Desire for fairer banding and better value for money in service delivery.
<b>Cleanliness and maintenance</b>	4	Poor upkeep of public spaces, overgrown vegetation, and inadequate waste collection services. Requests for better landscaping and tidier village environments.
<b>Environmental concerns</b>	2	Loss of green space, poor environmental protection, and concerns about pollution and biodiversity. Desire for more sustainable planning and better stewardship of natural assets.

## What do you really value about the services (e.g. waste and recycling collection / leisure facilities / roads management / parks) your current councils provide?

People could submit more than one answer – the first four were suggested answers and then participants could also add their own. Residents most value councils that demonstrate local understanding and accessibility, with the highest praise given to councillors who are easy to reach and responsive to community needs. High-quality services, particularly waste and recycling, are also appreciated, alongside recognition of councils that understand the challenges facing rural areas. These responses suggest that trust and satisfaction are closely tied to visibility, local knowledge, and service reliability, reinforcing the importance of maintaining strong local representation and tailored service delivery.

Answer	Count
Easy access to my local councillor	139
Council understands my area	190
High quality services	132
Understands the challenges facing the area	96
Other answers:	
Other with no narrative	26
Recycling	20
Understanding rural area	14
Good quality schools	2
Good quality roads	2

## How do you hope that Local Government Reorganisation will impact you and/or your community?

People could submit more than one answer – the first three were suggested answers and then participants could also add their own. The majority of respondents expressed hope that reorganisation would lead to more locally made decisions and improved services, with clearer accountability. However, this optimism was strongly tempered by widespread opposition to being absorbed into Plymouth City Council. Many voiced concerns about losing rural identity, autonomy, and tailored service delivery. A significant number also expressed satisfaction with current arrangements and scepticism about the motives and benefits of change. Key themes included fears over council tax increases, environmental degradation, and urban-centric planning. Overall, the feedback highlights a desire for reform that strengthens local representation and rural priorities – rather than centralisation or urban alignment.

Answer / Theme	Count	Commentary
Improved services	125	
Decisions that impact you will be made locally	168	
Clearer who is responsible for what service	33	
Other answers:		
Strong Opposition to Joining Plymouth City Council	56	Clear and repeated rejection of being absorbed into Plymouth. Concerns about urban priorities dominating rural needs. Emotional appeals to preserve identity, autonomy, and local governance. Frequent use of phrases like “leave us alone,” “we don’t want this,” and “not part of Plymouth.”
Satisfaction with Current Arrangements / Desire for No Change	22	Belief that current systems work well and do not need change. Scepticism about the need for reorganisation. Concerns that change will bring disruption without clear benefits. Calls to “leave South Hams alone” and maintain the status quo.
General Distrust, Scepticism and Lack of Faith in the Process	21	Deep scepticism about the motives and benefits of reorganisation. Perception that the plan is ill-conceived and politically driven. Belief that it will benefit officials rather than communities. Frustration with lack of clear problem statement or justification.

Answer / Theme	Count	Commentary
<b>Preference for Local Decision-Making and Representation</b>	18	Desire for decisions to remain with South Hams or local councils. Support for Parish and Town Councils having more influence. Frustration with boundary confusion and lack of accountability. Emphasis on rural voices being heard and respected.
<b>Concerns About Council Tax, Precepts and Financial Transparency</b>	13	Anxiety over potential increases in council tax and uncapped precepts. Lack of clarity around financial implications of reorganisation. Perception of a “stealth tax” and fears of paying more for fewer or less relevant services. Calls for clearer communication and justification of costs.
<b>Environmental and Planning Concerns</b>	10	Distrust in Plymouth’s environmental record and planning decisions. Fears of overdevelopment, especially in rural and coastal areas. Desire to protect natural beauty, wildlife, and village character. Support for sustainable building practices and infrastructure planning.
<b>Rural Identity and Way of Life</b>	9	Strong desire to preserve the rural character and lifestyle of South Hams. Concerns that urban governance will erode rural values and traditions. Emphasis on understanding the unique needs of dispersed, small communities.
<b>Efficiency, Value for Money and Service Delivery</b>	7	Support for streamlining services and reducing waste. Desire for better budget management and spending decisions. Criticism of expensive schemes with little perceived benefit. Hope for more joined-up service delivery across borders.
<b>Public Transport Improvements</b>	3	Hope that reorganisation could lead to better transport links. Desire for more joined-up thinking across travel-to-work areas. Specific mentions of bus and taxi services needing improvement.
<b>Healthcare and Social Services Concerns</b>	3	Worries about merging with Plymouth affecting GP access and healthcare equity. Concerns about inconsistent support across boundaries (e.g., Devon Carers vs Plymouth services). Fear that rural healthcare will be deprioritised.

## What has been your experience of children’s social care services in your local area - thinking about things like how approachable staff are, waiting times, quality of support provided, and communication with families?

Among those who have used children’s social care services, experiences are evenly split between positive, neutral, and negative, suggesting a mixed picture of service delivery. While some families report high-quality support and approachable staff, others highlight issues with communication and waiting times elsewhere in the survey. However, the vast majority of respondents (over 280) indicated they do not use these services, which reflects the demographic profile of survey respondents. Many participants are retired or not currently engaged with children’s services.

Answer	Count
<b>Very positive</b>	12
<b>Positive</b>	12
<b>Neither</b>	13
<b>Negative</b>	12
<b>Very negative</b>	7
<b>Don’t use children’s services</b>	284

## How would you describe the quality of adult social care services where you live - considering factors like availability of advice and information, being able to contact someone, range of services offered, quality of care, and support for maintaining independence? (select one option)

Among those with experience of adult social care services, feedback is mixed, with a fairly even spread of positive, neutral, and negative responses. While some residents appreciate the quality of care and support for independence, others report issues with accessibility, communication, and service range, else where in the survey. However, the majority of respondents (over 250) do not use these services, reflecting the demographic profile of the survey and suggesting that broader engagement with service users is needed to fully understand strengths and areas for improvement.

Answer	Count
Very positive	16
Positive	28
Neither	18
Negative	21
Very negative	7
Don't use adult social care services	252

## What should be the top priorities when deciding what the future model of local government should be for Devon?

People were asked to rank with the most important at the top.

When asked to rank their top priorities for the future model of local government in Devon, respondents placed the highest value on councils that understand local issues and deliver high-quality services. Local decision-making was also a key concern, reflecting a strong desire for governance that is responsive and rooted in community needs. While some participants emphasised cost-saving and reducing bureaucracy, these were generally ranked lower than priorities focused on service quality, local representation, and planning.

Interestingly, climate change and sustainability – though selected by fewer respondents – was consistently ranked as a top priority by those who did choose it, suggesting a passionate minority with strong environmental concerns. Overall, the results highlight that residents want a model of local government that is efficient, locally informed, and capable of delivering meaningful services without losing sight of rural identity and long-term sustainability.

Priority	Understanding of local issues	High quality services	Local decision making	Supporting Local Businesses	Transport and infrastructure	Easy access to Councillors	Creating jobs and economic growth	Saving money	Reducing bureaucracy	Housing and planning	Climate change and sustainability	Council Offices Nearby
Count	89	108	46	6	20	2	5	8	3	5	17	1
	60	47	117	14	29	6	3	7	16	2	7	2
	77	51	59	29	19	13	13	8	13	8	13	7
	37	33	29	86	28	10	14	11	13	18	22	9
	22	21	18	63	23	70	29	10	21	17	13	3
	8	21	14	37	36	41	29	18	14	19	20	53
	5	16	11	27	24	28	82	12	26	27	26	26
	7	5	8	28	16	36	53	27	63	26	15	26
	4	4	7	14	9	29	44	78	57	22	10	32
	1	3	1	4	17	34	24	52	47	81	21	26
		1		1	76	32	10	46	29	51	11	52
					13					34	135	73
Ranking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

## Are there any other priorities which haven't been mentioned above, that you would like us to consider as part of our work to develop our final proposal for local government reorganisation?

This was an open question. However, the answers that people provided could be gathered together in a number of clear themes. Many respondents used this open question to reinforce strong opposition to being incorporated into Plymouth, with repeated calls to preserve South Hams' autonomy and rural identity. There was also a clear desire for greater clarity around which council is responsible for which services, and for maintaining the current structure of South Hams District Council. Environmental protection and safeguarding the rural character of the area were recurring themes, alongside calls for improved access to services and infrastructure – particularly transport, healthcare, and waste facilities. These responses underline the importance of transparency, local control, and protecting what residents value most about their communities.

Themes	Count
<b>Strong opposition to being incorporated into Plymouth</b>	52
<b>Clearer who is responsible</b>	33
<b>Remain as South Hams</b>	28
<b>Environmental protection and rural character</b>	25
<b>Greater access to services and infrastructure e.g. better transport links, road maintenance, and access to essential services like libraries, healthcare, and waste facilities.</b>	21
<b>More accessible services e.g. family hubs / adult social care</b>	1

## How would you like your local authority to engage with you in the future?

Participants could select multiple options for this. However, it is clear that the most popular route is through their local parish council, closely followed by email communication.

Answer	Count	Percentage
<b>Through my local parish council</b>	140	26.42%
<b>Email communication</b>	135	25.47%
<b>Through regular communication, consultation and engagement activity</b>	124	23.40%
<b>Through my local ward councillor</b>	73	13.77%
<b>Through local groups and organisations</b>	58	10.94%
<b>Grand total who responded to this question</b>		

## South Hams Big Community Conversation events

Between June and July 2025, Plymouth City Council held 13 facilitated conversation events across the South Hams parishes proposed for inclusion in the Plymouth Growth Area. These sessions were led by Council staff trained in facilitation techniques, including Trauma-Informed approaches and Appreciative Inquiry, to ensure respectful, inclusive, and constructive dialogue. Held in accessible community venues, the events encouraged open and anonymous participation, allowing residents to share their views freely. The feedback gathered has been thematically analysed and plays a key role in shaping the final proposal.





### Question 1: How do you think LGR will impact you and/or your community?

Across all parish engagement events, participants voiced a wide range of concerns about the potential impact of Local Government Reorganisation, with consistent themes emerging across the South Hams. There was a strong and heartfelt emphasis on the importance of parish councils in preserving rural identity, ensuring local representation, and maintaining community cohesion. Many residents expressed scepticism about the proposed changes, fearing a shift toward urban-centric governance that might overlook the distinct needs of rural communities. Concerns were raised about the quality and funding of services, increased planning and development pressures, and a perceived lack of trust in Plymouth City Council's ability to manage rural priorities effectively. Additionally, the engagement highlighted widespread confusion about the current two-tier system of local government. Many participants conflated the roles of parish, district, and county councils, often attributing responsibilities incorrectly. This underscores the need for clearer communication about existing governance structures and any proposed changes, to ensure residents feel informed, reassured, and genuinely represented.

### Common themes across all 13 parishes

<b>Representation and governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear of diluted rural voice: Many parishes worried that decisions would be dominated by urban councillors, with rural concerns sidelined.</li> <li>• Loss of local knowledge: Concerns that existing councillors and staff with deep local understanding would be replaced or marginalised.</li> <li>• Democratic deficit: Repeated mention of the imbalance in councillor numbers (e.g. 10 councillors for 13 parishes) and fears of being outvoted.</li> <li>• Concern about the role and impact on Parish Councils</li> </ul>
<b>Planning and development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban sprawl: Strong opposition to increased housing developments, especially if driven by Plymouth's needs.</li> <li>• Loss of green space: Many feared that rural landscapes would be sacrificed for urban expansion.</li> <li>• Infrastructure strain: Worries that roads, schools, and health services are already stretched and would worsen under LGR.</li> </ul>
<b>Financial concerns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Tax (CT) disparities: Questions about whether CT would rise or be harmonised, and whether rural areas would subsidise urban ones.</li> <li>• Funding allocation: Fears that money raised in rural areas would be spent in Plymouth.</li> <li>• Debt inheritance: Concerns about taking on Plymouth's financial liabilities.</li> </ul>
<b>Services and infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waste and recycling: Many praised current SH services and feared they would decline under PCC.</li> <li>• Transport: Poor public transport was a recurring issue, with hopes that LGR might improve it – but scepticism prevailed.</li> <li>• Health and social care: Concerns about current access, especially for elderly and SEND populations.</li> <li>• Lack of understanding about which council currently provides which services.</li> </ul>
<b>Identity and community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of rural character: Strong emotional attachment to village life and fear of becoming “just another suburb.”</li> <li>• Community cohesion: Many felt their communities were tight-knit and self-sufficient, and worried LGR would disrupt this.</li> </ul>

### Area-specific feedback (that were not a strong theme in the other areas)

#### Bickleigh

- Concerns about Woolwell urban extension and dual carriageway construction.
- Specific issues with cross-boundary services (Devon vs Plymouth).

#### Cornwood

- Unique concerns about mineral rights and planning around mines.
- Strong preference for one unitary authority across the whole of Devon but not to include Plymouth.

#### Harford

- Desire for health hub in Ivybridge.
- Specific mention of Dartmoor National Park planning authority.

#### Shaugh Prior

- Mining operations and renewable energy planning.
- Concerns about Dartmoor planning jurisdiction and identity.

### Sparkwell

- Tungsten mine and its impact on roads and environment.
- Strong distrust of Plymouth City Council due to past planning and environmental decisions.

### Yealmpton

- Concerns about sewage infrastructure and beach pollution.
- Strong emphasis on maintaining rural peace and safety.

## Contradictions or differing views between areas

**Ivybridge vs Smaller Parishes:** Ivybridge showed mixed feelings, with some seeing potential benefits in better services and representation, while smaller parishes were overwhelmingly negative.

**Waste Services:** Some parishes praised South Ham's recycling system; others preferred Plymouth's simpler approach.

**Transport:** While most parishes criticised poor public transport, a few (e.g. Ivybridge) noted good train access and ring and ride services.

**Planning:** Some areas (e.g. Yealmpton) feared overdevelopment, while others (e.g. Sparkwell) were more focused on protecting specific assets like mines or greenbelt.

## Question 2: What is good about the area where you live?

Residents across the South Hams parishes expressed deep appreciation for their communities, highlighting a strong sense of rural identity, natural beauty, and social cohesion. The responses were overwhelmingly positive, with many describing their areas as peaceful, safe, and well-connected to nature. There was a clear pride in local amenities, community spirit, and the quality of life afforded by living in these rural settings.

## Common themes across all 13 parishes

<b>Natural environment and rural identity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenic beauty: Dartmoor, coastlines, estuaries, green spaces, and wildlife were frequently mentioned.</li> <li>• Peace and quiet: Many valued the tranquillity and low noise levels compared to urban areas.</li> <li>• Rural character: Residents felt strongly about maintaining their countryside lifestyle and resisting urbanisation.</li> </ul>
<b>Community spirit and social cohesion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close-knit communities: People described knowing their neighbours, helping each other, and feeling safe.</li> <li>• Local events: Village fairs, pantomimes, remembrance services, and seasonal celebrations were cherished.</li> <li>• Volunteering and clubs: VV, gardening clubs, sports teams, and youth groups were seen as vital to community life.</li> </ul>
<b>Local services and amenities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health services: Local GP surgeries and pharmacies were praised, especially where they were responsive and accessible.</li> <li>• Schools: Primary schools were frequently mentioned as excellent and central to village life.</li> <li>• Waste and recycling: Many appreciated the current waste collection systems, especially food and garden waste services.</li> </ul>
<b>Accessibility and location</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximity to nature and urban centres: Many valued being close to Plymouth, Ivybridge, or the A38 while still enjoying rural life.</li> <li>• Walking and cycling routes: Access to footpaths, moors, and coastlines was a major benefit.</li> <li>• Transport links: Train stations, ring and ride services, and bus routes were appreciated where available.</li> </ul>
<b>Local identity and pride</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unique village character: Residents felt their areas had distinct identities worth preserving.</li> <li>• Local governance: Parish councils were seen as effective and responsive, contributing to a sense of empowerment.</li> </ul>

## Area-specific feedback (that were not a strong theme in the other areas)

### Bickleigh

- Strong pride in Woolwell in Bloom and community centre awards.
- Emphasis on green space and nature on the doorstep.

### Cornwood

- Historical significance of the village hall and American soldier mess hall.
- Oldest WI in Devon and strong interest in renewables.

### Harford

- Lukesland and church community as central to social life.
- Ability to walk directly onto Dartmoor from home.

### Shaugh Prior

- Mining heritage and community management of industrial impacts.
- Unique mix of industry and housing with strong local governance.

### Sparkwell

- Dartmoor Zoo and parish hall as cultural anchors.
- Strong equestrian community and seasonal events like flower festivals.

### Yealmpton

- Yealmpton Show and active community groups.
- Strong support from local landowners and vibrant village centre.

## Contradictions or differing views between areas

**Urban proximity:** Ivybridge and Yealmpton appreciated being near Plymouth for services, while others (e.g. Sparkwell, Wembury) saw proximity as a threat to rural identity.

**Waste services:** Some praised SH's detailed recycling system; others preferred simpler systems like Plymouth's.

**Transport:** Ivybridge and Yealmpton noted good access; more remote parishes like Cornwood and Harford highlighted poor connectivity.

### Question 3: What do you really value about the services your current Council provides?

Residents across the South Hams parishes expressed strong appreciation for local council services, particularly those that are visible, responsive, and community-oriented. There was a clear emphasis on the value of waste collection, local governance, and access to health and education services. Many responses reflected a fear that these well-functioning services could be lost or diluted under Local Government Reorganisation. Often confusion as to which council provides which services.

### Common themes across all 13 parishes

<b>Waste and recycling Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly valued: Weekly or fortnightly collections, food and garden waste services, and responsive bin replacement.</li> <li>Concerns about change: Many feared losing the current system, especially where South Hams was seen as better than Plymouth City Council.</li> </ul>
<b>Health and social care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local GP surgeries and pharmacies: Praised for accessibility and responsiveness.</li> <li>Adult and children's social care: Devon's provision was often seen as good, with concerns about how it would be managed under Plymouth City Council.</li> </ul>
<b>Education and school transport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primary schools: Frequently mentioned as excellent and central to community life.</li> <li>School buses: Valued especially in more rural areas where walking isn't feasible.</li> </ul>
<b>Infrastructure and maintenance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Road repairs and gritting: Appreciated where done well, though patchiness and delays were noted.</li> <li>Drainage and fly-tipping: Some parishes highlighted proactive responses from SH.</li> </ul>
<b>Local Governance and communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parish councils: Seen as responsive, accessible, and deeply embedded in the community.</li> <li>District councillors: Praised for attending meetings and resolving issues quickly.</li> <li>Direct contact: Residents valued being able to speak to someone locally rather than navigating complex systems.</li> </ul>
<b>Community facilities and services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Libraries, leisure centres, and youth clubs: Frequently cited as important and well-used.</li> <li>Community centres and village halls: Central to social life and often supported by the council.</li> </ul>

### Area-specific feedback (that were not a strong theme in the other areas)

#### Cornwood

- Recycling shop and quick bin replacement.
- Concerns about losing funding for the local shop.

#### Ermington

- Ivybridge police hub and SEND school opening.
- Strong praise for Ivybridge waste recycling.

#### Harford

- Better relationship with Devon County Council than South Hams due to specific officers.
- Recycling issues when contracted out, later resolved.

#### Sparkwell

- Praise for proactive district councillors and bin collection.
- Concerns about mining impacts and environmental health.

#### Yealmpton

- South Ham's handling of Anti Social Behaviour and dog mess.
- Youth club funded by parish council.

