

Draft proposal for Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority

Consultation feedback report

April 2024

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Introduction

This report provides an analysis of the response to the joint consultation on the draft proposal for the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority (DT CCA) which took place between 12 February to 24 March 2024.

The proposed devolution deal for Devon and Torbay was announced by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities and published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on 25 January 2024. The powers and funding described in that agreement would be devolved to a new legal body: the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority (DT CCA).

The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 requires that prior to submitting a proposal for a CCA to the Secretary of State, the Constituent Councils must undertake a public consultation on the proposal in the proposed area. The Constituent Councils are obliged to carry out the consultation across the proposed area and consider the results.

The Secretary of State may make regulations establishing a CCA for an area if, having regard to the submitted proposal, the Secretary of State considers that:

- (a) to do so is likely to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of some or all of the people who live or work in the area,
- (b) the Secretary of State considers that to do so is appropriate having regard to the need—
 - (i) to secure effective and convenient local government, and
 - (ii) to reflect the identities and interests of local communities,
- (c) a public consultation has been carried out in connection with the proposal and the Secretary of State has been provided with a summary of the consultation responses.

The Cabinets of Devon County Council and Torbay Council met on 2 February 2024 and agreed that a joint consultation be undertaken on a draft proposal for the DT CCA. The reports to, and minutes of, those meetings are available by following the links below:

<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=5116&Ver=4>

<https://www.torbay.gov.uk/DemocraticServices/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=741&MId=26094>

Overview of the consultation process

The consultation on the draft proposal for the DT CCA was open to everyone and provision was made for accessible and alternative versions. The consultation was publicised through social media, news releases, leaflets, meetings and newsletters. It was available to residents, businesses and all other key stakeholders, including district councils, parish and town councils, voluntary and community organisations and other public sector bodies across the area as a whole.

The draft proposal for the DT CCA agreed by Devon County Council and Torbay Council, as the Constituent Councils, was available on the devolution deal website

<http://www.devontorbaydeal.org.uk/> together with:

- A consultation questionnaire response form
- A draft table of the powers which the Constituent Councils are proposing are available to the DT CCA - <https://www.devontorbaydeal.org.uk/table-of-powers-functions/>
- Answers to frequently asked questions - <https://www.devontorbaydeal.org.uk/devolution-faqs/>
- This link to the proposed devolution deal for Devon and Torbay - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/devon-and-torbay-devolution-deal>

Communications, publicity and promotion

Devon County Council and Torbay Council publicised the launch of the joint consultation through press releases and social media on 12 February 2024.

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/news/public-asked-to-have-their-say-on-devon-and-torbay-devolution-deal/>

<https://www.torbay.gov.uk/news/pr9067/>

Responses to the consultation could be made in three different ways:

- Online by completing a questionnaire
- By sending an email to: devontorbaydeal@torbay.gov.uk
- By sending a letter in the post to: FREEPOST D & T Devolution

Paper copies of the [summary leaflet](#) were made available in each of the 54 libraries in Devon and Torbay and at district, Devon and Torbay council offices.

Information about the consultation was disseminated through items in the regular newsletters sent to the members of a wide variety of networks including:

- Devon Climate Emergency Network
- Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Assembly
- Devon Schools Leadership Teams
- Headteachers of Torbay's schools
- Devon Association of Local Councils
- District Councils' weekly newsletters

Throughout the consultation period there were reminders issued via both Devon County Council's and Torbay Council's residents e-newsletters, both councils' staff e-newsletters and via social media.

Consultation questionnaire form

The consultation questionnaire form posed questions in relation to each element of the draft proposal for the DT CCA:

- Maximising economic potential
- Addressing housing pressures
- Improving local transport
- Meeting net zero ambitions
- Delivering investment
- Creating a strong and sustainable local economy
- The proposed delivery and governance arrangements

The first question on the form invited respondents to state whether they were responding as a member of the public or as a representative of a business or organisation. If respondents were completing the form as the latter, they were invited to provide the name of the business or organisation.

In both cases respondents were asked to provide the first part of their postcode (e.g. TQ1) and indicate which local authority area they lived and, if applicable, which one they worked in. The form also invited respondents to provide details of their: gender identity, age group and indicate whether they considered themselves to be disabled in any way. The demographic breakdown of the respondents is set out in Annex 1.

Two versions of the consultation form were available. Whilst both asked the same questions, one version was shorter and easier to read.

Consultation and engagement meetings

In addition to the web-based consultation, 31 stakeholder events/meetings were held or representatives from Devon County Council or Torbay Council attended already planned meetings. These were attended by more than 700 people.

The events included meetings with district councils; equality and diversity organisations; the Devon, Plymouth and Torbay Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Assembly; Devon Association of Local Councils; business representative bodies; transport providers and partners; health service providers and commissioners; and education and skills partners.

The analysis within this report includes summaries of the views expressed and points made at those meetings.

A full schedule of the meetings held is included as Annex 2.

Response to the consultation

There was a total of 890 responses to the consultation of which 99 were letters/emails from organisations and individuals, and 791 were completed online questionnaires.

Each of the eight district councils submitted a response and the texts of these responses are included as Annex 3.

- East Devon District Council
- Exeter City Council
- Mid Devon District Council
- North Devon Council
- South Hams District Council

- Teignbridge District Council
- Torridge District Council
- West Devon Borough Council

Responses were also received from 28 town and parish councils:

- Bampton Town Council
- Bovey Tracey Town Council
- Brixham Town Council
- Chulmleigh Parish Council
- Clovelly Parish Council
- Crediton Town Council
- Dartington Parish Council
- Dartmouth Town Council
- Dawlish Town Council
- East and West Buckland Parish Council
- Exminster Parish Council
- Fremington Parish Council
- Frogmore and Sherford Parish Council
- Great Torrington Town Council
- Honiton Town Council
- Horwood Lovacott and Newton Tracey Parish Council
- Kenn Parish Council
- Kilminster Parish Council
- Kingsbridge Town Council
- Morebath Parish Council
- Moretonhampstead Parish Council
- Newton Abbot Town Council
- Offwell Parish Council
- Plasterdown Grouped Parish Council
- Stokeinteignhead Parish Council
- Tavistock Town Council
- Totnes Town Council
- Woolsery Parish Council

Responses were received from a wide range of partner organisations and stakeholders including public service providers (e.g. health and police), voluntary/community sector bodies, businesses, education and skills providers, and other interest groups, including:

- Business Information Point
- CBI South West
- Citizens Advice Devon
- City College Plymouth
- Cosmic
- Dartmoor National Park Authority
- Devon and Cornwall Training Provider Network
- Devon and Plymouth Chamber of Commerce
- Devon Association of Local Councils
- Devon Communities Together

- Devon Partnership Trust
- Earl of Devon, Powderham Castle
- Employment and Skills Board for North Devon
- Exeter Airport Ltd
- Exeter Chamber of Commerce
- Exeter College
- Exeter Science Park
- Exmoor National Park Authority
- Great South West
- Institute of Directors (South West)
- Make UK
- Newton Abbot and District Civic Society
- Network Rail
- North Devon Homes
- North Devon Plus
- Peninsula Sub National Transport Body
- PETROC
- Police and Crime Commissioner for Cornwall, Devon and the Isles of Scilly
- Plymouth Marjon University
- South Devon College
- South Hams Society
- South West Business Council
- South Western Railway
- Stagecoach South West
- Tarka Rail Association
- Taylor Wimpey Exeter
- Teign Estuary Trail Campaign Group
- Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust
- Torbay Place Leadership Board and Torbay Business Forum
- Torbay, Plymouth and Devon Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Assembly
- UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and North Devon Biosphere Foundation
- University of Exeter
- University of Plymouth
- Wain Homes

A joint letter of support was received from the Members of Parliament for Newton Abbot, Totnes, South West Devon and East Devon, and one was also received from the MP for Torbay.

Report structure

The following sections of this report set out the responses to each of the questions asked within the consultation questionnaire. These questions related to the priorities within Devon County Council and Torbay Council's the draft Proposal as well as a question on our proposed delivery arrangements. Within each section, there is also a summary of:

- The comments received either within the online questionnaire or by email/letter; and
- The feedback from the range of stakeholder events held during the consultation period

Finally, each section includes selected extracts from the letters and emails received from our stakeholders during the consultation period.

The annexes to the report include the demographic breakdown of the respondents, a list of the consultation events held or attended and the text of the responses from the district councils.

Maximising Economic Potential

Background

Consultees were provided with details contained within our draft Proposal which set out how we would make sure that we have the skilled workforce our local economy needs for the future. We explained that we would work to secure new investment to help create additional high value jobs.

Online survey responses

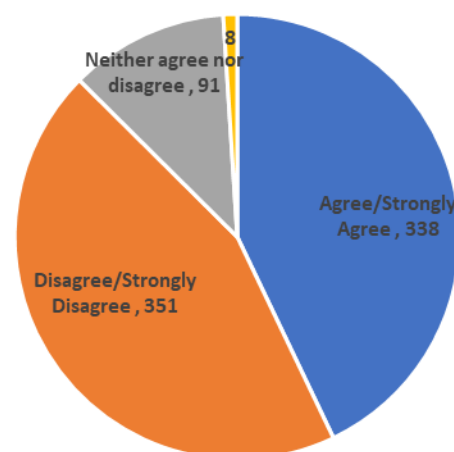
When asked:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to maximise our economic potential through the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority?

of the 788 people who provided a response:

- Respondents were broadly evenly split between disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the proposal (44%) and agreeing and strongly agreeing with the proposal (43%)
- 12% of respondents neither agreed or disagreed
- The remainder (1%) didn't know

Response	No.	%
Agree/Strongly Agree	338	43%
Disagree/Strongly Disagree	351	44%
Neither agree nor disagree	91	12%
Don't know	8	1%
Total	788	100
Blank	3	



Positive and supportive comments

Of the 208 respondents who provided comments and indicated that they supported the proposals in relation to maximising our economic potential, tourism, agriculture, creative economy and zero carbon energy generation were highlighted as important industries and should not be overlooked.

The need for regeneration, improved transport and digital connectivity in more remote areas was highlighted, as was the opportunity to build on current delivery of adult education and skills. Respondents identified that solutions must be tailored to local needs.

Example comments

- “DT CCA should be used as the driver for green economic growth. We have wind, tidal and geo-thermal assets.”

- “Devolution is our best hope. Time and again the government has shown its London-centric bias and a profound misunderstanding of Devon structure and economy. Good luck with the transition.”
- “FE Colleges should be at the heart of Devolution to support skills, productivity and ultimately economic growth. It is important for the FE sector to have an active voice in the strategic direction of the CCA and to play an even stronger role in Devon. In relation to Adult Skills Budgets Devon Colleges already have excellent outcomes and wide impact and have the systems, processes and reach to continue to deliver on this.”
- “I hope that this proposal will lead to the reversal of fortunes of far-flung coastal and agricultural areas of Devon.”

Negative comments and concerns

Of the 282 respondents who provided comments and indicated that they opposed the proposals in relation to maximising our economic potential, respondents felt that the initial investment was relatively low and funding for Devon is below other areas.

It was felt that the Combined County Authority area was too small to have a significant impact and there is no evidence of outcomes. There was concern about the risk of extra bureaucracy, duplication of local authority activity and additional cost.

Example comments

- “A funding increase of £16m for Devon and Torbay is a laughable insult to all residents. We need to be getting equal funding per person as other areas. London and the North all receive massively more per person in public investment (e.g. for public transport and economic growth). We should turn this deal down and not settle for less than £100m as a start. Unless this fundamental issue is fixed, Devon will continue to be a poor infrastructure and low wage economy, only kept going by wealthy retirees who push up house prices and pub prices. The working age population are mainly struggling.”
- “We in North Devon already feel like the poor relation when it comes to 'Devon matters or concerns' and our fear is that this proposal will only funnel more resources into the south of the county at the expense of us in the north.”
- “It is suggested that this model would create an unacceptable democratic deficit to residents in Devon. Instead of providing more of a voice on local impact policies the proposals appear to offer less. Each parish in the area has its own unique characteristics that require tailored approaches to remain locally accountable. The suggested economic benefits of this deal are unlikely to substantially improve the current situation. This proposed new authority appears to be at odds with the spirit of true devolution that should allow local decision-making from local authorities who are empowered to shape our futures.”
- “This sounds like the addition of yet more unnecessary bureaucracy and staff costs onto an already over-bureaucratic county and district council system, but with less public accountability over a newly formed body with a lot of money to spend. The areas covered in the various headings are surely already the responsibility of the County/Torbay and to a lesser extent local district councils. Why aren't these functions just handled by the existing authorities - which are already set up for such responsibilities?”

Suggestions and other comments

Of the 77 respondents who provided comments and/or indicated that they were unsure of the proposals in relation to maximising our economic potential, the reasons provided included that the Plymouth and South Devon Freeport should be included in proposals, rural communities would miss out, health and social care should be taken into account, and that the funding is insignificant.

There were also comments that bureaucracy would increase and benefits would be limited.

Example comments

- “The Freeport isn't mentioned at all, how will this influence your devolution plans?”
- “Rural communities will not benefit at all it seems from this scheme including younger people who are isolated from training and jobs due to lack of usable transport.”
- “The employment, skills and training sections of the plan make no mention at all of the health and social care sector. This is a significant part of the Devon and Torbay economy so its absence is concerning, and there will need to be close working of this economic sector with the new CCA to ensure the numbers of workers with the correct skills are available to employers. Further deregulation of transport services is a worrying concept. Services are already fragmented and totally reliant on a simplistic economic model which penalises rural areas.”
- “All sections of the proposed plan are aspirational rather than practical. There are no clear indications of the sort of actions that the CCA is planning for, only some aspirational outcomes. The additional benefits of the CCA seem limited and the devolved budgets tiny in the scope of the overall budgets of DCC and Torbay. My assessment is that it will create additional layers of bureaucracy and policy but the benefits for citizens and business will be limited.”

Feedback from stakeholder events

The views expressed at the Devon Colleges and Training Providers stakeholder event held on Tuesday 20 February 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our priority of maximising our economic potential. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **In terms of shaping and improving Employment and Skills Advisory Board, suggestion to not have too broad a membership.** Response - Agreed these need to be functional as there are other forums for engagement and networking.
- **Will you be looking to build on original Adult Education Budget (AEB)?** Response - This is a journey we are still on with the Department for Education (DfE) and they will set the parameters. We will be looking to carry out a lot of collaborative work with Plymouth, Cornwall etc.
- **If providers have out of county/cross boundary learners does this affect AEB? Example provided of Liverpool where they identified reciprocal deal with neighbouring areas.** Response – This has been raised with DfE and remains a live discussion.
- **Plymouth not being part of the deal.** Response - DfE are clear no area is to be left behind and there will be a collaborative solution to ensure a workable outcome. Devon County

Council and Torbay Council have invited Plymouth City Council to be a non-constituent member of the CCA and hope this offer may be taken up in the future.

- **In the current landscape, very few Independent Training Providers (ITPs) have access to AEB, will this provide them with more access going forward?** Response – This hasn't been mentioned by DfE but it could be considered as we evolve and progress.
- **Training providers working across Plymouth (non-devolved), Devon and Torbay (potentially soon to be devolved) and Cornwall and Isles of Scilly (devolved). Concerns there will be three different funding mechanisms / processes.** Response – We are keen to collaborate and ensure this is as simplified as possible. We will be seeking an early conversation with Cornwall to see how they are commissioning AEB and where there is synergy. It would seem sensible to use similar criteria.
- **Is Adult Community Learning (ACL) part of AEB and is this devolved?** Response – Not at the moment. It remains a central grant and unsure if this will change but a topic to be discussed with colleges going forward.
- **There isn't enough money in this for every provider to negotiate multiple contracts so would be helpful if you can negotiate the transfers at authority level. Need to create stability in the process from the start. Partnership principle is really positive. Will need to navigate statutory responsibilities in terms of skills – annual accountability statements around addressing skills needs and Ofsted inspections of our approaches to respond to labour market need and working with employers.** Response - Partnership point is well made and hopefully we can offer some reassurance. In terms of statutory duty and reporting, we won't be withdrawing any of the current strategies so Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) can still be referred too for assisting with Ofsted. Once CCA established, we will need to work on our own economic strategies and part of this will be a new skills plan.
- **A big constraint on innovation / productivity is around transport for learners.** Response - These budgets will come through from Department for Transport that sit more with education and learning but we recognise the importance. We will give consideration to how the CCA's powers and budget across education and learning could inform its strategies, plans and investments.
- **Interested to know more about the timescale for transition.** Response – We are looking at 2026/27 as likely the earliest to see transition of AEB due to separate legislative process required to be undertaken. Business as usual will continue during the transition period.
- **As a college, we receive allocation for adult skills, will the flexibility of this remain or will it be more directed into specific areas?** Response – We recognise that priorities will largely remain the same over transition period but will require a conversation between colleges / providers and businesses.
- **Levelling Up Partnership has seen £20m from cross-Government departments. No skills projects were selected. How will this connect with devolution?** Response - We will have cross collaborative working, strong officer groups, CCA with Advisory Boards and all of those groups will take into account where the gaps are and any potential duplication. UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) might change but the Levelling Up governance will remain as is.

- **In the proposed deal there is mention of skills bootcamps, will you be looking to commission these?** Response - Train4Tomorrow remains unaltered at the moment. We would want to see programmes supporting ambitions of CCA being delivered across the patch.
- **What does the geography of the Great South West mean for us?** Response – Very much here until March 2025 due to funding. All pan-regional partnerships will need to go through next iteration with Government. We would like to see Great South West succeed and very much consider it as an umbrella brand to promote the broader geography.

The views expressed at the Devon Association of Local Councils stakeholder event held on Tuesday 27 February 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our priority of maximising our economic potential. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **Upskilling and better prosperity – Concern £16m will not be enough to create the jobs required. What is success going to look like in terms of investment for skills?** Response – The £16m is a one-off. AEB is circa £15m per annum and this is about making sure that our colleges and training provider networks offer the right courses to support our businesses. There will be a skills strategy to underpin the economic strategy which will drive our priorities. Pending an update on UKSPF post March 2025. Careers Hub will be under the control of the CCA.
- **Upskilling alone is not enough, when will we see a strategy for skills? Will we be involved? What are the measurables and outcomes?** Response – You absolutely will have a chance to be involved. Would anticipate the CCA will be required to do this within the first few months of existence. We accept the challenge around upskilling not being enough – we know we produce enough to fulfil roles but we don't retain those young people.
- **With more powers and funding being devolved, will there be resources for Youth Services?** Response – Whilst not part of the devolution deal, support for young people through education etc plays an important role.

The views expressed at the Business Representative Organisations stakeholder event held on Tuesday 5 March 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our priority of maximising our economic potential. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **Is the £16 million new money? This is not a lot of money.** Response - £16 million is new money and is the allocation for this spending review period. Negotiations will occur as to monies in future spending reviews. The £16million affords us opportunities. The money must be spent by March 2025. UKSPF and adult education budget will also come to the CCA, but this is not new money.
- **Are we prevented from working with Plymouth and cross-border?** Response – No, the door remains open to Plymouth. There are ongoing working relationships including projects such as the Freeport, and we will be working closely with City College Plymouth with regards to the Adult Education Budget. We will remain working with our colleagues across the border. We continue to work on projects such as Train4Tomorrow with our colleagues in Cornwall.

