

Full Council

12 January 2026

Devon Local Government Re-organisation (LGR): short list

Purpose of Report

This report provides Council with an update on Devon's LGR.

Recommendations:

Council is asked to **NOTE** the update and **RESOLVE** a short list of assets/services for transfer from EDDC to the Town Council. – paragraph 29

Background and Report:

1. The Government issued its English Devolution White Paper (December 2024): [English Devolution White Paper - GOV.UK](#)
2. The Town Council has considered reports on this matter April 2025 and July 2025, when it approved the document summarised as [HTC Summary Devon LGR rev 3.pdf](#)
3. The Town Council convened a briefing meeting on Devon's LGR on 15 October 2025 with surrounding Parish Councils to describe LGR and begin to form relationships and work together. A second meeting is planned for January 2026.
4. EDDC has provided a briefings to all East Devon local Town and Parish Councils, on 18th March 25 and also August 2025. The Mayor and Town Clerk attended a briefing with EDDC on 17 September 2025. EDDC plan a further briefing for 3 December 2025, which the Mayor, Deputy and Town Clerk are attending.
5. EDDC (jointly with other Devon district councils) has submitted its Response to Invitation to Submit Proposals for a Single Tier of Local Government.
6. Similarly DCC has submitted its Local Government Reorganisation Interim Plan and in recent days, DCC has announced its probable - though not democratically agreed yet at DCC - direction of travel.

[A stronger future shaped by communities: Devon unveils 'leading' option for local government change - News](#)

7. Likewise Plymouth CC and Torbay Council have submitted outline proposals.
8. Upper tier Authorities had a deadline 28 November 2025 to submit to Government final proposals for the rationale and structure of proposed Devon unitary councils; there are several options to date and no unanimity. Authorities have now submitted their proposals and we await Government's response: consultation Spring 2026.

9. The Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) is helping and trying to be the voice of local councils. DALC's "Knowledge Bank" contains useful Devon LGR focused information.
10. DALC has arranged a meeting for Clerks of larger councils most recently 25 November 2025.
11. DALC requested local councils' Pen Portraits of their council. Pen Portraits summarise what the local council's Places are like, what local councils are doing and what would local councils would like to do. The purpose is for DALC to summarise from Pen Portraits, so that upper tier authorities know about local councils.
12. DALC asked What do local councils want; How do local councils want to be treated; What type of relationship do local councils want; and How do local councils want to be included in local Government in future.
13. The Town Council has provided its document ([HTC Summary Devon LGR rev 3.pdf](#)): Planning For Devon Unitary Councils, July 2025.
14. This is an important document that summarises Honiton the Place, identifies the Town Council's priorities (Economy, Tourism and the Environment) and suggests services that the Town Council needs to control to achieve those priorities.
15. The Town Council has distributed that paper widely to DCC, EDDC, DALC and Honiton's surrounding Parish Councils; the document is available publicly on the Council's website.
16. The Town Council has begun a dialogue with EDDC about Devon LGR. EDDC has undertaken planning a consultation with local councils about communications. Honiton Town Council's Council Surgeries April and August 2025 may have helped the Town Council hear residents' opinions. The budget 26/27 consultation includes a question on LGR.
17. Honiton Town Council is ambitious to take every opportunity that arises from Devon's LGR to enable it to deliver against its priorities and meet the expectations of people in Honiton. It was reassuring to hear that reflected by EDDC Officers at an Officer meeting 17 September 2025.
18. It was particularly noteworthy to hear that EDDC plan that Devon's LGR and transfer of services/assets is to leave a legacy for East Devon and that EDDC wants this programme of service/assets transfer to be successful.
19. It was promising to hear the plan that EDDC proposes requires services/assets (that EDDC provides in Honiton) transfer to the Town Council before Structural Change Orders (SCO) end 2026/early 2027.

