

William Morrison

From: Sam Hartley
Sent: 10 April 2008 10:21
To: Tim Bowden
Subject: FW: Structural Review of Devon
Importance: High
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

From: Jane V M Bishop [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 April 2008 18:54
To: Sam Hartley
Subject: Structural Review of Devon
Importance: High

Musbury Parish Council discussed the review at their last meeting.

Councillors accept that there are likely to be gains from a unified approach to travel and transport, highways, refuse collection and drainage issues (value for money). However they have concerns about moving to a unitary authority :

- With a top-down approach it is not clear exactly what the future role of parish councils will be. It is assumed that the parish councils will play an increasing role in scrutinising proposals, and garnering community feedback for an evidence-based response (Neighbourhood empowerment). If this is the case a considerable extra burden will be placed on what are effectively volunteers. Additional training for and time from members will be required which should be factored into the financial case for a change (Affordability).
- There is also likely to be some fallout from the membership and increased difficulties in attracting people at work for the role of councillor. It is unrealistic to base a local government framework on the goodwill and community spirit of a parish. Before decisions are taken at the top tier it is essential to clarify the full picture.
- There is a difference between political and administrative expediency
- There is a fear that local concerns will be given less attention by a more remote authority. Ratios of population size to square mileage are critical as councillors feared it is likely that authorities will be interested in high density economic assets such as Exeter airport, the new science park and the 'richer' towns over and above remote farming communities with less wealth creation potential.
- Any new structure must balance urban and rural interests

Overall the preference would be to maintain the status quo with East Devon.

Jane Bishop
Clerk, Musbury Parish Council
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