The views expressed at the Universities stakeholder event held on Tuesday 12 March 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our priority of maximising our economic potential. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **In terms of Innovate UK, wondering what conversations you have had and what the vision is and anything we can do to support and carry forward?** Response – We have started this conversation asking Government, we know mayoral deals get this but why don't we? University of Exeter have offered to have conversations with Innovate UK and feedback to Devon and Torbay. We have high potential growth areas defined already for the area – important to pull down the opportunities which will spill into Devon. We have had two meetings with the shadow minister for climate and energy.
- **Detailed discussions around Advisory Boards and who will be on these. University of Plymouth accredit all programmes offered through higher education in Devon. How far do we ask University of Plymouth to be involved?** Response – We would hope you would wish to participate in this.

Extracts from letters/emails from stakeholders

“The Devolution of the Adult Education Budget alongside wider skills and employment approaches will harness improved local decision making around public funding to benefit our local economy” **(Torbay Leadership Board (Chair) and Torbay Business Forum (Chair))**

“Regionally the skills needed over the next 10 to 25 years are significant. The devolution deal for the Devon and Torbay region creates a Combined Authority that is well positioned to meet these challenges, as well as the linked issues of housing and transport. Having this lead for economic growth across a focussed single strategy and set of priorities will undoubtedly maximise opportunities to address our particular priorities and challenges.” **(City College Plymouth, Chief Executive/Principal)**

We recognise the Devon and Torbay devolution proposal as being a catalyst in delivering substantial benefits for the area; with the devolved area and the communities it serves benefitting from improved transport links, wider connectivity, and the raising of aspirations amongst our young people.” **(Devon and Cornwall Provider Network)**

“There is a significant opportunity to create greater synergy within the skills system and to create programmes that really work for employers and students across Devon and Torbay. With devolution, we believe we could train up to 400 individuals each year on Bootcamps. We are delighted to offer our support to the devolution programme” **(Exeter College, Principal and CEO)**

“We are in full support of the Devolution deal for Devon [and Torbay] as proposed. Local decision making with the funding and powers being devolved to the Combined County Authority (CAA) will maximise opportunities to address our particular priorities and challenges which are known, understood and best addressed by the people of Torbay and Devon” **(South Devon College, Principal and CEO)**

“It is far from obvious how the CCA will maximise the region's economic potential when the only commitment being made by the Government is to devolve the budget for adult education to the Devon and Torbay CCA”. **(South Hams Society)**

“The University of Exeter supports the establishment of the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority. We recognise that this represents a historic transfer of powers and funding from central

to local government, enabling decisions to be made closer to local people. Communities and businesses they affect.” **(University of Exeter, President and Vice-Chancellor)**

“My college is supportive of the move you are proposing to create the combined authority and we look forward to Petroc playing its part in working with the Combined Authority to achieve a better future for our citizens, communities and economies” **(PETROC, Principal and CEO)**

Addressing housing pressures

Background

Consultees were provided with details contained within our draft Proposal which set out how we would, in partnership, deliver investment in affordable housing schemes for local people, reducing homelessness. We explained that greater Community Land Trust-led delivery would support rural and coastal affordable housing delivery.

Online survey responses

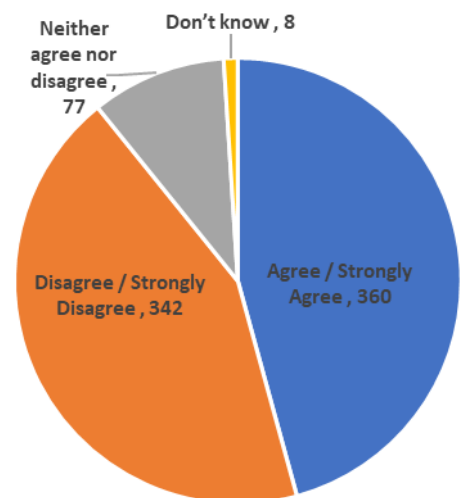
When asked:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to address our housing pressures through the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority?

of the 787 people who provided a response:

- The majority (46%) agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal with slightly fewer (43%) disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the proposal
- 10% of respondents neither agreed or disagreed
- The remainder (1%) didn't know

Response	No.	%
Agree / Strongly Agree	360	46%
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	342	43%
Neither agree nor disagree	77	10%
Don't know	8	1%
Total	787	
Blank	4	



Positive and supportive comments

Of the 219 respondents who provided comments and indicated that they supported the proposals in relation to addressing our housing pressures, the desire for more affordable housing with local consultation and improved infrastructure was highlighted. There was widespread concern over the pressure on availability caused by second homes and a recognition of the desire for more affordable housing, particularly for young renters.

Example comments

- “Regarding Housing we know we need far more housing stock, this needs to be affordable (linked to local wages not what a developer considers affordable). Setting up of Community Land Trusts can assist but we also need far more social housing and consultation with the

community about what they want for their area before land comes forward with allocations and options by the planning authorities to just to build housing on every square inch.”

- “Housing needs to focus on small developments, reducing rent/house prices, filling empty homes and repurposing buildings and NOT building more stock on green space.”
- “With regards to housing, as well as increasing housing available, consideration needs to be given to increasing amount of GP services and hospital services available for increased numbers, and improved infrastructure.”
- “It is vital that the CCA collaborate in the provision of affordable housing for local people and collaborate in the discouragement of second homes where this prices local people out of their localities. Second homes should be seen as a luxury and not a necessity and therefore a lower priority than ensuring sufficient affordable housing for everyone.”

Negative comments and concerns

Of the 280 respondents who provided comments and indicated that they opposed the proposals in relation to addressing out housing pressures, respondents felt that local views should not be overridden. The need for services and infrastructure to keep pace with population growth was highlighted as was the need for green spaces to be protected.

Example comments

- “Will a CCA really be able to solve the housing crisis that is in Torbay and Devon? Again what caused the housing problem here (as well as in the rest of the country)? Selling council houses and not replacing them, moving other social housing (sheltered accommodation for example) into the hands of housing associations and allowing the proliferation of unregulated private rented properties (seen by many as a method of making a quick profit) has only made the problem worse. The idea of ‘affordable housing’ is very vague. Does this mean rented accommodation provided by the council for local residents or help with obtaining mortgages to buy a property at a reasonable price for the salaries/wages in the area?”
- “I work for a charity supporting vulnerable people in rural areas, who are struggling with debt and money issues. My clients need homes. They need council and social housing provision to be developed - not just a focus on affordable housing. That will never be affordable for the majority of people I support. The housing plans do not recognise the right people have to a safe and secure HOME.”
- “Trying, for example, to ‘fix’ the housing crisis by punishing second home and holiday let owners, simply ignores the proximate cause of the problem - not enough affordable homes are built!”
- “My concerns are about housing, we are being overwhelmed by housing estates that our infrastructure cannot cope with, no to using all our green belt areas.”

Suggestions and other comments

Of the 68 respondents who provided comments and/or indicated that they were unsure of the proposals in relation to addressing our housing pressures, the reasons provided included concern over how CCA would improve housing delivery compared to current system. Again, the need to protect green open spaces and improve infrastructure was highlighted.

Example comments

- “New housing should not be robbing Devon of its green fields but should be in cities and brown-field sites. New housing on green fields increases cars on the roads, causes new roads to be built, causes more emissions and causes more flooding, causing the fields that are being used for food to be overly saturated.”
- “I’m not sure how you intend to deliver more housing, as most housing is currently delivered by private owners/companies, and they do things at their own schedule to meet their needs (be that financial or staff resource or material availability etc). Sure some builders use grant funds which force a timeline on the builder, but if they miss the window, the whole project halts until replacement funding is found.”
- “Houses are being built which are unaffordable to the local community for those on wages below the national average; houses being built with no improvements to local infrastructure. No development of local communities e.g. schools, doctors, dentists, central hubs with shops and amenities.”
- “The District Councils are being hung out to dry. They are the housing authorities and yet they will have only two members on the Board with limited powers. This is not at all satisfactory given the present housing situation in the county, especially in the coastal areas. District authorities already work well with Homes England.”

Feedback from stakeholder events

The views expressed at the Housing stakeholder event held on Friday 23 February highlighted the following points in respect of our priority of addressing our housing pressures.

- The impacts on District Councils in terms of their planning powers and the link they would have through to the proposed Combined County Authority through both the Housing Task Force and the proposed Team Devon Joint Committee.
- Interest in understanding how economic development funding inherited from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) would be distributed, particularly for projects already under way, and in the future integration of the new structure taking over projects from the LEP when assets transfer on 1 April 2024.
- Desire to clarify the role of the CCA in working with Homes England to facilitate the funding stream for projects. Proposals invited from district councils and housing providers to input into changes to future structure.
- Interest in future potential for further devolution. The meeting heard about conversations with the Department for Work and Pensions in relation to Universal Support, and flow of funding from Homes England to support business cases.
- Desire to understand how the CCA can help improve the delivery of affordable housing, potentially through Community Land Trusts, influencing the system and adding value.
- Devon Housing Commission sees the devolution proposals as a positive response to help with a Devon-wide response to a Devon-wide housing crisis, and is keen to see a structure in place to ensure its recommendations are considered and acted upon.

- Concerns around cost of living impact on the ability to recruit young planning officers, and how planning is funded at district level. Discussion on districts to lobby Government for small applications to be self-funded to allow more resource for large developments.

In addition, the following questions, comments and responses were raised and for completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are included, as appropriate.

- **Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) - Seen the percentage of how the funds / assets are split for Devon, Somerset, Torbay and Plymouth. Some of the £25m has ongoing projects which need to be completed by March 2025 – understand Torbay already has socio-economic board. Is this going to help us merge into a Devon Board and also will the assets we receive come into CCA?** Response – Growth Board for Torbay will remain. We are creating something specific to take over oversight and responsibility of LEP functions. When assets transfer on 1 April, they will be held and anything that remains will transfer to CCA.
- **Can you explain the link with District Councils? How do they overlap?** Response – There are two main ways – Housing Task Force and a more formal channel through Team Devon.
- **Are Plymouth going to stay within the Devon Housing Task Force?** Response – Need to conclude this conversation with them. A draft terms of reference for how the Housing Task Force could be amended to be a sub-committee for CCA is being developed.
- **In terms of the administrative burden / obligation for setting up and running the CCA, how is this likely to be fulfilled?** Response – Given £1m for first three years to set up the CCA, full intent is to make it streamlined. Looking to maximise existing resource including the economic development teams within Torbay Council, Devon County Council and the District Councils.
- **Infrastructure – will it sit within Devon County Council offices or is this yet to be determined?** Response – The physical space is yet to be determined. There is something about being seen across the whole patch and therefore don't think operating out of County Hall would be the best solution.
- **Our organisation works across whole of Devon (including Plymouth) and maximising delivery of affordable housing is really positive.**
- **Is the local planning process going to be unchanged entirely?** Response – This isn't about reorganising existing District Councils which are the planning authorities. Advantages in CCA are around trying to strike the right balance between strategic approach, single voice and confidence with Government and Homes England whilst still reflecting the local issues and concerns.
- **Homes England devolved affordable housing, assuming devolvement would include infrastructure funding? How will the criteria be set locally by the CCA around allocation of funding or a prescriptive format?** Response – There is initial capital allocation and commitment to develop a shared pipeline with Homes England. The funding isn't going to be devolved and therefore no criteria required to be set. Will be down to districts along with their housing providers to put forward how we best change the system going forward.

- **Opportunities to work with Homes England is to look at infrastructure as often the issue isn't housing but the infrastructure that supports it.**
- **You mentioned additional devolution steps that may happen in the future, do you have any ideas of what those might be over the next 5-10 years?** Response – In terms of extras, currently have conversations with the Department for Work and Pensions about Universal Support. North of England have shared with us the best outcome has been around engagement with Homes England and the flow of funding to support business cases.
- **Fully understand the scale of what D&T CCA represents. Feeling a lack of Plymouth. How is that landing with Government that they aren't part of proposition?** Response – Plymouth felt they could not move forward. We felt we still had a strong case and Government agreed with us and were content for us to continue. We will continue to keep the door open for Plymouth.

The views expressed at the East Devon Business stakeholder event held on Wednesday 6 March 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our priority of maximising our economic potential. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **Housing is critical, you can't create more jobs locally and attract high value businesses to the area with a shortage of housing. If we have a strategy in place for growth, what weight would this carry with a Planning Inspector for example?** Response - CCA will have no planning powers however it is the body that will be developing some of the strategies going forward. It's not a formal planning role but it's an influencing role. Districts will have a voice around the table in the form of Team Devon.
- **Think you need to devolve planning to County as opposed to Districts as a long-term solution.**
- **Need to have a land use framework that sets out what is the best land usage. Even in terms of transport it's about understanding where people want to travel to and from. Is this about land use framework thinking?** Response – There isn't a simple approach / solution. The CCA allows us to come together to have conversations i.e. through informal arrangements such as the Housing Task Force and this gives us a formal route through the new Team Devon to talk about those big issue items. This doesn't replace the existing democratically locally elected controls on planning and housing. This is a discussion outside of Government's remit.

Extracts from letters/emails from stakeholders

"We expect the CCA to enable and accelerate delivery with and through districts and local housing associations. While we recognise the potential for shared investment and the need for strategic conversations to deliver this, we would wish to make it clear that districts expect existing housing functions and groupings to be utilised – such as the Devon Housing taskforce which covers the whole of the Devon, Plymouth and Torbay area". **(West Devon Borough Council, Leader)**

"We are delivering a Housing Commission backed by every local authority in Devon, and we have recently launched a new regional policy Think Tank" **(University of Exeter, President and Vice-Chancellor)**

“As a member of the Devon Housing Commission, I am aware of Devon’s chronic housing shortage, particularly for those seeking employment in the county” **(Earl of Devon, Powderham Castle)**

“We want to deliver many more high quality homes in Devon. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the CCA in order to feed into the training requirements to help deliver more skills and training opportunities helping people secure jobs they value.” **(Taylor Wimpey Exeter, Managing Director)**

“We welcome the emphasis on building on the existing work and capacity of our Housing Authorities and the work of the Housing Commission/Housing Task Force. Our approach must align with the strong programme already in place across the area” **(Torbay Leadership Board (Chair) and Torbay Business Forum (Chair))**

Improving local transport

Background

Consultees were provided with details contained within our draft Proposal which set out we would strengthen our joined-up approach as equal partners, helping improve the efficiency and co-ordination of public transport. Shared responsibility for strategic transport would support economic growth.

Online survey responses

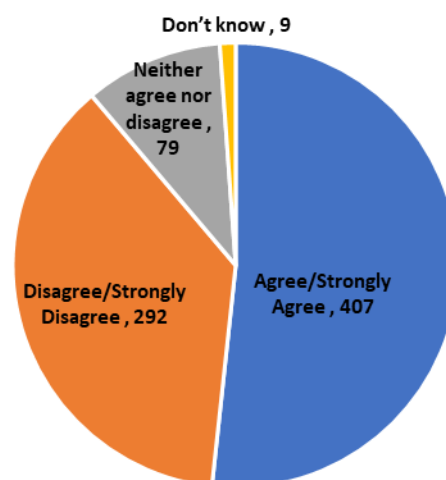
When asked:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to improve local transport through the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority?

of the 787 people who provided a response:

- The majority (51%) agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal
- Fewer (37%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal
- 10% of respondents neither agreed or disagreed
- The remainder (1%) didn't know

Response	No.	%
Agree/Strongly Agree	407	52%
Disagree/Strongly Disagree	292	37%
Neither agree nor disagree	79	10%
Don't know	9	1%
Total	787	
Blank	4	



Positive and supportive comments

Of the 252 respondents who provided comments and indicated that they supported the proposals in relation to improving local transport, there was support for better integration of public transport and infrastructure, and a desire to see investment in improved rail links, highways, and sustainable travel.

Example comments

- “Significant development of safe pedestrian/cycleways are needs from our new housing developments into towns and along main roads and alongside the Tarka Line perhaps from the Mid Devon section into Exeter. Our northern train service has improved but is very restricted as only one track, apart from the few passing places. There must be every effort made to open the northern route from Okehampton to Tavistock and ideally dual the line

from Plymouth to Exeter over Dartmoor. Public transport has to be cheaper and far more accessible for rural communities and for the public to use it, rather than getting in your car.”

- “Transport needs to be more holistic - connecting and enhancing rail, bus, cycling and walking. Bring in free travel for under 20s and means test over 65s (i.e. free travel for people in receipt of state pension only).”
- “We need more reliable, efficient, affordable public transport not more roads. Part of the problem for ‘zero’ emissions is the number of cars on the road to get to work.”
- “Proposals around public transport, and specifically train infrastructure should be stronger. Fuel poverty is a serious issue in West Devon, and the presence of perfectly usable train tracks, linking towns all over Devon is frustrating.”

Negative comments and concerns

Of the 240 respondents who provided comments and indicated that they opposed the proposals in relation to improving local transport, there were concerns over perceived lack of detail for specific improvements. There was a fear of an adverse impact of any expansion of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTN), and concern that resources would be focused on the larger urban centres.

Example comments

- “I’m very concerned that the proposals for improving public transport do not mention the opportunity of developing the northern link rail line via Okehampton and Tavistock. Development of bus services is commendable but should not be allowed to obscure other options.”
- “...if transport is transferred to the new authority I believe that the drivers of Devon will be targeted for more charges and the so-called LTNs will be expanded to the extent that local residents will be adversely impacted.”
- “I fear that combining DCC [Devon County Council] and Torbay in one transport authority will make the provision of rural bus services LESS likely, as funding will move towards Torbay and Exeter.”
- “As with most councils the inability to maintain the roads to an adequate standard gives me no confidence in their ability to improve transport for the CCA.”

Suggestions and other comments

Of the 75 respondents who provided comments and/or indicated that they were unsure of the proposals in relation to improving local transport, there was a desire to see better public transport and improvements in highways infrastructure away from the major routes. Further, there was a fear that rural communities would lose out to larger urban centres.

Example comments

- “Concern that the focus of improving public transport is overly focused on buses which will struggle with the same road infrastructure. There should be due consideration for improving the frequency and cost of rail services throughout and out/into the county. The comparable cost of rail travel in the SE of the country is significantly less. In addition, road infrastructure improvements are needed beyond major roads to improve access between towns and

villages. In addition there are few pavements and walk/cycle routes available in and between areas of rurality e.g. Mid Devon, which reduces realistic options for use of public transport.”

- “Another barmy organisation, so many district councils and a county council, let alone all the parish councils and what a mess Devon is in. Roads are like the Somme and not a mention of fixing those, second homes should be double rated across the board, transport in villages is a waste of money - so seeing as the current isn't fixed another level on top of the current inefficient mess is in my view a waste of money (again).”
- “All hot air and words with no actual proposals so I cannot see that anything would improve and suspect that all the money would be swallowed up by Torbay and the other cities and towns with zero input into rural communities including transport, roads, broadband.”
- “We are disappointed that Plymouth opted not to join the CCA, as it is the primary travel destination by bus and the nearest mainline station to Tavistock. Bus connections to Cornwall are also important across much of West Devon. While appreciating the benefits to Exeter and eastern Devon of better integration with Torbay, we are concerned that this could dilute attention to public transport in rural areas, particularly those in the west where collaboration with neighbouring authorities is needed. Inclusion of Torbay in bus planning could bring further improvement in cross-Dartmoor services, which help support tourism, and we hope this will be recognised.”