### Contradictions or differing views between parishes

**Waste services:** Some parishes (e.g. Ivybridge, Yealmpton) praised SH's detailed recycling system, while others (e.g. Sparkwell) preferred simpler systems like Plymouth City Council's.

**Health services:** Mixed reviews – some found local surgeries excellent, others struggled with access and appointments.

**Council responsiveness:** While many praised South Hams and Devon County Council for being accessible, a few noted difficulties in contacting the council or getting timely responses.

### Question 4: What is not so great (about the area in question) and what would you like to see changed, including Council services?

Residents across the parishes identified a range of local challenges, with many expressing frustration over infrastructure, transport, planning, and access to services. There was a strong desire for better communication, more responsive governance, and improved facilities, especially for young people and the elderly. Concerns about overdevelopment, loss of rural character, and insufficient investment in local amenities were widespread.

### Common themes across all 13 parishes

<b>Infrastructure and roads</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potholes and poor road surfaces: A near-universal complaint, especially in rural areas affected by heavy vehicles or mining.</li> <li>Drainage and flooding: Several parishes reported blocked drains and waterlogging.</li> <li>Street lighting and signage: Requests for better lighting and clearer road signs.</li> </ul>
<b>Transport and connectivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited public transport: Many areas suffer from infrequent or non-existent bus services, especially on Sundays.</li> <li>School transport: Concerns about accessibility and safety for children.</li> <li>Cycle lanes: Poor maintenance and underuse were noted, with calls for better upkeep and promotion.</li> </ul>
<b>Planning and development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overdevelopment fears: Strong opposition to new housing developments, especially where infrastructure is lacking.</li> <li>Loss of green space: Concerns about urban sprawl and environmental degradation.</li> <li>Sherford cited frequently: As an example of poor planning and pressure on services.</li> </ul>
<b>Health and social services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GP and hospital access: Long waits, limited facilities, and lack of local provision were common issues.</li> <li>SEND and elderly care: Worries about service quality and accessibility, especially under a larger authority.</li> </ul>
<b>Safety and policing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of police presence: Many felt their communities were underserved.</li> <li>Speeding and traffic safety: Calls for better enforcement and safer road design.</li> </ul>
<b>Youth and community services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Few activities for young people: Requests for youth clubs, sports facilities, and evening entertainment.</li> <li>Community centres and parks: Need for upgrades and better maintenance.</li> </ul>
<b>Waste and recycling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fly-tipping: Linked to restrictive tip access and lack of enforcement.</li> <li>Bin collection: Desire for simpler systems and more frequent pickups.</li> </ul>

### Area-specific feedback (that were not a strong theme in the other areas)

#### Bickleigh

- Concerns about dual carriageway construction and Woolwell development.
- Lack of secondary schools and poor infrastructure planning.

#### Cornwood

- No village shop and sparse bus service.
- Fears of becoming like Plympton or Plymstock.

#### Harford

- Ivybridge health facilities lacking; frequent power cuts and poor mobile signal.

#### Shaugh Prior

- Mining impacts on roads and planning.
- Renewable energy concerns and lack of clarity on Dartmoor planning jurisdiction.

#### Sparkwell

- Heavy traffic from the mine and poor road conditions.
- Fears of becoming a suburb of Plymouth.

#### Yealmpton

- Sherford development pressure and lack of safe cycling routes.
- Concerns about Anti Social Behaviour and youth safety.

### Contradictions or differing views between parishes

**Transport:** Ivybridge and Yealmpton noted some good services, while others (e.g. Cornwood, Sparkwell) reported severe limitations.

**Waste services:** Some praised Soth Ham's system; others found it overly complex and preferred Plymouth's approach.

**Planning:** While most opposed further development, a few saw potential for growth if infrastructure matched.

## Question 5: How would you like your Local Authority to engage with you in the future?

Across the parishes, residents expressed a strong desire for meaningful, transparent, and accessible engagement with their Local Authority. There was a clear preference for face-to-face communication, localised meetings, and ongoing dialogue – especially in light of the proposed changes under Local Government Reorganisation. Many felt that current engagement was insufficient and wanted to ensure their voices would be heard and respected in future decision-making.

### Common themes across all 13 parishes

<b>Communication channels</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face-to-face engagement: Strong preference for in-person meetings, drop-in sessions, and local surgeries.</li> <li>• Digital and traditional media: Use of email, social media, newsletters, and parish magazines was encouraged, but with recognition of digital exclusion.</li> <li>• Printed materials: Posters, flyers, and hard copies in community hubs and libraries were seen as essential for reaching all demographics.</li> </ul>
<b>Localised representation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parish councils: Seen as vital conduits for communication; residents want them to remain empowered and involved.</li> <li>• Councillor visibility: Requests for councillors to attend parish meetings regularly and be accessible to residents.</li> <li>• Local knowledge: Emphasis on the importance of representatives understanding the specific needs of rural communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Transparency and responsiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear information: Residents want clarity on proposals, impacts, and timelines.</li> <li>• Timely responses: Frustration with slow replies from councils, especially around planning and service queries.</li> <li>• Consultation before decisions: Strong opposition to “tick-box” exercises; people want genuine involvement before changes are made.</li> </ul>
<b>Inclusive engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital exclusion concerns: Many noted that elderly or rural residents may not use online platforms.</li> <li>• Accessible formats: Calls for large print, physical noticeboards, and inclusive venues.</li> <li>• Community-led engagement: Suggestions to use local events, pubs, and community centres as engagement points.</li> </ul>

### Area-specific feedback (that were not a strong theme in the other areas)

#### Harford

- Wants council meetings held locally, not just in Plymouth.
- Emphasis on equal representation and justification when decisions differ from community views.

#### Shaugh Prior

- Interest in citizen panels and feedback boxes.
- Engagement during popular parish events and through local pubs.

#### Sparkwell

- Strong emphasis on transparency and trust-building.
- Specific concerns about the mine and desire for ongoing dialogue with environmental health officers.

#### Yealmpton

- Requests for regular meetings and better telephone access.
- Emphasis on maintaining visibility of councillors and safeguarding local identity.

### Contradictions or differing views between parishes

**Digital vs. physical communication:** Some parishes embraced email and social media, while others stressed the need for printed materials due to digital exclusion.

**Engagement satisfaction:** Ivybridge appreciated early engagement on LGR, while others (e.g. Sparkwell, Wembury) felt the process had been poorly advertised or underhanded.

**Preferred venues:** While some suggested formal settings like community centres, others preferred informal spaces like pubs or local events.



## PLYMOUTH SURVEY (DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS)

The following section presents the demographic information that was collected from respondents to the full survey. The survey recorded key demographic data that aids the project team's understanding of who took part in the engagement exercise. Demographic data was collected in an optional personal information section of the survey.

**It is important to note that none of the below questions were compulsory.**

### Age

The table below demonstrates a wide range of respondents from different age groups, reflecting a diverse demographic profile. The largest proportions of respondents are in the 55–64 and 65–74 age brackets, each representing 19.71% of the total. This suggests strong engagement from older adults.

Age	Count	Percentage
Not given	101	23.99%
16-19	2	0.48%
20-24	3	0.71%
25-34	17	4.04%
35-44	36	8.55%
45-54	54	12.83%
55-64	83	19.71%
65-74	83	19.71%
75-84	39	9.26%
85+	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	3	0.71%
Grand total	421	

### Work status

The table below outlines the employment status of survey participants. Among those who responded, the largest group – 33.97% – reported working full time, indicating strong representation from the employed population. A significant proportion, 39.90%, identified as retired, reflecting notable engagement from older individuals no longer in the workforce. Additionally, 14.73% reported working part time, while smaller percentages were in education or seeking employment.

Work status	Count	Percentage
No answer	20	4.75%
In full-time education	3	0.71%
In part-time education	1	0.24%
Not in employment	19	4.51%
Not in employment but actively looking	5	1.19%
Retired	168	39.90%
Working full time	143	33.97%
Working part time	62	14.73%
Grand Total	421	

### Care experience

Plymouth City Council recognises that care experience is an additional protective characteristic. Of those who answered the question, 15 people stated that they have experience of the children's social care system.

Care experience?	Count	Percentage
No answer	244	57.96%
No	153	36.34%
Prefer not to say	9	2.14%
Yes	15	3.56%
Grand Total	421	

## Armed Forces

As part of our commitment to the Armed Forces, Plymouth City Council asks people if they currently or have previously served in the Armed Forces. Of those who answered the question 40 have served, or are currently serving in the Armed Forces.

Armed Forces	Count	Percentage
No answer	99	23.52%
No	273	64.85%
Prefer not to say	9	2.14%
Yes, in regular armed forces	36	8.55%
Yes, in reserve armed forces	4	0.95%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>421</b>	

## Sex

We asked all participants what their sex at birth.

Sex	Count	Percentage
Female	177	42.04%
Male	132	31.35%
Prefer not to say	17	4.04%
No answer	95	22.57%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>421</b>	

## Gender

We asked all participants if their gender identity is the same as the sex they were registered with at birth.

Gender	Count	Percentage
Yes	305	72.45%
No	3	0.71%
Prefer not to say	14	3.33%
No answer	99	23.52%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>421</b>	

## Disability

We asked all participants if day-to-day activities are limited due to a health problem or disability expected to last 12+ months.

Disability	Count	Percentage
Yes, limited a lot	27	6.41%
Yes, limited a little	77	18.29%
Prefer not to say	21	4.99%
No	196	46.56%
No answer	100	23.75%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>421</b>	

## Ethnicity

We asked all participants to define their ethnicity.

Ethnicity	Count	Percentage
White	290	68.88%
Prefer not to say	12	2.85%
Other (not stated)	4	0.95%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	3	0.71%
Asian or Asian British	3	0.71%
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	1	0.24%
No answer	108	25.65%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>421</b>	

## Plymouth survey key LGR questions (Online and Paper)

The total number of responses to the full survey by close was 403. The following section sets out the full analysis. Any demonstrable differences in findings by respondent type are stated within the commentary for those questions.

Qualitative data has been coded for themes, and one response may contain multiple themes. This means that the number of themes mentioned in a thematic table may exceed the number of responses to that question.

Responses in this section include feedback received from the online and paper survey.

**Again, none of these questions were compulsory.**

### Where is your work or education based?

The responses highlight Plymouth's dominant role as a centre for work and education, with nearly a quarter of participants based there. This suggests strong local engagement and a concentration of institutions and employers in the city.

The presence of remote working and international/UK-wide roles reflects evolving work patterns, especially post-pandemic, and points to a more flexible, dispersed workforce.

Smaller clusters like Derriford, City Centre, and surrounding areas such as South Devon and Plympton show that while Plymouth is central, the wider region also contributes meaningfully to the local economy and education landscape.

Answer	Count	Additional commentary provided
<b>Plymouth</b>	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is by far the most common response, reflecting Plymouth's central role in the region's work and education landscape. Responses include specific locations like Ballard House, City College, and various neighbourhoods (e.g., Crownhill, Estover, Stoke). It also includes broader mentions like "Plymouth and surrounding area" and "Plymouth University," showing a strong local identity and concentration of institutions.</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This group includes unique or less frequent responses that don't fit neatly into other categories. It includes specific buildings, job titles, and niche locations.</li> </ul>
<b>Home/remote working</b>	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This group reflects the shift toward flexible and remote working arrangements. Many responses simply state "home," while others mention hybrid setups or working from home internationally. This trend is consistent with post-pandemic work culture.</li> </ul>
<b>City Centre</b>	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These responses specifically mention Plymouth's city centre, indicating a hub for business, education, and public services. The repetition of "City Centre" shows its prominence as a workplace location.</li> </ul>
<b>Derriford</b>	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Derriford is another key employment area, especially for healthcare and business. Responses include Derriford Hospital and business parks, highlighting its role in public services and corporate activity.</li> </ul>
<b>South Devon</b>	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This group includes towns like Ashburton, Bovey Tracey, Dartmouth, Dartington, and Torbay. These responses reflect rural and semi-urban work or education settings, possibly linked to arts, education, or local services.</li> </ul>
<b>Plympton</b>	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plympton responses reflect residential and educational settings, with mentions of schools and broader community areas.</li> </ul>
<b>International/UK wide</b>	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These responses reflect roles with a broader geographic scope, including global consultancy and UK-wide operations. They highlight the reach of some professionals beyond the South West.</li> </ul>
<b>Crownhill</b>	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crownhill appears as a smaller but notable cluster, likely reflecting residential and educational institutions in the area.</li> </ul>
<b>Plymstock</b>	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plymstock is another residential area with educational and community ties. It's part of the wider Plymouth urban area.</li> </ul>
<b>Devonport</b>	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Devonport responses suggest ties to naval, educational, and community services. It's a historically significant area with ongoing relevance.</li> </ul>
<b>Cornwall / Devon</b>	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes places like Saltash, Tavistock, and South Hams. These are close to Plymouth and may represent commuter zones or regional service areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Estover</b>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estover is mentioned in relation to business parks and volunteer work, indicating a mix of commercial and community engagement.</li> </ul>
<b>Exeter</b>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only one direct mention of Exeter, suggesting limited representation from this city despite its regional importance.</li> </ul>

## Where do you do most of your shopping?

The data shows that Plymouth is the dominant shopping location, with most respondents identifying it as their primary area – highlighting the city's strong retail presence and local identity. The City Centre also stands out as a key destination, valued for its variety and convenience.

A notable number of respondents shop online, reflecting a shift toward digital retail, likely driven by convenience and accessibility. Suburban areas like Plymstock and Plympton are well-represented, showing the importance of local retail hubs.

Smaller clusters such as Derriford, Saltash, and Mutley point to more community-focused shopping habits, while out-of-town retail parks attract shoppers seeking specific stores or easier access.

Overall, the responses reveal a diverse mix of shopping behaviours, balancing city centre convenience, local loyalty, and digital flexibility. This suggests that retail strategies should consider both central and neighbourhood-based approaches, as well as the growing role of online platforms.

Answer	Count	Additional commentary provided
<b>Plymouth</b>	139	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This dominant group includes general mentions of Plymouth without specifying a shop or area. It reflects a strong local identity and suggests that many respondents shop broadly across the city.</li> </ul>
<b>City Centre Shopping</b>	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With responses referencing locations like Armada Centre, Drake Circus, Union Street, and the broader Plymouth city centre, it's clear that the heart of the city remains a vital shopping destination. These responses reflect a preference for the convenience and variety offered by central retail hubs, where high street stores, department chains, and independent outlets converge. The city centre is not just a place to shop – it's a social and cultural focal point for many residents.</li> </ul>
<b>Online Shopping</b>	49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A significant number of respondents indicated that they shop online, using platforms like Amazon or general internet retailers. This trend highlights the growing reliance on digital convenience, especially for non-grocery items or when time and accessibility are factors.</li> </ul>
<b>Plymstock</b>	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plymstock emerged as a popular shopping area, pointing to locations such as Broadway and Marsh Mills. These responses suggest a blend of local and out-of-town shopping habits, where residents enjoy the accessibility of nearby retail parks while still supporting community-based stores. The area's mix of supermarkets and high street shops makes it a versatile choice for everyday needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Local Shops and Independent Retail</b>	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responses referenced shopping at local or independent outlets, including areas like Mutley Plain, Ridgeway, and charity shops. This theme reflects a strong community ethos, where shoppers value the personal touch, uniqueness, and ethical appeal of smaller businesses. These choices often go beyond convenience, representing a conscious decision to support local economies and sustainable retail practices.</li> </ul>
<b>Plympton</b>	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plympton stands out as a well-supported suburb for shopping. Respondents likely frequent Ridgeway and other local centres, showing a preference for familiar, accessible retail environments. The area's mix of supermarkets and independent shops caters well to residents who value proximity and a sense of community in their shopping routines..</li> </ul>
<b>Out-of-Town Shopping</b>	21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responses pointed to shopping destinations outside the immediate city, such as Lee Mill, Marsh Mills, Transit Way, Roborough, and Saltash. These locations are typically home to larger supermarkets and retail parks, suggesting that many shoppers are willing to travel for bulk purchases, better parking, or specific stores not found in the city centre. This pattern reflects a practical approach to shopping, often tied to weekly routines or family needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Mixed / General Responses</b>	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respondents gave broad or non-specific answers, such as "a mix of supermarkets," "depends on what I'm buying," or "various places." These responses suggest flexible shopping habits, where choices are driven by convenience, availability, or specific needs rather than loyalty to a particular store or location. It reflects a pragmatic approach to retail, shaped by circumstance rather than routine.</li> </ul>
<b>Saltash</b>	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Saltash represents a cross-border shopping option for those living near the Tamar. Its proximity to Plymouth makes it a convenient alternative, especially for those seeking specific stores or avoiding city centre congestion. These responses highlight the fluidity of regional shopping habits, where boundaries are less important than accessibility.</li> </ul>
<b>Mutley</b>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mutley Plain holds significance as a local high street with a mix of independent shops and supermarkets. It's a place where community and commerce intersect, offering a more personal shopping experience. These responses suggest that for some, shopping is as much about connection and familiarity as it is about products.</li> </ul>

## Where do you spend the most time socialising or taking part in cultural activities?

Answer	Count	Additional commentary provided
<b>City Centre and waterfront</b>	181	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plymouth's city centre and waterfront areas – such as the Barbican, Hoe, and Central Park – remain the most popular destinations for social and cultural engagement. These locations offer a vibrant mix of leisure, heritage, and entertainment venues, making them central to the city's social life.</li> </ul>
<b>Local suburbs</b>	41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suburban areas like Plymstock, Plympton, Elburton, Ernesettle, Kingsbridge, Mutley Plain, and Ridgeway are popular for socialising. These reflect a strong connection to local community spaces, pubs, and green areas outside the city centre.</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural venues</b>	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Churches, pubs, gyms, theatres, and arts societies are important hubs for structured social and cultural activities – from worship and fitness to live performances and dining.</li> </ul>
<b>Devon and Cornwall region</b>	21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respondents indicated that they socialise across the wider Devon and Cornwall region. This reflects a regional lifestyle where cultural and social engagement extends beyond Plymouth's boundaries.</li> </ul>
<b>Nature and outdoors</b>	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dartmoor, beaches, parks, and other natural settings continue to be highlighted as preferred places for socialising and cultural engagement. These areas offer tranquility and open space, appealing to those who enjoy outdoor recreation and informal gatherings.</li> </ul>
<b>Home-based socialising</b>	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A consistent number of people reported spending most of their social time at home. This reflects a preference for comfort, affordability, or necessity, with some combining home life with religious or family-based cultural activities</li> </ul>
<b>Do not socialise / barriers</b>	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A small but notable group expressed that they do not participate in social or cultural activities, often citing barriers such as time, affordability, or personal circumstances.</li> </ul>
<b>Out-of-town or travel</b>	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A few responses described travel-based socialising, including trips across the UK and Europe or following sports teams. These individuals engage with culture and community through mobility and exploration.</li> </ul>





## How do you hope that Local Government Reorganisation will impact you and/or your community?

The responses show that Plymouth's city centre and waterfront are the most popular areas for social and cultural engagement. This highlights the importance of spaces like the Barbican, Hoe, and Central Park as vibrant hubs for leisure and community life. Suburban areas such as Plymstock, Plympton, and Mutley Plain also play a key role, reflecting strong ties to local pubs, parks, and community venues. Cultural institutions – including churches, theatres, and gyms – are valued by many for structured activities. A notable number of respondents engage with nature and outdoor spaces like Dartmoor and local beaches, showing a preference for informal, open-air socialising. Others socialise at home, suggesting comfort, affordability, or accessibility as key factors. Smaller groups mentioned regional travel across Devon and Cornwall, or cited barriers to socialising, such as time or cost. Overall, the data reflects a diverse mix of social habits, shaped by geography, lifestyle, and personal circumstances.

