

Everyone could win with a single Devon unitary

THE shape of local Government across Devon could soon change if proposals for a new single council for Devon get the go ahead.

Following Exeter City Council's failed bid for unitary status last year the Government asked the independent Boundary Committee to come up with a model of unitary government for Devon.

After much investigation and wide consultation, their final suggestion is likely to be the creation of a single council covering the whole of Devon. It is then up to the Secretary of State to decide whether or not to go ahead with the creation of a new Devon authority in April 2010.

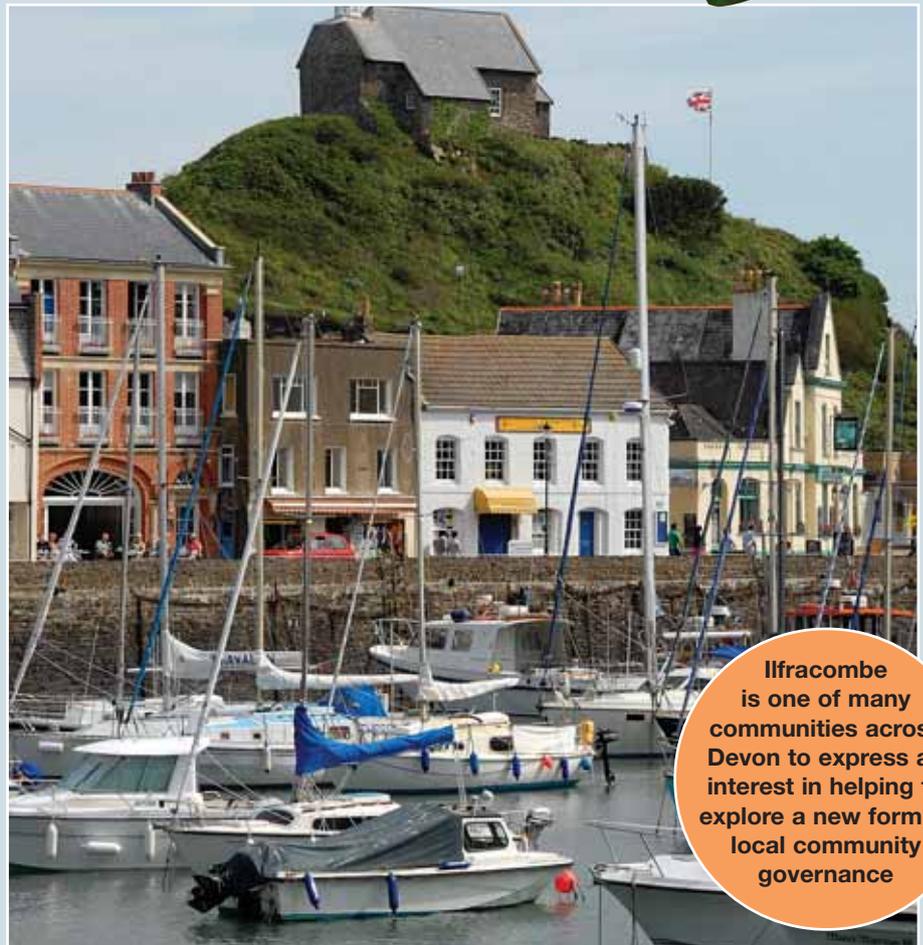
Devon County Council, local businesses, the Devon Association of Parish Councils, the police, health services and educationalists all back this proposal and the opportunity to renew and rebuild local democracy in Devon from the bottom up – based on natural communities and market and coastal towns.

To see a short video about a single council for Devon log on to mydevon.tv

Why it makes good sense

Some people argue that the downturn in the economy means the Government should scrap the idea of reorganisation. But if ever there was a time to strip away inefficiencies and save Council Tax payer's money the time is now.

The fully audited financial case which is based on bringing council tax down to the lowest across the county for everyone shows that a single Devon council will:



Ifracombe is one of many communities across Devon to express an interest in helping to explore a new form of local community governance

- save over £28 million in the first five years
- pay back all set up costs within three years and eight months and then give annual savings of £19 million a year

How will savings be made?

Fewer councils means less bureaucracy. A single unitary

council will remove duplication and cut management, administration and other costs. It would also allow for huge economies of scale. For example, do we really need eight different waste collection services or IT systems?

Cutting costs will release money to improve local services and help keep council tax down.

Did You KNOW ...?

more than **85%**

of all your local government services are already provided by Devon County Council





After selling Exeter International Airport last year for £60 million, Devon County Council has made available £48 million to enable hundreds of projects to take off. Here, *DevonTalk* features some of the initial beneficiaries from one-off cash grants in North Devon...



Plan for harbour development

A MASTER plan for the Ilfracombe Harbour area will be drawn up to explore development, design and help potential investors to take decisions on future capital investment.

A grant of £63,000 will go towards the feasibility study which will look at improving the mooring facilities, encouraging tourism and improving access to the area.