Feedback from stakeholder events

The views expressed at the Transport stakeholder event held on Monday 11 March 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our priority of improving local transport. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **How does rail devolution process open up investment with Government?** Response - There will be advantages, but it is difficult as we can't say that we will definitely get investment but what we have seen in Combined Authority (CA) areas is a higher level of investment with simpler processes without the need to bid for money. What causes the most problems is bidding for money. It is an indication that it could make our life easier. It is also about the Department for Transport (DfT) expectation for the CCA to be ambitious and not use the investment in something underwhelming.
- **How does it work with the sub national transport bodies?** Response - That hasn't really been discussed yet but it would simplify it, as rather than having five authorities with voices, it would be four authorities but two of those who would have direct lines to DfT and Government.
- **What are the District Council reactions to this?** Response – They have been either positive during the consultation meetings or have been reserving their thoughts to provide a written response. So far all the written responses have said they are OK, not 100% happy with parts of it but understand that it's better to be a part of it than not.
- **From a transport perspective is there something we should be asking that is more tangible and a quick win?** Response - The Transport Advisory Board will be the way in, we need to think what do we want first as an area, peninsula and then as Devon and Torbay and what areas do we want to speed up.

Specific comments from attendees at the event are set out below:

Network Rail

- We already collaborate well with Devon, what we would like to achieve is to become more proactive and create a five-year plan for what we would like to see as a partnership. We are currently reactive but want to take a more strategic approach with the DfT with a well thought out and funded plan.
- This isn't going to be an easy overnight fix, we need to work as a peninsula to identify, plan and draw down on opportunities as projects are costly and the only way forward is to have a proper plan or strategy on how to tackle it in place.

Peninsula Transport

- The role of sub-national transport body is to look across the areas and identify their transport needs and priorities. We also have to maintain a relevant and live prioritisation list, this was last done in 2019 and we are about to start looking at all transport modes across the peninsula to find a way to bring them together and then establish the key priorities as Government wants to know how effectively we will spend money.
- This is due to run throughout the summer with the intention of bringing it together at the end of the summer. We are going to work closely with all authorities and partners.
- The challenge for devolution is, from the service users' perspective, what difference is it going to make to them and how are they going to notice the difference? There will be a need to get the quick wins in early to show service users the benefits.
- There needs to be an ask for more powers, to enable bus companies to work together to make the experience better for the service user, as opposed to money. In Cornwall being given the powers to franchise bus services, although never used, was what got the companies to focus on providing a better service and working better together.

Stagecoach

- The challenge isn't in network coverage, we can do that, the challenge lies in being able to run our network reliably due to highways maintenance or congestion.
- In Scotland there is one concessionary travel scheme combined with practical investment in infrastructure, for example small scale park and rides on strategic road networks as they recognised that buses cannot go into all the small villages so tried to get more people on the existing network that way. Compelling journey bidding for improved bus priority measures in congested towns.

South Western Railway

- If we look at our upcoming investment programmes tying those in with any new investment could be a quick win. For example we are needing to upgrade our signals but this could be tied in with other network investment to save money.

Tally Ho! Coaches Ltd

- There are significant skills gaps in the industry in areas such as HR, finance, marketing and trained engineers, currently if someone wants to become a bus mechanic they need to go to Bristol for training. There are no providers in Devon.

Peninsula Transport

- There is a skills shortage within public transport within Devon and Torbay, this isn't just a local problem but a national one. It would be beneficial for us to go to the DfT with an ask but to also develop an offer, for example that we develop a programme to upskill people through colleges to build capacity to help deliver our transport services and take the burden off officers. This could be offered as a pilot to the DfT to roll out to help address a national problem.

National Highways

- There is a need to make sure that infrastructure is represented on the housing boards as there will be lots of areas that need to be reconciled as some housing schemes that are considered a priority might not be possible because of infrastructure so there needs to be infrastructure around the table.

The views expressed at the North Devon and Torridge Businesses stakeholder event held on Thursday 22 February 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our priority of improving local transport. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **Is there likely to be a competitive environment caused by Treasury? Do we have sufficient voice when talking about transport budget on a regional basis? The fact Plymouth is not involved is not landing well with business community. Businesses are blind to geographical and administrative boundaries.** Response – To date we are not aware of mayoral combined authorities competing for resource, understand it's more on an allocation basis. In terms of adjacency point – we are fully committed to continue to work at a peninsula level, backing and supporting Great South West and their campaigns. In terms of Transport, from DfT we are hearing they are wanting a sub national transport board. They see the addition of two combined authorities should help strengthen the board.

The views expressed at the East Devon Business stakeholder event held on Wednesday 6 March 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our priority of improving local transport. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **What about influencing discussions around rail and roads coming into and going out of Devon? Will any of that infrastructure change?** Response – Not at this stage. This is a way of unlocking connections to Government. If we prove we are capable of delivering what is involved in the deal, this will hopefully mean more powers will come to us. The devolved areas that have been successful started out small and have built on.

The views expressed at the Universities stakeholder event held on Tuesday 12 March 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our priority of improving local transport. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **How much do you know about people who don't live in Devon and Torbay but work in the area so are commuting?** Response - We have a lot of information on travel to work patterns and how these have altered due to Covid and home working. In terms of travel to learn, these patterns are different again and need to discuss with Cornwall around Adult Education Budget.

- **70% of students at Marjon (Plymouth) are regional and one of the biggest barriers we face is the travel piece.** Response – When thinking about transport planning, we have been asked to look at the travel to learn element. Working in partnership is all the more important. We held a transport event and feedback was overwhelming support.

The views expressed at the online open stakeholder event held on Monday 18 March 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our priority of improving local transport. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **How will you strategically co-ordinate transport routes across Devon taking into account travel to work areas such as Exeter, Torbay and Plymouth given that you will not receive the full transport devolution package available to Level 3 tier authorities?** Response – We are already working across geographies as a partnership. Whilst we don't receive mayoral transport fund, the difference is not as significant as Devon and Torbay have been remarkably successful in securing funding. Will be looking to continue this pace and push those priorities. All Local Authorities are looking to update local transport plans so will be looking to tie these together. The Transport Advisory Board will feed into CCA and focus on travel to work and learn.
- **Public transport seems to be one of the potential areas of growth from the devolution deal. Does this mean that the CCA will be the commissioning body for bus services across Devon and Torbay?** Response – In principle, yes. Devon and Torbay will come together to become the commissioning body of the Local Transport Authority. This will provide new options and opportunities including bus ticketing and allow ability to do commissioning in a slightly different way.

Extracts from letters/emails from stakeholders

“In the duty to produce a joint strategic transport plan across the CCA geography, we would urge inclusion of district councils in the formulation of this to ensure that vital economic and housing plans area aligned to transport plans and that sustainable transport options are embedded – both in terms of strategic intent and future investment” **(West Devon Borough Council, Leader)**

“Without the participation of Plymouth it is hard to see how the CCA can effectively develop an area-wide Local Transport Plan that the Department for Transport can use as the basis for future local transport investment. It is also not obvious what improvement the CCA can make to subsidised bus services and concessionary fares and potholes will not be amongst its responsibilities.” **(South Hams Society)**

“We see value in the devolution deal which offers greater flexibility and freedoms at a local level to address priorities and challenges for our communities; to direct targeted growth and investment strategies; and which provide a robust framework for local decision-making and accountability. We see significant opportunities for stronger collaboration between business and enhanced, and empowered local authority structure to develop skills and take forward relevant key sector opportunities – such as Smart Aviation, advanced manufacturing, and aerospace.” **(Exeter and Devon Airport Ltd, Managing Director)**

“We recognise the opportunities and benefits that the devolution deal would bring for the combined authority, giving scope for further close engagement on delivering rail improvements” **(Network Rail, Industry Programme Director)**

“The STB [Sub National Transport Body] is keen to continue [the collaborative] approach in working with the new CCA and transport industry to create an integrated transport system which meets the existing and future patterns of movement across the region.” **(Peninsula Transport)**

“We have closely followed and noted the benefits of devolution deals in other areas including Cornwall and firmly believe that the proposal to achieve a similar deal for Devon and Torbay including the creation of the Combined County Authority during 2024 dovetails very well with the opportunities and challenges noted [in our letter].” **(South Western Railway, Regional Development Manager)**

Meeting net zero ambitions

Background

Consultee were provided with details contained within our draft Proposal which set out that we would unlock Devon and Torbay's huge green economic potential, with more investment in green growth and through attracting inward investment to the area. Our acceleration to a net-zero economy would be accelerated, capitalising on our area's world-leading expertise in green science and technology.

Online survey responses

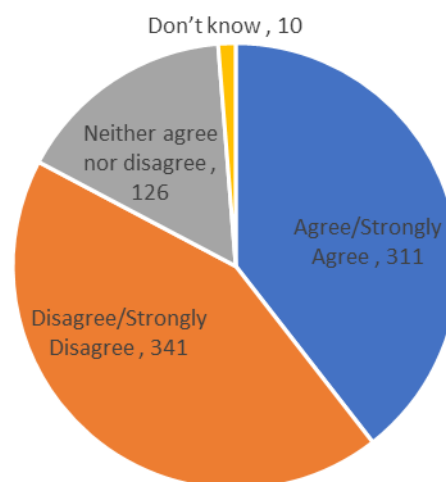
When asked:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to meet our net zero ambitions through the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority?

of the 788 people who provided a response:

- The majority (43%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal
- Fewer (39%) agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal
- 16% of respondents neither agreed or disagreed
- The remainder (1%) didn't know

Response	No.	%
Agree/Strongly Agree	311	40%
Disagree/Strongly Disagree	341	43%
Neither agree nor disagree	126	16%
Don't know	10	1%
Total	788	
Blank	3	



Positive and supportive comments

Of the 190 respondents who provided comments and indicated that they supported the proposals in relation to meeting our net zero ambitions, the commitment to net zero was welcomed. There was however a recognition that more funding is needed to support the transition, with a focus on housing, transport and renewable energy.

Example comments

- "Re net zero ambitions: We are pleased to see energy system planning, place-based retrofit and green skills development within the objectives. It is important to public support for net zero goals that investment attracted has a visibly positive impact on places and livelihoods across the area."

- “Green jobs through retrofitting homes and businesses is essential to net zero. How much of £16m goes on helping create more energy efficient, cheap to run, warm and healthy net zero homes and supported by a local skills programme? I would suggest this is insufficient to make any difference. More funding needed.”
- “Opportunities for increased joint working and increased funding in areas such as housing, transport and net zero are welcomed.”
- “Yes, the commitment to net zero is important, but better articulate what that means in Devon - much more renewable energy, and a huge level of investment in housing retrofit - we have some of the most inefficient homes in Europe. Where is the incentive to get our homes properly retrofitted, with a drastic reduction in old fossil fuel-based heating systems? This should be a specific named growth sector, with a huge amount invested in training, awareness, supply chains and delivery.”

Negative comments and concerns

Of the 280 respondents who provided comments and indicated that they opposed the proposals in relation to meeting our net zero ambitions, it was felt that development and growth are at odds with the net zero ambition which was impractical and misguided. Respondents felt that policies were unproven, transition could damage our economy and money would be better spent elsewhere.

Example comments

- “You say you want net zero for the environment but want lots of tourism, to build all over the countryside and in the seas, making it feel like you will destroy the countryside and environment with the things you say we need to help.”
- “Additional funds will be used to continue our headlong dash to net zero before a proper discussion is held to determine the cost of such measures, the net benefit and the harm to the economy. Please stop and think before investing in this obsession with chasing net zero and damaging our economy and inhabitants whilst the rest of the western world is taking a more cautious approach.”
- “Although I agree with some of the priorities, I object to the ridiculous net zero targets which are at long last starting to be questioned. The money would be better spent on transport links and developing business and employment opportunities.”
- “We did not vote for net zero - it will make us poor, cold and not be possible, as without carbon dioxide we and plants will die. Climate change is a natural occurrence as time passes. Stop all this nonsense and get back to reality.”

Suggestions and other comments

Of the 97 respondents who provided comments and/or indicated that they were unsure of the proposals in relation to meeting our net zero ambitions, there was concern over a risk of duplication of services already provided. Respondents also felt that practical solutions were needed to deliver change.

Example comments

- “Surely, all these proposals are already covered by Torbay and Devon County Council?”

- “I would like to see...real solutions to climate change by mandating developers to install solar panels/ heat pumps on developments - a move from huge profit-making by the few to the detriment of the many.”

Feedback from stakeholder events

The views expressed at the stakeholder event held on Innovation and Green Growth on Tuesday 20 February 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our priority of meeting our net zero ambitions. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **There is a feeling that we are missing a significant opportunity in Devon. Research was undertaken around actual energy consumed in the South West in 2020 and main two were petroleum and fossil gas. Only have 26 years to transition 75% of energy we consume in the region to zero carbon. Floating Offshore Wind sector is a huge opportunity and there is a lack of emphasis on this.** Response – We will take this on board when talking to our priorities to make this more explicit that the CCA will be working across the Peninsula, as part of Great South West (GSW), with Plymouth in relation to the Freeport and marine sector etc and include more information recognising these opportunities and the supply chain under additionality and partnership.
- **Are there any opportunities through the CCA to support District Councils in terms of considering planning proposals specifically those relating to offshore wind/hydrogen?** Response – District colleagues advised that work has been done with planners, ensuring they’re working closely with developers. Great South West (GSW) which includes all local authorities from Cornwall to Gloucester, Dorset and Bournemouth etc. The core focus for GSW is around being the UK Natural Power House.
- **How will the proposals impact power grid connectivity and enable industry to invest in distributing the estimated 4.5 gigawatts of energy coming into North Devon?** Response – Whilst devolution isn’t the only answer to this, through partnership working and bringing together private and public sector, we can put this on the agenda with Government.
- **We are accepting the disruption that offshore wind will bring but in return want the distribution network to be fit for purpose.** Response – You are encouraged for this to be articulated in consultation responses to highlight the importance and businesses top priorities.
- **Re the Environment / Net Zero Advisory Board, is this an opportunity to redevelop the Climate Emergency Response/Task Force into an Advisory Board?** Response – This suggestion was welcomed.

Extracts from letters/emails from stakeholders

“The Authority discussed the proposed deal at its Authority meeting on 1 March 2024 and voted in favour of supporting the devolution deal. Members were pleased to note the involvement of the Authority in the proposed Joint Committee. I hope that the deal will provide a route to funding for rural development, an ability to influence nature recovery and to shape the new environmental land management schemes so they reflect local as well as national priorities” **(Dartmoor National Park Authority, Chair)**

“The deal provides a very exciting opportunity to address issues that are important to all the people in Devon and allows them to be addressed in a manner that can showcase the best practice in sustainable development; this coincides with a main function of the designation. For these reasons we would be very willing to support and partner with the planning and execution of the devolution deal.” **(North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Manager and CEO North Devon Biosphere Foundation)**

“Until the next government’s aims and objectives are known following the forthcoming election the Society neither agrees nor disagrees that we should try to meet our net zero ambitions through the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority” **(South Hams Society)**

“The partnership will also take forward key sector opportunities – such as tourism, housing, transport and Net Zero, all of which businesses can play a part in delivering and which businesses themselves will benefit from, i.e. local homes for local workers.” **(Exeter Chamber of Commerce, Chair)**

Delivering investment in Devon and Torbay

Background

Consultees were provided with details contained within our draft Proposal which set out that there would be local democratic accountability for big investment decisions in the local economy. Business and skills representatives would have a strong voice and a direct route to locally-elected decision-makers.

Online survey responses

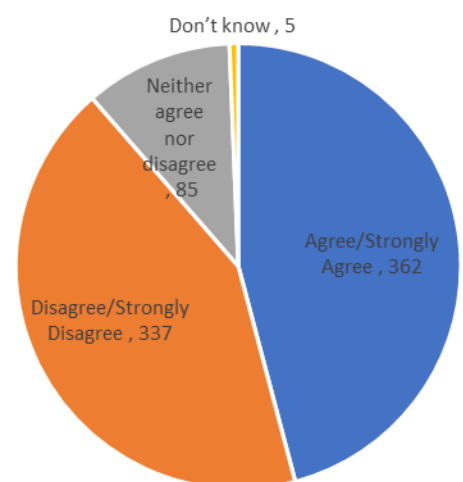
When asked:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to deliver investment in Devon and Torbay through the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority?

of the 789 people who provided a response:

- The largest number (46%) agreed or strongly agreed with slightly fewer (43%) disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the proposal
- Of the remainder, 11% neither agreed or disagreed and 1% didn't know

Response	No.	%
Agree/Strongly Agree	362	46%
Disagree/Strongly Disagree	337	43%
Neither agree nor disagree	85	10%
Don't know	5	1%
Total	789	
Blank	2	



Positive and supportive comments

Of the 222 respondents who provided comments and indicated that they supported the proposals in relation to delivering investment, respondents felt that the CCA would benefit from improved economies of scale and joint working, but that more investment was needed in key sectors.

Example comments

- “Investment for growth across the whole region is important. Skills, jobs, education, apprenticeships, transport are all important. The correct focus needs to be applied, which means more private sector engagement. Working together will benefit the area and attract the investment needed to improve the lives of people that live and work here.”

- “I always thought that Torbay being a unitary authority was a bad idea. It's not a large enough Council area to generate the income needed to sustain growth and investment needed for the area to progress in the 21st Century.”
- “At this stage I support the proposal, but will wait to see what is proposed and achieved, only then will we be able to judge the success. As a small business we see skills training driven by local needs as a step forward plus we welcome business investment/housing development that ties in with local transport systems. Sounds good on paper!”
- “Working together will benefit the area and attract the investment needed to improve the lives of people that live and work here.”

Negative comments and concerns

Of the 276 respondents who provided comments and indicated that they opposed the proposals in relation to delivering investment in Devon and Torbay, there were concerns that competition for investment could mean areas missing out, particularly North Devon. It was felt that the CCA's decision-making would be less democratic and that governance arrangements were unclear.

Example comments

- “I think we should remain two separate councils respectively and continue to lobby Government for better investments in the two separate councils so that we can tackle each council's issues.”
- “I have little confidence that rural areas of North Devon will benefit in any way from this proposal, in fact with an even larger population covered by this proposal that are located in the south of the county I suggest that the current imbalance of investment towards the south by Devon County will be made even worse by the addition of Torbay.”
- “Centralisation of this type will be a move to less local focus for all services mentioned. As a resident of East Devon we're already ignored at county level and my home town of Axminster is always at the bottom of East Devon priorities and investment.”
- “The framing of the CCA, based around economic growth and productivity is poorly conceived and short-termist, that does not nothing to structurally reform the rural economy. What we have come to recognise as 'traditional' measures of progress, such as Gross Domestic Product and Gross Value Added are not reliable measures of societal progress - they only seek to reinforce the economic orthodoxy, and are geared around delivering perpetual economic growth - which is manifestly undeliverable on a planet with finite natural resources.”

Suggestions and other comments

Of the 70 respondents who provided comments and/or indicated that they were unsure of the proposals in relation to delivering investment, it was recognised that investment is important to deliver well paid, sustainable jobs, but there was little confidence in the ability of local authorities to deliver. There was also concern over peripheral areas missing out.

Example comments

- “I have concerns over the amount of impact and investment promised by the £16million capital fund - there seems to be a high likelihood of aims being over promised and

underdelivered. I have reservations about the way in which 'leaders' will be appointed and their qualifications for the role.”