Answer / Theme	Count	Commentary
Improved services	270	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responses focus on tangible improvements in public services and infrastructure. Suggestions include better transport, cleaner environments, and more cohesive service delivery that meets everyday needs more effectively. The large number of responses indicates a strong public desire for practical, visible improvements in how services are delivered.</li> </ul>
Decisions that impact you will be made locally	135	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responses highlight the importance of empowering local communities. People hope that reorganisation will bring decision-making closer to the community level, fostering more relevant and responsive governance that reflects local needs and priorities.</li> </ul>
Clearer who is responsible for what service	56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responses reflect a strong desire for transparency and accountability in local governance. Respondents want clearer delineation of responsibilities and better oversight of decision-making processes, ensuring that those in power are held to account.</li> </ul>
<b>Other answers:</b>		
Opposition or scepticism	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responses capture scepticism or opposition to local government reorganisation. Respondents express concerns about the competence of current leadership, fear of negative impacts, and a general lack of confidence in proposed changes.</li> </ul>
Improved financial management	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These responses point to concerns about how public funds are managed. Respondents are calling for better prioritisation, reduced waste, and more efficient use of resources to ensure that public money delivers real value to communities.</li> </ul>
Public engagement and communication	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These responses emphasise the need for better communication between local government and residents. People want to be consulted and informed before decisions are made, ensuring that governance is inclusive and transparent.</li> </ul>
Improved public voice and participation	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respondents highlighted the need for greater public involvement in decision-making, including calls for consultation and democratic leadership selection. These views emphasise the importance of inclusive governance.</li> </ul>
Efficiency and reform	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respondents called for more efficient governance, reduced bureaucracy, and coherent policy implementation. These views suggest frustration with current administrative processes.</li> </ul>

## Imagine it's 2050 – what five words or short phrases would you use to describe the Plymouth you'd love to live, work or be educated in?

The responses paint a clear and aspirational vision for Plymouth's future. Safety and green, sustainable living top the list, showing a strong desire for a city that is both secure and environmentally responsible. People want clean air, accessible green spaces, and a community where safety is built into everyday life.

Themes of community and inclusivity reflect a longing for a city that welcomes everyone, supports wellbeing, and fosters civic pride. Culture and heritage remain central, with calls for vibrant arts, events, and preservation of Plymouth's unique identity. Improved transport and connectivity, affordable housing, and economic opportunity are also key priorities, alongside better healthcare, education, and governance. Together, these responses suggest a future Plymouth that is resilient, inclusive, and thriving – a place where people feel proud to live, work, and learn.

Answer / Theme	Count	Commentary
<b>Green and sustainable living</b>	122	<p>Respondents overwhelmingly envision a greener Plymouth – one that is clean, biodiverse, and environmentally responsible. There is a strong desire for more trees, green spaces, and nature woven into the urban fabric. Sustainability is a recurring aspiration, with calls for carbon neutrality, clean air, and eco-conscious infrastructure. People want a city that not only looks green but lives green – through active travel, renewable energy, and environmental stewardship.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Green, clean, connected, welcoming, thriving”</li> <li>• “Cleaner! Much cleaner! A centre to be proud of!”</li> <li>• “Greenery. More accessible and frequent bus services. Local businesses.”</li> <li>• “Green, safe, vibrant, social care thriving, improved sustainably led infrastructure”</li> <li>• “Trees everywhere, affordable homes”</li> </ul>
<b>Safety and crime prevention</b>	144	<p>Safety is one of the most frequently mentioned priorities. Respondents want a city where people feel secure in their homes, streets, and public spaces. This includes visible and approachable policing, low crime rates, and protection for vulnerable groups. Safety is also linked to cleanliness, lighting, and the design of public areas. Many envision a Plymouth where safety is a shared community value, not just a policing issue.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Safe, clean, vibrant, successful, very low crime rate.”</li> <li>• “Safe place to live, lowest crime rate nationwide and community police approachable”</li> <li>• “Safe, inclusive, healthy with a road network designed to reduce illegal speeding”</li> <li>• “No drugs or addicts. Better connected (airport). Prosperous”</li> <li>• “Safe, clear, friendly, green, accessible.”</li> </ul>
<b>Community and inclusivity</b>	108	<p>A strong, inclusive community is at the heart of many people's vision for Plymouth. Respondents want a city where everyone feels welcome, supported, and able to thrive – regardless of age, background, or ability. There's a desire for intergenerational connection, civic pride, and a culture of mutual care. Community-led initiatives, social cohesion, and inclusive design are seen as essential to a thriving future.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Community led, vibrant, healthy population, good standard of living for all”</li> <li>• “Inclusive, caring, vibrant, thriving, diverse”</li> <li>• “Community orientated. Young people focused. Social activities”</li> <li>• “Vibrant multi cultural thriving community with ample opportunities”</li> <li>• “Everyone is valued. Everyone is cared for.”</li> </ul>
<b>Culture and heritage</b>	94	<p>Plymouth's cultural identity and heritage are deeply valued. Respondents want to see the city celebrate its maritime history, invest in the arts, and become a destination for creativity and cultural experiences. There's a strong call for more events, music, theatre, and public art, as well as the preservation of historic buildings and spaces. Culture is seen as a source of pride, tourism, and community connection.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Valued and recognised heritage... dockyard, 20th century buildings, Hoe”</li> <li>• “A dynamic arts and cultural city”</li> <li>• “Keep live entertainment, poetry and art and music, and look after nature.”</li> <li>• “Leading city for arts and culture”</li> <li>• “Vibrantly cultural, fair, accessible and inclusive”</li> </ul>

Answer / Theme	Count	Commentary
<b>Transport and connectivity</b>	84	<p>Efficient, affordable, and sustainable transport is a top priority. Respondents want better public transport, improved road infrastructure, and the reopening of the airport. There's a desire for a city that is easy to navigate – on foot, by bike, or by bus – and well connected to the rest of the UK. Transport is seen as essential to economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Transport links. Airport open”</li> <li>• “Excellent public transport befitting a city meaning cars are rarely needed”</li> <li>• “Better transport out of town. Lower parking price”</li> <li>• “Transport-hub connections community business destination-shopping”</li> <li>• “More cycle paths, much better bus services, more free busses”</li> </ul>
<b>Housing and urban development</b>	78	<p>People want a city that is clean, well-maintained, and thoughtfully developed. Affordable housing, revitalised neighbourhoods, and vibrant city centres are key aspirations. Respondents call for fewer empty shops, better public spaces, and more mixed-use developments. Maintenance of streets, pavements, and green areas is seen as essential to civic pride and quality of life.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Affordable housing for people born in the city”</li> <li>• “Well kept parks, roads, pavements, grass cut and trees maintained.”</li> <li>• “Cleaner streets free of litter; no fly tipping”</li> <li>• “Lively city centre with plenty of new homes and people”</li> <li>• “No empty shops in town centre”</li> </ul>
<b>Economic growth and business</b>	66	<p>A thriving economy is central to the vision for Plymouth. Respondents want more high-quality jobs, support for local businesses, and investment in innovation. Economic growth is closely tied to education, infrastructure, and housing. Many envision Plymouth as a place where people can build careers, start businesses, and enjoy financial stability.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Economically vibrant, scenic and a pleasure to live in”</li> <li>• “Open for business, culture rich, community led”</li> <li>• “Strong economy. Good services. Shops. Public transport. Cycling links”</li> <li>• “Financially stable, well equipped and well maintained”</li> <li>• “More good shops”</li> </ul>
<b>Accessibility and infrastructure</b>	64	<p>Accessibility is about more than physical access—it's about equity, inclusion, and ease of living. Respondents want well-maintained infrastructure, accessible services, and inclusive design. This includes everything from public transport and digital access to clean streets and well-lit paths. Infrastructure is seen as the backbone of a fair and functional city.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Accessible well maintained biodiverse green spaces for all”</li> <li>• “Better transport systems. Make better use of the Hoe and Plymouth Sound”</li> <li>• “Accessible, tolerant, clean, vibrant, inclusive”</li> <li>• “Where everyone's overall wellbeing needs are met (stopping littering is one of them)”</li> <li>• “Infrastructure actually cleaned, maintained and invested.”</li> </ul>
<b>Healthcare and Social Care</b>	54	<p>Health and wellbeing are seen as fundamental to a good life in Plymouth. Respondents want better NHS services, more support for the elderly and vulnerable, and improved mental health care. There's a strong desire for a system that is accessible, responsive, and preventative—one that supports people to live well at every stage of life.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Hospitals where you don't wait to near death before you're attended to”</li> <li>• “Safe place to live. Good access to healthcare. Help for those who need it”</li> <li>• “Well cared for spaces... good social care”</li> <li>• “Excellent health services... funded police services”</li> <li>• “Improved health facilities”</li> </ul>

Answer / Theme	Count	Commentary
<b>Education and opportunities</b>	47	<p>Education is seen as a pathway to opportunity and a cornerstone of a thriving city. Respondents want high-quality schools, accessible lifelong learning, and strong links between education and employment. There's a desire for a city where young people can succeed without needing to leave, and where education is inclusive and future-focused.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Reputation for excellent education – at all levels"</li> <li>• "Good schools. Low crime"</li> <li>• "Schools accountable to LA not run by trusts"</li> <li>• "Educational powerhouse, welcoming place to visit"</li> <li>• "Equal access to quality education across the city"</li> </ul>
<b>Governance and civic engagement</b>	26	<p>People want a council that listens, leads with integrity, and puts residents first. There's a call for more transparency, better consultation, and leadership that reflects the city's diversity and ambition. Respondents want to feel heard, respected, and involved in shaping Plymouth's future.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Council that listens"</li> <li>• "More accountability by the council"</li> <li>• "Well managed, caring, efficient. Schools back under LA control"</li> <li>• "To go back to what the town looked like before the council decided to change it"</li> </ul>

## What one thing would you most like to see change about your local neighbourhood?

The most common concern among respondents is the cleanliness and upkeep of public spaces, with residents calling for cleaner streets and better waste management. This reflects a strong desire for improved civic maintenance and pride in local environments.

Transport and connectivity also emerged as a key theme, with calls for better public transport, new infrastructure, and improved access across the city and region. Safety and policing followed closely, highlighting concerns about antisocial behaviour and the need for more visible community protection. Respondents also expressed a desire for more green spaces and better maintenance of existing ones, alongside improved access to healthcare and education, and affordable housing, pointing to broader issues of wellbeing and inclusion. Smaller but meaningful themes included support for local shops and services, activities for young people, and accessibility for disabled residents. These responses show that while priorities vary, there is a shared vision for neighbourhoods that are cleaner, safer, better connected, and more inclusive.

Answer / Theme	Count	Commentary
<b>More affordable housing</b>	30	<p>Concerns about affordability, overcrowding, and the need for more social housing and better housing stock.</p> <p>Sample items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less HMOs / multi occupancy houses</li> <li>• Less overcrowding, being able to park near your house</li> <li>• More affordable housing</li> </ul>
<b>Better public transport or connectivity</b>	47	<p>Strong interest in improving transport infrastructure, including rail, airport access, and overall connectivity.</p> <p>Sample items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new railway station at Plympton</li> <li>• An airport and technological connectivity</li> <li>• Better public transport or connectivity</li> </ul>
<b>Improved safety and policing</b>	44	<p>Concerns about antisocial behaviour, drug control, and the need for stronger policing and safety measures.</p> <p>Sample items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better control of drugs</li> <li>• Heavy clampdown on antisocial behaviour</li> <li>• Improved safety and policing</li> </ul>

Answer / Theme	Count	Commentary
<b>Cleaner streets and better waste management</b>	62	<p>A dominant theme, with widespread concern about street cleanliness, waste management, and general upkeep of public spaces.</p> <p>Sample items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better kept verges and streets</li> <li>• Cleaner streets and better waste management</li> <li>• Cleaner streets and better waste management</li> </ul>
<b>More green spaces or better maintenance of existing ones</b>	44	<p>A clear desire for more green spaces and better maintenance of existing ones, reflecting environmental and wellbeing priorities.</p> <p>Sample items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent cafes, shops and parks</li> <li>• More green spaces or better maintenance of existing ones</li> <li>• More green spaces or better maintenance of existing ones</li> </ul>
<b>More local shops, cafes or services</b>	21	<p>Interest in enhancing local retail options, including shops, cafés, and city centre experiences.</p> <p>Sample items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better higher standard of shopping in the city centre</li> <li>• Better shops on Albert Road</li> <li>• More local shops, cafés, or services</li> </ul>
<b>Better access to healthcare or education</b>	37	<p>Calls for improved access to healthcare services, especially NHS dental care, and better educational opportunities.</p> <p>Sample items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access an NHS dentist</li> <li>• Better access to healthcare or education</li> <li>• Better access to healthcare or education</li> </ul>
<b>More activities for young people or families</b>	20	<p>Desire for more recreational and social opportunities for young people and families.</p>
<b>Improvements accessibility for people with disabilities</b>	13	<p>Feedback highlights the need for better accessibility for disabled people and improved parking options.</p>
<b>OTHER</b>		
<b>Active travel</b>	3	<p>Support for safer cycling infrastructure and active travel options.</p> <p>Sample items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better Active Travel provision</li> <li>• Improved infrastructure for active travel especially cycling</li> <li>• Safer cycle routes and traffic calming</li> </ul>
<b>Urban Planning and Infrastructure</b>	3	<p>Calls for better road planning, pothole repairs, and infrastructure investment.</p> <p>Sample items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better planning on roads and developments</li> <li>• Better roads</li> <li>• Potholes fixed quickly</li> </ul>



## Rank the top three things you love most about your local neighbourhood?

People were asked to rank with the most important at the top.

In our local neighbourhood, the most cherished aspect is undoubtedly the access to green spaces and parks. With respondents placing it as their top choice, it's clear that the ability to enjoy nature, unwind outdoors, and engage in recreational activities is a cornerstone of community life. Coming in second is the friendly and supportive community, reflecting the strong social bonds and neighbourly spirit that make the area feel welcoming and safe. The third most loved feature is the local shops and amenities, which not only provide convenience but also foster a sense of local identity and connection. Together, these top three elements paint a picture of a neighbourhood that values nature, community, and accessibility – making it a truly special place to live.

Count by position	Access to green spaces and parks	Friendly and supportive community	Local shops and amenities	Safety and low crime levels	Good public transport links	Clean and well-maintained environment	Access to schools and healthcare	Quiet and peaceful atmosphere
1	95	83	31	63	29	18	17	31
2	96	49	39	44	45	34	27	30
3	57	45	61	44	77	30	18	28
4	41	92	73	26	61	30	18	18
5	42	34	62	80	61	30	30	24
6	27	30	56	57	42	103	24	16
7	12	23	35	34	24	80	118	20
8	4	14	14	21	22	36	98	20
9	3	7	6	8	16	16	27	190
<b>Overall Ranking</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>

## What are the things you love most about Plymouth as a city?

People were asked to rank with the most important at the top.

Plymouth's most beloved feature is its access to the waterfront and stunning coastal views, with respondents ranking it as their top choice. The city's connection to the sea clearly resonates deeply, offering both beauty and a sense of identity. In second place is Plymouth's proximity to nature, including Dartmoor and nearby beaches, which highlights the value residents place on outdoor exploration and natural escapes. The third most appreciated aspect is the city's green spaces and parks, providing peaceful retreats and recreational opportunities within the urban landscape. Together, these top three reflect Plymouth's unique blend of coastal charm, natural beauty, and accessible green spaces - making it a city that truly celebrates its environment.

Count by position	Access to the waterfront and coastal views	Proximity to nature (e.g. Dartmoor beaches)	Green spaces and parks	Rich maritime and cultural heritage	Vibrant arts events and festivals	Friendly and welcoming community	Access to education and universities	Good transport links and connectivity	Range of shops restaurants and cafés
1	176	60	10	15	4	16	2	4	6
2	61	136	32	14	9	16	5	8	5
3	22	39	58	82	32	24	3	13	15
4	19	27	31	75	60	28	8	21	16
5	5	13	29	42	67	72	21	21	14
6	6	8	22	21	44	62	15	72	26
7	2	7	18	16	30	36	14	73	32
8	1	0	8	7	23	18	36	37	86
9	1	1	12	10	15	17	89	23	82
<b>Overall Ranking</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>

## What would you most like to see change about Plymouth as a city?

People were asked to rank with the most important at the top.

The most desired change among respondents is the creation of more inclusive and accessible public spaces, with most people ranking it as their top priority. This reflects a strong community interest in making Plymouth more welcoming and usable for everyone, regardless of age, ability, or background. In second place is a call for improved road maintenance, highlighting concerns around infrastructure and everyday mobility. The third most requested change is the need for more affordable and diverse housing options, pointing to growing pressures around cost of living and housing availability. These priorities suggest a collective vision for a more equitable, functional, and liveable city.

Count by position	More inclusive and accessible public spaces	Improved road maintenance	More affordable and diverse housing options	Better public transport within and beyond the city	More job opportunities and support for local businesses	Improved cleanliness and waste management	Safer streets and reduced crime	Improved education
1	6	39	53	50	28	24	32	2
2	5	35	27	52	35	39	42	5
3	10	28	38	34	45	43	36	5
4	12	20	45	36	55	43	28	5
5	5	21	26	45	42	52	30	5
6	9	11	23	34	38	46	32	7
7	14	11	12	18	20	30	49	16
8	17	9	14	13	12	9	26	86
9	13	14	11	7	9	4	17	97
10	31	81	18	5	4	5	1	47
11	173	26	28	1	7	0	2	20
<b>Overall Rank</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>

## How can we plan for homes, jobs, and green spaces in a way that supports wellbeing?

People were asked to rank with the most important at the top.

The top priority for supporting wellbeing in future planning is to build more affordable and energy-efficient homes, with most respondents ranking it first. This reflects a strong desire for housing that is both accessible and environmentally sustainable. Second on the list is the need to ensure new developments have good access to green space, highlighting the importance of nature in everyday life and mental health. The third most valued approach is to protect and enhance existing green spaces and natural habitats, showing a clear commitment to preserving Plymouth's environmental assets. These responses suggest that residents envision a city where housing, nature, and community wellbeing are thoughtfully integrated.

	Build more affordable and energy-efficient homes	Ensure new developments have good access to green space.	Involve communities in planning decisions from the start	Create mixed-use neighbourhoods with homes shops and services nearby	Prioritise access to public transport and active travel (walking cycling)	Protect and enhance existing green spaces and natural habitats	Design inclusive spaces that are accessible to all ages and abilities	Support local job creation through business hubs and training centres
Count	48	21	60	30	26	56	4	12
	49	60	39	30	34	39	13	7
	35	62	27	41	44	30	16	13
	55	55	17	45	41	28	17	18
	30	48	14	50	57	11	53	13
	20	18	10	52	43	42	70	16
	17	13	10	24	18	45	67	78
	15	5	76	6	16	29	33	92
<b>Ranking</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>

## What services do you most value having face-to-face?

People were asked to rank with the most important at the top.

The most valued face-to-face service is adult social care or support for vulnerable adults, with respondents ranking it as their top priority. This highlights the importance of personal interaction in delivering compassionate and effective care. In second place is housing advice and support, reflecting the need for tailored guidance in navigating housing challenges. The third most valued in-person service is children's services and family support, underscoring the significance of direct engagement when supporting families and young people. These results show that when it comes to sensitive or complex issues, residents strongly prefer the reassurance and clarity that face-to-face services provide.

