

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND - ELECTORAL REVIEW OF DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

Report of the County Solicitor

### Recommendation:

- (a) that the Committee consider its response to the Commission's recommendations in light of the views and suggestions set out in the schedule attached to this Report or received direct;
- (b) that the proposed suggestions/variations submitted by individual local members be forwarded to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England for consideration and that the suggested alternative names for electoral divisions be also endorsed and submitted to the Commission;
- (c) that consideration be given to the need for a further meeting being held prior to the deadline for responses to provide an opportunity for Members of the Council to attend and discuss any response now determined.

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### Introduction

1. On 12 May 2015, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England published its draft proposals for the boundaries of County Council electoral divisions to come into effect for the 2017 elections. The Commission is undertaking an eight-week public consultation (ending on 6 July 2015) open to anyone who wants to have their say on the proposed new county council electoral divisions, their boundaries and/or division names.
2. The Commission's draft recommendations reflected the County Council's submission on 'Council Size' - that there should be 60 councillors in the future, two fewer than the current arrangements - and that the proposed 'apportionment' between District Council areas be as set out below. The Commission's proposals also set out a suggested pattern of representation of those 60 councillors across the county, through 56 single-member divisions and 2 two-member divisions.

|              |    | East Devon | Exeter | Mid Devon | North Devon | South Hams | Teign-bridge | Torrige | West Devon |
|--------------|----|------------|--------|-----------|-------------|------------|--------------|---------|------------|
| <b>Seats</b> | 60 | 11         | 9      | 6         | 8           | 7          | 10           | 5       | 4          |

3. A copy of the LGBCE's Report was sent to Members electronically and by hard copy, together with a copy of the Commission's Summary of Recommendations and maps produced both by the Commission and the County Council, comparing existing and proposed boundaries. Members were invited to put forward any initial suggestions or proposals to be considered by this Committee - by 5 June - for inclusion in any response by the Council.
4. The attached schedule summarises the views received on or suggested changes to boundaries or names of proposed divisions received from members. Members of the Committee may have also received comments direct. It must be recognised that any suggestion to change the boundary of a division at this stage should preferably be accompanied by compensating changes to the boundaries of any adjoining division(s) affected, to demonstrate the case to the Commission to amend its proposals.

5. The Commission's proposals generally appear sympathetic to the geography of and community identity within the county, recognising the inevitability of changes being made to a significant number of divisions once the Review was announced. Given, also, the constraints placed upon such Reviews of having to adhere to administrative boundaries rather than any natural, identifiable or geographical boundaries, the proposals as now submitted - subject to the comments referred to above and in the schedule - are felt in the main to be practical and acceptable.

6. The Procedures Committee has been authorised to consider and determine any response to the Commission on behalf of the Council. It was also suggested that the Committee might wish to consider the need for a further meeting - prior to any final response being submitted to the Commission - to give an opportunity for all Members of the Council to be made aware of and discuss any detailed response agreed at this meeting. The next scheduled meeting of this Committee is actually on 6 July - the Commission's deadline for comments - and it may therefore be sensible, if Members felt it necessary, simply to bring that meeting forward by 24 or 48 hours to ensure there is sufficient time after any subsequent discussion for the response to the Commission to be finalised and submitted.

7. A few members have indicated their intention to make their own submission(s) direct to the Commission and/or have indicated they are content or agree with the proposals inasmuch as they affect those Members' current divisions. Similarly, a small number of other bodies or individuals have advised the Council they will be making representations to the Commission direct.

8. This Report has no specific equality, sustainability, legal or public health implications that have not already been assessed and appropriate safeguards and/or actions taken or included within the detailed policies or practices or requirements relating to the conduct of meetings, to safeguard the Council's position.

JAN SHADBOLT

[Electoral Divisions: All]

**Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers**

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| <b><u>Background Paper</u></b> | <b><u>Date</u></b> | <b><u>File Reference</u></b> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
|--------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|

Nil

*[NB: The full recommendations and detailed interactive maps are also available on the Commission's website at [www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk) and [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk) and on the Council's website at: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/democracy/elections-and-voting/electoral-review-of-devon-county-council/>]*

