

**AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING** of the **MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL** will be held in the Phoenix Chambers, Phoenix House, Tiverton on Wednesday, 12 March 2025 at 6.00 pm

**ALL MEMBERS** of the **COUNCIL** are summoned to attend for the purposes of transacting the business specified in the Agenda which is set out below:

**[The next meeting is scheduled to be held in Tiverton on Wednesday, 23 April 2025 at 6.00 pm]**

**Please Note:** this meeting will take place at Phoenix House and members of the Public and Press are able to attend via Teams. If you are intending to attend in person please contact the committee clerk in advance, in order that numbers of people can be appropriately managed in physical meeting rooms.

**The meeting will be Hybrid and an audio recording made and published on the website after the meeting**

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 358 849 767 487  
Passcode: mc3S64cM

**STEPHEN WALFORD**  
Chief Executive

4 March 2025

## **AGENDA**

### **1 Apologies**

To receive any apologies for absence.

### **2 Declarations of Interest under the Code of Conduct**

To record any interests on agenda matters.

*(All Members of the Council have been granted a dispensation to allow them to speak and vote in any debate on any matter that relates to devolution or Local Government reorganisation in Devon)*

### **3 Public Question Time**

The Chair of the Council may be minded to allow requests using his constitutional discretion as Chair at this meeting.

Members of the public are asked to submit questions and/or statements by 5pm 3 clear working days in advance of the meeting as usual. You may register to speak without submitting a question and this must be done by 4pm the day before the meeting. Questions and/or statements received in advance may be answered as part of the debate at the meeting, but no written responses to questions will be provided. However, as per the constitution, there is to be no other business conducted at extraordinary council meetings, so if questions and/or statements are not in relation to the specific agenda item of this meeting the Chair will not permit the question. Questioners will be directed to the next regularly scheduled meeting of Council as appropriate.

### **4 Local Government Reorganisation in Devon**

Council will be aware of the stated intention from government to 'simplify' local government structures by requiring two-tier areas (and adjacent or smaller unitaries) to reorganise into unitary structures. Invitations for proposals for local government reorganisation have been sent to all Leaders of councils in areas affected, with the deadline for responses due later this year; before 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025. However, a submission to government on our initial plan is required before 21<sup>st</sup> March. Following confirmation of the intended timeline, the process for Devon sees the government indicating its intention to receive proposals by the 28<sup>th</sup> November, to consult on viable options in early 2026 and then to make a final decision in summer 2026 on what the best form of local government for Devon should be.

This is a process that has not been initiated by the councils of Devon, nor its people. Our challenge now is to recognise the intent of central government and seek to secure the best possible outcome for our communities. Councils are more than just delivery arms or agents of central government. While there will be many views on the viability or sensibility of such enforced changes, our aim should be to seek that we

retain, as far as is possible, some form of connection to local place, distinctiveness and identity within any new councils for Devon and, ultimately, that we keep the 'local' in local government.

It is recommended that the Council:

1. Notes the importance of keeping the public informed on this process that central government has mandated of us.
2. Recognises the excellent collaboration across most of the councils in Devon and hopes that this spirit continues over the coming months with a view to effective partnership working and sharing the resource requirements of developing the full proposal.
3. Ensures that meaningful and substantial public engagement and consultation takes place before the submission of any proposal in November.
4. Supports the submission to government of an initial plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> March deadline outlining the current proposal, which would potentially see an enlarged Plymouth City area with the remaining county geography split in two – achieving the government's requirement of serving approximately 500k population in these two new areas. Such a proposal would see Devon's existing 11 councils reduced to 3; reported locally as the 1,5,4 proposal.
5. Tasks the Leader and Chief Executive with ensuring the best possible submission is presented to government and that any revisions or amendments continue to reflect the districts' best interests; and
6. Writes immediately to Devon County Council to request that they consider submitting this majority-supported proposal as one of the options they intend to look at in future, seeking to work with the new administration after May's elections to achieve better alignment between the efforts of all councils in Devon as we work up full and final proposals.