Count by position	Adult social care or support for vulnerable adults	Housing advice and support	Children's services and family support	Reporting neighbourhood or anti-social behaviour concerns	Waste and recycling issues	Benefits and financial support	Council tax or rent queries	Planning and building control advice	Help with digital services or online forms
1	89	42	51	80	42	12	11	8	19
2	96	44	65	47	39	23	13	22	5
3	50	77	66	44	26	28	17	27	19
4	41	98	37	20	30	75	29	15	9
5	48	41	54	15	22	65	79	18	12
6	15	23	46	10	77	60	92	17	14
7	8	14	15	11	80	53	62	99	12
8	5	10	9	103	31	25	44	103	24
9	2	5	11	24	7	13	7	45	240
Ranking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

## What services do you most value having by phone?

People were asked to rank with the most important at the top.

When it comes to phone-based services, residents most value the ability to report neighbourhood or anti-social behaviour concerns, with respondents ranking it as their top choice. This suggests that speed, discretion, and convenience are key when addressing community safety issues. In second place is housing advice and support, indicating that many prefer the immediacy and personal connection of a phone call when navigating housing challenges. The third most valued service by phone is adult social care or support for vulnerable adults, showing that even outside of face-to-face settings, people still seek direct and empathetic communication for sensitive matters. These preferences highlight the importance of accessible and responsive phone services for issues that require timely and personal support.

Count by position	Housing advice and support	Adult social care or support for vulnerable adults	Waste and recycling issues	Reporting neighbourhood or anti-social behaviour concerns	Council tax or rent queries	Children's services and family support	Benefits and financial support	Planning and building control advice	Help with digital services or online forms
1	35	28	43	71	36	20	8	14	19
2	41	56	53	33	30	17	17	19	8
3	43	45	20	38	31	41	20	22	14
4	85	43	18	7	18	42	40	14	7
5	37	55	10	10	39	51	56	6	10
6	13	22	49	2	56	60	53	13	6
7	6	14	56	13	41	18	57	64	5
8	6	4	21	78	23	14	15	96	17
9	8	7	4	22	0	11	8	26	188
Overall Ranking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

## What would make it easier for you to use digital services confidently?

People were asked to rank with the most important at the top.

The most important factor in helping residents use digital services confidently is having a clear and simple website or app design, with respondents ranking it as their top choice. This highlights the value of intuitive, user-friendly platforms that reduce frustration and make navigation straightforward. In second place is access to a device, such as a smartphone, tablet, or computer, showing that having the right tools is essential for digital inclusion. The third most valued support is telephone assistance alongside online services, reflecting the need for reassurance and help when navigating digital systems. These responses suggest that confidence in digital services grows when they are easy to use, well-supported, and accessible to all.

Count by position	Clear and simple website or app design	Access to free or low-cost internet or data	Telephone support alongside online services	Access to a device (e.g. smartphone tablet computer)	Step-by-step guidance or tutorials	In-person support or digital help hubs	More trust in how my data is used and protected	Services available in multiple languages or accessible formats
1	114	12	44	49	5	12	30	5
2	57	31	51	40	32	26	31	3
3	45	36	33	60	29	42	23	3
4	33	64	17	69	56	25	6	1
5	13	69	13	31	71	57	14	3
6	7	30	75	14	62	72	11	0
7	1	22	35	6	13	36	144	14
8	1	7	3	2	3	1	12	242
<b>Overall Ranking</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>

## How can we make sure everyone benefits from modernised services?

People were asked to rank with the most important at the top.

The most important factor in ensuring everyone benefits from modernised services is to keep non-digital options – like phone and face-to-face – available, with respondents ranking it as their top priority. This reflects a strong desire for inclusivity and choice, especially for those who may struggle with digital access. In second place is the need to design services that are easy to use for people of all ages and abilities, highlighting the importance of intuitive and accessible design. The third most valued approach is to provide digital skills training and support in local communities, showing a commitment to empowering residents to confidently engage with modern services. These responses point to a clear vision: digital transformation must be inclusive, accessible, and supportive of everyone's needs.

Count by position	Keep non-digital options (like phone or face-to-face) available	Design services that are easy to use for people of all ages and abilities	Provide digital skills training and support in local communities	Ensure affordable access to devices and internet	Involve residents in designing and testing new digital services	Offer services in multiple languages and accessible formats	Build trust by being transparent about how data is used
1	151	43	37	14	20	4	19
2	54	116	55	19	24	5	15
3	36	64	72	30	44	19	23
4	27	44	75	41	32	58	11
5	14	18	35	87	19	82	33
6	5	3	12	76	37	46	109
7	1	0	2	21	11	74	78
<b>Overall Ranking</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

## How can we keep you better informed and involved in decisions?

The most preferred way for residents to stay informed and involved in decision-making is through regular email updates or newsletters, with respondents ranking it as their top choice. This reflects a strong appetite for consistent, direct communication. In second place is making information available in multiple languages and formats, highlighting the need for inclusivity and accessibility. The third most valued method is community meetings or local forums, showing that many still appreciate face-to-face engagement and dialogue. These responses suggest that a mix of digital and in-person communication – tailored to diverse needs – is key to building trust and encouraging active participation in local decisions.

Count by position	Regular email updates or newsletters	Information available in multiple languages and formats	Community meetings or local forums	Social media updates and engagement	Clear and accessible information on the council website	Online surveys and feedback forms	Opportunities to join community panels / forums or advisory groups	Better promotion of engagement opportunities in local areas
1	149	2	29	42	55	12	25	36
2	65	3	83	59	49	47	21	23
3	46	3	67	65	57	49	27	36
4	47	4	88	65	28	65	25	28
5	21	1	58	65	70	86	23	26
6	12	12	17	31	63	62	139	14
7	8	139	8	13	27	22	87	46
8	2	186	0	10	1	7	3	141
<b>Overall Ranking</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>



## Plymouth Big Community Conversation events

Between July and August 2025, six community events and one youth-specific session were held across Plymouth to gather feedback on the proposed boundary expansion. Facilitated by Council staff trained in Trauma-Informed and Appreciative Inquiry methods, these events created space for meaningful conversations and active listening. Residents were invited to attend without signing in, and the sessions were designed to be informal, inclusive, and responsive to local concerns. The insights captured reflect a wide range of perspectives and have been carefully analysed to inform the development of the final proposal.



### Question 1: What concerns or opportunities do you see in PCC's proposal for an expanded local authority?

The conversations reveal a community that is open to change but deeply cautious. While there is no strong ideological opposition to the idea of an expanded local authority, there is a clear demand for evidence, equity, and engagement. People want to understand how the proposal will tangibly improve their lives, especially in terms of infrastructure, services, and representation.

The urban-rural divide is a central tension – participants fear that rural needs may be overlooked in a city-led model. However, there is also recognition of shared challenges and interdependencies, such as healthcare, transport, and housing pressures that cross current boundaries.

To move forward, the proposal must demonstrate clear, mutual benefits, address concerns about identity and access, and ensure that local voices are not only heard but empowered. The success of the expansion hinges on trust, transparency, and tailored delivery that respects the diversity of the communities involved.

### Common themes

<b>Infrastructure and services</b>	There is concern that existing infrastructure (roads, transport, utilities, healthcare) is already under strain and may not cope with additional demand. Participants questioned whether the expansion would bring improvements or further dilute services.
<b>Funding and financial transparency</b>	Questions were raised about how the expansion would be funded, how council tax revenue would be allocated, and whether economies of scale would truly deliver savings. There's a desire for clarity on financial projections and equitable distribution of resources.
<b>Representation and governance</b>	People expressed a need for stronger local representation, especially in rural areas. The idea of town or parish councils for areas like Plympton was seen as a potential opportunity. Concerns were also raised about political shifts and the risk of rural voices being drowned out.
<b>Identity and community cohesion</b>	A recurring concern was the potential loss of identity for South Hams communities. There's a strong sense of distinctiveness between urban Plymouth and rural South Hams, and fears that expansion could blur or erase these differences.
<b>Access and inclusion</b>	Digital exclusion, transport limitations, and service accessibility were highlighted, particularly for older residents and those in outlying parishes. People want assurance that access will improve, not worsen.
<b>Urban vs rural needs</b>	There's a perceived mismatch between urban policy models and rural realities. Participants fear that a city-centric approach could lead to service closures or neglect in rural areas.
<b>Opportunities for integration</b>	Some saw the expansion as a chance to better align services, improve funding models (e.g. healthcare), and address cross-boundary issues like Sherford's impact on Plympton. There's cautious optimism if benefits are clearly demonstrated.
<b>Planning, housing, and growth</b>	Concerns about housing developments outpacing infrastructure were common. People want assurances that planning will be strategic, with adequate provision for GPs, schools, and transport.
<b>Public engagement and trust</b>	Scepticism exists due to past unfulfilled promises. There's a call for genuine engagement, especially with young people and digitally excluded groups, and a need to build trust through transparency and delivery.

## Question 2: What do you love most about the city and your neighbourhood, and what would you most like to see change in the future – try to think long term, not just in the next couple of years?

Plymouth is a city with deep emotional and cultural roots, where people feel connected to their environment, their neighbours, and their shared history. The city's natural beauty, compact character, and community spirit are its greatest strengths and residents are keen to protect these as the city evolves.

However, there's a clear appetite for thoughtful, long-term change. People want better transport, more vibrant cultural life, fairer governance, and stronger economic opportunities. They're not resistant to growth but they want it to be sustainable, inclusive, and respectful of Plymouth's identity.

The challenge for future planning is to balance ambition with authenticity: to grow without losing what makes Plymouth special, and to ensure that all neighbourhoods (urban and rural) feel heard, valued, and empowered in shaping the city's future.

### Common themes

<b>Natural environment and location</b>	The sea, moors, coastlines, and green spaces are deeply cherished. Plymouth's proximity to nature is seen as a defining asset, contributing to quality of life and identity. There's a desire to preserve and enhance these features, not compromise them through overdevelopment.
<b>Community and identity</b>	A strong sense of community and neighbourhood pride came through clearly. People value knowing their neighbours, grassroots action, and the diversity of the city. There's concern that expansion or rapid change could dilute this cohesion.
<b>Transport and connectivity</b>	Transport is both a strength and a frustration. While some areas are well connected, others suffer from infrequent services and poor infrastructure. Long-term aspirations include better rail links (e.g. to London), a second rail route, improved bus services, and even tram systems. Connectivity with Cornwall and Europe (via ferry) was also mentioned.
<b>Culture, creativity and heritage</b>	Plymouth's cultural assets – theatres, universities, historic sites – are appreciated but under-promoted. There's a call to celebrate the city's maritime history more visibly and to invest in creative industries and venues that bring vibrancy to the city centre.
<b>Housing and urban development</b>	Concerns were raised about housing affordability, management fees, and the character of new developments. People want more housing in the city centre, but with thoughtful planning that respects existing communities and infrastructure limits.
<b>Public services and amenities</b>	Libraries, healthcare, education, and leisure services are valued, but there's a desire for more consistency and investment. Issues like drainage, sewage, and access to adult social care were flagged as needing attention.
<b>Economic opportunity and skills</b>	There's a sense that Plymouth hasn't fully realised its economic potential. Calls were made for better job opportunities, skills development, and leveraging assets like the Freeport and waterfront to attract investment and tourism.
<b>Governance and fairness</b>	Frustrations around parking permits, solar panel grants, and perceived inequalities (e.g. Devonport vs other areas) suggest a need for more transparent and equitable decision-making. People want to see where money is spent and feel fairly treated.
<b>Youth voice and future generations</b>	A few comments highlighted the absence of young people's perspectives. There's a recognition that long-term planning must include their voices and address their needs – from education to housing to cultural life.

### **Question 3: Which services do you need to be delivered in person or over the phone or digitally because they are personal or more effectively delivered that way?**

The community recognises the benefits of digital services; speed, convenience, and efficiency but is clear that digital cannot be the only option. People want a blended approach that respects individual needs, abilities, and preferences.

There's a strong desire for equity in access, whether that's through better-designed websites, more responsive phone lines, or the preservation of in-person services. Libraries and local offices are seen as untapped assets that could play a bigger role in bridging the digital divide.

Ultimately, residents want a council that is easy to reach, responsive, and inclusive. One that listens to feedback and designs services around the real-life experiences of its communities.

#### **Common themes**

<b>Digital access and inclusion</b>	While many are comfortable using digital services, there's a strong awareness of digital exclusion, especially among older residents and those in rural areas like South Hams. Poor internet coverage, lack of digital skills, and inaccessible websites were frequently mentioned. People want choice, not compulsion, in how they access services.
<b>In-person services still matter</b>	Libraries, local offices, and the former One Stop Shop were praised as vital community hubs. In-person contact is especially valued for complex, sensitive, or urgent issues (e.g. adult social care, SEND, anti-social behaviour). There's a desire to retain face-to-face options, particularly for those who struggle with digital or phone-based systems.
<b>Telephone access and responsiveness</b>	Many expressed frustration with the lack of phone numbers, long wait times, and unclear call prioritisation. A good telephone service is seen as essential, especially for those who can't or don't want to go online. People want clearer communication and faster response times.
<b>Website and digital services</b>	Experiences with the council website were mixed. Some found it user-friendly for tasks like reporting bins or renewing bus passes, while others described it as confusing, poorly designed, or inaccessible. There's a call for improved usability, mobile-friendliness, and clearer navigation.
<b>Channel flexibility and user choice</b>	A recurring theme was the need for multiple access routes: digital, phone, and in-person, to suit different needs and preferences. People want to opt in to digital communications (e.g. letters), not be forced into them. Services should be designed around the user, not the system.
<b>Libraries as community access points</b>	Libraries were frequently mentioned as trusted, accessible spaces that could be better used for service delivery, digital support, and community engagement. Plymstock Library was singled out as an excellent example.
<b>Equity and accessibility</b>	There's concern that current systems disadvantage people with disabilities, those without internet access, or those unfamiliar with digital tools. Accessibility (both physical and digital) needs to be reviewed and improved across all services.

## Question 4: How can the council be better to listen to residents and keep you informed?

Residents want a council that is visible, approachable, and proactive in its communication. They appreciate opportunities to engage in person and want these to be more frequent, better advertised, and inclusive of all communities.

There's a clear call for transparency and clarity. Not just in what decisions are made, but why. People want to understand the rationale behind council actions and feel confident that their voices are being heard and considered.

To build trust and improve engagement, the council must embrace a multi-channel strategy that includes digital, print, broadcast, and face-to-face methods. It must also actively seek out diverse voices, including young people, disabled residents, and those who are digitally excluded. Ultimately, good communication is not just about broadcasting information, it's about building relationships, closing feedback loops, and making residents feel part of the city's journey.

### Common themes

<b>Face-to-face engagement</b>	Events like the facilitated conversations were widely praised. People value personal interaction, saying it's the best way to feel heard and understood. There's a strong call for more in-person forums, especially for major decisions or proposals.
<b>Clear, accessible communication</b>	Residents want plain-language explanations of decisions, especially around taxation, planning, and proposals like the expansion. There's frustration with speculation and misinformation, often from third-party sources like Plymouth Live, and a desire for the council to get ahead of the narrative.
<b>Multi-channel information sharing</b>	Suggestions included radio slots, posters, billboards, newsletters, TV interviews, and school-based engagement. People want a mix of digital and non-digital channels to reach different demographics, including those who are digitally excluded or geographically distant.
<b>Digital inclusion and website usability</b>	The council website was described as difficult to navigate, especially for finding updates or reporting issues. There's a need for better design, clearer structure, and mobile-friendly features. Digital exclusion remains a barrier for many, especially older residents and those in rural areas.
<b>Listening and feedback loops</b>	Residents want to feel that their input leads to action or change. There's a perception that feedback is sometimes ignored or dismissed. Suggestions included surveys, customer experience sharing, and clearer follow-up on what's been done in response to public input.
<b>Youth and diverse voices</b>	There's a desire to hear from young people and under-represented groups, and to ensure that engagement reflects Plymouth's diverse population. Schools, community groups, and cultural organisations were suggested as partners.
<b>Localised and timely updates</b>	People want more notice about decisions, events, and service changes. Suggestions included apps, Friday email roundups, and printed newsletters like those used in Exeter. Timely updates on issues like roadworks, waste collection, and local projects are especially valued.

## Plymouth Youth Big Community Conversation event

Young people aged 13-19 were invited to attend a facilitated conversation event to discuss the future of Plymouth. Attendees included members of the Plymouth Youth Parliament.



### Question 1: What do you like about your area?

Young people in Plymouth shared a strong appreciation for the local environment, highlighting the city's green spaces, seafront, and proximity to Dartmoor as key features that support wellbeing and offer opportunities for outdoor activities. The presence of parks and skateparks, particularly Central Park, was noted as important for recreation and socialising.

Transport was another positive theme, with several mentioning that public transport – especially buses and the train station – is generally reliable and well-connected, making it easier to get around the city.

There was also a clear sense of value placed on community and opportunity. Free cultural venues like The Box, youth groups, and organisations such as cadets were praised for providing spaces to connect, learn, and grow. These opportunities contribute to a feeling of belonging and safety, with some respondents noting that the area feels “relatively safe.”

Finally, Plymouth's rich culture and heritage were recognised as part of what makes the city unique and engaging for young people.

### Question 2: What would you like to see change in your local area

Young people in Plymouth expressed a clear desire for more things to do, especially youth centres and leisure options like swimming pools, ice rinks, and music venues. They want spaces that are engaging, inclusive, and not just run by the council – places that feel genuinely youth-led and community-driven.

Transport was another key theme, with calls for more reliable and frequent bus services, especially to outer boroughs. Respondents highlighted issues with buses not following timetables or failing to stop, which affects their ability to travel independently and access opportunities.

There's also a strong interest in improving the local environment, including more benches, bins, and better lighting, especially in darker months. Concerns were raised about abandoned buildings and the need for cleaner, safer public spaces.

Community and wellbeing featured prominently. Young people want a stronger sense of community, with more volunteering opportunities that are well-promoted and incentivised – such as discounts on concert tickets. They also called for better SEND and mental health services, and lower waiting times in emergencies, showing a need for more responsive and inclusive support systems.

Finally, there were suggestions for more residential homes in the city centre, greater retail and dining variety, and development of district centres to bring services and activities closer to where people live.



**Question 3: What do you want Plymouth to look like in 50 years**

Young people envision a future Plymouth that is better connected, more inclusive, and full of opportunity. A key theme is transport, with aspirations for trams, improved train links, and even air travel, making the city more accessible both locally and nationally. They also want greener transport options and a push for eco-friendly infrastructure.

Housing and affordability are central to their vision. Young people want more housing options, especially affordable homes that allow them to stay in Plymouth long-term. They also hope to see fewer empty buildings and a focus on building on brownfield sites to protect natural spaces.

Employment and opportunity are vital. There's a desire for great job options, more apprenticeships, and work experience across diverse sectors, including law and creative industries. They also want youth services available city-wide, and part-time jobs for 16-year-olds that can fit around school.

Community pride and wellbeing matter too. Young people imagine a city with more celebratory events, stronger community identity, and better access to public services, including SEND and mental health support. They'd like to see purple help points distributed across Plymouth for safety and assistance.

Finally, they want Plymouth to grow into a bigger, more vibrant city that attracts investment, while still preserving its green and blue spaces and the distinct character of its neighbourhoods.