- “Whilst the jargon of 'investment', 'improvement to the area' and 'more employment' is interesting to read, nothing really ever materialises other than more council debt due to failed 'investments'.”
- “I am concerned that this proposed merger will focus finance and investment even more to the south of the county. The north of the county is struggling already with little investment into infrastructure or decent employment. We in the north of the county want more than tourism to survive on.”
- “The arrangements for distribution of funding within the CCA should reflect the demographic spread and the importance of Exeter & East Devon to the county's economy - and potential for these areas to deliver further growth and investment, and lead the transformation to a zero-carbon Devon.”

Feedback from stakeholder events

The views expressed at the Business Representative Organisations stakeholder event held on Tuesday 5 March 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our priority of delivering investment for Devon and Torbay.

- Overall welcome devolution and the proposed deal and see this as a great opportunity to re-set relationships and work differently taking a fresh approach to working together across public and business sector.
- We should be brave, looking ahead, innovative and ensure that we have a nimble structure.
- Advisory Boards – these should be agile with a meaningful voice for businesses across each but there needs to be more definition on what is meant by an advisory role.
- Risk appetite – working together on shared priorities is great and we also need to work together to understand risks and downsides and how we collectively approach these.
- Connections – there are several advisory boards proposed that should have business representation on them, and there are strong inter-dependencies across each – so how will they work in practice? Will innovation be part of the business advisory group? How do we engage with Health?
- Using business champions on each of the proposed groups drawn from the business advisory group might be an option.
- The vision needs to be translated into what does it actually mean in practice – need to see an action plan and targets.
- The business group raised the concern of a perception that Plymouth not being involved in the deal made it seem to businesses that there are tensions in the region and that this may put off businesses from investing in the area.
- We have the opportunity to move Devon and Torbay into a new, more influential, visible place. Businesses need to have the confidence to understand what is happening. Need barrier removal not cash handouts, and they need to understand that we are working together.

In addition, the following questions, comments and responses were raised and for completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are included, as appropriate.

- **Concern around district councils. The Business Group raised concern that behind closed doors district councils are still worried about loss of input and decisions being taken away from them.** Response – It is important to the CCA that the districts have a voice. The CCA is another lever that gives us a bigger voice in the room in central government, but it is not local government re-organisation.
- **We have heard about the benefits, what are the big bear traps to avoid?** Response – Solely not to take the opportunity that is being presented to us.
- **We know what the CCA is, what isn't it?** Response – We recognise that this is a high-level concept at the moment. We do not know what further powers and monies will be given to it in the future, so in that respect it is a bit of a leap of faith, but one we believe will benefit Devon and Torbay. We are excited about seeing what this money can grow into. We look forward to local government being less risk averse in this space. The more you can let us know how you want it to look and how you want it to feel like, the more we can work towards that.
- **What are the goals and objectives that we will be looking at over the next five years? Where are we trying to get to from a business and residential perspective? What is the equivalent of Somerset Gravity in Devon and Torbay?** Response – It was discussed that we allocated money yearly through spending reviews, however, we are listening to this question.
- **Do all the boards have a seat on the CCA?** Response – The Government requires a business and skills voice, so these will come from those boards. The Growth Board will be a business advisory group.
- **Health doesn't appear to be shown in these boards?** Response – Health has a direct link to housing and unemployment. The Integrated Care Board has health and social care within their responsibility. This was noted and will be followed up by Devon County Council and Torbay Council. It was suggested that health colleagues could become champions in the boards as we do not want to dilute their effectiveness. It was noted that the boards provide us with an opportunity for joined up thinking.
- **Will the councils be fearless?** Response – There was concern raised about the CCA continuing to follow the status quo. It was raised that we need to take this as a new opportunity, with total transparency and a fresh approach. If we seemingly 'trot out the same model' then this may fail. There is an opportunity to think creatively and recruit differently to the boards. We are keen to work differently, together. Concerns were raised from the business representative organisations that they were worried that we may be dismissing things as 'not going to work' prematurely.
- **Innovation has been mentioned – where does that go? A member of the business representative group raised that innovation should run through all the subgroups and should be embedded in devolution.** Response – The need for innovation and creative thinking has been a running theme during this conversation. There are some really dynamic businesses looking for opportunities. Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives reflected on the impact of having a bigger seat on the table in the Highlands

of Scotland and how this has led to more jobs through energy companies. Innovation is what we are looking for.

- **Is this a referendum?** Response – No. However, it is useful to have people’s input, and we need to meet tests set out by Government to move forward. This includes having spent time with people, listening. Consultation gives us the opportunity to shape some elements before they become enshrined.
- **Does this put us on an even playing field to combined authorities such as Manchester?** Response – No. All parties, including Plymouth when they were still round the table, agreed that they did not want an elected mayor. This meant we could not have a Level 3 agreement. Members of the business representative organisations also noted that they felt this was the right decision. However, we are much better position to make Devon and Torbay a bigger spot on the map. It was also noted by Cllr John Hart that there are many local authorities striving to be in our position. The Level 2 agreement is not precept-raising so will not have a direct impact on Council Tax. 60% of the country is now covered by devolution deals – we need to be at the party to dance the tango.
- **How will the CCA be resourced?** Response – There is £1million of new money from Government to resource the CCA in its first year, including initial set up and early running costs. There will then be a discussion with Government about future running costs.
- **Will there be more bureaucracy?** Response – The aim is that there will not be more bureaucracy, and that the CCA is lean, nimble, and effective. It was noted by the business groups that not everything has to be formalised, and meeting informally can be just as important.

The views expressed at the Exeter Businesses stakeholder event held on Friday 8 March 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our priority of delivering investment in Devon and Torbay. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **We want young people to stay and housing is core to this. The right time to fix the housing issue was 20 years ago, the next best time is now.** Response – Housing is a significant priority. The housing group hope to have more of a strategic view to bring down bigger projects. Devolution is part of solving problems but may not be the whole answer.
- **When we are looking to pull people in, do we have the land available that will let us grab some of those projects?** Response – We are working on employment land pieces, there is a huge amount of work in trying to unlock these things. It is worth noting that Gravity in Somerset took 15 years to actualise. We are hoping that the CCA will help us unlock some more of this.
- **There is an incoherence across the two authorities. What will stop happening?** Response – There won’t be a Local Enterprise Partnership and some of their remits and responsibilities will move to the CCA. There will be a rationalising and streamlining of structures. There will be one team with one set of commissioning on some activity. It will feel different.
- **What will happen with the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)?** Response – There are a few options around this. It is possible that we will have a bigger say on LSIP, or that the local provision sets the strategy. We are waiting for the direction on this.

- **With the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) going, will the CCA take on some of those responsibilities?** Response – Yes, from 1 April 2024 several functions will move from the LEP including the Careers Hub, the Growth Hub, and the sector voice. These will transfer into County Councils and Unitary Authorities in the Heart of the South West, and will then transfer to the CCA as they relate to Devon and Torbay.

The views expressed at the North Devon and Torridge Businesses stakeholder event held on Thursday 22 February 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our priority of delivering investment in Devon and Torbay. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **There is a real risk, in terms of Adult Education Budget (AEB), of micromanagement and creation of both bureaucracy and policies that may not suit North Devon. Example given of West of England CCA.** Response – We are learning from others who are going through the same process. We have been in liaison with West of England to discuss what hasn't worked for AEB model.
- **Exercise needs to be focused on additionality. Real concerns around transitional period to not lose the good economic development work we have achieved. Losing the richness of this relationship is a key component which would be of great concern.** Response – Economic development functions within Devon County Council and Torbay Council will now feed into CCA. It's about combining resource and effort to work on behalf of CCA.
- **When looking at the CCA and how an economic development strategy works in geography, you highlighted highest level of deprivation – have we got an observatory function that sits behind this? Geographies are a bit different here than in the cities.** Response – There has to be an evidence/research element sitting alongside strategy. When you read the proposal, it should provide reassurance that places will not be forgotten. Even if we're not present, we are actively listening and involved.
- **To provide everyone with confidence around how the CCA is serving all the patch, need to consider tracking beneficiaries and showing how they are represented. More interested to see impact of the work of the CCA.**

Extracts from letters/emails from stakeholders

“The Devon and Torbay devolution deal can be the rising tide that lifts all boats. It has the potential to create access to high-value jobs, enhance productivity and create economic growth across the region instead of at discrete locations, thus helping to mitigate rural and coastal poverty.” **(Exeter Science Park Ltd, Chief Executive Officer)**

“At present, District Councils administer the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The Fund has, and is, addressing local priorities under a scheme agreed at District level. Whilst this particular fund runs only until 2025, any successor fund will pass to the CCA under the offer. It is the firm view of this Council, and others, that any successor fund should be devolved to Districts to plan and deliver without top slicing at CCA level.” **(North Devon Council)**

“Our primary concern revolves around the allocated funding of £16 million over three years for Devon, which appears notably modest when juxtaposed with the existing capital expenditure across Devon and Torbay. We believe that a more substantial funding allocation is necessary to

effectively address the diverse needs and challenges within our region.” (**Moretonhampstead Parish Council, Chairman**)

“The level two deal effectively addresses immediate needs, but there remains ample opportunity for growth and enhanced collaboration as the County Combined Authority (CCA) evolves.” (**CBI South West, Regional Director**)

“It is also important that the Combined Authority is given the maximum opportunity, through new funding and policy levers, to support the development of Devon and Torbay most important sectors (notably advanced engineering/manufacturing, electronics and photonics, health and life sciences, digital industries, farming and food, tourism and construction.” (**Torbay Leadership Board (Chair) and Torbay Business Forum (Chair)**)

Creating a strong and sustainable local economy

Background

Consultees were provided with details contained within our draft Proposal which set out how we would support high growth business sectors such as marine engineering, defence, photonics and digital, as well as our traditional strengths of tourism, agritech and food production. Through creating a strong and sustainable local economy, we could increase productivity and pay across Devon and Torbay.

Online survey responses

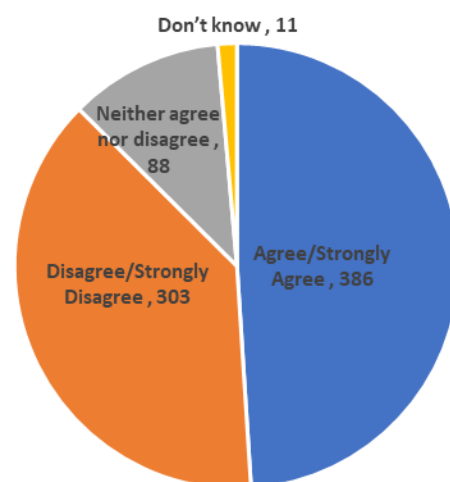
When asked:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal that it will support industries that are important to Devon and Torbay?

of the 788 people who provided a response:

- The majority (50%) agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal
- A smaller number (38%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal
- 11% of respondents neither agreed or disagreed
- The remainder (1%) didn't know

Response	No.	%
Agree/Strongly Agree	386	49%
Disagree/Strongly Disagree	303	39%
Neither agree nor disagree	88	11%
Don't know	11	1%
Total	788	
Blank	3	



Positive and supportive comments

Of the 238 respondents who provided comments and indicated that they supported the proposals in relation to supporting industries important to Devon and Torbay, respondents identified that more investment is needed in key industries. As the CCA will be larger than the current local authorities, respondents questioned whether it would be able to attract more investment, particularly into rural and remote areas.

Example comments

- "The agriculture industry needs support."
- "Will the CCA be able to use its voice to be an effective tool to attract new investment into public service delivery in a rural area or will it be expected to provide the investment?"

- “Skills in sustainable farming and renewable energy are particularly important to our area. Digital connectivity in rural areas is important in enabling innovative shared transport solutions and enabling remote working.”
- “There is not enough emphasis on the protection, growth and development of the agricultural industry which is the lifeblood of the South West.”

Negative comments and concerns

Of the 149 respondents who provided comments that they opposed the proposals in relation to supporting important industries, there was little confidence in benefit that would be felt in rural and remote areas. Respondents felt that more investment was needed than the £16m already allocated. Concerns were also raised over democratic accountability.

Example comments

- “I have little confidence that rural areas of North Devon will benefit in any way from this proposal, in fact with an even larger population covered by this proposal that are located in the south of the county I suggest that the current imbalance of investment towards the south by Devon County will be made even worse by the addition of Torbay.”
- “Creating this level of concentrated authority will be detrimental to the Arts and Culture industry in East Devon. It will detract from localised funding and make the systems more formulated and less specific to a town or region. It will mean funds held by East Devon District Council will be absorbed by the new authority. It will have a negative impact on towns like Seaton and will be damaging to the Gateway Theatre and the arts industry.”
- “The contents of this consultation sound like a cover story for an actual plan for a rapid corporate take-over of South West Devon at the same time destroying everything that people love about Devon and makes it so unique, the landscape, wildlife, and traditions. Should it not be explicit in the consultation, which firms exactly will be coming in to help realise these ‘big’ glamour opportunities?”
- “To be democratic, big investment decisions should be taken by the relevant County Council in full session, not by an elite cabal of a few councillors selected in some undefined undemocratic way for that plum job.”

Suggestions and other comments

Of the 80 respondents who provided comments and/or indicated that they were unsure of the proposals in relation to supporting important industries, there was recognition that investment was needed in high-tech industries. There was a lack of confidence in the promises of investment and improvements. Again, respondents felt that the £16m initial investment was not enough.

Example comments

- “If you want sustainable, modern investment, invest in firms making robots such as automated crop harvesting and weeding machines for farmers. And get the rest of our quotas back from the European Union.”
- “Torbay can't function and needs to be part of a coherent bigger entity to achieve. Torbay needs jobs and not minimum wage jobs, investment in and encouraging green and high-tech to here is essential.”

- “Torbay and Devon areas are very different. Economically and financially, it should in theory improve investment, infrastructure and opportunities providing politics doesn't take over.”
- “It's largely a smokescreen for hiding government cuts. £16m investment is miniscule, and some of this will be swallowed up by paying for new staff etc.”

Feedback from stakeholder events

The views expressed at the Innovation and Green Growth stakeholder event held on Tuesday 20 February 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our priority of creating a strong and sustainable local economy. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **Surprised to not hear farming mentioned within the presentation.** Response – We can reassure you that farming is included in the proposal document on the consultation website and confirm that the food and farming sector is viewed as fundamental to the Devon/Torbay economy.
- **Will there be any development through the CCA of policies/strategies/guidance to support a particular industry?** Response – The CCA will have an economic strategy which will be evidence based developed in collaboration with businesses/private sector.

The views expressed at the East Devon Businesses stakeholder event held on Wednesday 6 March 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our priority of creating a strong and sustainable local economy. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **The advisory boards will be crucial, it will be the make or break of it.** This was acknowledged.
- **Key thing is how we get the level of interest behind this, how do we increase the level of excitement that this is a bright new opportunity for Devon.**
- **Inward investment, we need to be getting together as a county and geographic area to encourage this from other parts of the country.**
- **East Devon District Council has a Local Plan to submit by Summer 2025 and will require transport infrastructure which will need to be provided by the new transport authority and new transport plan.** Response - The CCA will bring in Heat Network Zoning Co-ordinator role which gives ability to draw a line and say within that zone, these premises must connect to this network.
- **The power of a group of people in a certain sector coming together is nothing but inspirational.** Response – We have lost something around the cluster / sector groups. The real essence of this, is getting people together with shared set of interests, moving that forward is an opportunity.

The views expressed at the online open stakeholder event held on Monday 18 March 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our priority of creating a strong and sustainable local

economy. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **How will the CCA relationship work with the Great South West (GSW) especially as the CCA will be taking on functions of the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership but does not cover the same geographical area?** Response – Looking at pan-regional geography of GSW. Intent is to continue to work in partnership with GSW. Whilst GSW is regional, our focus is to improve what we have within our own organisations and will be working together more closely with Government.
- **How will you ensure that the business representative covers businesses from all sectors and sizes across the functional economic area?** Response – The function of the Business Advisory Groups is to feed into CCA on advising their decision making. Anticipating ten representatives from Devon and five from Torbay and will be appointed on a recruitment and selection basis. Would expect representatives to go back into sectors, gather the voice and evidence and bring to the CCA.
- **Will the devolution deal introduce an additional level of complexity for businesses dealing with the Council - where will the point of contact be for issues such as planning, economic development etc?** Response – This does not change relationships around planning and core economic development. Planning function will remain with Torbay Council and the District Councils as the planning authorities. Economic development teams will work together more closely but on a day-by-day basis, contact will continue to go through normal routes with local authorities.

Extracts from letters/emails from stakeholders

“A clear focus on effective and strong leadership on economic development (including skills for business and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector) is fundamental for the area for the coming years” (**Cosmic, Chief Executive**)

“From our perspective, the priorities as set out correlate with addressing the wider determinants of health and impact on the mental health and emotional wellbeing of our population, and also offer the potential to help foster conditions for more resilient health and care services” (**Devon Partnership Trust, Acting Chief Executive and Trust Chair**)

“Paragraph 5 of the offer states that Devon and Torbay is a coherent economic area, but the facts do not support this. This generalisation is an excellent example of the often-made error of assuming that the North and South of Devon are the same. For example, the South of Devon is a far wealthier area whose data often masks the deprivation and lack of services which are common in Mid and North Devon.” (**East and West Buckland Parish Council**)

Proposed delivery arrangements

Background

Consultees were provided with details contained within our draft Proposal which explained that we would implement streamlined management and decision-making arrangements with a strong business and skills voice to address the opportunities and challenges for Devon and Torbay. It was highlighted that the arrangements needed to accord with the provisions of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023.

Online survey responses

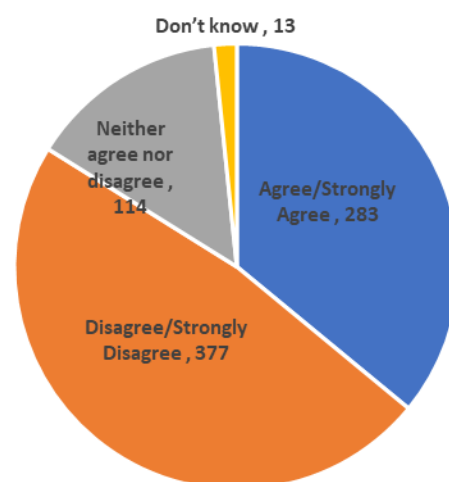
When asked:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed delivery arrangements for the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority?

of the 787 people who provided a response:

- The majority (48%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal
- A smaller number (36%) agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal
- 14% of respondents neither agreed or disagreed
- The remainder (2%) didn't know

Response	No.	%
Agree/Strongly Agree	283	36%
Disagree/Strongly Disagree	377	48%
Neither agree nor disagree	114	14%
Don't know	13	2%
Total	787	
Blank	4	



Positive and supportive comments

Of the 163 respondents who provided comments and indicated that they supported the proposals in relation to our delivery arrangements, there was support for the proposed CCA structure and the opportunity for new thinking. However, there was concern over governance, future funding and the need to avoid duplication with other local authorities.

Example comments

- “While I support the principle of the CCA with no directly elected Mayor, I remain concerned about how this will be funded going forward. Reference is made to capital funding to get

things up and running, but there is very little detail as to how the costs of it being administered will be met going forward.”