| Boundary Commission – Proposed Division (as at 5.6.15)                                                                                         | Comment on/Suggested change to Division Boundaries                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Comment on/Suggested change to Division Name                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
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| East Devon                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p data-bbox="136 419 409 486">Budleigh Salterton Coastal</p> <p data-bbox="136 1177 409 1305">Budleigh Salterton Coastal<br/>Otter Valley</p> | <p data-bbox="409 419 1263 619">The Member for the existing Exmouth Halsdon and Woodbury Division, Councillor Hughes, suggests the amendment of the Commission's proposal by adding Woodbury Salterton to the existing boundary of that division as a single member ward. This would leave the old Brixington and Withycombe division and the town part of the Littleham and Town division.</p> <p data-bbox="409 655 1263 1114"><i>[The Commission will necessarily undertake its own analysis of any suggested changes to its proposals on electorate size but the existing Halsdon and Woodbury division would only have an electorate of 7,932 in 2020; Woodbury would add another 432 bringing the total to 8,364. With the 'new' county average of electors per division under the Commission's proposals being 10,417, this suggestion would result in an electorate some 19.7% below that new average and is unlikely therefore to find favour with the Commission. The separation of Brixington and Withycombe from Littleham and Town is again unlikely to find favour with the Commission on community/identity grounds. To increase the electorate of the division as now suggested would require a redrawing of the proposed boundaries from the proposed Budleigh Salterton Coastal but that would similarly have further knock on effects. The proposed Exmouth (2 member) division would appear to have an electorate of some 22,000 electors which fits much better with the proposed average]</i></p> <p data-bbox="409 1177 1263 1436">The Member for the existing Budleigh Division (Councillor Channon) has expressed concern at the proposal to not include Otterton, East Budleigh and Bicton Parishes in the Budleigh Salterton Coastal Division and place them instead within the Otter Valley Division, arguing that the Commission has not paid any attention to connections between community such as medical and social care and policing arrangements [as illustrated by the fact that all the parishes come under the WEB area for Eastern Area CCG and use the Budleigh Health Practice; Budleigh Hospital is a Health and</p> | <p data-bbox="1263 419 2074 587"><i>Exmouth Coastal</i><br/><i>[Should the Commission adhere to its original proposal the local member further suggests the name be amended thus on the grounds that Exmouth is not only the larger community but the largest town in Devon and it would make sense for that to take precedence]</i></p> |

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|          | <p>Wellbeing Hub serving the whole area; the 4 Primary Schools in Budleigh, Otterton, East Budleigh and Littleham are all VA and work together on projects; the Raleigh Mission Community covers Budleigh Salterton, East Budleigh and Otterton and Police Advisory Groups and Community Safety Partnerships also relate to the whole area]. It is suggested that as the electorates of these two proposed divisions would appear to reduce between now and 2020 there is scope to include electors from Otterton (461) and East Budleigh with Bicton (700) (at 2020 figures) within the proposed Budleigh Salterton Coastal; with any necessary changes being made to the Otter Valley, Broadclyst and Fenton &amp; Honiton Divisions.</p> <p>Moreover, the Member does not agree with 2 member divisions in a County of the geographical make up of Devon which could also result in inequitable allocation of workload between the elected representatives.</p> <p><i>[While the Commission will necessarily undertake its own analysis of the impact of any suggested variations on electorate size, this suggestion - while workable on the face of it insofar as the Budleigh Salterton Coastal Division would have an electorate of 10,741 (+3.2%) – it would, as the local member recognises, also require a possible recasting of at least 3 other divisions in the area (i.e Otter Valley, Broadclyst, Feniton &amp; Honiton). While no definitive suggestions for such changes are made for this Committee to consider, and in the limited time available, Officers have explored a number of potential options which would result in variations from the average ( + or – ) ranging from +3.2% to -18.3% .. some of which would be unlikely to find favour with the Commission. Further, and by way of example, removing Gittisham or Buckerell from the proposed Feniton &amp; Honiton division could create 'doughnuts' or 'islands' within divisions which are unacceptable to the Commission.</i></p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Exmouth  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p><b>Exmouth, Lympstone &amp; Woodbury</b><br/> <i>[Both the local County Councillor and Parish Council favour the above which it is felt better reflects and encapsulates the spirit and identity of the area]</i></p> |
| Sidmouth |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p><b>Sid Valley</b><br/> <i>[The Member for the existing Sidmouth Sidford Division suggests the name be amended thus as it more accurately reflects the geographical extent and spread of the division]</i></p>         |