**Question 4: What would make you want to stay living here?**

Young people in Plymouth shared a clear vision for what would encourage them to build their futures in the city. Better job opportunities and affordable housing – including rent control – were top priorities, reflecting a desire for stability and independence. Many also emphasised the importance of access to healthcare, especially mental health support, dentists, and primary services like GPs, which they feel are currently lacking.

Education and career development are also key motivators. Respondents highlighted Plymouth's strengths, such as its three universities and military pathways, but called for improvements in SEND support and more opportunities for young people, including platforms like UK Youth Parliament.

The city's natural beauty and open spaces were appreciated, especially in comparison to other urban areas. However, young people also want improved transport links to other cities, so they can live in Plymouth while accessing opportunities elsewhere.

Finally, safety was a recurring theme. Suggestions included more lighting, help points, and general awareness, all aimed at making Plymouth feel safer and more welcoming.







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# Plymouth City Council's Local Government Reorganisation Final Proposal – Appendices

November 2025



Plymouth City Council Devolution  
and Local Government Reform Team



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# Appendix I - Finance

## I. Overview of approach

Our approach to the financial modelling and review of costs, savings and financial viability has been developed by a senior group of cross-authority finance professionals, following a review of various approaches taken in previous or proposed Local Government Re-organisations. We have developed detailed financial models to establish the financial case for reorganisation, and to assess the viability of each proposed new unitary. Transitional and implementation costs have been estimated with reference to the implementation plans set out in Appendix 2, drawing upon evidence from previous Local Government Reorganisations and a review of available models. Corroborating indicators of financial resilience have been reviewed alongside our modelling to provide further analysis of financial sustainability. We have commissioned specialist external input to provide advice and modelling in technical areas. This appendix sets out the methodology used for the core financial modelling work, referencing source data and setting out assumptions and the basis of calculations at each stage.

As a first stage, we have used published financial datasets to collate and analyse baseline costs. Within these baseline calculations, we have differentiated fixed and variable cost elements and used this analysis to estimate likely savings and additional costs from the aggregation and disaggregation of different service areas. We have also used data collected from the 11 current councils across Devon as a baseline to estimate the likely savings from the aggregation of corporate services and rationalisation of senior managers, the rationalisation of accommodation, and a reduction in the number of elections and councillors. Savings from the transformation of service delivery and the harmonisation of income streams have been calculated for some specific areas. This has enabled us to estimate the future running costs of each proposed unitary council (after the delivery of reorganisation and transformation savings, and the application of any ongoing costs of disaggregation).

Section 2 of this Appendix provides further detail on this stage of financial modelling.

Secondly, we have compared the estimated future running cost with modelled revenue streams for each proposed new unitary in order to assess the financial viability of each proposed base and modified unitary. Secondary assessments of viability have been carried out by reviewing comparative resilience and viability indicators for each new council, alongside an initial assessment of likely balance sheet health.

The methodology used to assess viability and financial sustainability is set out in more detail in section 3 of this appendix.

Section 4 below explains how the costs of implementation have been estimated, for each new council area and for Devon-wide co-ordination and governance arrangements. Estimated implementation costs are profiled, alongside estimates of savings, disaggregation costs and revenues, to produce a medium-term financial forecast for each proposed new unitary. Financing options for costs have been considered.

## **2. Transformation and Reorganisation benefits and Disaggregation costs**

### **2.1 Baseline costs**

Costs have been estimated and analysed using source data from the 2025/26 Revenue Account (RA) returns from each of the current 11 councils, with some further detail sourced from published financial statements (adjusted to a 2025/26 price base). This source cost data has been supplemented with further information collected through a working group of senior finance leaders from each council, using a 2025/26 price base with a reconciliation back to the published RA data. Data from published 2024/25 statement of accounts and other published sources has also been used to estimate 2025/26 senior management costs and members allowances. The results of this data collection exercise are presented in Annex I below, which sets out a baseline cost for each current authority against various categories of cost. Costs for corporate services (charged as overheads to RA lines in accordance with guidance) have been disaggregated by each authority so that the full cost of corporate services can be analysed. The total baseline cost reconciles to each authority's 2025/26 RA return.

All baseline costs analysed in Annex I are generally presented and analysed using the net cost of service calculation prescribed by the RA guidance, aggregating the total cost of services at a level of cost which:

- Includes costs that are funded by government grants, i.e. costs shown are gross of government grant income (with costs funded by Dedicated Schools Grant set out separately).
- Presents (with some exceptions) a net position for other (non-government grant) income streams. Exceptions, where costs are presented gross of non-government grant income, are noted in paragraph 2.5 below.

This approach allows a fuller understanding of the costs that would be impacted by Local Government Reorganisation, allowing all taxpayer-funded costs to be analysed. However, we have applied a general assumption that most non-governmental income streams (e.g. fees and charges income, grants and funding provided by other, non-governmental bodies) are either not material or would be impacted in line with costs. For example:

- Client income for social care packages would be distributed to new authorities in line with the net cost of care packages.
- Income from fees and charges will generally be distributed in line with the cost of the service.

- Other income streams are generally considered to be de-minimis for the purposes of this proposal stage.

The exceptions to this general approach for non-government grant income are income received from parking operations (parking charges, permit income and fines), and income received within economic and community development functions (generally for property held for economic development and regeneration purposes, but also including revenue grants). These income streams are material (totalling £65.7m and £59.2m respectively across Devon). The geographical distribution of income streams and behaviour of cost in these areas are likely to vary independently of each other and so have been analysed separately.

All costs shown are revenue costs. At this stage we have not attempted to baseline or analyse Capital Expenditure; although we consider that there would be financial benefits from the aggregation and consolidated management of capital programmes savings are likely to be smaller and difficult to estimate at this stage. Capital financing costs are including in the cost modelling set out in Annex I as disclosed in each Council's 2025/25 RA return.

## 2.2 Estimates of savings and costs – service aggregation and disaggregation

The baseline cost data presented in Annex I has been disaggregated into fixed and variable elements for different service areas. Fixed and variable costs have been estimated with reference to existing council budget data for comparable authorities. We have taken this approach to try to model estimates of savings and costs, but also to ensure that the overall cost of new council structures is forecast effectively, taking into account the fixed costs of different service areas in a new four unitary model of local government, and apportioning the variable cost of operations carefully across new council areas. The methodology set out in this section 2.2 also forms the basis of the financial viability assessment in section 3 below.

Variable costs have been reallocated to proposed new unitary councils for base case and modified proposals based on the following principles:

- Where a whole existing council will be incorporated within a proposed new unitary council, all the variable costs for that council are included within the proposed new unitary. For example, in both the base proposal and modified proposal, the estimated variable costs for Torridge District Council services are included within the cost base for the proposed Devon Coast & Countryside unitary.
- Where an existing council area will be split between two or more proposed unitary councils, the estimated variable costs for that council have been allocated to proposed new unitary councils in proportion to appropriate cost drivers for each constituent geography. Cost drivers have been selected for each category of cost using a balance of accuracy / availability of data and the most appropriate basis for apportioning cost across geographical areas.

The fixed costs of providing services across Devon are likely to change significantly through the creation of four unitary councils to replace the existing eleven Unitary,

District and County Councils. For upper-tier functions, fixed costs are likely to increase with the creation of a fourth set of social care, highways and education functions – requiring additional management structures, systems and specialist functions. For lower tier and corporate functions, fixed costs are likely to reduce through the aggregation of functions – the cost of management structures, systems and specialist functions that are currently duplicated will be reduced.

As noted in paragraph 2.2.1 above, some information (on the cost of elections, accommodation, senior management and member allowances costs) has been collected through a working group of senior finance leaders from each council, using a 2025/26 price base with a reconciliation back to the published RA data. Data from published 2024/25 statement of accounts and other published sources has also been used to estimate 2025/26 senior management costs and members allowances and to ensure a consistent estimate. These categories of cost are shown separately in Annex I and have been analysed separately as detailed in section 2.3 below.

The fixed costs for service delivery and other corporate functions for the new base and modified unitary proposals have been estimated; again, with reference to similar current council fixed cost bases as a guide, using fixed costs in the two current Devon unitaries as a basis for comparative analysis. The following key assumptions have been used:

- For the base case proposal:
  - Plymouth and Torbay councils will be unchanged and so both fixed and variable costs are assumed to be unchanged.
  - The new proposed Exeter unitary is assumed to have a similar fixed cost base to the current Torbay unitary, being of a similar population.
  - The new proposed Devon Coast and Countryside unitary is assumed to have a larger fixed cost base than the current Plymouth unitary authority, reflecting the fact that it is a larger, more dispersed council.
- For the modified case proposal:
  - The proposed expansion to Plymouth Council is modest, representing a marginal 12% expansion of population over a relatively small area. Because we are proposing a continuing authority model for the expanded Plymouth Council, we have assumed that the cost of existing Plymouth City Council management structures, systems and specialist functions will continue into the new council largely unchanged. A very small increase has been included in the modified proposal estimates of the fixed costs of education services, reflecting the need to establish a larger specialist school transport function across a new rural area with different demands for mainstream school transport.
  - The proposed expansion of current Torbay Council boundaries and the proposed expanded Exeter unitary area represent more significant expansions and an increase in fixed costs has been assumed for these modified proposals compared to the base proposal. Under our modified proposal, expanded Exeter, expanded Torbay and expanded Plymouth will have broadly similar populations and so are assumed to have similar fixed cost bases.



- As with the base proposal, the modified proposal for the Devon Coast and Countryside unitary would be the largest unitary council of the four proposed and is significantly more dispersed than the other three urban councils. However, its size would be reduced compared to the base case proposal, and so a more modest fixed cost base is assumed when compared to the base proposal.

Our analysis assumes that some existing shared service arrangements across Devon councils (specifically, Pensions Administration, Internal Audit, Libraries and Trading Standards & Coroners) will continue to operate as shared services. We have not, at this stage, assumed that new shared service arrangements will be created and therefore for all other services, fixed costs have been estimated based an assumption that there will be four separate functions operating across Devon following a transition period. Some areas of cost – for example, Capital Financing and Levies – are treated as wholly variable and, at this stage, have been apportioned to new proposed council areas based on population.

It is important to note that, throughout, our estimates of cost are for future ‘steady state’ unitary councils, after a period of transition and transformation into new council structures is concluded. We acknowledge that new councils that are not continuing authorities will inherit a cost base that is likely to be larger than the estimates set out here. This issue is explored further in section 4 below.

Estimates of changes to fixed costs before and after reorganisation are set out in Tables 1 and 2 (below and overleaf), for the base case and modified proposals respectively.

*Table 1: Estimated fixed service delivery costs before and after reorganisation: base case proposal*

	Total estimated current fixed costs	Estimated fixed costs after reorganisation (£m) – base case proposal				Total estimated future fixed costs	Difference – cost / (saving)
		Devon coast & countryside	Exeter	Plymouth	Torbay		
Top tier functions	42.7	21.6	9.5	11.8	9.5	52.5	9.8
Lower tier functions	62.3	11.7	6.9	8.5	6.9	34.0	-28.3
Corporate functions	140.1	38.1	21.6	29.1	21.6	110.2	-29.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>245.1</b>	<b>71.4</b>	<b>38.0</b>	<b>49.3</b>	<b>38.0</b>	<b>196.7</b>	<b>-48.4</b>

*Table 2: Estimated fixed service delivery costs before and after reorganisation: modified case proposal*

	Total estimated current fixed costs	Estimated fixed costs after reorganisation (£m) – modified case proposal				Total estimated future fixed costs	Difference – cost / (saving)
		Devon coast & countryside	expanded Exeter	expanded Plymouth	expanded Torbay		
Top tier functions	42.7	16.7	13.8	11.9	13.8	56.2	13.5
Lower tier functions	62.3	9.5	8.9	8.5	8.9	35.7	-26.5
Corporate functions	140.1	32.0	29.2	29.1	29.2	119.3	-20.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>245.1</b>	<b>58.2</b>	<b>51.8</b>	<b>49.4</b>	<b>51.8</b>	<b>211.2</b>	<b>-33.9</b>

### 2.3 Property optimisation, democratic costs and optimising leadership

We have estimated savings achievable through the rationalisation of property and the optimisation of democratic and leadership costs separately to the broader estimation of savings and additional costs arising from the wider. The baseline expenditure for the relevant categories of cost has been disaggregated from other corporate / central services costs (as set out in Annex I) to ensure there is no double-counting within wider aggregation savings. For all costs in this section, under the base case costs are assumed to be unchanged for the base proposal for Plymouth and Torbay unitaries.

#### ***Property optimisation***

Savings through the rationalisation of office accommodation have been estimated for the proposed Exeter and Devon Coast and Countryside unitaries in both the base and modified proposal – and in the modified proposal for an expanded Torbay council - with reference to actual premises running costs of office accommodation collated through a cross-authority senior finance officer working group. Taking an average cost across similar categories of office sites from the existing office estate cost base, we have estimated the costs of office accommodation for new proposed councils using the following assumptions:

- It is assumed that the cost of office accommodation for the base-case Exeter unitary would be broadly equivalent to the current cost of office accommodation for Torbay Council, a similar-sized unitary.
- It is assumed that office accommodation for the proposed Devon Coast and Countryside unitary would be dispersed for both the base and modified proposals. We have based estimated costs for both the base and modified options on four larger satellite sites.
- For the modified proposal for an expanded Exeter unitary, we have assumed the office accommodation cost of the base case proposal, with an additional two small satellite sites.
- It is assumed that office accommodation costs for the proposed expanded Torbay unitary would be equivalent to those for the current Torbay council, with a further mid-sized satellite site.

It is possible that further property optimisation savings may be achievable through a broader rationalisation of operational property (for example, depot sites and customer service delivery points). However, we are not assuming any further savings beyond the office estate as a result of this exercise.

We do not consider that there are likely to be any significant property optimisation savings falling to the proposed expanded Plymouth Council within our modified proposal, and so for this proposal office accommodation costs for the current Plymouth Council are assumed to be equal to the costs for an expanded Plymouth Council. In line with other corporate services, a marginal increase in variable costs for wider FM services has been assumed in order to account for any increase in satellite customer service point or depot costs.

### ***Optimisation of democratic costs***

The number of elections held in Devon will reduce in proportion to a reduction in the number of councils in Devon from 11 to 4. Currently, every 4 years there are 15 elections held in Devon – Exeter and Plymouth Councils hold ‘elections by thirds’ with three elections every four years; all other councils hold one election every four years. We have assumed (under both the base case and modified proposals) that the Exeter based and Plymouth based unitaries will continue with elections by thirds and the other two councils will operate an ‘all out’ democratic process. The estimated cost of elections has therefore been reduced proportionately through a reduction from 15 elections to 8 elections every four years, with costs allocated to new councils in line with the number of elections assumed for each new council, allowing for different population sizes as a further variable element and fixed management and system costs.

The number of councillors would also reduce with a reduction in the number of councils – there are currently 475 district, county and unitary councillors across the 11 authorities in Devon. Councillors are paid allowances and expenses, which would reduce in proportion with a reduction to the number of councillors.

Cost estimates of general and special allowances have been calculated by reducing the baseline costs across current Devon councils in proportion to the reduced number of councillors. This cost has been apportioned across the base and modified proposed unitaries using the assumed number of councillors set out in the table above. Special allowances are assumed to change in proportion to the number of councillors and so have not been calculated separately to general expenses / allowances.

### ***Optimisation of leadership costs***

Senior leadership costs will reduce as a result of Local Government Reorganisation in Devon through the elimination of duplication and consolidation of management structures. For the purposes of our analysis, we have defined ‘senior leadership’ as follows:

- For district councils, the Chief Executive and direct reports to the Chief Executive, plus (if different) the Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.
- For the County Council and Unitary Councils, the Chief Executive, direct reports to the Chief Executive, and the third tier of management; including the Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.

Current senior leadership costs have been collated through a cross-authority senior finance officer working group and cross referenced to published statement of accounts data (adjusted to a 2025/26 price base). Headteachers and other school-based senior leaders have been excluded. These costs are shown separately in Annex 1 (with other cost categories adjusted to ensure there is no double-counting).

For the Plymouth and Torbay Councils proposed in the base case proposal, senior leadership costs are assumed to be unchanged; we are assuming that (under a continuing authority model) that senior leadership team costs for expanded Plymouth will remain unchanged from the current Plymouth council costs. For other new unitary councils proposed (Exeter Council / expanded Exeter and Devon Coast and Countryside Councils in the base and modified proposals, and for the modified proposal for expanded Torbay) we have assumed that each Council will have a leadership team cost broadly equivalent to the average senior leadership cost for the existing top tier authorities.

Tables 4 and 5 (below and overleaf) set out estimates of the various savings covered in this section.

*Table 4: Estimated costs & savings before and after reorganisation (Office accommodation, Democratic costs, Senior leadership): base case proposal*

	Total current costs (£m)	Estimated costs after reorganisation (£m) – base case proposal				Total estimated future costs (£m)	Estimated saving (£m)
		Devon Coast & Countryside	Exeter	Plymouth	Torbay		
Office accommodation	8.4	2.1	1.4	1.6	1.4	6.5	-1.9
Elections	4.0	0.9	0.4	0.5	0.3	2.1	-1.9
Member allowances	5.9	1.9	0.6	1.2	0.5	4.2	-1.7
Senior Leadership	13.0	2.5	2.5	2.2	2.5	9.7	-3.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31.3</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>-8.9</b>

*Table 5: Estimated costs & savings before and after reorganisation (Office accommodation, Democratic costs, Senior leadership): modified proposal*

	Total current costs (£m)	Estimated costs after reorganisation (£m) – modified proposal				Total estimated future costs (£m)	Estimated saving (£m)
		Devon Coast & Countryside	expanded Exeter	expanded Plymouth	expanded Torbay		
Office accommodation	8.4	2.1	1.6	1.6	1.7	6.9	-1.5
Elections	4.0	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.3	2.2	-1.8
Member allowances	5.9	1.5	0.8	1.3	0.8	4.4	-1.5
Senior Leadership	13.0	2.5	2.5	2.2	2.5	9.7	-3.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31.3</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>-8.0</b>

## 2.4 Other savings

New unitary councils would have to harmonise fees and charges; the experience of previous reorganisations in other areas is that this results in some additional income. For the base Devon Coast and Countryside proposal, and for the modified proposals for the Devon Coast and Countryside and extended Torbay unitaries, we have assumed a 2% increase in parking revenues, with a separate modelled increase for the modified extended Exeter Unitary developed by finance colleagues at Exeter City Council. A minor increase in fees and charges income is also assumed within cost estimates for regulatory services and leisure services.

Some modest savings arising from economies of scale in procurement and efficiencies for single systems have been assumed to be delivered through the merging of lower tier services in the Devon Coast and Countryside proposals for both options, and in the extended Exeter and extended Torbay options for the modified proposal. A 5% reduction in variable costs has been assumed for planning development, economic and community development, with more modest savings in regulatory services and sports, leisure and open spaces.

Specific savings assumptions have been developed in Waste Collection for the extended Plymouth, extended Exeter and extended Torbay proposals in the



modified case in consultation with finance colleagues at Exeter City Council. Comparative analysis of unit costs in this service indicates that there are likely to be cost reduction opportunities arising from reduced travel times and route harmonisation, as well as extended use of recycling technology currently adopted at Exeter City Council across a wider area.

Comparing unit costs for Adult and Children social work safeguarding, assessment and care management activity (excluding care placement costs) between current Devon County Council and current Plymouth City Council costs indicates that there is likely to be a saving in this area falling to the extended Plymouth council, which could be delivered through reduced travel times and other operational efficiencies. We have applied existing Plymouth City Council unit costs to the activity data supplied by Devon County Council for the expanded area, which results in a significant cost saving on current apportioned costs.