## **Guidance notes for meetings of Mid Devon District Council**

From 7 May 2021, the law requires all councils to hold formal meetings in person. The Council will enable all people to continue to participate in meetings via Teams.

If the Council experience technology difficulties at a committee meeting the Chairman may make the decision to continue the meeting 'in-person' only to conclude the business on the agenda.

### **1. Inspection of Papers**

Any person wishing to inspect minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the agenda should contact Democratic Services at [Committee@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:Committee@middevon.gov.uk).

They can also be accessed via the council's website [Click Here](#)

Printed agendas can also be viewed in reception at the Council offices at Phoenix House, Phoenix Lane, Tiverton, EX16 6PP.

### **2. Members' Code of Conduct requirements**

When considering the declaration of interests and their actions as a councillor, Members are reminded of the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct and the underpinning Principles of Public Life: Honesty; Integrity; Selflessness; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Leadership.

The Code of Conduct can be [viewed here](#):

### **3. Minutes of the Meeting**

Details of the issues discussed, and recommendations made at the meeting will be set out in the minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting. Minutes of meetings are not verbatim.

### **4. Public Question Time**

The Chair of the Council may be minded to allow requests using his constitutional discretion as Chair at this meeting.

Members of the public are asked to submit questions and/or statements by 5pm 3 clear working days in advance of the meeting as usual. You may register to speak without submitting a question and this must be done by 4pm the day before the meeting. Questions and/or statements received in advance may be answered as part of the debate at the meeting, but no written responses to questions will be provided. However, as per the constitution, there is to be no other business conducted at extraordinary council meetings, so if questions and/or statements are not in relation to the specific agenda item of this meeting the Chair will not permit the question. Questioners will be directed to the next regularly scheduled meeting of Council as appropriate.

You can register to speak by emailing your full name to [Committee@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:Committee@middevon.gov.uk)

## **5. Meeting Etiquette for participants**

- Only speak when invited to do so by the Chair.
- If you're referring to a specific page, mention the page number.

For those joining the meeting virtually:

- Mute your microphone when you are not talking.
- Switch off your camera if you are not speaking.
- Speak clearly (if you are not using camera then please state your name)
- Switch off your camera and microphone after you have spoken.
- There is a facility in Microsoft Teams under the ellipsis button called "turn on live captions" which provides subtitles on the screen.

## **6. Exclusion of Press & Public**

When considering an item on the agenda, the Committee may consider it appropriate to pass a resolution under Section 100A (4) Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, as defined under the terms of the Act. If there are members of the public and press listening to the open part of the meeting, then the Democratic Services Officer will, at the appropriate time, ask participants to leave the meeting when any exempt or confidential information is about to be discussed. They will be invited to return as soon as the meeting returns to open session.

## **7. Recording of meetings**

All media, including radio and TV journalists, and members of the public may attend Council, Cabinet, PDG and Committee meetings (apart from items Media and Social Media Policy - 2023 page 22 where the public is excluded) you can view our Media and Social Media Policy [here](#). They may record, film or use social media before, during or after the meeting, so long as this does not distract from or interfere unduly with the smooth running of the meeting. Anyone proposing to film during the meeting is requested to make this known to the Chairman in advance. The Council also makes audio recordings of meetings which are published on our website [Browse Meetings, 2024 - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](#).

## **8. Fire Drill Procedure**

If you hear the fire alarm you should leave the building by the marked fire exits, follow the direction signs and assemble at the master point outside the entrance. Do not use the lifts or the main staircase. You must wait there until directed otherwise by a senior officer. If anybody present is likely to need assistance in exiting the building in the event of an emergency, please ensure you have let a member of Democratic Services know before the meeting begins and arrangements will be made should an emergency occur.

## **9. WIFI**

An open, publicly available Wi-Fi network is normally available for meetings held in the Phoenix Chambers at Phoenix House.