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| Whimble & Newbridges                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p><i>Whimble &amp; Blackdown</i><br/> <i>[Much of the northern part of this division lies within the Blackdown plateau and the alternative name suggested would better reflect the geographical identity of the area ]</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Exeter</b>                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p>Alphington &amp; St Thomas</p> <p>Redhills &amp; Exwick</p> | <p>The Members for the existing Exwick &amp; St Thomas Division and the Alphington &amp; Cowick Division (Councillors Hannaford and Hill) broadly support the proposed new boundaries for these 'new' divisions and support the principle of single member county divisions for Exeter, accepting also the reasoning for Haven Banks to be transferred out of the West Exe to create better electoral equality.</p> <p>Concern has however also been expressed at the County Council's electoral boundaries in Exeter being considered in isolation from the outcome of the current review of Exeter City Council ward boundaries, the proposals for which are not yet known.</p> | <p><i>Exwick &amp; St Thomas and Alphington &amp; Cowick</i><br/> <i>[The local County Councillors favour the retention of existing divisions names in the interests of continuity and clarity, as follow. In terms of the new Redhills &amp; Exwick division, the local Councillors suggest that the areas being added in from Cowick ward (such as Newman Road, Newman Court, Merrivale Road, Locarno Road, Saville Road, Linfield Garden , Oak Road, the other half of Buddle Lane odds currently in Cowick ward and evens in St Thomas ward, Myrtle Road, Kerswell Avenue, Dunsford Road and Bowhay Lane) are all strongly part of St Thomas (?ecumenical?) Parish. Additionally, the southern part of Exwick ward (such as John Levers Way, Lakelands Drive, Ullswater Court, Lowswater House, Buttermere Court, Rydal Mews, Felixwell Court, Windermere Close, Isleworth Road , High Meadows. etc.) are also St Thomas Parish: thus and in addition to these new areas , the new division is still ostensibly Exwick and St Thomas. Similarly, and in relation to the proposed Alphington &amp; St Thomas division, the majority of Cowick ward is retained in this division and the additional parts of the St Thomas ward added border on and around the large Cowick Barton Playing Fields, giving weight to the "Cowick" name and the retention of the name of Alphington and Cowick]</i></p> |
| St David's and Haven Banks                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p><i>St Leonard's &amp; Haven Banks <u>or</u> St Leonards' and St David's</i><br/> <i>[The Member for the existing Priory &amp; St Leonards Division is of the view that the proposed name does not give due weight to the community identity of the St Leonard's area - hence the above suggestions]</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Mid Devon</b>                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Silverton & Taw                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p><i>Creedy, Taw &amp; Exe <u>or</u> Creedy, Taw &amp; Mid Exe</i><br/> <i>[The proposed name does not reflect the geographical breadth or spread of the division; using the three main river valleys as an identifier, provide a more recognisable linkage to the topography of the division]</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

| North Devon                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                     |
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| <p>Combe Martin Rural</p> <p>Ilfracombe</p> <p>Landkey &amp; Chittlehampton</p> <p>South Molton</p> | <p>Councillors Davis, Edgell, Edmunds and Yabsley, the Members for the existing areas affected, suggest the following variations to the Boundary Commission's proposals which they also feel takes into account electorate size using the same criteria as the Boundary Commission.</p> <p><b>South Molton Rural</b> to include Brayford, East and West Buckland, North Molton, Twitchen, Molland and possibly East Worlington ... but removing Chulmleigh and Burrington from the Commission's proposed new division and putting them instead into the proposed Landkey and Chittlehampton Division which it is suggested should be named Chulmleigh and Landkey Division <i>[See also revised proposal for Combe Martin Rural division below]</i></p> <p><b>Landkey and Chittlehampton</b> to include Chulmleigh and Burrington <i>[as mentioned above]</i></p> <p><b>Ilfracombe</b> to stay as now, with existing boundary.<br/><i>[The current Members are mindful of both current and future electorate numbers with the proposed housing growth and the challenging issues facing Ilfracombe associated with Victorian coastal communities, including significant deprivation issues]</i></p> <p><b>Combe Martin Rural</b> to include West Down and Morteheo as those Parishes (which are currently in Combe Martin Rural) are rural parishes with similar culture and identity to the rest of Combe Martin Rural with rural and coastal issues; they strongly feel they would not be well represented if they were in Ilfracombe Division which is of a more urban nature, with significant issues around deprivation. Arlington, Bratton Fleming, Challacombe, Goodleigh, Loxhore and Stoke Rivers should be included in the new Combe Martin Division as proposed as they are a good fit for both proximity and communications. Further, Brayford, East and West Buckland, North Molton, Twitchen and Molland, and possibly East Worlington - depending on where extra electors are most needed - as above, to be part of South Molton Rural. These parishes look to South Molton rather than northwards to Combe Martin. North Molton in particular is very much an integral part of South Molton. These Parishes</p> | <p><i>Chulmleigh and Landkey</i> [see opposite]</p> |