In addition to the savings categories described above, Table 6 below also sets out a possible additional saving (of £11.3m in the modified proposal), modelled on a reduction in the cost of social care packages through 'right sized', localised delivery models. This additional saving has not been included in the wider financial modelling of financial viability and payback periods because there are differing views on how Local Government Reorganisation in Devon (and other two-tier areas) might impact on the cost of commissioned social care services.

Currently, the unit costs of providing social care packages in the County Council area are observably higher than similar unit costs in the Unitary council areas of Torbay and Plymouth. It is arguable that some of this difference relates to the benefits of providing social care through a more localised, responsive delivery model in a smaller geographical area. The £11.3m saving is based on a modest (2-3%) reduction in the cost of commissioned social care packages across the current county area – based on an assumed reduction in unit costs that are currently higher than the unit costs of councils in Devon which operate more localised social care services. However, we feel that this assumed reduction is more uncertain than other assumptions used in our financial modelling, and so we are taking a prudent approach by excluding this saving from our financial viability calculations.

## 2.5 Summary of transformation and reorganisation benefits and disaggregation costs

Table 6 sets out a summary of disaggregation costs and financial savings for the base and modified proposals calculated using the methodology set out above.

Table 6: Summary of costs and savings – Base and Modified proposals

	Estimated cost / (saving) (£m) - Base Proposal	Estimated cost / (saving) (£m) - Modified Proposal	Description
Service disaggregation costs	9.8	13.5	Additional cost of creating new top tier services
Service consolidation savings	-28.3	-26.5	Savings from the consolidation of lower tier services
Corporate services consolidation savings	-29.9	-20.8	Savings from the consolidation of corporate services
Optimising Senior Leadership	-3.3	-3.3	Reduced costs of senior leadership team
Optimising costs of democracy	-3.6	-3.3	Savings in the cost of elections and councillor allowances / expenses
Property rationalisation	-1.9	-1.5	Savings from the rationalisation of offices
Service transformation savings	-5.9	-11.3	Savings from the transformation of services, i.e waste route optimisation
Harmonisation of fees and charges	-1.3	-5.2	Additional income from the harmonisation of fees and charges
<b>TOTAL NET MODELLED ANNUAL SAVING</b>	<b>-64.5</b>	<b>-58.4</b>	

### 3. Financial sustainability and viability

#### Estimated costs and income for proposed authorities

Using the estimates of fixed and variable costs developed through the methodology set out in section 2 above, we have modelled a projected cost of services for each Unitary Council proposed. All costs are shown at a 2025/26 price base

Income from Council Tax has been estimated using published 2025/26 taxbase figures, aggregated at parish level to match proposed authority boundaries. For councils where council tax harmonisation will be required, harmonisation to an average rate has been assumed in the first year of new unitary councils.

Settlement Funding Assessment income for the base case and modified proposals has been modelled for all unitaries proposed by specialist advisors Pixel, using their latest modelling of the impact of changes proposed in the government's recent Fair Funding Review 2.0 consultation. Note that this modelling was done in October 2025, before the impact changes to Indices of Multiple Deprivation data and prior to the policy statement.

Table 7 below sets out these estimated costs and income streams.

Table 7: Estimated Costs of proposed Unitary Councils – Base and Modified proposals

	Estimated costs & income (£m) - Base Case			
	Devon Coast & Countryside	Exeter	Plymouth	Torbay
<b>NET COST OF SERVICES:</b>	<b>751.8</b>	<b>181.7</b>	<b>315.8</b>	<b>185.0</b>
<i>funded by:</i>				
Settlement Funding Assessment	235.4	77.7	164.2	89.3
Council tax	559.9	79.2	147.9	95.9
<b>TOTAL CORE SPENDING POWER FUNDING:</b>	<b>795.3</b>	<b>156.9</b>	<b>312.2</b>	<b>185.2</b>
Viability surplus / (gap) in funding	43.5	- 24.8	- 3.6	0.2
	Estimated costs & income (£m) - Modified Case			
	Devon Coast & Countryside	Expanded Exeter	Expanded Plymouth	Expanded Torbay
<b>NET COST OF SERVICES:</b>	<b>503.5</b>	<b>316.4</b>	<b>338.4</b>	<b>276.8</b>
<i>funded by:</i>				
Settlement Funding Assessment	143.9	144.0	163.5	116.3
Council tax	367.4	177.0	177.8	163.3
<b>TOTAL CORE SPENDING POWER FUNDING:</b>	<b>511.3</b>	<b>321.0</b>	<b>341.2</b>	<b>279.6</b>
Viability surplus / (gap) in funding	7.7	4.6	2.8	2.8

#### 4. Transition costs and medium-term financial profiles

Transition costs are detailed in the main proposal document, with main assumptions stated there. These have been developed through workshop discussions with the Plymouth City Council LGR team, with reference to learning from previous Local Government Reorganisations. Colleagues at Exeter City Council have provided estimates for the transition costs for the disaggregation of an Exeter-based Unitary from the wider Devon Coast and Countryside Unitary, which are assumed to be similar for both the base case and modified proposals. We have assumed transition costs for the creation of an extended Torbay council in the modified proposal to be approximately double the costs for the creation of an extended Plymouth council, due to a more complex implementation; though under the proposed continuing authority model these costs would remain far lower than transition costs for the other two councils proposed.

Annex 2 sets out how costs and savings are assumed to fall across the implementation period and for the first 10 years of new councils. We have assumed that savings will take 2-3 years to be fully implemented in most cases.

## Annex I - Baseline Costs (£m)

	East Devon	Exeter	Mid Devon	North Devon	South Hams	Teignbridge	Torridge	West Devon	Devon CC	Plymouth	Torbay	TOTAL COST
Education (DSG funded)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	425.1	108.8	66.5	600.3
Other Education	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	82.7	20.3	13.3	116.2
Transport Strategy	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	1.4	0.1	3.0
Highways	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	35.0	7.1	7.5	49.6
Traffic Management	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.9
<i>Parking costs</i>	<i>1.9</i>	<i>3.5</i>	<i>0.7</i>	<i>1.3</i>	<i>2.4</i>	<i>2.1</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>0.8</i>	<i>5.5</i>	<i>6.4</i>	<i>2.5</i>	<i>28.1</i>
<i>Parking income</i>	<i>-5.6</i>	<i>-10.6</i>	<i>-1.5</i>	<i>-4.0</i>	<i>-4.8</i>	<i>-5.8</i>	<i>-2.4</i>	<i>-1.1</i>	<i>-9.8</i>	<i>-12.2</i>	<i>-8.0</i>	<i>-65.7</i>
Parking Services	-3.7	-7.1	-0.8	-2.8	-2.4	-3.7	-1.3	-0.4	-4.3	-5.8	-5.5	-37.6
Concessionary Fares	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.1	4.4	3.6	16.1
Other transport	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	18.2	0.1	0.9	19.3
Children Looked After	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	118.2	59.0	27.2	204.4
Safeguarding Children	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	48.4	12.5	15.0	76.0
Other Children's Social Care	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	35.0	12.7	6.4	54.0
Adults Care – 18-64	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	175.1	63.4	30.0	268.6
Adults Care – 65+	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	153.9	48.1	26.8	228.9
Safeguarding Adults	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	40.3	8.5	1.1	49.9
Other Adults Social Care	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.9	2.0	9.7	42.6
P. Health children's services	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.3	6.7	3.6	26.6
P. Health adults' services	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	19.1	8.6	4.6	32.3
Other Public Health services	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.1	2.5	3.0	9.7
Homelessness	1.4	2.5	0.3	-0.4	0.6	1.6	0.5	0.6	1.0	7.0	4.1	19.1
Housing Benefits admin.	0.9	1.0	0.5	0.6	0.6	1.4	0.3	0.4	0.0	1.6	2.0	9.3
Other Gen. Fund housing	0.2	0.5	0.0	-0.1	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.0	-0.1	0.8	2.7
Libraries & Archives	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.8	2.0	0.7	10.5
Culture, Heritage & Tourism	0.3	2.6	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	4.0	1.5	8.8
Sport, Leisure & Parks	5.4	3.2	1.7	-0.2	0.9	2.9	0.5	0.3	2.1	5.3	0.7	22.9
Cemetery & Crematoria	0.2	0.1	-0.1	-0.2	0.0	0.0	-0.2	0.0	0.0	-1.9	-0.8	-2.9
Trading Standards	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.3	0.2	2.9
Regulatory services	2.0	0.8	-0.1	-0.3	1.3	2.0	0.6	0.7	0.0	0.4	1.4	8.7

	East Devon	Exeter	Mid Devon	North Devon	South Hams	Teignbridge	Torridge	West Devon	Devon CC	Plymouth	Torbay	TOTAL COST
Community safety	0.6	0.5	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.4	2.9
Flood & Coastal Protection	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.1	-0.9	0.7
Street cleansing	1.8	1.7	0.6	0.7	0.9	2.4	1.0	0.6	0.0	4.6	1.9	16.2
Waste Disposal	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	26.5	1.4	6.5	34.5
Waste Coll. & Recycling	6.4	3.9	0.7	0.8	6.2	4.6	1.9	2.8	16.6	12.7	6.0	62.7
Building control	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	-0.4	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.7
Planning (dev. control)	1.6	0.5	0.4	0.1	1.7	1.3	0.3	0.7	0.8	1.3	0.3	9.0
Planning policy	0.5	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.2	3.3
Environment & Climate	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	2.6	1.2	0.2	5.2
<i>Economic &amp; Com. Dev. cost</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>7.4</i>	<i>1.6</i>	<i>1.9</i>	<i>3.1</i>	<i>0.8</i>	<i>2.1</i>	<i>1.8</i>	<i>8.7</i>	<i>10.8</i>	<i>4.6</i>	<i>43.8</i>
<i>Economic &amp; Com. Dev. inc.</i>	<i>-0.1</i>	<i>-13.9</i>	<i>-1.5</i>	<i>-2.3</i>	<i>-3.5</i>	<i>-0.8</i>	<i>-2.2</i>	<i>-1.4</i>	<i>-6.2</i>	<i>-23.6</i>	<i>-3.7</i>	<i>-59.2</i>
Economic & Community Development.	0.8	-6.6	0.1	-0.4	-0.4	0.0	0.0	0.4	2.5	-12.8	1.0	-15.4
Coroners & courts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.7	0.4	2.9
Corporate & Democratic	0.4	0.7	1.1	-1.5	0.8	-0.6	0.4	0.5	2.6	3.3	4.4	12.1
Local tax collection	1.4	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.4	1.3	7.7
Emergency planning	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.9
Other central services	0.0	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	-0.7	1.2	0.0	2.0
Non-distributed costs	0.0	1.3	0.7	0.8	0.2	1.6	0.2	0.4	5.5	0.0	1.3	11.9
Finance & Procurement	1.2	1.7	0.7	1.2	0.6	1.4	0.6	0.3	10.2	4.6	3.4	25.8
FM, Property & Accom'm'n.	1.1	1.4	1.5	2.1	0.5	0.2	1.0	0.0	0.2	10.4	2.6	21.0
ICT, Change & Cust. Svs.	1.9	4.0	1.1	2.8	1.4	1.7	1.5	1.2	11.8	13.8	1.8	43.1
Legal services	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.3	3.6	1.4	2.8	10.2
HR & OD	0.4	0.8	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.2	6.3	2.3	2.1	14.1
Senior Management	1.1	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.5	0.7	0.4	0.5	2.9	2.2	2.5	13.0
Office Accommodation	0.5	0.7	0.3	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	2.5	1.6	1.4	8.4
Cllr. expenses & allowances	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.3	1.3	1.2	0.5	5.9
Election costs	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.4	0.5	0.3	4.0
Other overheads	1.0	0.8	2.0	10.4	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.1	12.4	1.4	11.5	40.3
Housing Benefits	15.5	28.6	11.2	17.4	10.5	18.0	9.8	6.5	0.0	40.4	35.3	193.2
Levies	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.6	0.2	2.8
Trading Accounts	-0.5	0.0	0.0	-0.2	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.0	0.0	-1.5	0.0	-2.4
Capital financing	1.2	5.9	1.1	2.3	1.0	2.0	0.2	1.4	41.3	48.5	20.7	125.6
Interest, investment inc.	-2.2	-1.7	-0.7	-0.4	-1.8	-1.2	-0.7	-2.0	-4.0	-4.8	-14.2	-33.6

	East Devon	Exeter	Mid Devon	North Devon	South Hams	Teignbridge	Torridge	West Devon	Devon CC	Plymouth	Torbay	TOTAL COST
NET COST OF SERVICES	43.1	51.8	25.8	36.8	26.2	40.1	21.3	16.9	1,372.9	517.2	319.1	2,471.1



## Annex 2 - Medium Term Financial Profile (£m)

	Year -1 (2026/27) (£m)	Year 0 (2027/28) (£m)	Year 1 (2028/29) (£m)	Year 2 (2029/30) (£m)	Year 3 (2030/31) (£m)	Year 4 (2031/32) (£m)	Year 5 (2032/33) (£m)	Year 6 (2033/34) (£m)	Year 7 (2034/35) (£m)	Year 8 (2035/36) (£m)	Year 9 (2036/37) (£m)	Year 10 (2037/38) (£m)
<b>Base Case proposal</b>												
Transition costs	4.6	22.4	20.1	7.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Savings in each year	0.0	0.0	-8.4	-33.6	-62.1	-64.5	-64.5	-64.5	-64.5	-64.5	-64.5	-64.5
Incremental Net Impact	4.6	22.4	11.7	-25.7	-62.1	-64.5	-64.5	-64.5	-64.5	-64.5	-64.5	-64.5
Cumulative Impact	4.6	27.0	38.7	13.1	-49.0	-113.6	-178.1	-242.6	-307.1	-371.7	-436.2	-500.7
<b>Modified Proposal</b>	Year -1	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Transition costs	5.8	27.7	27.3	9.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Savings in each year	0.0	0.0	-4.9	-29.7	-54.8	-58.4	-58.4	-58.4	-58.4	-58.4	-58.4	-58.4
Incremental Net Impact	5.8	27.7	22.4	-20.4	-54.8	-58.4	-58.4	-58.4	-58.4	-58.4	-58.4	-58.4
Cumulative Impact	5.8	33.5	55.9	35.6	-19.2	-77.6	-136.0	-194.4	-252.8	-311.2	-369.6	-428.0

## **Appendix 2 - Implementation plan**

Insert [Appendix 2 - Implementation Timeline.pdf](#)

Continuing Authority Implementation Plan		Timeline																							
Key Milestones		2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046
Phase 1: Programme planning and pre-enquiries activities																									
Submission of formal enquiry proposal			28 Nov 25																						
Secretary General report to Government																									
Ministerial decision to implement a regional																									
Possibility of the Minister instructing LGfE to deliver a structural review of Devon electoral boundaries																									
Plymouth City Council 2026 Elections																									
Phase 2: likely start of implementation programme, upon government decision																									
Parliamentary Approval for Structural Changes Order to expand boundary (Date TBC)																									
Possibility of the Minister instructing LGfE to deliver a structural review of Devon electoral boundaries																									
Phase 3: Implementation Executive - Transition period begins																									
May 2027 Elections - TBC by MHCLG after submission (Plymouth U3, South Hams All out)																									
Budget setting for the existing authority on the new boundary for 2028/29																									
Phase 4: Vesting day - Transition is complete and services operate within extended area.																									
Confirmation or extension of the boundary by LGfE (Date unknown)																									
Completion of boundary review by LGfE (Date unknown)																									
Workstream - Programme Management and Governance		2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046
Internal programme support (Legal, HR and financial)																									
MHCLG Agreement / Approval for Continuing Authority																									
Governance established (PMO Reporting/RAGS/Planning)																									
Detailed transition implementation plan agreed and shared with MHCLG																									
Alignment of existing change activities across councils																									
Council board to oversee the programme in place																									
Delivery of safe & legal May 2027 elections for the existing councils																									
Delivery of safe & legal May 2027 elections for the Unitary Council																									
Boundary Commission Review - TBC - anticipated to start date after the May Election																									
Legal policy and processes in place for the expanded boundary - application of Plymouth City Council policies to the 13 areas and communication of the changes involved to residents																									
Preparation of Day 1 Operation & Service Plans, including staff training and communication of changes created																									
Programme closure and handover to transformation																									
Monitoring and evaluation																									
Benefit realisation																									
Workstream - Community Customer and Partnerships		2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046
Development of Neighbourhood Networks Operating Model with Communities (Town/Parish and Community Reg)																									
Ongoing engagement with residents and stakeholders																									
Expand current access arrangements to cover expanded area																									
Neighbourhood Networks operational																									
Workstream - Assets Optimisation (Technology and Property)		2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046
Baseline property plan for expanded area, map out what property to onboard																									
Identify business critical data and systems from 13 areas and create transition plan																									
Prepare the onboard new staff																									
Implement transition plan for business critical data and systems from predecessor councils																									
Integrate capital investment programme for 13 areas																									
Use existing data management policy and processes and communicate to staff																									
Use existing security protocols and policies (and communicate to staff)																									
Workstream - People and Culture		2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046
Communication Strategy and Plan agreed for all staff																									
HR Transition Management Plan agreed for new staff																									
Existing People and Culture Model shared with new staff																									
External and Internal Communications delivered																									
Develop and Deliver Staff Engagement Plan																									
TUPE transfer of new staff to existing Council																									
Trade Union Engagement for new staff including TUPE arrangements																									
Closure of the workstream and handover as BCU																									
Staff Terms and Conditions and Job Descriptions updated and aligned to existing authority Policy and Process																									
Workstream - Service Alignment and Improvement		2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046
Alignment of service requirements																									
New Functional operating Models and Services aligned																									
Service Policy, Process and Procedures Prioritised and updated																									
SLAs and Performance Metrics aligned																									
Revised Membership of Partnership Boards (new area representation on PBs)																									
Service Continuity across predecessor Council Boundaries ensured (either side of vesting day)																									
External Agencies and Statutory Bodies Notified																									
Workstream - Finance		2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046
Budget Baseline Defined																									
Implementation budget prepared and in place for 2027/28																									
Agree responsibilities for legacy financial statements with new authorities																									
Agree responsibility for Peninsula Pensions, Pension Fund Accountable Body and Devon Audit Partnership																									
Spendings protocol and governance for all authorities in place and monitored																									
Internal Audit Plan, Audit Charter and Risk Strategy reviewed and in place																									
Income / payment arrangements transition and communication																									
Consolidation of grants, fees and charges, and approach to Divorced Funding agreed																									
Council Tax (Equalisation plus Additional National Amounts through MHCLG, collection scheme and rates agreed)																									
Consult on and introduce a new Council Tax Support Policy																									
Business rates collection scheme and billing agreed																									
Consult on business rates																									
Financial Strategy and budget for 2028/29 agreed (incl. aligned capital programmes, Fees and Charges)																									
Write new Treasury Management, Capital and Investment Strategies																									
Existing contracts reviewed and requirements moving forward determined																									
Transfer of company holdings from South Hams to Plymouth Councils																									
Insurance arrangements for the existing authority in place																									
Approach and process for determining governance balances in the councils concerned																									
Transfer of assets and liabilities to existing authority completed																									

## **Appendix 3 - Letters of support**

Insert [Appendix 3 - Letters of Support.pdf](#)

Helen Wylde-Archibald  
Chief Executive Officer  
Plymouth Chamber of  
Commerce

24th October 2025

Tudor Evans OBE  
Leader, Plymouth City Council

**RE: Local Government Reorganisation in Devon**

Dear Tudor,

I am writing to you as the Chief Executive Officer of the Plymouth Chamber of Commerce. Plymouth Chamber is a founder member of Devon Chamber and has been supporting the Plymouth's maritime city's businesses for more than 200 years having been founded in 1813. We have over 800 members and we have our own programme of events, attended by over 40,000 people last year. We run various business support programmes and initiatives, and our strategic priorities are people, planet, and purpose: comprising inclusivity, working towards net zero and doing business that has positive social impact, creates employment and sustainable growth.

