

News release

Thursday 19 March 2009
EMBARGOED UNTIL 12 noon

Boundary Committee publishes further draft proposals for Devon

The Boundary Committee for England has published further draft proposals for new unitary local government arrangements in Devon and is asking for people in the county to give their views on the proposals. This follows the Committee's earlier consultation which took place between July and September 2008.

The Committee has published two further draft proposals: a single unitary council for the whole of the current Devon County Council area; and a two-unitary pattern featuring one authority for Exeter and Exmouth and the surrounding area, and one for the rest of the current Devon County Council area. The proposals also set out key features of the way in which neighbourhood empowerment structures might work in a future unitary structure.

The existing councils of Plymouth and Torbay would not change under either draft proposal. The boundaries of the new proposals are the same as those published in July 2008's 'draft proposal' report.

The new consultation is as a result of the Committee adapting its process following High Court judgments that allowed it to publish more than one proposal for consultation.

Max Caller, Chair of the Boundary Committee for England, said: “We want people to look carefully at what we’re proposing and then tell us what they think and why. Any evidence we receive from this stage will add to that which we obtained in our consultation last year.

“You might want to tells us, among other things, which proposal you prefer, how one or both could be made better, or how you feel the community empowerment arrangements could work for your village or town.

“We are not at this stage expressing a preference for one pattern over another but, on the basis of the evidence received so far, we think both sets of proposals may have the capacity to meet all five criteria that the Secretary of State has given us and deliver the very best for local people.”

Responses to our draft proposals can be made by filling in an online form at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk or writing to:

Review Manager
(Devon Review)
The Boundary Committee for England
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW

Email: reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk

The period for responses closes on 14 May 2009. The Committee will then consider the responses before providing any advice to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government by 15 July 2009.

ends/

For further information contact:

Gareth Nicholson on 020 7271 0638
email: press@boundarycommittee.org.uk
outside office hours: 07789 920414

Notes to editors:

1. The Boundary Committee for England (BCfE) is a statutory committee of the Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by the UK Parliament.

2. A structural review is used to establish whether one or more single, all-purpose councils, known as unitary authorities, should be established in an area instead of the existing two-tier system.

3. The Boundary Committee published its original draft proposals on 7 July 2008. These were for: a draft proposal for one unitary authority for the whole of the Devon county area (minus Plymouth and Torbay); and an 'alternate pattern' of one unitary authority for Exeter and Exmouth and one for the rest of rural Devon.

4. Judicial review proceedings were issued against the Boundary Committee's draft proposals published in July 2008. A High Court judgment refused to quash the Committee's process and the Committee has adapted its process by publishing on an equal basis those draft proposals it feels are likely to have the capacity to meet the Secretary of State's criteria. The Committee may be required to further adapt its process depending on the outcome of Court of Appeal hearings.