Multi-sensory school room

LAMPARD Community School is to receive £10,000 for relocation and refurbishment of a multi-sensory room for children with disabilities. Work will include preparing a room, with installation of electrics and plumbing, and decoration. A selection of audio, light and tactile equipment will be used.

Calming influence

TRAFFIC calming measures at Goodleigh Rise, Barnstaple, will go ahead with the help of a £20,000 grant – bringing environmental and road safety gains to the local community.

Funds for town 'youth caf'

DEVON County Council's Youth Service is looking for shop premises in Torrington to develop a "Youth Caf" drop-in centre for young people as well as office space that will also be used by the Council's Youth Offending Service and Connexions.

This is being made possible by a £300,000 grant from money raised by the sale of Exeter International Airport.

Local County Councillor John Rawlinson said: "This is a shot in the arm for the

youth service in Torrington. The support we are giving to youth provision in North Devon and Torridge will make a significant contribution to reducing perceived and actual anti-social behaviour."

● Meanwhile, The Plough arts centre at Torrington has been awarded a grant of £44,000 to pay for better seating in the auditorium.

The money will enable balcony seats to be replaced and the re-upholstering of stalls seating.

In addition, the grant will go towards funding a series

of health and safety measures.

As with many art organisations, funding sources for The Plough are declining and more demands are being placed on those funding streams.

Local County Councillor John Rawlinson said: "Torrington without The Plough is unimaginable. The town is incredibly fortunate to have an Arts Centre of this calibre.

"It attracts an audience not only from Torrington, but from the whole of Torridge and Mid and North Devon.



THE Queen's Theatre at Barnstaple (pictured above) has received £60,000 to replace five 25-year-old boilers with three new condensing boilers. The new boilers will save some

20% on electricity and gas usage costs. It will cut carbon emissions and provide extra warm air to the auditorium, rather than use the less effective electricity option.



THE Royal Horticultural Society Rosemoor garden is to have a new learning centre thanks to a grant of £500,000. The centre, which will include a teaching garden and two in-door classrooms, will sit between three mature oak trees. Pictured is a view of Rosemoor's herb garden

Boost for children's and young people's services

A GRANT of £450,000 has been awarded to fund new services for children and young people in and around Chulmleigh. It will pay for activities that promote personal and social development.

Chulmleigh currently does not have a dedicated space for providing these services. The County Council has identified a site but negotiations are not yet concluded.

Local County Councillor Joe Tucker said: "This is fantastic news for Chulmleigh. This is a project that I have been hoping to achieve ever since I became a County Councillor three years ago.

"My main aim is to help young people where I can in my ward.

I know that the young people of Chulmleigh will be really pleased, and will benefit greatly from this project."

● Meanwhile, £200,000 has been allocated for the development of a brand new purpose-built resource centre for young people at South Molton. It will include access to health services, activities that promote young people's personal and social development, youth offending services, Connexions, and drug and alcohol services.

The project is a joint initiative with South Molton Town Council and North Devon Council, with contributions also from local businesses.

Soccer team nets grant

A £20,000 grant will enable Putfield AFC to build new changing facilities, toilets and a small parking area on Parkham's sports field.

The football pitch is a valuable asset to the village, has been home to Putfield AFC for many years and is used by many local groups including the local primary school, village groups and youth group.

Expanding use of hall

ADMIRALS Hall at Chulmleigh Community College is used extensively by young people throughout the year for sports but there are plans for the space to be used for concerts, plays and displaying art.

An allocation of £6,000 has been awarded to improve the acoustics and to repair and reseal the floor as well as improvements to the electrical supply for lighting and sound.

Sweet cash for The Pill

THE Pill at Bideford – a building used by Devon County Council's youth service, social care and young carers – is to be refurbished with the help of a £140,000 grant.

The cash will provide a purpose-built facility for delivering services for children and young people.

Know your councillors

There are 62 councillors on Devon County Council, each representing an electoral division.

Here, the County Councillors in the North Devon area are pictured with their phone numbers and email addresses.

The political group to which they belong is indicated by the abbreviation Lib

Dem (Liberal Democrat), Con (Conservative), Lab (Labour) and Ind (Independent).

Leaders of the political groups are Brian Greenslade (Lib Dem), Leader of the Council; John Hart (Con), Shadow Leader; Saxon Spence, Labour Group Leader; and Mary Turner, Independent Group Leader.



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Recycling centre wins accolade

DEVON County Council's recycling centre at Caddsdon Industrial Estate in Bideford has been recognised as one of the best in the country.

The site is in the top three of all UK recycling centres after achieving runner-up status in the recycling centre of the year category of the Letsrecycle.com 2008 Awards.

The modern recycling centre, which opened in May last year, was designed to be as quick and easy to use as possible.



Best ever service on Tarka Line

MAJOR improvements to the Exeter to Barnstaple train service on the Tarka Line are being implemented by Devon County Council and First Great Western from December 15 this year to give the line its best-ever service.

With financial support from the County Council, there will be an hourly service throughout most of the day from Monday to Saturday. The new improved timetable will include two additional trains each way, hourly departure times from Exeter and Barnstaple, and all trains serving Exeter Central as well as St David's Stations.