- “Although I support the proposals I am concerned the new structure will create another level of bureaucracy that will suck up resources.”
- “In general I support the initiative but believe that strong governance needs to be in place to ensure funds are spent wisely and accounted for. I would recommend an independent audit committee be an integral part of the governance structure with members selected from the public from the Devon and Torbay region.”
- “CCA needs to involve people with fresh and diverse ideas - politicians/business leaders are generally old, white, privileged and male. Greater involvement of the universities, VCSE and young adults (from all walks of life).”

Negative comments and concerns

Of the 308 respondents who provided comments and indicated that they opposed the proposals in relation to delivery arrangements, there was concern over the potential increased cost to tax payers from an extra layer of local government. Respondents also felt that the area covered was not big enough to make a difference.

Example comments

- “I do not agree with this proposal at all. I feel that a devolved Devon and Torbay will lead to increased public funding cuts and a decline in services. We need a new central government to take better control of the current situation, not further complications via devolution.”
- “The proposal lacks ambition and is very geographically constrained. It is difficult to see how the CCA will make a significant difference to the Devon economy, when much of what is being proposed is already being done in one form or other.”
- “The governance arrangements are unclear and the role of non-constituent councils is not fully developed. There is a huge mismatch in the influence given to Torbay when many Districts are larger. The additional layer of governance created and the huge cost involved in setting that up seems wasted compared to the small additional investment realised. The removal of local funds such as UK Shared Prosperity Fund represents elevation rather than devolution.”
- “In a world of financial strain and dwindling resources, the last thing we need is another layer of bureaucracy and a plethora of talking shops. We should be cutting waste and streamlining local government rather than creating yet another tier.”

Suggestions and other comments

Of the 96 respondents who provided comments and/or indicated that they were unsure of the proposals in relation to delivery arrangements, respondents raised concerns over future funding, including how the CCA would be resourced and delivered. The level of input into decision-making from district, town and parish authorities was also raised.

Example comments

- “Once powers are moved to this new authority, funding will be cut. Central government always want devolution when it means local government will be blamed for cuts.”

- “It's difficult to assess the real value/benefit of these proposals. For sure, there are lots of valuable aspirations. Whether it requires a new, additional layer of bureaucracy to deliver it is questionable, especially as it requires additional funding that appears only to cover the next three years (1-2 of which seem to be focused on the set-up period).”
- “Re investment delivery: We support in principle local democratic accountability on this, but are concerned that wording re direct business influence, combined with the limited role for district councils in the CCA governance arrangements, will mean that rural towns and parishes have no practical way of exercising this accountability on behalf of their residents.”
- “This is a good idea if it means: less duplication of services; saves money overall, especially for local council tax payers; can make the less well performing local authorities act more like the better ones; makes transport work better; gives a louder/more joined-up voice from Devon nationally for investment from businesses and government; not creating additional layers of bureaucracy and empire building and doesn't over-ride local democracy in terms of planning decisions. Any structure and delivery needs to bear all these potential issues in mind.”

Feedback from stakeholder events

The views expressed at the North Devon and Torridge Businesses stakeholder event held on Thursday 22 February 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our proposed delivery arrangements. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **What is the size of the CCA going to look like after three years?** Response – We are still working through the detail; there will be a small team overseeing skills budget, small team overseeing capital investment and net zero opportunities. Looking to keep this streamlined and efficient and fully utilise the existing economic development functions within Devon County Council, Torbay Council and the district councils.
- **How do we measure success or failure of the CCA?** Response – One of the early requirements of CCA, likely in shadow form and then adopted, is to have an economic strategy with an associated delivery plan and key performance indicators. We're also required to have scrutiny and audit functions which sit within government's overarching assurance framework.
- **Will members of the CCA get rotated?** Response - The Chair of the CCA will rotate every two years between Devon and Torbay. When setting up Economic Growth Board for Devon and Torbay, they will be committed to interface with Plymouth and Somerset Growth Boards and will be holding meetings four times a year together.
- **What is happening to the Specialist Applied Skills Programmes now?** Response – They will stand down by 31 March. Employment and Skills Board needs to be stood up to fill the space.
- **Will it be an advertisement type process for the Employment and Skills Board?** Response – We can apply an open process for the Business Board but unclear on Employment and Skills Board as we require certain members on this.
- **Will associate members of the CCA be nominated by advisory boards?** Response – This will not be the CCA process to decide, it will be for the group to determine its Chair.

- **Physically where will the CCA be based? Concern if you have this in one location, it will be harder for other areas voices to be heard. Strongly advise rotating location so they experience and see the issues in each area.** Response – We will need to give this consideration.

The views expressed at the Public Sector Core Partners stakeholder event held on Tuesday 27 February 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our proposed delivery arrangements. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **In agreement with ambition. What do we believe we can achieve with this tier of Devolution Deal and what might we be unable to achieve?** Response - primarily it's about the partnerships and relationships, doors are open at officer level which can be more difficult to open. Also about accountability and responsibility that drives the ambition. We have a Level 2 deal arrangement and whilst this doesn't give us as many powers as Level 3 mayoral deal, we believe that once the CCA is established, hopeful that Government may be keen to accelerate and give us more powers. Residents did not want an elected mayor.
- **Across Devon there are huge inequalities in health and levels of affluence. Heartening to hear that it's being picked up as part of this.**
- **How does UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) tie in?** Response – UKSPF has been awarded to Districts until March 2025 with clear priorities around business support and pride and place and less about skills and employment. Upper tier local authorities were awarded a sum of money to deliver the numeracy programme called 'Multiply'. What funding may be available post March 2025 remains unclear. Any funding that is available will come to the CCA and we will need to develop a strategy for how we deliver the investment.
- **Concerns raised in terms of gaps between funding from end of the Local Enterprise Partnership.** Response – We are hoping the CCA may be established by Autumn 2024 with shadow arrangements in place.
- **Helpful to know more about how this will work with Integrated Care Board (ICB).** Response - CCA Advisory Boards are currently being worked on in terms of how many there are, what areas they cover etc. Health and wellbeing of our population is intrinsic. Devon County Council and Torbay Council will pick this up with the Chair of the ICB to discuss further, providing an opportunity to bring this together.
- **When can we expect to see more detail and what the targets will be?** Response – We are working on this currently, we have been encouraged to develop business cases over the next few weeks in terms of the initial £16m allocation. Money will be required to be committed and spent where possible by March 2025.
- **Supportive of this but do need to think about what should ICB look like in the future. Need to develop a partnership of trust where we have a joint strategy and intentions and trust each other to deliver.** Response – Yes and similarly important to be able to support and challenge each other.

The views expressed at the Devon Association of Local Councils stakeholder event held on Tuesday 27 February 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our proposed delivery

arrangements. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **Apart from the one-off receipt of £16m and £1m for setting up, will this be enough?** Response – We are confident the £1m for mobilisation will be sufficient. £16m is not enough and we did ask for more however this is within the current spending review. We are hopeful for further conversations. £15m per year Adult Education Budget will be going to CCA which will be more efficient.
- **Seems like we are getting another layer of government when what we need is less government. No devolvement to town and parish councils so won't have an impact. How much overall will this cost, what are the savings and where will they come from? Has there been a cost benefit analysis?** Response – Not at this stage. Suggested structure benefits from shared posts across Devon and Torbay so no immediate increase in costs. Whilst this is a new entity, the Local Enterprise Partnership and Heart of the South West Joint Committee will be removed. Trying to get advisory boards to work within existing arrangements to prevent duplication. Budget for the CCA needs to be worked through once we have final set of proposals.
- **Wouldn't a local government reorganisation have been a better option?** Response – A unitary council for Devon wouldn't have been possible with around 800k residents. With County and Districts, we have the capacity and strength (in funds and numbers).
- **Parish and town councils feel quite far from decision-making and will likely feel further away. Are there any assurances you can provide?** Response – Where there is a local decision to be made, this will be for local discussion. Devon County Council will talk to the district council and district councils will talk to parish and town councils. We are hopeful the Devon Association of Local Councils can take up the role of providing the local council voice in Team Devon.
- **How are governance arrangements being set up? Devon is considerably larger than Torbay and therefore the proposed proportion of seats on CCA seems skewed.** Response – This is set out in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act. The method to address the balance will be through Team Devon Joint Committee.
- **Concerns that parish and town councils are being left out. It seems like nothing will change for us when we were told devolution would bring more powers. Would like to hear what you feel about the chances of parish and town councils getting more local powers devolved?** Response – The powers are going from central Government to Devon County Council and Torbay Council rather than devolving down further. Whilst powers remain with the two upper tier authorities, we want to get more of Devon involved in this and would hope districts are listening to you and feeding this in.
- **Members are seeking assurances there is recognition that relationships aren't where they want them to be and want to see some commitment to improving relationships going forward.** Response – Since the creation of Team Devon we have endeavoured to give a voice to parish and town councils. Please trust us to work on this, we have the opportunity to change the face of Devon and are hopeful that further powers and prosperity will come.
- **How will a CCA improve the transfer and power of funding compared to now? What difference will it make?** Response – Local Enterprise Partnership funding will be received

by the CCA going forward. We will be working with Government, civil servants and together in partnership. We will receive funding, opportunity to take on extra responsibilities and have opportunities to develop further facilities for Devon and Torbay.

- **What is Plymouth's reason for not joining?** Response – They were not comfortable with the CCA transport arrangements. The door remains open should they wish to join in the future.
- **What mechanisms are envisaged to ensure Devon County Council (DCC) and districts are co-operating and obtaining appropriate housing stock and tenure to serve communities?** Response – Whilst DCC is not responsible for housing, DCC will encourage joint working with districts and Homes England. Districts are working together to develop local plans for similar areas.
- **Housing Advisory Board likely to be linked to the Task Force, are there any other structures to help with joint working around housing?** Response – CCA will set up an economic strategy for the area and within that there will be key infrastructure priorities which will be a blueprint for liaison with Government to secure investment in the area.
- **Suggestion to get parish and town councils on side by providing confidence you will be acting on their behalf.** Response – This will be raised at the next Team Devon meeting with the District Chief Executives and we will feed these comments back.
- **Concerns investment from Devolution Deal will be very South Devon centric, didn't feel reflected there would be investment in the North.** Response – Events have been held with Northern Devon Futures and Business Group and we recognise there are unique sectoral opportunities in the North.
- **Any downsides to committing to a CCA structure? If we set this up but Government will not give us any more money, will we be stuck?** Response – The Labour Party manifesto is very similar to current Government in terms of devolution. Therefore we have confidence the CCA provides an opportunity for ongoing investment, conversations and dialogue with whoever forms the next Government.
- **Do you have any fear or concerns about functions being devolved which then don't see the funding follow in future?** Response – We do not believe Government would do that. We are in a different position now since we started this, we are much closer to civil servants.
- **Freeport – no mention of tie in?** Answer provided – The CCA covers the whole of Devon and Torbay so would be consistent with the geography of the Plymouth and South Devon Freeport. The CCA won't be set up in isolation to other partnerships so will work alongside Great South West, Plymouth and South Devon Freeport – aligning and adding value.

The views expressed at the East Devon Business stakeholder event held on Wednesday 6 March 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our proposed delivery arrangements. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **Think you need to devolve planning to County as opposed to Districts as a long-term solution.**
- **Need to have a land use framework that sets out what is the best land usage. Even in terms of transport it's about understanding where people want to travel to and from.**

Is this about land use framework thinking? Response – There isn't a simple approach / solution. The CCA allows us to come together to have conversations i.e. through informal arrangements such as the Housing Task Force and this gives us a formal route through the new Team Devon to talk about those big issue items. This doesn't replace the existing democratically locally elected controls on planning and housing. This is a discussion outside of Government's remit.

- **It's far better that locally in Devon, we recognise we have a significant amount of land for agriculture and forestry. If devolution allows land use framework, we would be in a better position to provide evidence to local people. If we start to come up with a plan for Devon, devolution allows us to have more controls / influence and more funding to support it.** Response – If we find a structure that works, we can come together as a group, agree these priorities and identify where challenges are and have a consensus.
- **The opportunities far outweigh the challenges. Mention of priorities being around social care etc, is this going to allow a step back and more thoughtful approach?** Response – It allows us to keep this separate and members are not having to make the decision around what to prioritise and support this year. There will be two separate conversations.
- **What authority will this group have?** Response – It will be a group that makes decisions on strategies, investment control around local transport etc.
- **Does it have to be listened to by districts?** Response – It will be a formal local body which will have powers and anticipate it will have a role of informing as we go through. Local Plans will have to give due regard to the strategy set by CCA.
- **What will this cost us?** Response - This is separate from local taxation. Every area gets separate settlement from Government. Will take a percentage from funding strands coming down from Whitehall. Currently Whitehall takes about 7-8% but we think CCA can do this with 3%.
- **Is this making Local Government more complicated or simpler, is it another layer?** Response – This wraps around and takes the lifting away from other areas. We will all work together on CCA priorities. It should therefore simplify it.
- **How will the boards be supported in terms of secretariat and resource?** Response – We will have some revenue resource from the Local Enterprise Partnership transferring into the CCA and we will have some resource provided.
- **Where do you draw constituent members from? How and who? This requires some real thought and needs to be democratic but also need to get the right people in the room to ensure sectors are well represented.** Response – We are having this conversation at present. There are discussions with the Chambers of Trade, National Farmers Union, district councils, other parties etc. We recognise we need to ensure we have the right representation.
- **The advisory boards will be crucial, it will be the make or break of it.** This was acknowledged.

The views expressed at the Exeter Businesses stakeholder event held on Friday 8 March 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our proposed delivery arrangements. For

completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **Devon and Torbay CCA excludes Plymouth. This is a big elephant in the room. Plymouth are a big powerhouse. What are your views on how to manage that relationship with the CCA?** Response – There is still a seat around the table open to Plymouth. However, this becomes more difficult the further down the line we get with Plymouth. We will, of course, still continue to work with Plymouth on key priorities and projects. We are already working with them on the Adult Education Budget. Devolution won't work in isolation, we want to work together as much as possible. We are so integrated as a county that we can't cut ourselves off.
- **You are setting up a new entity – how do you avoid it becoming another layer of bureaucracy that imposes rather than liberates? Start-up funding is welcome but not groundbreaking – how do you remove barriers to business.** Response - We will be standing this up as a lean and nimble organisation. We propose that those are shared roles across the Devon County Council, Torbay Council and the district councils. There will need to be some resourcing, and we will need to work on operating models to make sure it works in a streamlined way. We have to prove to Government that the CCA does what it says it is going to do.
- **What are we learning from elsewhere?** Response – We are part of a joint group of those who have already become combined or mayoral combined authorities. There are open and clear discussions within this over what has and hasn't work, and we are learning from the councils that have gone before us. One of the things that we have learned is that those that work best have integrated with authorities, business groups, working groups etc. It is about partnership, otherwise it doesn't work.

The views expressed at the Universities stakeholder event held on Tuesday 12 March 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our proposed delivery arrangements. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **How do we achieve a whole that is greater than some of the parts - what is the vision around leveraging what you can for Devon and Torbay but also the stretch point geographically as well. Thinking about the greater needs of the South West. Is this an opportunity to try a different approach?** Response – Yes. Fundamentally it's about ambition and influence. It's a start on that journey.
- **Most powerful reflection hearing the discussion, it is completely changing the system we're working in. It adds a link to Central Government and national agendas. Even though we're in Plymouth, it's important that we are a part of this.**
- **Need to consider the inter-connectedness of the advisory boards, ensuring no duplication. Importance around inter-connectedness leading to opportunity i.e. leveraging assets around net zero will bring investment.** Response – We are very much still working the advisory groups through so would welcome suggestions and inputs around how we can do this.
- **What will the influence of the advisory groups be?** Response – We want the influence to come through in the form of advice, bringing in expertise.

- **The quality of the advice determines how influential it is. Equally in terms of attracting group members, need to get a sense of what they are going to achieve by giving up their time. Need to understand what advice is helpful. Is it advice you need or the contacts?** – Response - We need to work this through. We are currently looking at this in Torbay to see how groups can get a wider reach and feed into CCA. Need to ensure we're actively reaching out.
- **Suggestion of a common secretariat for co-ordinating agendas etc might be helpful.** Response – We agree we need someone to co-ordinate the advice to ensure coherent to enable decisions is needed.
- **Concerns around advisory groups doing duplicative work on the same issues.**
- **Need to consider membership of the advisory groups and if they are representatives or not.** Response – We don't have all the answers yet but it's about balance, requirement to have real businesses present.
- **Need to take a South West view and consider what we can do for the country, rather than being a tourist economy.**

The views expressed at the Devon Voluntary and Community Sector Partnership stakeholder event, with representatives from the Devon, Torbay and Plymouth Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Assembly, held on Thursday 14 March 2024 highlighted the following points in respect of our proposed delivery arrangements. For completeness, the responses provided by Devon County Council and Torbay Council representatives are also included, as appropriate.

- **We cover Devon and Torbay, there is an opportunity to think about how governance will incorporate the sector, but conversations over the last 18 months have been really helpful with lots of opportunities to think differently. In terms of language it would be helpful when talking about 'business' that we talk about charities and social enterprises so we know what's intended.** Response - We want to work constructively with the sector. In terms of progression there is a process to get the initial framework on paper but it's really heartening that the sector want to shape the next steps. In terms of inclusive economy, it is certainly the aspiration that the sector is key to how we shape going forward and excited about the skills agenda and how we marry that with the greener jobs with a whole space for creativity.
- **There are some real benefits of joint commissioning with three authorities and will be writing a letter of support and would like to support DCC. The thing that has been missing is the integration of health and social care, let's look at that, the way we integrate things and make it a really positive way forward. How does the integrated care board fit into governance as one of the largest employers?** Response - We consider the role of public health and how they might help us as a body linked in to acute and social care to help up prioritise in terms of the boards. The Integrated Care Board (ICB) is going through a reshape and redesign working across Plymouth, Torbay and Devon so looking to do things differently and is certainly something that's been raised and will respond, and at the same time take steps forward to make a difference and get steps correct where those opportunities are but also where challenges are. Groups are raising challenges with housing, we have to set a way forward that is realistic in recognising what work is done with the Devon Housing Commission and the work DCC has done as an authority. This is a starting point. 60% of population already involved in the deal and benefits of deal and local

government is focussing across the spectrum. We have been in touch with other deals and geographies and it really is a starting part of inter-connectedness, geographical boundaries start to drop and some structural boundaries change which is a positive outlook and two years into the deal we will work differently together and won't see geography as a boundary. It is quite clear that the opportunity for Plymouth to join the deal remains and also the work with Plymouth will be ongoing in these areas and won't be a barrier.

- **We would welcome and value bringing decisions closer to communities. Governance is still to be worked out but our colleagues in the sector would like to request that there is some formal seat within the governance whether that would be in Team Devon or elsewhere. The Assembly does have three places on the ICB so has a precedent of bringing that strategic level and voice perspective. There are issues on rural transport, rural affordable housing, enterprise and skills and community wealth building across our rural communities so we absolutely support those priorities and devolution of funding streams and want to work with Devon Association of Local Councils in making sure the influence from the rural communities come through.**
- **Who will be on the advisory boards? The views of those with protected characteristics should be heard, and thought given to how equality issues are addressed through the work of the advisory boards.** Response – The boards come in different varieties: business advisory group will be business but that is a broad recognition that we would want to recognise business diversity but will go through a recruitment process. Still working through terms of reference and will be one of the boards we stand up soonest. Any thoughts, ideas and feelings how we set that up please say. Business advisory group would not be the only place to hear VCSE voice, also skills and employment board and we would want to build on existing arrangements with the need to establish the voice of the skills and education provider. Housing group rests with the district authorities to bring forward their proposals and is suggested that the housing taskforce provides that. In addition, within each terms of reference a task and finish group would be created.