Plymouth Chamber has been briefed on regular occasions by your officers and so we are aware of the issues and the options for Devon.

We support the government's proposal to move to a simpler and more efficient unitary structure of local government for Devon which we believe will benefit businesses across the whole of Devon.

Plymouth Chamber of Commerce supports the proposal by Plymouth City Council for four unitary councils in Devon to replace the current two-tier system. We also support the proposed modest extension of the city boundary into the wider travel to work area which we think will enable a more strategic approach to future growth and a more consistent offer to businesses in the area.

**Devon Chamber**

Unit 5, Derriford Park, Brest Road, Derriford, Plymouth, PL6 5QZ

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CHAMBER

EXETER  
CHAMBER





We also believe that it is important that any proposals for local government reorganisation reinforce the opportunities for growth linked to the recent announcements of the Defence Deal for the city, its identification as a national centre for Marine Autonomy, and the need to deliver significant numbers of new homes for all the workers that are projected to be needed for these endeavours.

We are aware of other proposals for the area of Devon and so look forward to further engagement with you in the future when the government undertakes its statutory consultation.

Your sincerely,

*Helen Wylde-Archibald*

**Helen Wylde-Archibald**

**Chief Executive Officer**

**Plymouth Chamber of Commerce**

CC Richard Steven – Chair Of Plymouth & Devon Chambers Of Commerce

**Devon Chamber**

Unit 5, Derriford Park, Brest Road, Derriford, Plymouth, PL6 5QZ

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CHAMBER



EXETER  
CHAMBER







HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Tudor Evans OBE  
Leader, Plymouth City Council

30 October 2025

Dear Tudor,

### **Local Government Reorganisation in Devon**

I am writing to you to back proposals for an expanded Plymouth, an expanded Torbay, a large unitary Exeter and surrounding areas council and the creation of a new Coast and Countryside Devon unitary council.

I have long championed the South West getting our fair share and I believe the current set up of small unitaries alongside district and county council means our voice is diluted, services are replicated and there is not the efficiency of delivery of local services necessary to provide taxpayers with value for money and for councils to have a clear focus on growth.

I back proposals set out in the Government's white paper on English devolution. I am aware now that the people of Plymouth have, again, rejected proposals for an expensive and pointless city mayor, we need to now motor with local government reorganisation as a necessary step towards proper devolution of powers and funding to the far south west. I continue to back a Devon and Cornwall option for that devolution, but want to see Devon proceed at pace. To do that, I believe we need to settle LGR swiftly.

The proposals for a larger Plymouth, a larger Torbay, a new Exeter and district unitary alongside a unitary Devon coast and country authority is the best option in my view. This not only provides a strong basis for the urban areas to accelerate their complimentary regeneration agendas, but would make provision for a strongly rural-focussed authority that can respond more effectively in delivering services to dispersed communities. I will advocate for this with my Ministerial colleagues.

In the case of the "expanded Plymouth" part of your proposal, I believe this will ensure that local people reap the benefits to the city arising from the once-in-a-generation opportunities from the defence deal, the national centre for marine autonomy designation, and from the new town announcement. This will also provide Plymouth with a strong voice as and when the Peninsula Mayoral Strategic Authority is taken forward.

Plymouth Sutton and Devonport  
luke.pollard.mp@parliament.uk  
www.lukepollard.org  
@lukepollard

Plymouth: 01752 717255 Westminster: 020 7219 2749

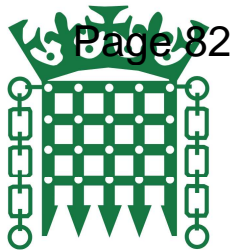
In my view the proposal for four unitary councils in Devon, with an expanded Plymouth area covering the 13 parishes immediately surrounding the city, which was the subject of your “Big Community Conversation”, is both bold and transformational.

When the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government publishes their statutory consultation sometime during 2026, I would appreciate further briefings on the next steps the City Council proposes to take with its reorganisation proposals.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'luke', written in a cursive style.

Luke Pollard MP  
Labour and Co-operative MP for Plymouth Sutton and Devonport



**Fred Thomas MP**  
**Member of Parliament for Plymouth Moor View**

Councillor Tudor Evans OBE  
Leader, Plymouth City Council

23 October 2025

Dear Tudor,

#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN DEVON**

As you know, I support the Government's proposals, set out in its White Paper of December 2024, to create unitary local government across the whole of England.

I also support the aim of having these unitary authorities combine into Mayoral Strategic Authorities.

This vision was laid out clearly in the Labour Party manifesto that I and hundreds of other MPs were elected on last year.

I'm writing to confirm that I support your proposal for the creation of four unitary councils in Devon to replace the current county council and eight district councils.

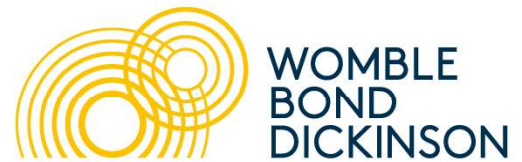
I also support your proposal for a modest boundary extension of the Plymouth City Council area into the South Hams.

I wish you all the best on your local government proposal. Please continue to keep me updated on future progress.

Best wishes,

*Fred Thomas*

**Fred Thomas MP**  
Labour Member of Parliament for Plymouth Moor View



22 October 2025

Tudor Evans OBE  
Plymouth City Council

Christopher Stephens  
Chair of Plymouth Regeneration Forum  
c/o womble Bond Dickinson (UK) LLP  
Ballard House  
West Hoe Road  
Plymouth  
PL1 3AE

Dear Tudor

### **Local Government Reorganisation in Devon**

I am writing to you as the Chair of the Plymouth Regeneration Forum.

The Plymouth Regeneration Forum was set up some years ago to engage with key investors, landowners, and other development stakeholders in the city. The Forum is a chance to discuss relevant planning issues affecting the city and to act as an opportunity for members to be kept informed of the work that the City Council is doing as well as hearing from the development industry about issues that are of concern to them. The Forum is managed in partnership with Womble Bond Dickinson.

We have had presentations at the Plymouth Regeneration Forum from City Council officers on progress with local government reorganisation during 2025. At the 4th of September meeting, there was an interactive session where participants were asked to respond to a series of questions regarding Plymouth's proposals for local government reorganisation.

In response to the question: What opportunities do you see in Plymouth City Council's proposal for an expanded authority?, participants highlighted the following:

- Stronger local voice recognised by the government by meeting criteria of the government thus funding.
- Cost savings.
- An opportunity to clear out "dead wood".
- Better connectivity via transport to the city to help with the job growth.
- A stronger collective voice to represent the area nationally.
- To look at transport efficiencies more coherently.
- Clarity and confidence among investors.

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- Ability to plan infrastructure and provide greater certainty enabling business to make better medium and long term investment plans.
- Potential economies of scale across the various organisations.
- Economies of scale.
- Better ways to manage the travel to work area.
- Pulled funding resources. Strategic improvements to infrastructure.
- Hopefully more consistency in terms of development throughout the expanded authority.
- Access to government funding.
- Reducing costs of delivering services across the area by avoiding duplication.
- Greater voice for Plymouth which means more investment for more affordable homes/creation new jobs/improved local services.
- Consistent approach to development management and planning but needs Local Plan to evolve.
- Opportunities to improve public transport across the areas where Plymouth would expand to, and across the region.
- United consistency across the area.
- Opportunities to combine budgets and overheads to create a more efficient system.
- More cohesive approach to housing and infrastructure delivery across the expanded local authority - but the local authority needs to be adequately staffed and resourced.

In response to the question: What concerns do you have about Plymouth City Council's proposal for an expanded local authority?, participants commented:

- Distraction from real services in the interim.
- Whilst the change happens there could be a vacuum of decisions.
- The encouragement for 'local spending' within the local economy will have a wider catchment area.
- Need to deliver well across many areas , more challenging for SMEs.
- Difficulties in aligning agendas across formerly separate authorities. Will need strong common purpose.
- Ability to knit competing interests constructively. Difficulty in achieving growth agenda as most settlements will not be suitable except Ivybridge and Sherford.
- Plymouth's previous performance hasn't been great so expanding this leadership could make the whole region fail further.
- Spread too thinly at inception.
- If it doesn't bring in more resources than there's more pressure on existing.
- Time lag for implementation and uncertainty during that period.

- Lack of resourcing.
- Direction of travel to a situation where funding decision at mayoral level are not as local.
- More red tape stifling growth with added wider arguments slowing potential investment and growth.
- Pressure on services and cost due to geography.
- Delay in implementation.
- Difficulty in aligning agendas.
- Increased council tax for better service attracting skills to the region for new jobs.
- No improvement in service delivery due to expanded area.
- Decision making on matters such as planning and housing allocation, making sure that the needs of the new areas absorbed into Plymouth City Council are reflected and balanced with those of the existing authority.
- Reduction in staffing and efficiency of works. Will there be a lack of 'on the ground' knowledge reflective of the whole area?
- Smaller areas needs may get overlooked.
- That a priority to deliver cost / efficiency savings isn't at the expense of staffing and resources required to deliver what will be expanded services.

In response to the question: Thinking about the long term (not just the next couple of years) what opportunities would you like there to be for Plymouth businesses?, participants said:

- Increased opportunity's to build housing for the new jobs coming. Not everyone wants to live in a city centre.
- Consistency on the procurement asks of businesses across the regions to help streamline our strategies and internal development etc.
- Breadth. For resilience. Not overly reliant in 1 or 2 sectors.
- Greater certainty on opportunities to incentivise investment.
- Hopefully, businesses only with a PL postcode getting the work in Plymouth.
- Utilising local businesses and consultants for local work and projects.
- A way to share our long term plans with you.
- Working with those on the ground and actually listening to them.
- Become better at attracting private funding to support gov funded redevelopment.
- Strong investment in forward thinking infrastructure that allows growth to happen in a sustained and sustainable way.
- Nationally focussed campaign on strength of combined area for advanced manufacturing.
- Increased opportunities with development partners to deliver private rented sector/build to rent in Plymouth city centre.



- A focus on working with local businesses.
- Opportunity to consider how public transport integrates across the region to improve service.
- Wider tender agreements for both social and private housing.
- Better consistency with planning and development, ensuring not all areas are left behind.
- Ability to attract larger employers to the region in order that job opportunities, particularly at a senior level, become available.
- A fully joined up approach across the southwest for growth and resilience not an enlarged Plymouth and Exeter working against each other.

As you can see from these responses there is clear in principle support for unitary government in Devon and in particular for Plymouth's expanded area.

There was also a fourth question asked about future engagement by any expanded authority with local business. Plymouth Regeneration Forum members could also see other benefits from the streamlined proposal for four unitary councils in Devon in terms of public sector service reform building upon business relationship programmes that already exist and which could be enhanced in the future so that the voice of business is heard in future strategic growth discussions.

I trust the above comments are of assistance and we look forward to discussing local government reform again in the new year when the government publishes its statutory consultation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher Stephens". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and slightly larger than the rest of the letters.

**Christopher Stephens**

Chair of Plymouth Regeneration Forum  
c/o Womble Bond Dickinson (UK) LLP

Professor Claire Taylor  
Vice-Chancellor's Office  
Plymouth Marjon University  
Derriford Road  
Plymouth  
PL6 8BH

21<sup>st</sup> October 2025

Tudor Evans OBE  
Leader, Plymouth City Council

Dear Tudor,

#### **Local Government Reorganisation in Devon**

For over 180 years, Marjon staff and students have sought to make a difference for individual lives and communities. Founded in London in 1840 and moving to Plymouth over 50 years ago we are proud to be 'place-based', working regionally, nationally and globally where there is a need to address inequity, raise aspiration and provide graduates to fill higher level skills gaps. Our strategy, Marjon 2030, makes clear that we are a university driven by strong principles of social justice, rooted in our Church of England foundation, and committed to the common good. We work within a values framework, and our purpose is to tackle inequity.

Our focus is to ensure that we provide outstanding graduates to work in the public, professional and community sectors. Our curriculum is designed with employers to ensure relevance, and we are proud of our track record across key areas of need including professionals working within education, health, criminal justice, business, social and human sciences. We therefore recognise our central role in addressing the projected employment opportunities in the city arising from the defence deal, other regeneration initiatives, and the huge opportunities that will come with a new structure of local government in Devon. Critically, we have a role to play ensuring our public services infrastructure is fit for purpose.

I am aware of your proposal to expand Plymouth's boundary into the South Hams to create a larger unitary council. Given the huge pipeline of growth planned for the city, and the need to link the opportunities that will arise from this to the aspirations of young people in the city, especially those from more deprived backgrounds, I see educational advantages to your proposal. These include more simplified and unified governance, opportunities for improved strategic coordination in relation to educational progression pathways, strengthening preventative support and early intervention for children and families, and more integrated long-term school-place and infrastructure planning. I therefore support your proposed boundary extension.

It is also important to point out how your proposals for the whole of Devon will provide a strong foundation for the work of the proposed South-West Peninsula Mayoral Strategic Authority. This will be essential to better coordinate the delivery of higher skills on a regional basis making the most of the powers and funding devolved to it once it is established. The recent Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper is explicit about the role for Strategic Authorities in this respect.

I have also been made aware of your proposal for the replacement of the existing two-tier local government arrangements in Devon with four unitary councils. Again, this will simplify how the education sector can engage with a streamlined local government structure to deliver more targeted skills programmes and clear progression pathways linked to the new economic opportunities. I therefore support your proposals for local government reorganisation in Devon.

I would be grateful if the City Council could continue to keep me informed of progress on local government reorganisation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claire Taylor', with a stylized, cursive script.

Professor Claire Taylor  
Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive  
Plymouth Marjon University



17 October 2025

Tudor Evans OBE  
Leader, Plymouth City Council

Dear Tudor

### **Local Government Reorganisation in Devon**

As Chair of the Destination Plymouth's Brand Development Group and following my recent presentation of the city's new brand strategy, I am writing to formally address the matter of local government reorganisation in Devon.

Plymouth is currently experiencing an exciting period of change and growth. Having been briefed on your proposals for an expanded Plymouth and the creation of four unitary councils in Devon, I believe this initiative aligns perfectly with our city branding values: **to go boldly, go together, and go far**. I believe a streamlined structure of local government is essential to reflect and support this vital new agenda.

As Vice-Chancellor of Arts University Plymouth, and looking from an educational perspective, we see numerous benefits from your proposal including:

- Simplified and unified governance for the delivery of education services.
- Improved strategic coordination of school place planning, particularly for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- Enhanced integration of early help and family hubs, strengthening preventative support and early intervention for children and families.
- The capacity to attract and retain creative graduates, which is essential for filling the estimated 25,000 new jobs arising from the transformational initiatives recently announced for the city.

Our role as a specialist Arts University is to provide the creative and cultural capacity cultivated through practice-based research and education. Our graduates develop the skills and attributes necessary for Plymouth's unique, nationally significant growth agenda. However, we believe the efficient delivery of this planned growth would be significantly compromised without your proposed structural changes to local government in Devon. Arts University Plymouth therefore unequivocally endorses Plymouth City Council's proposals for local government reorganisation in Devon.

Yours sincerely

**Professor Paul Fieldsend-Danks**  
**Vice-Chancellor & Chief Executive**

Richard Stevens  
*Chair of Plymouth Growth Board*  
1 Milehouse Road  
Milehouse  
Plymouth  
Devon  
PL3 4AA

17th October 2025

Tudor Evans OBE  
*Leader, Plymouth City Council*  
Council House  
Armada Way  
Plymouth  
PL1 2AA

### **Local Government Reorganisation in Devon**

Dear Tudor,

I am writing to you as the Chair of the Plymouth Growth Board. As you know the Plymouth Growth Board (PGB) is a public private partnership, bringing together representatives from key businesses and business organisations, Plymouth's three universities, City College Plymouth, representatives of the voluntary and community sector, Plymouth Culture, and others. Its primary role is to ensure city organisations collaborate and oversee the delivery of the Plymouth Economic Strategy and Plymouth Plan. It is the recognised voice of business in delivering economic growth.

Firstly, I would like to thank you and your officers for regularly engaging and consulting with the Plymouth Growth Board on local government reorganisation in Devon since the publication of the government's white paper. We feel well-versed in the issues arising from local government reorganisation for business and are aware of the various options being put forward.

Plymouth Growth Board supports the government's proposal to move to a simpler and more efficient unitary structure of local government for Devon. We believe strongly from our experience that this will remove duplication and inefficiency and deliver significant savings.

Plymouth Growth Board strongly supports the proposal by Plymouth City Council for four unitary council's in Devon to replace the current two-tier system. We especially endorse the part of the proposal which seeks to extend the boundary of the city to encompass the towns and villages immediately surrounding Plymouth which from a business perspective are already economically linked to the city. We see the following benefits of this proposal for business:

- Driving strategic economic growth and investment on and expanded economic footprint to deliver the Defence Deal, the plans for 10,000 homes in the city centre, the further investment in the Freeport and Enterprise Zone and the £6 billion regeneration pipeline.
- Creating city growth-orientated local authorities that can improve investor confidence and build upon the already close working relationships with business.

- Delivering both strategic infrastructure improving regional connectivity the rough the Plymouth Metro rail initiative and the completion of the current £719 million strategic and sustainable transport programmes.
- Enabling a more strategic and integrated approach to spatial planning both in relation to the new-style local plans required by the Planning and Infrastructure Bill but also allowing for an early start with a Peninsula Mayoral Strategic Authority Spatial Development Strategy
- Ensuring through workforce and skills development that the projected shortfall of some 25,000 jobs in Plymouth expected in the next 10 years arising from the expansion of the defence sector and opportunities linked to Plymouth's designation as the national centre for marine autonomy can be addressed with skills aligned to those new jobs.
- Ensuring simplified governance and more responsive service delivery arrangements for business with single points of contact.
- Putting the authorities on a firmer financial footing in order to maintain a focus on economic development and regeneration.
- Enabling the continued development of sector-specific opportunities, especially in relation to marine autonomy and the cultural sector.
- Facilitating a more strategic approach over a wider geographical area for the continuation of climate and sustainability initiatives.
- Enabling a much-needed acceleration of housing and future strategic land releases.

We believe that the creation of four unitary authorities for Devon (three of which have ambitious and complimentary strategies for growth and regeneration) will provide a strong urban voice for the planned Peninsula Mayoral Strategic Authority when it is created.

We also see other benefits from the streamlined proposal for four unitary councils in Devon in terms of public sector service reform building upon business relationship programmes that could be enhanced in the future so the voice of business is heard in future strategic growth discussions.

We look forward to further engagement with you in the future when the statutory consultation is undertaken by the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government which we understand will be early in 2026.

Your sincerely,



**Richard Stevens MBE**  
**Chair, Plymouth Growth Board**





Verena Womersley  
Chair, Plymouth Housing Development Partnership  
C/o Clarion Housing Group  
8 Shelley Way, Plymouth, Devon, PL5 1QF

17 October 2025

Tudor Evans OBE  
Leader, Plymouth City Council

Dear Tudor,

### **Local Government Reorganisation in Devon**

I write as the Chair of the Plymouth Housing Development Partnership (PHDP). The PHDP is a group of 9 leading Housing Associations working with the City Council and Homes England to maximise the delivery of new affordable housing in Plymouth. Collectively our members manage more than 20,000 affordable homes in the city and invest many tens of millions of pounds into their existing and new build properties every year.