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|                        | <p>feel they would not be well represented if they were to be included in the large and diverse Combe Martin proposal as the proposals would complicate the extended chain of communication over the considerable distance from Combe Martin and make it more difficult for North Molton and neighbouring parishes to communicate with the County Councillor.</p> <p><i>[While the Commission will necessarily undertake its own analysis of the impact of these suggested variations on electorate size, the variations would appear to result in the electorate for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Combe Martin being 10,055 - some 3.5% below the new average (of 10,417);</i></li> <li>• <i>South Molton Rural being 9,558 - some 8.2% below the average</i></li> </ul> <p><i>both of which would be within the 10% tolerance .. but these could change in light of any further redrawing of boundaries as required below, because</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ilfracombe being 9,322 – would be some 10.5% below the average, and</i></li> <li>• <i>Landkey &amp; Chittlehampton (Chulmleigh and Landkey) being 11,676 – is some 12.1% above the average (due to forecast housing developments),</i></li> </ul> <p><i>both of which would therefore be outside the 10% tolerance and unlikely to find favour without further adjustments to boundaries which would undoubtedly impact on other divisions in the area]</i></p> |  |
| South Hams             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |
| All proposed Divisions | <p>The Member for the existing Totnes Rural Division, Councillor Vint, is of the view - shared by the Town Council and Parish Councils in the area – that the changes proposed by the Boundary Commission are unnecessary and that they cause far more problems than they solve, that the changes will cause administrative confusion and result in people not knowing which Division they are in. In particular, North Huish and Diptford Parishes will be detached from 'their' Market Town and moved into the Yealmpton Division with which they have little connection. It is argued that such changes are inappropriate and unnecessary when the County Council faces far more serious financial and administrative challenges and while they may '<i>.. make some sort of strange mathematical sense in terms of numbers [they] ... make no sense in terms of communities</i>'.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |

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|                     | <p><i>[It was widely known and understood when the review was first announced by the Commission - which has a statutory duty to assess the extent and degree of electoral imbalance in principal local authorities and undertake any detailed reviews it feels are necessary - that there would inevitably be changes to a significant number of the Council's current electoral boundaries whether or not the size of the Council remained the same or increased or decreased. That was inevitable. This Review is not being undertaken at the Council's behest; the Council suggested on at least two occasions that any Review of the County Council's electoral arrangements should be deferred until such time as reviews of all Devon District Councils had been undertaken and completed to provide the essential building blocks for any review of county electoral divisions. That view did not however prevail]</i></p> |  |
| Dartmouth & Marldon | <p>Councillor Hawkins, the Member for the existing Dartmouth &amp; Kingswear Division is of the view that although the proposals may not felt to be ideal for the communities surrounding Dartmouth and the perfect solution for Dartmouth and those communities that see it as their Market and Area centre would be for any new division to include the following parishes (Street, Slapton, Stoke Fleming, Stoke Gabriel, Blackawton, Cornworthy, Dittisham, Kingswear &amp; Hillhead and Ashprington) the revised boundary as now proposed is workable and is probably the best that could be expected.</p> <p><i>[Any changes would necessarily need to have regard to the need to remain within the 10% tolerance of the county average electors per division in 2020 of 10,417 and would therefore require a further redrawing of boundaries of other Divisions in the area]</i></p>                                       |  |
| Teignbridge         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |
| Bovey Rural         | <p>The Member for the existing Bovey Tracey Rural Division (Councillor Gribble) points out that Teigngrace Parish appears to be within this division despite not actually being listed as such in the Commission's Report. Further, Moretonhampstead Parish is now in the Chudleigh &amp; Teign Valley Division; while not necessarily preferred the changes are understandable.</p> <p><i>[These changes reflect the need to rebalance electorates to remain within the 10% tolerance of the county average electors per division in 2020 of 10,417. While acknowledging the inclusion or exclusion of Teigngrace (electorate 120) would not have a material effect either way, the continuing inclusion of Mortenhampstead (electorate 1435) in this division would result in a</i></p>                                                                                                                                         |  |



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|                                                  | <i>significant variation from the average (over 10%) and would almost certainly require the 'removal' of a number of other Parishes to compensate for its retention should the status quo be argued. That in turn would require a further redrawing of boundaries of other Divisions in the area]</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Teignhead & Kerswell                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <i>Ipplepen and The Kerswells</i><br><i>[The proposed name may misrepresent the division as being at the Head of the River Teign which could lead to confusion of community identity]</i>   |
| The Teigntons                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <i>Teign Estuary</i><br><i>[it is suggested the retention of the previous name for part of the new division is preferable to an artificial construct which has no significance locally]</i> |
| Torrige                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Bideford West & Hartland<br><br>Holsworthy Rural | <p>The Member for the existing Holsworthy Rural Division (Councillor Parsons) expresses concern at 'moving' Bradworthy Parish from what is a strongly-related rural area to a more urban-centric/orientated division. Similarly the inclusion of greater numbers of parishes area within electoral divisions will, as in other areas of northern Devon, create difficulties for elected members being able to effectively represent and interact with those Councils.</p> <p><i>[These changes no doubt again reflect the Commission's desire to rebalance electorates against the county average of electors per division in 2020 of 10,417. The inclusion or exclusion of Bradworthy (electorate 825) in either of these divisions would result in more significant variations much closer to the average (i.e 10%). Bideford West &amp; Hartland ( currently 11026 (+6%)) – would be 10201 (-2.1%) but Holsworthy (currently 10625 (+2%) would be 11,450 (+9.9%) which may not find favour with the Commission and could in turn could require a further redrawing of boundaries of other Divisions in the area.]</i></p> |                                                                                                                                                                                             |