Extracts from letters/emails from stakeholders

“Council have reservations with only 2 district councillors likely to be appointed out of the 8 districts.” **(Bampton Council)**

“As the governing body directly elected to represent the interests of Totnes residents, we have significant reservations about an additional layer of governance at regional level, particularly one with very limited representation of the Town and Parish sector. It is our position that such a governance model would create an unacceptable democratic deficit. We need more of a voice on policies with profound local impacts, not less. Each town and parish council across Devon has its own unique characteristics that require tailored approaches, staying locally accountable. **(Totnes Town Council)**

“There is concern for the sustainability of the proposed CCA. To be effective the CCA must be adequately resourced in the longer term. DALC is concerned about the short-term nature of government funding, and the risks this presents for delivering long-term objectives effectively.

“Devon Association of Local Councils believes that democratic accountability is important for the delivery and oversight of government functions. We welcome and support proposals to establish a Team Devon Joint Committee, of which DALC would be a member representing the parish and town council sector.” **(Devon Association of Local Councils, Chair of the Board of Directors)**

“We support the principles of devolved decision-making and firmly believe that decisions taken in Devon are more likely to be beneficial to the specific needs of the communities in Mid Devon than those taken in Whitehall. However, we have a number of specific concerns that we would urge parties to consider and address as part of any implementation. Many of these relate to the challenges associated with districts being ‘non-constituent’ members. This council believes the law is flawed in this area and fails to recognise the significant delivery role that districts have in housing, economic development, regeneration and spatial/infrastructure planning.” **(Mid Devon District Council)**

“It is noted that the two Constituent Members of the CCA will be DCC and Torbay. Whilst Torbay is a unitary council, its population is smaller than the population of some District Councils in Devon and so there is the risk of a democratic deficit especially when the Chair of the CCA rotates between the two authorities. It is accepted that this is a requirement of the legislation, but we urge all parties to ensure that democratic balance is reflected so far as is possible under the legislation in the governance arrangements being put in place. Whilst the Team Devon Joint Committee may alleviate some concerns, excluding District Councils from important decisions affecting their communities is incorrect and, without further comfort being provided within the proposed constitutional arrangements, represents a reduction in the influence of District Councils. The democratic imbalance referred to above means that areas such as North Devon could be underrepresented and so it is suggested that of the three councillors appointed to the CCA by DCC, at least one should represent a ward in the North Devon area.” **(North Devon Council)**

“Devon, with its larger geographic area and population, requires a governance model that accurately reflects its needs and contributions. Historical experiences suggest that areas within Devon, notably Torridge, have faced challenges in securing government funding and project support. There is palpable apprehension that the proposed structure may perpetuate these disparities rather than address them.” **(Cllr Isaac, Great Torrington Town Council)**

“It is impossible to believe that the new Authority will cost less to run in year three than it might in year two, and it is equally improbable that the money on offer will meet the full costs of getting the new Authority up and running with a full complement of staff on board.” **(South Hams Society)**

“It is hard to see how, given that both Constituent Councils primarily derive their revenue from Council Tax and given that no government funds, other than for adult education and £250k in Year Three, are guaranteed after Year Two, there is every probability that Council Tax payers will be left footing the bill for the CCA in years Three and beyond.” **(South Hams Society)**

“The proposed CCA is a leap – and possibly a dangerous leap – into the unknown, with few, if any, benefits immediately apparent. Considerably more information needs to be made available, and only then should residents be given the opportunity to vote on whether or not they wish to participate” **(South Hams Society)**

“We fully support the proposal to move “Team Devon” on to a more robust governance footing by converting this to a statutory joint committee in order to inform the voting intentions wielded at the CCA board” **(West Devon Borough Council, Leader)**

“The Council has significant concerns as to the detail and time of the proposal. Torbay (which is of a similar size to Teignbridge District Council or Exeter City Council) is proposed have the same number of votes as Devon County Council (3). In the alternative all the Districts combined would have a maximum of only 2 representatives on the Authority. As such the voting arrangements lack democratic accountability, are unrepresentative and not fit for purpose. The absence of Plymouth represents a major weakness which, given the high level of collaboration between it and West

Devon/South Hams is likely to be disadvantageous to those districts and their communities.”
(Tavistock Town Council, Clerk)

“The Parish Council asks that it be confirmed in the Devolution Deal that the running costs of the CCA will be paid by Government and not any of the constituent, district, city, town or parish councils or their taxpayers.” **(Exminster Parish Council, Clerk)**

“The Town Council is disappointed at the lack of focus in the proposal on community, locality and place at the local level. This makes it difficult to respond in more detail, for the reasons listed, especially the inadequacy of proposed voting arrangements and underrepresentation of the Districts on the prospective Devon and Torbay Combined Authority.” **(Newton Abbot Town Council, Town Clerk)**

“It’s not clear with this proposal, where the savings if any, are going to come from, there appears to have been no clear cost benefit assessment to this proposal.” **(Dartmouth Town Council, Town Clerk)**

“The Council is very disappointed that the proposals do not see funding from government devolved to the lowest level, i.e. to towns and parishes and instead will see some funding being applied for not from the respective District Council, where in Dawlish’s case it would be against a potential 46 other local authorities, but to the Combined County Authority which would see upwards of 300 local authorities potentially bidding against each other.” **(Dawlish Town Council, Town Clerk)**

“Cranbrook Town Council strongly supports the transfer of powers, functions and funding from central to local government, advocating for greater local autonomy. However, the proposal would result in added complexity – and therefore added cost to the taxpayer – in an already three-tier area of local government. Cranbrook Town Council disagrees with the need to create and maintain a CCA to deliver the stated ambition.” **(Cranbrook Town Council, Chairman)**

“Not all areas in Devon are parished and this is particularly noticeable in Torbay with only one Town Council. Therefore it is considered that with the devolution proposals a review should take place on:

- the unparished areas and how these communities can be better represented at local level; and
- devolution of powers to local level, who are elected to represent their communities.”
(Brixham Town Council, Clerk)

“We welcome the potential of the proposed Devolution Deal as a positive step towards increased local control. The transfer of powers and resources from central government aligns with the principle of subsidiarity, allowing decisions to be made at the most appropriate level” **(East Devon District Council, Leader)**

“We firmly believe that the proposed governance model would result in an unacceptable democratic deficit” **(Crediton Town Council, Clerk)**

“We believe that, at present, only individuals with the specific education on this particular issue can provide an informed opinion on Devolution. Therefore, we are not able to support the proposed Devolution changes at this time” **(Newton Abbot and District Civic Society)**

“The proposed combined authority will be a powerful voice in the sector and one I would want to engage with as would policing at a senior level” **(Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly)**

“In the absence of assured ongoing funding a new Combined Authority will not be sustainable and the Town Council has significant fears that post 2026/27 the financial burden will be placed on Devon’s taxpayers via current Precepts leading to a degradation of existing services”

(Kingsbridge Town Council)

“The Teignbridge District Council response gives overall support for devolution and the principle that decisions made in Devon are more likely to be beneficial to the specific needs of our communities than those made in Whitehall, but has concerns on a number of details”

(Teignbridge District Council, Leader)

“Torrige District Council regret the fact that there is very little involvement with District Council in the proposed CCA and express their concerns over the levels of Governance and Scrutiny of the CCA and that all concerns raised also be sent to Central Government.” **(Torrige District Council, Chair)**

“The current proposal on the establishment of Combined County Authority does not have a formal link with health services. Given the long standing history of partnership between the Council and Health across Devon and the existing Integrated arrangements for delivering health and social care in Torbay we feel that this is a gap and would welcome consideration on how this could be addressed and ensure that we maintain a focus on joint strategic planning.” **(Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust, Chief Executive)**

“Exmoor National Park Authority is very supportive of the proposal. We recognise the benefits the DT CCA would deliver through the transfer of powers and funding to local government, decision making at a local level, more effective, better targeted public services and stronger partnerships.” **(Exmoor National Park Authority)**

“In concluding the debate, the Council supported a proposal to request that the devolution process be postponed pending the outcome of the forthcoming General Election and 2025 County Council elections in order to prevent any unnecessary costs being incurred” **(South Hams District Council, Executive Lead for Governance and Economy)**

“The Council notes that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities’ published deal and the background text for the consultation are silent on the impact of the devolution and CAA on local government restructuring. The Council also notes the following statement in the Constituent Councils’ press release of 25 January 2024: “The Government has chosen Devon and Torbay as one of only a small number of local authority areas in the country to form a Combined County Authority (CCA), that will not require an elected Mayor or changes to the current structure of local councils.” The Council looks forward to receiving a record of the CCA’s formal endorsement of this position following its inception.” **(Exeter City Council, Chief Executive)**

“The Torbay, Plymouth and Devon VCSE Assembly supports the draft proposals for a Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority which are currently subject to public consultation. As an equal and valued Anchor Organisation, the Assembly would request that our role is recognised as a useful gateway into the VCSE sector by the new CCA to ensure its reach into the wider sector, including the very small and micro organisations, moving forwards” **(Torbay, Plymouth and Devon, Voluntary and Community and Social Enterprise Assembly, Independent Chair)**

“Devon Communities Together acknowledges that Combined County Authorities are a new model designed for rural areas. We welcome the intention to enable decisions to be made closer to the local people, communities and businesses they affect. The creation of more effective, better targeted public services, greater growth and stronger partnerships between public, private and

community leaders should be beneficial to people in rural areas” (**Devon Communities Together, Chief Executive Officer**)

Annex 1: Demographics

Online survey responses

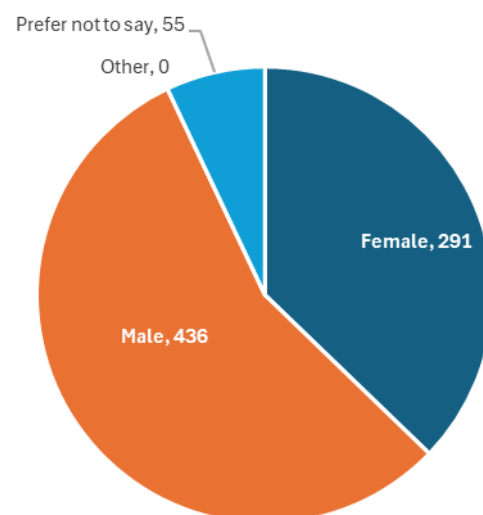
A total of 791 completed consultation questionnaire forms were received. Of these responses:

- 758 (96%) were recorded as received from individuals.
- 31 (4%) were recorded as received from respondents who identified themselves as a representative of a business or organisation.

Gender identity

56% of respondents were male and 37% were female. 7% preferred not to say.

Response	No.	%
Female	291	37%
Male	436	56%
Other	0	0%
Prefer not to say	55	7%
Total	782	
Blank	9	



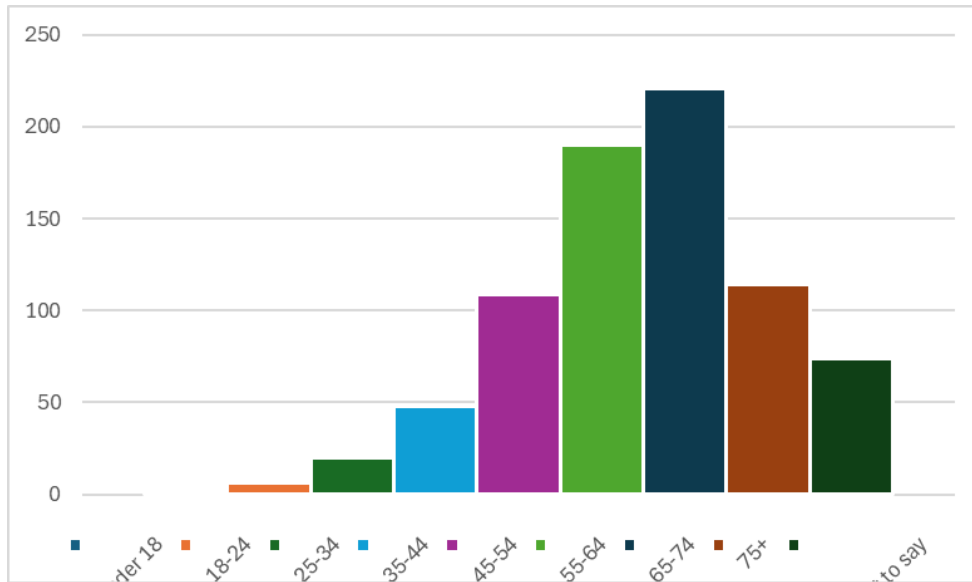
Age group

Of those who responded, the largest group (221 or 28%) was aged 65-74. The next largest group were those aged 55-64 at 190 (24%).

114 (14%) were from the 75+ group, 109 (14%) responses were from the 45-54 group, 48 (6%) were from the 35-44 group, 20 (3%) were aged 25-34 and six (1%) were from the 18-24 group. Two were from under 18.

74 (9%) respondents preferred not to say.

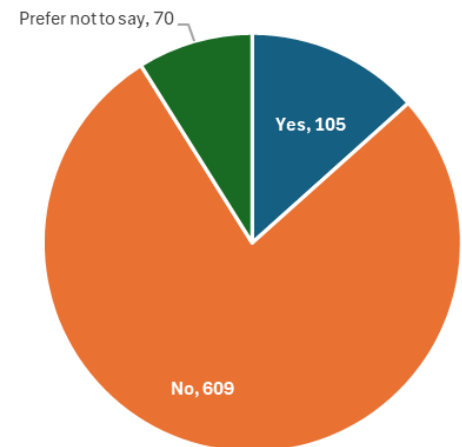
Response	No.	%
Under 18	2	<1%
18-24	6	1%
25-34	20	3%
35-44	48	6%
45-54	109	14%
55-64	190	24%
65-74	221	28%
75+	114	15%
Prefer not to say	74	9%
Total	784	100%



Disability

105 of the respondents (13%) stated that they considered themselves to be disabled. 609 (78%) did not and 70 (9%) preferred not to say.

Response	No.	%
Yes	105	13%
No	609	78%
Prefer not to say	70	9%
Total	784	
Blank	7	

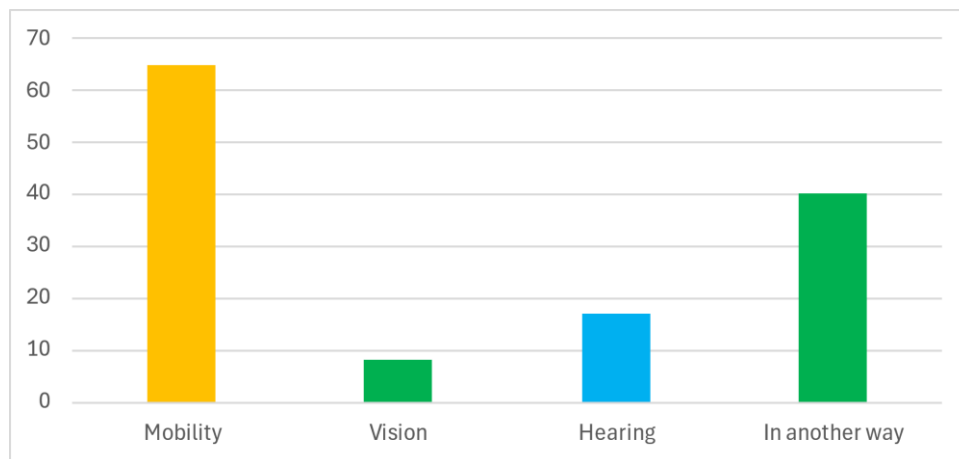


When asked how this affected them, 66 respondents selected one or more options.

The largest number was 65 (98%) for who stated that their disability affected their mobility, with the second largest number 40 (61%) identifying that it affected them in another way.

17 (26%) people stated their disability affected their hearing and 8 (12%) said it affected their vision.

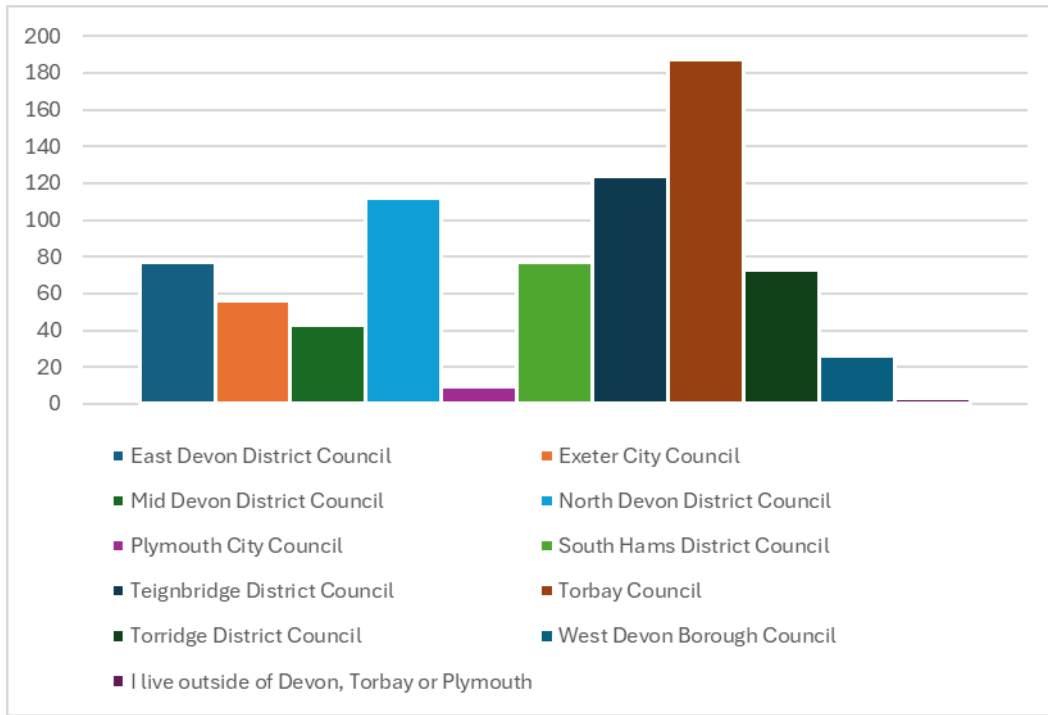
Response	No.	%
Mobility	65	98%
Vision	8	12%
Hearing	17	26%
In another way	40	61%
Total selecting 1 or more options	66	
Persons selecting none of the options	725	