Following the briefing and discussion with the PHDP members and Council officers, the Partnership members voiced support of the government's proposal to move to a simpler and more efficient unitary structure of local government for Devon. During the session it was discussed by members that they believe this has ability to benefit the cross boundary working that the housing associations achieve in providing affordable housing across the whole of Devon.

The consensus within the PHDP was that the proposal by Plymouth City Council for four unitary council's in Devon - replacing the current two-tier system - gives rise to providing an improved strategic approach to the housing challenges of the area and enabling an acceleration of housing delivery within an expanded Plymouth. The proposed extension of the city boundary into the wider housing market area could in our members view enable a more strategic approach to future growth.

We also believe that the proposal by Plymouth City Council provides a clear opportunity to drive the delivery of a significant numbers of new homes for all the new jobs arising from the investment in the dockyard and the plan for “A Town in the City” comprising 10,000 homes.

We look forward to more detailed discussions with you and your officers once the government announces their intentions for local government in Devon.

Your sincerely,

**Verena Womersley**  
**Chair, Plymouth Housing Development Partnership**



Tudor Evans OBE  
Leader  
Plymouth City Council  
Ballard House  
26 West Hoe Road  
Plymouth  
PL1 3BJ

Thursday 06<sup>th</sup> November 2025

Dear Tudor,

### **Local Government Reorganisation in Devon**

I am writing to you in connection with local government reorganisation following briefings from your officers over this the course of this year.

The University of Plymouth sees the benefits of working with a Peninsula Mayoral Strategic Authority when it is established to deal with regional matters, especially skills, once government announces its devolution plans for the southwest. In principle, we also support the government's proposal to move to a simpler and more efficient unitary structure of local government for Devon which we believe will benefit education providers across the whole of Devon.

Plymouth City Council has proposed four unitary councils in Devon to replace the current two-tier system in place outside of Plymouth and Torbay Unitary Authorities. We recognise that not all councils in Devon are supportive of this approach and that issues of boundary changes are contentious ones. However, given the newly announced Defence Growth Deal and our on-going collaborations together, we believe it is important that Plymouth's unitary authority has the scale and capacity to ensure that these investments deliver real and lasting benefits to the city and more widely. As such we are supportive of your proposal, include the proposed boundary changes.

At the University of Plymouth, we are significantly investing in our campus and facilities to ensure a first-class learning, research and working environments as part of our commitment to a "triple gold student experience." We are at the forefront of globally significant research in relation to marine science and engineering, climate change, and oceanography. This is vital to the wider growth agenda of the city as we need to recruit and retain bright young people to fill the projected shortfall of some 25,000 jobs because of Plymouth's unique role related to defence of the realm.

We look forward to hearing from you further in the future on local government reorganisation.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Richard Davies  
**Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive**

## Appendix 4 - List of figures and tables

Figure/ Table	Page number	Description	Source
Figure 7.1	Page 15	A map showing the proportion of population working in Plymouth from neighbouring areas.	Original content developed by Plymouth City Council, derived from Census 2021 data <a href="#">Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics</a>
Figure 7.2	Page 16	A map showing the Plymouth Policy Area	Original content developed by Plymouth City Council to illustrate the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan: <a href="#">The Plymouth Plan   SO1 - Delivering the spatial strategy</a>
Figure 7.3	Page 17	A figure showing the Plymouth Metro Local Rail Network	Original content developed by PCC to illustrate the Plymouth Metro Local Rail Network
Figure 2.1	Page 24	A map showing the base case for Devon	Original content developed for this document; derived from <a href="#">Open Geography Portal</a>
Table 2.1	Page 24	A table showing the assessment of the Base Case for Devon against the Government criteria	Original content developed for this document.
Figure 3.1	Page 27	A map showing the expanded 4 unitary authorities	Original content developed for this document; derived from <a href="#">Open Geography Portal</a>
Figure 10.1	Page 38	A map showing the base case	Original content developed for this document; derived from <a href="#">Open Geography Portal</a>
Figure 10.2	Page 39	A map showing the Plymouth base case	Original content developed for this document; derived from <a href="#">Open Geography Portal</a>
Figure 10.3	Page 42	A map showing the Torbay base case	Original content developed for this

Figure/ Table	Page number	Description	Source
			document; derived from <a href="#">Open Geography Portal</a>
Figure 10.4	Page 45	A map showing the Exeter base case	Original content developed for this document; derived from <a href="#">Open Geography Portal</a>
Figure 10.5	Page 47	A map showing the Devon Coast and Countryside base case	Original content developed for this document; derived from <a href="#">Open Geography Portal</a>
Table 10.1	Page 50	A table showing the base case assessment against the government criteria.	Original content developed for this document.
Figure 11.1	Page 52	A map showing the modification – Four Unitary Authority Option	Original content developed for this document; derived from <a href="#">Open Geography Portal</a>
Figure 11.2	Page 53	A map showing the expanded Plymouth modification	Original content developed for this document; derived from <a href="#">Open Geography Portal</a>
Figure 11.3	Page 56	A map showing the expanded Torbay modification	Original content developed for this document; derived from <a href="#">Open Geography Portal</a>
Figure 11.4	Page 58	A map showing the expanded Exeter modification	Original content developed for this document; derived from <a href="#">Open Geography Portal</a>
Figure 11.5	Page 60	A map showing the Devon Coast and Countryside modification	Original content developed for this document; derived from <a href="#">Open Geography Portal</a>
Table 11.1	Page 61	A table showing the assessment of the four unitary model against the government criteria	Original content developed for this document.
Figure 12.1	Page 64	A map showing the new Devon proposal	Original content developed for this document; derived from <a href="#">Open Geography Portal</a>
Figure 12.2	Page 66	A map showing Plymouth in the new Devon proposal	Original content developed for this document; derived from <a href="#">Open Geography Portal</a>

Figure/ Table	Page number	Description	Source
Figure 12.3	Page 67	A map showing Torbay in the new Devon proposal	Original content developed for this document; derived from <a href="#">Open Geography Portal</a>
Figure 12.4	Page 68	A map showing Devon in the new Devon proposal	Original content developed for this document; derived from <a href="#">Open Geography Portal</a>
Table 12.1	Page 70	A table showing the assessment of the New Devon proposal against the government criteria	Original content developed for this document.
Figure 13.1	Page 72	A map showing the 1-4-5 proposal	Original content developed for this document; derived from <a href="#">Open Geography Portal</a>
Figure 13.2	Page 73	A map showing Plymouth in the 1-4-5 proposal	Original content developed for this document; derived from <a href="#">Open Geography Portal</a>
Figure 13.3	Page 74	A map showing District 4 in the 1-4-5 proposal	Original content developed for this document; derived from <a href="#">Open Geography Portal</a>
Figure 13.4	Page 76	A map showing District 5 in the 1-4-5 proposal	Original content developed for this document; derived from <a href="#">Open Geography Portal</a>
Table 13.1	Page 77	A table showing the assessment of the 1-4-5 proposal against the Government criteria.	Original content developed for this document.
Figure 14.1	Page 88	A figure showing the implementation of the neighbourhood networks	Original content developed for this document.
Figure 16.1	Page 105	A chart showing the financial sustainability of the four unitary councils in the base case in relation to other unitary councils nationally	Original content developed for this document.
Figure 16.2	Page 105	A chart showing the financial sustainability of the modified four unitary councils in relation to	Original content developed for this document.



Figure/ Table	Page number	Description	Source
		other unitary councils nationally	
Table 16.1	Page 106	A table summarising the modelled position for the base case proposal	Original content developed for this document.
Table 16.2	Page 106	A table summarising the modelled position for the modified proposal	Original content developed for this document.
Table 16.3	Page 107	A table showing the number of housing stock in East Devon District Council, Exeter City Council, and Mid Devon District Council	Original content developed for this document.
Table 16.4	Page 109	A table showing the estimated savings (base and modified proposal)	Original content developed for this document.
Table 16.5	Page 111	A table showing the estimated Devon-wide implementation costs (base proposal)	Original content developed for this document.
Table 16.6	Page 112	A table showing the estimated Devon-wide implementation costs (modified proposal)	Original content developed for this document.
Table 16.7	Page 113	A table showing the estimated implementation costs for expanded Plymouth Council modification only	Original content developed for this document.
Table 16.8	Page 114	A table showing the financial profile up to and including Year 2032/33	Original content developed for this document.
Figure 16.3	Page 115	A chart showing the Usable Revenue Reserves as a proportion of Core Spending Power – Devon compared to other re-organising shire areas	Original content developed for this document.
Figure 16.4	Page 115	A chart showing the Usable Revenue Reserves and cumulative DSG deficit as a proportion of Core Spending Power – Devon compared to other reorganising shire areas	Original content developed for this document.

<b>Figure/ Table</b>	<b>Page number</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Source</b>
Figure 16.5	Page 116	A chart showing the Capital Financing Requirement: Core Spending Power ratio – Devon compared to other reorganising shire areas.	Original content developed for this document.
Figure 16.6	Page 117	A chart showing the Usable Revenue Reserves as a proportion of Core Spending Power – Base proposal unitaries compared to existing English Unitary councils	Original content developed for this document.
Figure 16.7	Page 117	A chart showing the Capital Financing Requirement to Core Spending Power ratio – Base proposal unitaries compared to existing English Unitary councils	Original content developed for this document.
Figure 16.8	Page 118	A chart showing the Usable Revenue Reserves as a proportion of Core Spending Power – Modified proposal unitaries compared to existing English Unitary councils	Original content developed for this document.
Figure 16.9	Page 118	A chart showing the Capital Financing Requirement to Core Spending Power ratio – Modified proposal unitaries compared to existing English Unitary councils	Original content developed for this document.
Figure 18.1	Page 129	A chart showing the implementation timeline	Original content developed for this document; derived from MHCLG guidance
Table 18.1	Page 129	A table outlining implementation processes for continuing and new authorities.	Original content developed for this document; not derived from external sources.

<b>Figure/ Table</b>	<b>Page number</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Source</b>
Table 18.2	Page 131	A table showing the implementation timeline for Plymouth	Original content developed for this document; derived from MHCLG guidance
Figure 18.2	Page 132	A figure showing the structure chart for the LGR implementation programme in Plymouth	Original content developed for this document; not derived from external sources.
Table 19.1	Page 122	A table showing the key risks of implementation	Original content developed for this document; not derived from external sources.

## Appendix 5 - List of acronyms

Acronym	Full Form	Explanation
<b>ASCOF</b>	Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework	National performance measures for adult social care services.
<b>CASD</b>	Continuous At Sea Deterrent	UK's nuclear submarine-based deterrent programme.
<b>CQC</b>	Care Quality Commission	Regulator of health and social care services in England.
<b>DSG</b>	Dedicated Schools Grant	Ring-fenced funding from the Department for Education for schools and education services.
<b>GVA</b>	Gross Value Added	A measure of economic output and productivity.
<b>HRA</b>	Housing Revenue Account	A ring-fenced account for income and expenditure related to council housing.
<b>ICO</b>	Integrated Care Organisation	A partnership model integrating health and social care services.
<b>IDACI</b>	Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index	A sub-measure of deprivation focused on children.
<b>IMD</b>	Index of Multiple Deprivation	A composite measure of relative deprivation across England.
<b>LGBCE</b>	Local Government Boundary Commission for England	Independent body responsible for electoral reviews and boundary changes.
<b>LGR</b>	Local Government Reorganisation	A process led by central government to change how councils are structured and operate in a local area.
<b>MHCLG</b>	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government	Central government department overseeing local government.
<b>MSA</b>	Mayoral Strategic Authority	A proposed regional governance model led by an elected mayor.
<b>MSOA</b>	Middle Layer Super Output Area	A statistical unit of geography used by ONS for data analysis.
<b>MOD</b>	Ministry of Defence	UK government department responsible for defence and armed forces.

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Full Form</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>ONS</b>	Office for National Statistics	UK's national statistical institute.
<b>PMO</b>	Programme Management Office	A team responsible for governance and coordination of major programmes.
<b>RA</b>	Revenue Account	The budget used for day-to-day service delivery and operational costs. It excludes capital expenditure.
<b>SCO</b>	Structural Change Order	A legal document issued by government that sets out the details of a local government reorganisation, including boundaries, powers, and transition arrangements.
<b>SEND</b>	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	A term covering children and young people who require additional support.
<b>TUPE</b>	Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)	Legislation protecting employees when services transfer between organisations.
<b>UKSPF</b>	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	Government fund supporting local economic development and regeneration.
<b>VCSE</b>	Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise	Sector comprising charities, community groups, and social enterprises.

## Appendix 6 - Key terms explained

Term	Meaning
<b>Unitary authority</b>	A single-tier local government responsible for all local services in its area, replacing the two-tier system of county and district councils.
<b>Continuing authority</b>	An existing council that retains its legal identity and absorbs new areas during reorganisation, rather than being replaced or merged.
<b>Vesting day</b>	The official date when the new council structures come into legal effect and begin operating.
<b>Ministerial modification</b>	A change to a submitted proposal made by the Secretary of State to improve outcomes or align with government priorities.
<b>Neighbourhood networks</b>	Proposed local forums that bring together councillors, parish representatives, and community organisations to influence decisions and improve services.
<b>Parish partnership agreements</b>	Formal arrangements between the new council and parish councils to support collaboration and protect local identity.
<b>Plymouth growth area</b>	A geographic area around Plymouth identified for strategic planning and development, including housing and infrastructure.
<b>Plymouth policy area</b>	A planning concept used in the Joint Local Plan to define the wider area that functions as part of Plymouth's housing and economic region.
<b>Joint Local Plan</b>	A shared planning document developed by multiple councils to guide development and land use across a wider area.
<b>Spatial development strategy</b>	A long-term strategic plan for where development should happen, including housing, transport, and infrastructure.
<b>Electoral review</b>	A formal process to assess and redraw council ward boundaries to reflect population changes and ensure fair representation.
<b>Council tax harmonisation</b>	The process of aligning council tax rates across newly formed or reorganised councils to ensure fairness.
<b>Capital receipts</b>	Money from selling assets.
<b>Implementation executive</b>	A temporary governance body within a continuing authority that oversees the transition to the new arrangements.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>Shadow council</b>	A temporary council formed before vesting day to prepare for the launch of a new authority.
<b>Extra care housing</b>	Specialist housing designed for older people who need care and support but want to live independently.
<b>Shared lives placements</b>	A form of adult social care where individuals live with a carer in their home, offering a family-style environment.
<b>Freeport</b>	A designated area where normal tax and customs rules do not apply, intended to boost trade and investment.
<b>Local Transport Authority</b>	The body responsible for planning and managing public transport services in a given area.
<b>Enhanced bus partnership</b>	A formal agreement between councils and bus operators to improve services and coordinate investment.
<b>Wellbeing hubs</b>	Local centres offering integrated health, social care, and community services to support residents' wellbeing.
<b>Civic agreements</b>	Formal arrangements recognising the ceremonial roles of mayors and civic leaders across different communities.
<b>Letters patent</b>	A formal legal document issued by the monarch granting rights or status, such as Plymouth's Lord Mayoralty.



## Appendix 7 - Sources

### Data sources and limitations

This proposal draws on a range of data sources to support the case for a four unitary model of governance. Wherever possible, we have used publicly available datasets published by central government departments, statutory bodies, and recognised sector organisations. These include official statistics, financial returns, and performance indicators.

In some instances, we have relied on data that is not publicly available. This includes proprietary analysis commissioned under commercial contract with external consultancies, as well as internal datasets held by participating authorities.

The analysis draws particularly on multiple Office for National Statistics datasets to provide the most accurate picture possible of local populations and service demand. However, detailed population data at small geographical levels is not always published consistently across all the areas we have examined. Where precise figures are unavailable, we have used approximations based on the most appropriate ONS sources for each geography.

This means that some figures represent best estimates rather than exact counts, particularly where we have needed to aggregate or disaggregate data across different statistical boundaries. We have applied consistent methodology throughout to ensure comparability between areas, but readers should be aware that all population figures carry some degree of uncertainty at the level of detail required for this analysis.

For social care demand analysis, we have used public and MSOA level data shared by participating authorities. This data has not been directly incorporated into this proposal, but we note for transparency that it is subject to varying definitions and recording practices between authorities, reflecting different service models and operational approaches. Any future analysis using this data would need to account for these variations.

### Demographic data sources

**Office for National Statistics**, *Population estimates for England and Wales: mid-2024*. Published: July 2025. Available at: [ONS – Population Estimates \[ons.gov.uk\]](https://ons.gov.uk/population/estimates)

**Office for National Statistics**, *Census 2021 Small Area Multiples (OA level data) data via Nomis*. Updated regularly. Available at: [https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/sources/census\\_2021](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/sources/census_2021)

**Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government**, *English Indices of Deprivation 2025*. Published: 30 October 2025. Available at: [English indices of deprivation 2025 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-indices-of-deprivation-2025)

## Boundaries and mapping

**Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty / National Parks / National Landscapes** – [Natural England](#)

**Highways and Roads** - [OS Open Roads](#)

**Open Geography Portal** – [Lower Super Output Area](#), [Middle Super Output Area](#), [Output Areas](#), [Parishes](#), [Wards](#).

## Economic development statistics

**Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government**, *Housing and Economic Needs Assessment Guidance*. Last updated: 24 February 2025. Available at: [GOV.UK – Housing Needs Guidance \[gov.uk\]](#)

**Office for National Statistics**, *Regional Gross Value Added (Balanced) by Industry: All ITL Regions*. Published: 17 April 2025. Available at: [ONS – GVA by Industry \[ons.gov.uk\]](#)

**Office for National Statistics**, *Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES): Provisional Results 2023*. Published: 4 November 2024. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/ukbusinessregisterandemploymentsurveybresprovisionalresults2023revisedresults2022>

**Plymouth City Council**, *Foreign business investment is driving high value jobs in Plymouth*. Published: 13 March 2023. Available at: <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/news/foreign-business-investment-driving-high-value-jobs-plymouth>

## Local government metrics

Children Services Data

**Department for Education**, *Explore Education Statistics*, published: n.d. Available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/>

Adult Social Care Data

**NHS Digital**, *Adult Social Care Activity and Finance Report, England, 2023–24*, published: 31 October 2024. Available at: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/adult-social-care-activity-and-finance-report/2023-24> [digital.nhs.uk]

**Local Government Association**, *LG Inform*, published: n.d. Available at: <https://lginform.local.gov.uk/> [lginform.l...cal.gov.uk]

## Local government initiatives

**Key Cities** *Key Cities: The network that speaks for urban UK.* (n.d.). Available at: <https://keycities.uk>

**UK Government (Homes England).** *Tens of thousands of new homes delivered for communities across England.* Published 17 May 2024. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tens-of-thousands-of-new-homes-delivered-for-communities-across-england>

**Plymouth City Council,** *Plymouth City Council and Homes England launch new City Centre Vision.* Published: 27 March 2025. Available at: <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/news/plymouth-city-council-and-homes-england-launch-new-city-centre-vision>

**Plymouth City Council.** *Plymouth bus service improvements.* Published: April 2025 Available at: <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/bus-improvements>.

**Plymouth City Council.** *Plymouth and South Devon Freeport.* Available at: <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/plymouth-and-south-devon-freeport>.

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