20. This is a significantly early timescale. The range of possible service/asset transfers that could be transferred will have a significant impact on the size, complexity, governance, budget, employment and assets (eg Office, depot, plant and machinery), HR, volunteers and Precept. In addition there are several legal matters that must be addressed eg Powers, TUPE, asset valuation (less than best consideration).
21. The work may need to be undertaken in phases but if done after the SCO would not be within the gift of only EDDC. This may direct any phasing.
22. Ensuring services are financially sustainable will be important to ensure success, quality and longevity. Providing a mix of income generating and net cost services/assets is welcomed to achieve a balanced budget.
23. Before the Town Council commits further resources to implement transfer of services/assets, it would be helpful to receive confirmation of EDDC's intentions (Officers and ideally at a political level), upon which the Town Council can proceed with confidence. To date that confirmation has not been provided by EDDC.
24. It's helpful to know that EDDC has committed resources to enable this work. Of course, much support and information will need to be gathered from a range of Officers within EDDC, which must follow the corporate lead and be responsive, to meet the short timescales.
25. The Mayors, Deputies and Town Clerks from Sidmouth, Exmouth and Honiton Town Councils met on 19 November 2025 and have presented a joint letter to EDDC 1 December 2025 (attached here).
26. There are many questions regarding individual services that EDDC provides in Honiton; these questions will be put to EDDC. The focus at this stage is on:
 - Compliance with law eg land ownership/disposal/transfer and Powers
 - Consent eg asset value and less than best consideration
 - Human Resources eg TUPE
 - Costs and income
 - Range of SLAs with EDDC
27. In the first instance the responses are intended to enable the Town Council to determine the scope of service/assets transfer and its phasing. Nevertheless the Town Council initially considers a significant number of assets/services for transfers.
28. A long list of services provided by EDDC in Honiton that have been presented to EDDC for transfer to the Town Council were decided by Strategy, Economy & Tourism (SET) Committee 8 October 25 and endorsed by Full Council 13 October 2025.

Triangle of land at Lloyds Bank (New Street, High Street)

Car Parks:

Lace Walk (both parts)

Silver street

Kings Road

New street

Lace Walk car park public convenience

Economic Development:

Heath Park Ind Estate

Land Allocated West of Heathpark

Allhallows (and lease to the rugby club)

St Rita's play field (if sublet to Youth Football)

Play areas

The Glen

Honiton Bottom

Honiton Wildlife areas

Litter picking/weeds

Bin emptying (to central points for collection)

Thelma Hulbert Gallery (building)

29. SET Committee was asked to prioritise transfer of these assets/service at its meeting 10 December 2025, which prioritised the following:

Triangle of land at Lloyds Bank (New Street, High Street)

Play areas

The Glen

Honiton Bottom

Honiton Wildlife areas

Litter picking/weeds

Bin emptying (to central points for collection)

30. EDDC and the Town Council must satisfy the TUPE Regulations.

31. Supporting building/s (eg depot) and vehicles/plant/machinery will need to be transferred to the Town Council.

32. It is also anticipated that Service Level Agreements (SLAs) would be necessary with EDDC (and its superseding Authority). Depending upon the services transferred his may include for example:

Car parks:

Enforcement

Ticket machines

Street cleaning

Off Street Parking Places Order (OSPPO)

Electric car charger points

Lighting

Collection and disposal of Waste arisings

Open spaces/play:

Inspection H&S

Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) (and its enforcement)

Public Convenience:

Cleaning

Restocking

Payments collection

Payroll (extend the current arrangements)

33. Transfer of services/assets may be possible from DCC. There are a range of Highway services that the Town Council could make full use of the Road Warden and Snow Warden scheme with DCC, including for example cutting of highway grass verges.

34. This programme will require significant internal resources to implement and require external support, not least HR and legal. The draft budget 26/27 includes £120k legal and £10k HR professional services.

35. Costs/income for additional services planned to be provided by the Town Council say late 2026 would have a significant impact on budget / Precept 26/27, which budget is being prepared now, to be completed early January 2026.

36. Honiton Town Council plans to establish a Transitional Committee (Full Council 8 December 2025) with the focus to guide the Council through LGR and to work with other agencies and councils.

Name: Stephen Hill

Post: Town Clerk

Month year: 2 January 2026