Location

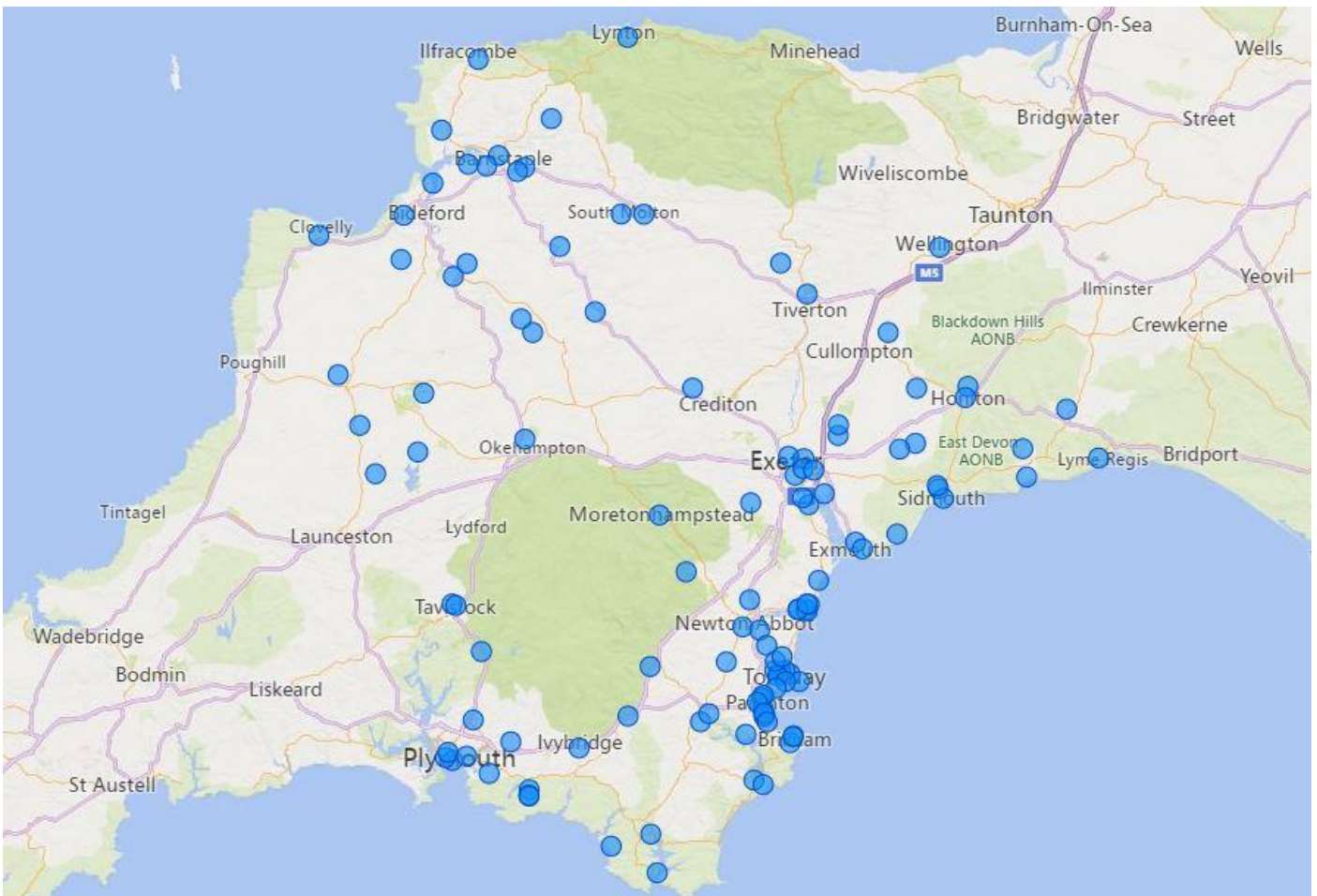
There was a geographic spread of the 789 responses recorded from across Devon and Torbay identifying the district/unitary council area where they lived. Almost all were from people who lived in Devon, Torbay or Plymouth, with only three living outside of Devon, Torbay or Plymouth. Two preferred not to say.

Response	No.	%	No	%
Devon County Council	588	74%		
Of which:				
East Devon District Council			77	10%
Exeter City Council			56	7%
Mid Devon District Council			43	5%
North Devon District Council			112	14%
South Hams District Council			77	10%
Teignbridge District Council			124	16%
Torrige District Council			73	9%
West Devon Borough Council			26	3%
Torbay Council	187	24%		
Plymouth City Council	9	1%		
I live outside of Devon, Torbay or Plymouth	3	<1%		
Prefer not to say	2	<1%		
Total	789			
Blank	2			



Postcode information

Respondents were asked for the first part of their postcode and 789 were recorded. The locations are mapped below.

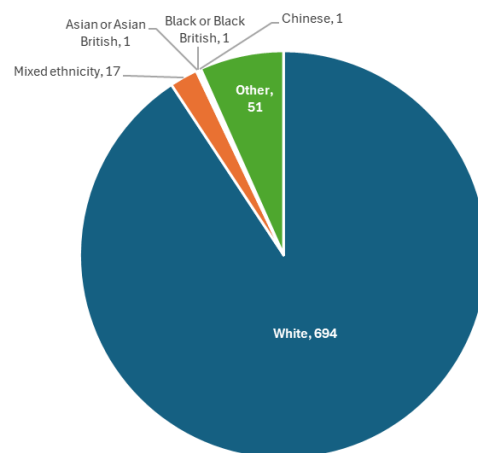


Ethnic origin

The largest group of respondents by ethnic origin was white at 694 (91%). The next largest groups recorded were “other” at 51 (6%) and mixed ethnicity at 17 (2%).

There was one respondent each who identified as Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British, and Chinese.

Response	No.	%
White	694	91%
Mixed ethnicity	17	2%
Asian or Asian British	1	<1%
Black or Black British	1	<1%
Chinese	1	<1%
Other	51	6%
Total	765	
Blank	26	



Employment status

The largest group of respondents by employment status were recorded as retired at 320 (40%). The second largest group of 190 (24%) were working full-time in Devon or Torbay, and 73 (9%) were working part-time in Devon or Torbay.

41 (5%) were self-employed part-time, 25 (3%) were self-employed full-time, 16 (2%) were working full-time elsewhere, 12 (2%) had a long-term sickness, and 11 (1%) were students.

Nine (1%) were looking after family/home, six (1%) were unemployed, five (1%) were working full-time in Plymouth, and four (1%) were working part-time elsewhere.

One was working part-time in Plymouth, and one was temporarily sick.

77 respondents (10%) chose “other” for this question.

Response	No.	%
Working full-time in Devon or Torbay	190	24%
Working full-time in Plymouth	5	1%
Working full-time elsewhere	16	2%
Working part-time in Devon or Torbay	73	9%
Working part-time in Plymouth	1	0%
Working part-time elsewhere	4	1%
Self-employed - full time	25	3%
Self-employed - part time	41	5%
Student	11	1%
Looking after Family/Home	9	1%
Temporary Sick	1	0%
Long-term sick	12	2%
Retired	320	40%
Unemployed	6	1%
Other	77	10%
Total	714	
Blank	77	

Annex 2: Schedule of stakeholder events

20 February 2024	Green Innovation and Growth Roundtable Colleges and Training Providers Public Sector Core Partners East Devon District Council – Cabinet Briefing
21 February 2024	North Devon District Council Exeter City Council – Briefing
22 February 2024	North Devon and Torridge place-based event Teignbridge District Council – Briefing
23 February 2024	Housing Roundtable
26 February 2024	Devon County Council – Briefing ¹
27 February 2024	Teignbridge District Council – Cabinet West Devon Borough Council – Briefing Devon Association of Local Councils
28 February 2024	East Devon District Council – Briefing
29 February 2024	Mid Devon District Council – Briefing
4 March 2024	Torbay place-based event North Devon District Council – Scrutiny Committee
5 March 2024	Business Representative Organisations West Devon Borough Council – Special Council Meeting
6 March 2024	East Devon place-based event
7 March 2024	South Hams District Council – Briefing
8 March 2024	Exeter place-based event
11 March 2024	Transport Roundtable Torridge District Council – Extraordinary Council Meeting
12 March 2024	Universities Roundtable
14 March 2024	Voluntary and Community Sector Partners
18 March 2024	Chairs of Torbay Community Partnerships Online open event
19 March 2024	Devon Partnership NHS Trust
20 March 2024	Devon Equalities Reference Group (including representatives from Torbay)

¹ A briefing for members of Torbay Council was held on 24 January 2024 prior to the start of the consultation and a further briefing was not required during the consultation period.

21 March 2024

Devon County Council – Care Leavers and Personal Assistants
South Hams District Council

Annex 3: Text of consultation responses submitted by Devon's district councils

East Devon District Council response

Assessment of the Proposed Devolution Deal for Devon and Torbay

This letter provides East Devon District Council's response to the proposed Devolution Deal for Devon and Torbay. The proposed Deal was discussed at Cabinet on the 28th February. This response captures the key points from this discussion and highlights areas that we wish to see strengthened as the proposals move forward. This is aligned with the issues and concerns identified across the network of Devon Districts.

Overall Support for Devolution

We welcome the potential of the proposed Devolution Deal as a positive step towards increased local control. The transfer of powers and resources from central government aligns with the principle of subsidiarity, allowing decisions to be made at the most appropriate level. We recognise the considerable time and effort that has been invested in to securing the offer of this Deal.

The provisions of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 mean that District Councils cannot automatically become full constituent members of the proposed Combined County Authority (CCA). Subsequently it is difficult to escape the impression that District Councils are starting from a position of being junior partners in the devolution proposals. We hope that this position can be corrected locally through the constitution for the CCA.

Our response focuses on three specific aspects to the proposed Deal;

1. Relationship with Design Principles

The nine design principles set out in the consultation document provide a useful framework against which to consider the proposals. A particular area of focus relates to the principle of subsidiarity and the importance of ensuring that specific activity happens at the lowest viable level.

- **UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funds:** While the proposed deal routes these funds through the new Combined Authority (CCA), our strong preference is for continued devolution directly to District Councils. The remaining CCA remit should be to broker conversations about strategic commissioning of countywide (generic) business support activity, and to maximise the effectiveness of local investment aligned to the economic support activity newly-returning to the county council as part of the winding down of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). However, since the LEP failed on both its democratic mandate and often in its local relevance, we would wish the CCA to set off firmly on the right foot by committing to retain local delivery methods for business support where this is currently in place via districts.
- **Heat Network Zoning Coordination:** The proposal positions the CCA as the Heat Network Zoning Coordinator. Given the localised nature of heat networks, particularly in the Exeter and East Devon areas, we believe that District Councils are better placed to manage this activity.

2. Resources

The proposed £16 million of additional capital is a welcome development. We support the emphasis placed on ensuring investment in housing delivery and the transition to net zero.

- **Housing Delivery:** We support the potential for a shared strategic investment pipeline with Homes England. However, we emphasise the importance of utilising existing housing functions and groupings like the Devon Housing Task Force. We expect the CCA to enable and accelerate delivery with and through Districts and local housing associations. We specifically want to ensure that the District Councils relationship with Homes England be retained and built upon. The aims of the CCA should be to build on best practice and expertise; to provide a stronger platform and empower the excellent work being done across the Team Devon landscape, not to duplicate or add extra bureaucracy. We understand that this is the intention, however we would wish to be involved more fully in the discussions around 'operationalising' the CCA.
- **Transport** - Investment in transport infrastructure is crucial, including projects like the new passing loop on the Exeter-Waterloo line. We recognise that operational highway matters will remain with DCC and Torbay respectively. However, in the duty to produce a joint strategic transport plan across the CCA geography, we would urge inclusion of the District Councils in the formulation of this in order to ensure that vital land-use and housing plans are aligned with transport plans and that sustainable transport options are embedded – both in terms of strategic intent and future investment.

3. Governance and Decision Making

We acknowledge the constraints of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act. We believe that enabling District Councils to also become full constituent members of the Combined Authority will be an important step towards improving the representative voice of Devon residents and in strengthening local democratic accountability.

- **Constitution of the CCA** – We ask that all opportunities to enable Districts to become full constituent members are considered to ensure that districts can have a voice on reserved matter issues. This is of particular significance given that many of these matters are of relevance to districts and existing partnership ambitions are already in place, for example around carbon reduction and the Devon Climate Emergency.
- **Team Devon** - The proposed Team Devon statutory joint committee is a positive step towards collective decision-making which we firmly support. This will help to inform voting intentions at CCA meetings. However, further details regarding its operation and role in relation to the CCA are necessary. We would particularly welcome the opportunity to develop the detailed terms of reference for this committee.
- **Community and involvement of local towns and parishes** – the voice of the Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) is a welcome one within the current 'Team Devon' arena, and we would strongly support the inclusion and recognition of town and parishes in the implementation and operationalising of the CCA. Housing, transport, jobs, skills and sustainability are strategic issues with often local or hyper-local solutions. The CCA should aim to be the bridge that demonstrates strategic intervention and scale, while empowering our communities' ambition and aspiration.

Conclusion

We believe the proposed Devolution Deal presents both opportunities and challenges. Our focus is on ensuring it strengthens local democracy and empowers effective decision-making at the most appropriate level. We look forward to engaging further in discussions to refine the details and maximise the benefits for Devon and Torbay.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Paul Arnott, Leader

Exeter City Council response

Dear Colleagues

I am writing to submit Exeter City Council's formal response to the consultation on the plan to create the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority.

At a meeting last night it was resolved that Council notes the proposed Devon and Torbay devolution deal and formation of the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority and submits the following response to the consultation:

1. Voting rights and governance

The council notes that the Government rejected the proposed amendment by the House of Lords to allow district councils to be constituent members of the new Combined County Authorities. We contend that this creates a democratic deficit for all district councils, and we look forward to this being rectified in Devon.

More specifically, from the perspective of Exeter and its residents and communities, with a population of more than 130,000, the city is one of two major urban areas south west of Bristol, and the main growth hub for the South West, with specialisms in science, tech, big data, and significant assets, such as the University of Exeter and Exeter College, which are vital to skills generation, innovation, and productivity growth. There are over 35,000 people who commute into the city to work but nearly half a million who travel-to work within Greater Exeter.

The capacity for future development and growth could be markedly improved with vital investment to:

- accelerate green growth and improve economic productivity;
- increase private sector employment particularly in transformative sectors where higher skills, higher levels of research and development and deep technology in climate sciences and health are predicted;
- grow, retain, and attract a better skilled workforce and invest in employment, education, and skills plans;
- provide better digital connectivity;
- deliver high-quality, sustainable new neighbourhoods incorporating a pipeline of housing sites on brownfield land across the city, unlocking 12,000 green homes;
- retrofit a further 4,000 council houses to reduce carbon footprint and tackle fuel poverty;
- improve public transport connectivity, promote active travel choices, tackle congestion, and improve accessibility to the city centre;
- expand and secure the city's future green energy supply, including new renewable sources.

The ambitions and purported benefits of the CCA mirror these challenges and it is imperative that Exeter's democratically elected representatives have direct input to decisions on prioritisation and allocation of funding and resources as constituent members of the CCA. With a population of around 136,00 and three constituent members of the CCA, Torbay is afforded disproportionate and inequitable democratic input, which would be more accurately and reasonably allocated if the governance arrangements were represented by Devon's urban, rural, and coastal communities, with three seats to reflect this balance.

2. Local Government Restructuring

The Council notes that DLUHC's published deal and the background text for the consultation are silent on the impact of the devolution and CAA on local government restructuring. The Council also notes the following statement in the Constituent Councils' press release of 25 January 2024:

“The Government has chosen Devon and Torbay as one of only a small number of local authority areas in the country to form a Combined County Authority (CCA), that will not require an elected Mayor or changes to the current structure of local councils.” The Council looks forward to receiving a record of the CCA’s formal endorsement of this position following its inception.

3. District Council Common Issues

In common with other district council colleagues across Devon, we recognise the potential benefits of a CCA, in giving Devon and Exeter a voice in government and attracting funding to support our ambitions. We want to work collaboratively with our Devon colleagues and government to address concerns in a number of specific areas:

- UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) – we expect this (or its successor) to continue to be devolved to districts within Devon to deliver. We note that there is currently no certainty about any future rounds of the UKSPF programme. However, in line with the Government’s commitment to replace lost EU funding, we would expect the shared prosperity fund, or equivalent replacement funding streams in future, to be devolved from the CCA to district level by default. With the remaining CCA remit being to broker conversations about strategic commissioning of countywide (generic) business support activity, to maximise the effectiveness of local investment aligned to the economic activity newly returning to the county council as part of the winding down of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). However, since the LEP failed on both its democratic mandate and local relevance to businesses, we would wish the CCA to set off firmly on the right foot by committing to retain local delivery methods for business support where this is currently in place via districts.
- Housing empowerment – we expect the CCA to enable and accelerate delivery with and through districts and local housing associations. Much is made of the potential for a shared strategic investment pipeline with Homes England, and while we recognise the potential for shared investment and the need for strategic conversations to deliver this, we would wish to make it clear that districts expect existing housing functions and groupings to be utilised – such as the Devon Housing Task Force, which covers the whole of the Devon and Torbay area (and which is currently chaired by a District Council Leader). The aims of the CCA should be to build on best practice and expertise; to provide a stronger platform and empower the excellent work being done across the Team Devon landscape, not to duplicate or add extra bureaucracy. We understand that this is the intention, however we would wish to be involved more fully in the discussions around ‘operationalising’ the CCA.

Additionally, as a result of conversations held between Exeter City Council’s Group Leaders, Members unanimously supported that, in addition to the above response, the Council would be seeking to ensure that any wider governance arrangements for a business advisory committee should feature each of the following:

- a for profit business representative;
- a not for profit business representative (i.e. social enterprise); and
- voluntary and community sector representative.

Kind Regards

Bindu Arjoon, Chief Executive, Exeter City Council

Mid Devon District Council's response

- We note the county is intending to propose this deal under the process described by statute.
- We support the principles of devolved decision-making and firmly believe that decisions taken in Devon are more likely to be beneficial to the specific needs of the communities in Mid Devon than those taken in Whitehall. However, we have a number of specific concerns that we would urge parties to consider and address as part of any implementation. Many of these relate to the challenges associated with districts being 'non-constituent' members. This council believes the law is flawed in this area and fails to recognise the significant delivery role that districts have in housing, economic development, regeneration and spatial/infrastructure planning.
- In common with other district colleagues across Devon, we have concerns in a number of specific areas:
 - UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) – we expect this (or its successor) to continue to be devolved to districts within Devon to deliver. We note that there is currently no certainty about any future rounds of the UKSPF programme. However, in line with government commitment to replace lost EU funding, we would expect the shared prosperity fund, or equivalent replacement funding streams in future, to be devolved from the CCA to district level by default. The remaining CCA remit should be to broker conversations about strategic commissioning of countywide (generic) business support activity, and to maximise the effectiveness of local investment aligned to the economic support activity newly returning to the county council as part of the winding down of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). However, since the LEP failed on both its democratic mandate and often in its local relevance, we would wish the CCA to set off firmly on the right foot by committing to retain local delivery methods for business support where this is currently in place via districts.
 - Housing empowerment – we expect the CCA to enable and accelerate delivery with and through districts and local housing associations. Much is made of the potential for a shared strategic investment pipeline with Homes England, and while we recognise the potential for shared investment and the need for strategic conversations to deliver this, we would wish to make it clear that districts expect existing housing functions and groupings to be utilised – such as the Devon Housing Task Force, which already covers the whole of the Devon and Torbay area (and which is currently chaired by a District Council Leader). The aims of the CCA should be to build on best practice and expertise; to provide a stronger platform and empower the excellent work being done across the Team Devon landscape, not to duplicate or add extra bureaucracy. We understand that this is the intention, however we would wish to be involved more fully in the discussions around 'operationalising' the CCA.
 - Voting rights and governance – we understand that the government rejected the proposed amendment by the House of Lords to allow district councils to be constituent members of the new Combined County Authorities. This failure to include the statutory housing and planning authorities significantly overlooks the remit of spatial planning in economic productivity and agglomeration gains, but perhaps more importantly fails to recognise the considerable correlation between housing and health outcomes. For the government to consider that devolution and 'levelling up' can be achieved without housing and planning authorities at the table, is indicative of an ongoing failure to understand what levelling up means to the people of Mid Devon. The deal from government acknowledges housing challenges as one of the

most pressing issues facing Devon and Torbay, and yet fails to include the housing authorities within the proposed governance arrangements. It is hard to know whether this is indicative of government dereliction or incompetence. We would hope that a more enlightened future government takes steps to amend this. However, in the meantime we would ask that all such opportunities within the law are considered to ensure that districts can have a voice on reserved matter issues. Particularly when many of these are of relevance to districts and existing partnership ambitions are already in place, for example around carbon reduction and the Devon Climate Emergency. We welcome and firmly support the proposal to move 'Team Devon' onto a more robust governance footing by converting this to a statutory joint committee in order to inform the voting intentions wielded at the CCA board. However, we regret that such a workaround is necessary and note the policy paradox of government devolution diminishing the voice of local democratic institutions.

