

West Devon and South Hams Joint Local Planning

The current Joint Local Plan covering Plymouth, South Hams and West Devon is being reviewed and replaced by one covering only South Hams and West Devon entitled South Hams west Devon Joint Local Plan (SHWDJLP). I have been appointed as a member of the Joint Local Plan Board which its key functions include:

- ensuring that the two councils maintain a clear programme for preparation, monitoring and review of the SHWDJLP;
- providing strategic guidance to the Local Plan Working Groups in their plan making and delivery functions; and
- providing active and dynamic overview of the performance of each council in meeting targets for maintaining a five-year housing land supply, and for delivering all other elements of the SHWDJLP, including the delivery of key infrastructure and development projects.

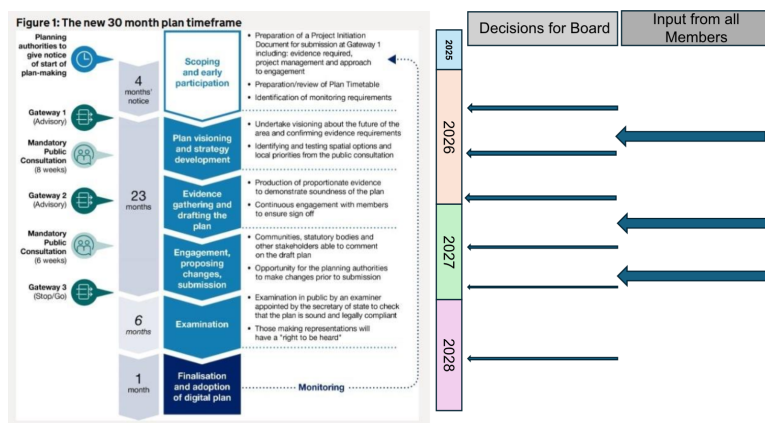
The government has increased the number of new houses required and this process will establish a robust evidence base for the number of houses which can be built, which will probably be less than the government's simple formula based target.

The evidence base will be created by going through a 'call for sites exercise' which will allow us to quantify the extent of sites that cannot come forward for development due to known constraints, as well as identifying potential new sites for development. This is a critical step in justifying a figure that is lower than the government housing need figure.

This is the first call for sites since 2017, and as such it is anticipated that new sites will be submitted for consideration. This is a critical part of the process for reducing our housing need figure into an appropriate and proportionate housing requirement – which reflects constraints, availability and deliverability.

The call for sites will not interfere with wider community considerations concerning local government reorganisation.

The current project timetable being used by government is shown on the left of the following image, with the expected timetable for SHWD and key decisions shown on the right.



Local Government Reorganisation

The deadline date for submission of plans to government for reorganisation is 28th November. All the authorities in Devon are working hard to meet this date.

Key issues which have to be addressed by proposals include the following.

- Each proposal must deal with the whole of Devon.
- There must be recognisable and coherent council geographies and identities.
- The populations of the unitary authorities should be balanced and relatively equal.
- Each authority should have strong economic growth prospects.
- Unbalanced concentrations of need should be avoided..

Inwardleigh Parish Council
George Dexter: 1st October 2025 Report

The government's evaluation criteria for establishing a single tier of Local Government are:

- Efficiency, capacity and the ability to withstand shocks;
- Ability to deliver high quality and sustainable services;
- Understanding and meeting local needs;
- Supporting devolution arrangements; and
- Strengthening community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment.

WDBC along with the other district Councils are investigating the 1:4:5 proposal and have retained the accounting and consulting firm KPMG to help develop and evaluate proposals and critically examine these against other potential models.

The submission will include proposals for the tier of local government below the unitary authority. These ideas which are in the process of development and assessment at the moment include:

- Neighbourhood Area Committees for delegated decision-making including planning and licensing;
- Local Community Networks (LCN) which bring together stakeholders from towns, parishes, ward members, police, health services and others to focus on place-based issues; and
- Parish and Town Councils to continue in their present form with stronger links to the LCN so as to enhance community representation.

WDBC is undertaking an engagement exercise to hear people's views on the proposals for the reorganisation. As part of this, there was a public meeting at the Ockment Centre on 2nd September which was attended by a small number of the public as well as local councillors. (This is not a formal 'consultation'. That will be carried out by the Government at some time next year.)

Contributions can be made on-line at - www.westdevon.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation.