



HOUSE OF COMMONS

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LONDON SW1A 0AA
Review Manager (Devon Review)
The Boundary Committee for England
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW

Ref: AMS/TJS/tc

Date: 10th April 2008

Please quote my reference when replying

Dear Sir/Madam

Suggested concept for Unitary Councils in Devon

Torbay has so far benefited from unitary status. It's separation from Devon allowed a greater focus upon the particular needs of the area and a better negotiating position with the government for grant funding; Torbay received an 8.6% rise in central grant this year compared to 7% for Devon.

The current Torbay Authority does, however, suffer from a number of disadvantages, which could be ameliorated by incorporation into a larger Unitary Authority.

The Boundary Committee offers the people of Devon the opportunity to reassess the delivery of local government services in the area. Representing an urban part of Devon, I can see great benefit from looking again at the existing boundary of the Torbay local authority area and how service delivery could be improved and made more cost effective.

The small size of the Torbay authority prevents economies of scale from developing, adding to an already over stretched budget. The authority is underperforming in a number of areas, with particular concern for Children's Services. An acute housing shortage in Torbay could also be better tackled with a wider, South Devon, approach. Also, the authority suffers from a serious perception problem, often does not have the resources to communicate effectively with residents and is susceptible to political instability.

Torbay serves as a focus for a wider rural area stretching up to Exeter in the North and Kingsbridge in the South. This area corresponds with the South Devon Healthcare Trust boundary. Torbay and the Teign Valley are the main centres for employment and commerce for this sub-region, and all communities within it are highly interlinked. This area also provides the catchment area for Torbay's Grammar schools and Further Education College. The towns of Torbay; Torquay, Paignton and Brixham, all share characteristics with the major settlements of Teignbridge and the South Hams, including Newton Abbot, Teignmouth, Totnes, Dartmouth and Dawlish.



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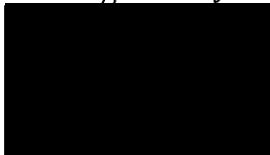
Organising the delivery of services and their political management across a large part of the south of the county would build on the strengths of these communities and more comprehensively tackle any problems. A more unified approach could then be taken towards healthcare and education. A more strategic approach could be taken towards transport, housing and economic development. Such an authority ought to encourage political stability and better reflect the diversity of the communities within its larger boundary.

A larger unitary would be more financially viable and could provide savings through economies of scale and a reduction in senior management posts.

I would therefore propose that the model benefiting the populations of the cities, towns, villages and rural areas of Devonshire the most would be one based upon three unitary authorities of approximate equal size: These might combine the market towns of Teignbridge and the South Hams and the associated hinterland with Brixham, Paignton and Torquay; another might include Plymouth and its associated hinterland up to Ivybridge and Tavistock and a final authority might cover the city of Exeter and the remainder of Devon.

However, the main focus must be how local government services can be delivered more equitably and cost effectively.

Yours sincerely



Adrian Sanders MP

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