- Transport – we recognise that operational highway matters will remain with DCC and Torbay respectively. However, in the duty to produce a joint strategic transport plan across the CCA geography, we would urge inclusion of the district councils in the formulation of this in order to ensure that vital land-use and housing plans are aligned to transport plans and that sustainable transport options are embedded – both in terms of strategic intent and future investment. It is inconceivable that new communities can be delivered without the planning and housing authorities helping to shape and direct investment in necessary infrastructure to ensure sustainable, happy and healthy communities.
- Community and involvement of local towns and parishes – the voice of the Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) is a welcome one within the current 'Team Devon' arena, and we would strongly support the inclusion and recognition of town and parishes in the implementation and operationalising of the CCA. Housing, transport, jobs, skills and sustainability are strategic issues with often local or hyper-local solutions. The CCA should aim to be the bridge that demonstrates strategic intervention and scale, while empowering our communities' ambition and aspiration.

North Devon Council's response

Proposed Resolution

That Council note the content of the Devolution offer and provide the following response to the public consultation:-

-That North Devon Council is supportive of the principles of devolution. It agrees that powers and budgets should be devolved to local bodies in order to deliver priorities for the local community and also agrees that decisions taken across Devon are more likely to reflect the sometimes very localised needs in North Devon than decisions taken in Whitehall.

- Notwithstanding the above, there are specific concerns regarding the offer and the legislative structure that should be expressed and where possible taken on board by government and DCC and Torbay:-

Governance and Decision Making

- It is noted that the two Constituent Members of the CCA will be DCC and Torbay. Whilst Torbay is a unitary council, its population is smaller than the population of some District Councils in Devon and so there is the risk of a democratic deficit especially when the Chair of the CCA rotates between the two authorities. It is accepted that this is a requirement of the legislation but we urge all parties to ensure that democratic balance is reflected so far as is possible under the legislation in the governance arrangements being put in place.
- Whilst the Team Devon Joint Committee may alleviate some concerns, excluding District Councils from important decisions affecting their communities is incorrect and, without further comfort being provided within the proposed constitutional arrangements, represents a reduction in the influence of District Councils.
- The democratic imbalance referred to above means that areas such as North Devon could be underrepresented and so it is suggested that of the three councillors appointed to the CCA by DCC, at least one should represent a ward in the North Devon area.
- Allied to the above point, paragraph 20 sets out examples of decisions that will be reserved for constituent councils to take. Greater clarity over what will be a reserved decision would be welcomed.
- The list of Reserved Matters includes decisions on all transport functions. Whilst we recognise that District Councils are not transport authorities and that DCC and Torbay will be responsible for operational transport issues, the CCA should involve District Councils in discussions and decisions relating to strategic transport planning to ensure that there is continuity with Local Plans and local priorities for growth.
- The list of Reserved Matters also includes major investment decisions. Greater clarity over what is a major investment decision should be provided but as a principle, District Councils should be involved, or have a voice, in decisions that affect their interests. They must also be involved in the delivery of those decisions where appropriate.
- The Scrutiny function must be structured in a way that provides strong challenge and scrutiny and District Councils should play a meaningful role in that function. Scrutiny also needs to be politically and place balanced.

Economy

- Paragraph 5 of the offer refers to Devon and Torbay being a coherent economic area but that is not considered to be correct. The economy in North Devon is entirely different to that in the south of the county and should be recognised as such.

- The Council would be extremely concerned in the creation of the CCA resulted in a diminution in the role of District Councils in place shaping and economic development. It is our firm view that District Councils are best placed to deliver these objectives in their local areas and whilst co-ordination and collaboration arising from the creation of the CCA, as well as the stronger voice nationally, will be welcomed, the main role of District Councils in delivering these functions locally should not be undermined.

Housing

- The opportunity for greater strategic collaboration with Homes England is to be welcomed but this should not be at the expense of local partnerships with Homes England that exist at District level. We would also urge the parties to take advantage of the existing arrangements in place such as the Devon Housing Task Force, to provide the platform for the collaborative work and strategic planning.
- Paragraph 69 refers to the provision of “affordable housing, regeneration and wider housing growth through the development of a shared development pipeline for the area”. We agree that the pipeline should reflect strategic priorities across the whole CCA area, but District Councils should be involved in decisions relating to that pipeline and the principles underpinning it. Clarity over whether decision relating to the development of a pipeline are “major investments decisions” and therefore reserved to constituent councils should be provided.

UKSPF

- At present, District Councils administer the UKSPF. The Fund has, and is, addressing local priorities under a scheme agreed at District level. Whilst this particular fund runs only until 2025, any successor fund will pass to the CCA under the offer. It is the firm view of this Council, and others, that any successor fund should be devolved to Districts to plan and deliver without top slicing at CCA level.

Business Support

- This authority has used funding from UKSPF to deliver support tailored to local businesses, taking into account local knowledge and intelligence about business needs in the area. Whilst there should be scope for support to be delivered across the county where appropriate, local delivery of business support should be retained and developed under the CCA.

South Hams District Council's response

Dear Councillor Hart

Thank you for inviting comments on the proposed Devon and Torbay Devolution Deal. South Hams District Council considered the proposal at its Council Meeting on 21st March 2024. During the debate, it was noted the District Councils are only a consultee and not being asked to make a formal decision as to whether or not it supports the deal and formation of a Combined County Authority.

As a result of the debate, the Council wishes to raise the following concerns in respect of the proposed deal and with it the additional tier of local government in Devon and Torbay. While we support the principle of devolution and welcome the additional funding for this region, we consider that the proposal risks making local government more complex by adding a layer of bureaucracy.

While the £16m of capital funding is a positive step, it is only for two years which we consider will not provide the long-term solution that the region needs. Furthermore, we feel the fact that spending plans must be signed-off by central government disqualifies the plan from being true devolution of powers.

Economic Programmes

While there is no certainty about future rounds of the UK Shared Prosperity Programme, we would expect any future such funding streams to be devolved from the CCA to district level by default. The remaining CCA remit being to broker conversations about strategic commissioning of countywide (generic) business support activity, to maximise the effectiveness of local investment aligned to the economic activity returning to the county council as part of the winding down of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The LEP failed on both its democratic mandate and had little local relevance. It is important for the CCA to set off firmly on the right foot by committing to retaining local delivery methods for business support where this is currently in place within districts. It is essential that the CCA delivers for the economy of South Hams in a way that the LEP previously failed to do.

Housing Empowerment

We expect any CCA to enable and accelerate delivery with and through districts and local housing associations. Much is made of the potential for a shared strategic investment pipeline with Homes England, and while we recognise the potential for shared investment and the need for strategic conversations to deliver this, we would wish to make it clear that districts expect existing housing functions and groupings to be utilised – such as the Devon Housing taskforce which covers the whole of the Devon and Torbay area. The aims of the CCA should be to build on best practice and expertise; to provide a stronger platform and empower the excellent work being done across the Team Devon landscape, not to duplicate or add extra bureaucracy. It is essential the CCA provides the vehicle to deliver on recommendations emerging from the Devon Housing Commission, delivery against which should be a key test of its impact and success.

Governance & Voting Rights

We feel that the proposed combined authority's remoteness and lack of democratic accountability, including the lack of voting rights for District Councils further disqualifies it from being described as devolution.

We are disappointed that the government rejected the House of Lords amendment which would have allowed district councils to be constituent members of the CCA with full voting rights

reflecting their democratic mandate on behalf of their areas. We intend to lobby a future government to rectify this democratic deficit. In the meantime, we ask that all such opportunities within the legal framework are considered to ensure that districts can have a voice on 'reserved' matters. We fully support the proposal to move 'Team Devon' onto a more robust governance footing by converting this to a statutory joint committee in order to inform the voting intentions wielded at the CCA board.

Transport

We recognise that operational highways matters will remain with DCC and Torbay respectively. However, in the duty to produce a joint strategic transport plan across the CAA geography, we would urge inclusion of district councils in the formulation of this in order to ensure that vital economic and housing plans are aligned to transport plans and that sustainable transport options are embedded – both in terms of strategic intent and future investment.

Adult Education

The Council welcomes the proposed devolution of the Adult Education budget and feel that local control is more likely to deliver for local need. We hope that local control of this budget will enable Devon's known problems in social mobility and productivity to be addressed.

Community

We feel that the government's document entitled "Devon and Torbay Devolution Deal" indicates that this is the first step in the reorganisation of local government in Devon and Torbay. Whilst we would welcome the genuine devolution of more powers to Devon, we feel that the intention as stated threatens the existence of district councils, the loss of effective local governance and may establish rule by a body that is remote and out of touch. We are also concerned that the cost of establishing an additional layer of local government will in itself hamper any improvement in the local services it is intended to improve and may even result in their decline.

South Hams benefits hugely from the resilient and resourceful communities that make up its towns and villages. Working with and for our communities is a key priority for this Council and we expect that the voice of those communities, organisations and of the towns and parishes which deliver services at a very local level are also heard by the CCA.

In concluding the debate, the Council supported a proposal to request that the devolution process be postponed pending the outcome of the forthcoming General Election and 2025 County Council elections in order to prevent any unnecessary costs being incurred.

Your sincerely

Councillor John Birch, Executive Lead for Governance and Economy

Teignbridge District Council's response

Dear John

The Proposed Devolution Deal for Devon and Torbay was discussed at Full Council on the 27th February 2024. The Teignbridge District Council response gives overall support for devolution and the principle that decisions made in Devon are more likely to be beneficial to the specific needs of our communities than those made in Whitehall, but has concerns on a number of details.

We wish to thank the County Council for the resources, time and effort it has taken to get to this position. The Council is optimistic that we can look forward to greater local decision making and further devolved powers that allow better more relevant decisions for our area. The Council has however raised a number of specific concerns to be addressed as part of the implementation of the CCA to ensure that democracy is improved by devolution, current working relationships are enhanced not weakened and where good practice already exists it should be maintained.

Our concerns are set out below and most are in common with other district colleagues across Devon:

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) – we expect this (or its successor) to continue to be devolved to districts within Devon. We note that there is currently no certainty about any future rounds of the UKSPF programme. However, in line with government commitment to replace lost EU funding, we would expect the shared prosperity fund, or equivalent replacement funding streams, to be devolved from the CCA to district level by default. The remaining CCA remit should be to broker conversations about strategic commissioning of countywide (generic) business support activity, and to maximise the effectiveness of local investment aligned to the economic support activity newly-returning to the county council as part of the winding down of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). However, since the LEP failed on both its democratic mandate and often in its local relevance, we would wish the CCA to set off firmly on the right foot by committing to retain local delivery methods for business support where this is currently in place via districts.

Housing empowerment – we expect the CCA to enable and accelerate delivery with and through districts and local housing associations. Much is made of the potential for a shared strategic investment pipeline with Homes England, and while we recognise the potential for shared investment and the need for strategic conversations to deliver this, we would wish to make it clear that districts expect existing housing functions and groupings to be utilised. We specifically would like to ensure that the district councils relationship with Homes England be retained and built upon. The aims of the CCA should be to build on best practice and expertise; to provide a stronger platform and empower the excellent work being done across the Team Devon landscape, not to duplicate or add extra bureaucracy. We understand that this is the intention, however we would wish to be involved more fully in the discussions around 'operationalising' the CCA and ensuring that the delivery of Local Plans and associated targets.

Voting rights and governance – we understand that the government rejected the proposed amendment by the House of Lords to allow district councils to be constituent members of the new Combined County Authorities. However, in the meantime we would ask that all such opportunities within the law are considered to ensure that districts can have a voice on reserved matter issues. Particularly when many of these are of relevance to districts and existing partnership ambitions are already in place, for example around carbon reduction and the Devon Climate Emergency. We welcome and firmly support the proposal to move 'Team Devon' onto a more robust governance footing by converting this to a statutory joint committee in order to inform the voting intentions

wielded at the CCA board. However, we regret that such a workaround is necessary and note the policy paradox of government devolution diminishing the voice of local democratic institutions.

Transport and Infrastructure - we recognise that operational highway matters will remain with DCC and Torbay respectively. However, in the duty to produce a joint strategic transport plan across the CCA geography, we would urge inclusion of the district councils in the formulation of this in order to ensure that vital land-use and housing plans are aligned to transport plans and that sustainable transport options are embedded – both in terms of strategic intent and future investment. The CCA needs to lead on County-wide and regionally significant projects, rather than focus on smaller projects aimed at a local level solution. We would also like to see that CCA go further to engage key utility providers, water, electricity, gas and communications which currently does not happen at a county scale yet is key to the delivery of local plans and the economic success of the County and Districts.

Community and involvement of local towns and parishes – the voice of the Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) is a welcome one within the current ‘Team Devon’ arena, and we would strongly support the inclusion and recognition of town and parishes in the implementation and operationalising of the CCA. Housing, transport, jobs, skills and sustainability are strategic issues with often local or hyper-local solutions. The CCA should aim to be the bridge that demonstrates strategic intervention and scale, while empowering our communities’ ambition and aspiration.

To conclude

Teignbridge recognises both the opportunities and risks that the Devolution Deal offers. The Council hopes and expects the dialogue to continue as the Devolution Deal develops and the CCA is formed. A critical part of the success of the CCA and Devolution will be the partnership working between the County and District. The CCA must ensure Districts have a real, and genuine, involvement in decision making and determining local priorities so that funding really benefits residents and communities.

Yours sincerely

Martin Wrigley, Leader of Teignbridge District Council

Torrige District Council's response

Dear Councillor J Hart

Thank you for the opportunity for Torrige District Council to formally respond to the consultation on the proposed Devolution Deal. The proposed deal was discussed at an Extraordinary Council Meeting held on Monday 11th March 2024.

I would like to thank your officers Keri Denton, Director of Performance and Partnerships at DCC and Maria Price, Director of Legal and Democratic Services at Devon County Council for taking the time to attend the Full Council meeting on 11th March 2024 presenting to our Members the Devon and Torbay Devolution Deal and the formation of a County Combined Authority (CCA) and also for answering the many questions raised.

Following the presentation a lengthy discussion took place where Members voiced their opinions on the Devolution Deal and how Torrige District Council might be impacted and what benefits might flow from the Deal.

During the discussion several proposals were put forward by Members and as a result the following response was resolved.

Torrige District Council regret the fact that there is very little involvement with District Councils in the proposed CCA and express their concerns over the levels of Governance and Scrutiny of the CCA and that all concerns raised also be sent to Central Government.

Your faithfully

Councillor D Bushby – Chair of Torrige District Council

West Devon Borough Council's response

Dear Councillor Hart

Consultation Response – Devon and Torbay Devolution Deal

Thank you for inviting comments on the proposed Devon and Torbay Devolution Deal. West Devon Borough Council noted the proposal at its Special Council Meeting on 5th March 2024. During the debate, as you would expect, Members of this Council wish to firmly state that the residents and communities of West Devon must be able to see the benefit from any such deal and formation of a Combined County Authority. The principle of Devon receiving more devolved powers and funding from central government to local government and allowing for decisions to be made at a local level is to be welcomed. West Devon Borough Council did not take a decision on whether or not to support the proposal, nevertheless it did set out a number of concerns that the relevant parties to the deal be urged to consider during any implementation process. These are set out below.

Economic Programmes

While there is no certainty about future rounds of the UK Shared Prosperity Programme, we would expect any future such funding streams to be devolved from the CCA to district level by default. The remaining CCA remit being to broker conversations about strategic commissioning of countywide (generic) business support activity, to maximise the effectiveness of local investment aligned to the economic activity returning to the county council as part of the winding down of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The LEP failed on both its democratic mandate and had little local relevance. It is important for the CCA to set off firmly on the right foot by committing to retaining local delivery methods for business support where this is currently in place within districts. It is essential that the CCA delivers for the economy of West Devon in a way that the LEP previously failed to do.

Housing Empowerment

We expect the CCA to enable and accelerate delivery with and through districts and local housing associations. Much is made of the potential for a shared strategic investment pipeline with Homes England, and while we recognise the potential for shared investment and the need for strategic conversations to deliver this, we would wish to make it clear that districts expect existing housing functions and groupings to be utilised – such as the Devon Housing taskforce which covers the whole of the Devon, Plymouth, and Torbay area. The aims of the CCA should be to build on best practice and expertise; to provide a stronger platform and empower the excellent work being done across the Team Devon landscape, not to duplicate or add extra bureaucracy. It is essential the CCA provides the vehicle to deliver on recommendations emerging from the Devon Housing Commission, delivery against which should be a key test of its impact and success.

Governance & Voting Rights

We are disappointed that the government rejected the House of Lords amendment which would have allowed district councils to be constituent members of the CCA with full voting rights reflecting their democratic mandate on behalf of their areas. We intend to lobby a future government to rectify this democratic deficit. In the meantime, we ask that all such opportunities within the legal framework are considered to ensure that districts can have a voice on 'reserved' matters. We fully support the proposal to move 'Team Devon' onto a more robust governance footing by converting this to a statutory joint committee in order to inform the voting intentions wielded at the CCA board.

Transport

We recognise that operational highways matters will remain with DCC and Torbay respectively. However, in the duty to produce a joint strategic transport plan across the CCA geography, we would urge inclusion of district councils in the formulation of this to ensure that vital economic and housing plans are aligned to transport plans and that sustainable transport options are embedded – both in terms of strategic intent and future investment. We have taken positive strides within West Devon, working with Devon County Council and other partners, to secure significant infrastructure schemes such as the Okehampton Transport Hub and in developing proposals for the reinstatement for the Tavistock to Plymouth rail line. It is important to West Devon that the CCA only builds upon these positive relationships and successful schemes to deliver truly integrated public transport networks that serve our rural communities.

Community

West Devon, and Devon as a whole benefits hugely from the resilient and resourceful communities that make its towns and villages. Working with and for our communities is a key priority for this Council and we expect that the voice of those communities, our local organisations and of the towns and parishes which deliver services at a very local level are also heard by the CCA.

We welcome the clarification from Devon County Council Officers that the CCA will be required to produce a business plan including clear metrics by which its success will be measured and we anticipate that the performance reporting of the CCA will enable us to monitor the impact on the West Devon area.

We hope that you find these points helpful and that they will be fully incorporated during the implementation of the CCA. Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Devon County Council Officers (in particular Phill Adams) for providing our Members with a briefing on the proposals and for supporting the debate at our Council meeting.

Yours Sincerely

Councillor Mandy Ewings – Leader of West Devon Borough Council