

## **Thoughts on Local Government Reorganisation and how it might affect Newton St Cyres Parish Council.**

- 1) What will be the overall outcome of the reorganisation?** Mid Devon District Council and Devon County Council will disappear. Instead, a new unitary authority will replace them and deliver all the services they currently deliver. How many authorities there will be in Devon is not finalised. The government preference is for 1. Locally, more than 1 is preferred. Several different plans are being submitted and the government will choose one. Over the top of this, there will be a strategic authority. This will not deliver any services but instead be a small body that decides policy and instructs the unitary authority. There will be only 1 for Devon and it will probably have a directly elected mayor. Parish and Town Councils will continue to exist and may be more important.
- 2) What is the timeline?**
  - a. Submissions for the future structures of unitary authorities must be submitted to government by November 28<sup>th</sup>.
  - b. There is likely to be a public consultation by the government, sometime about next Easter, with final decision made shortly after that.
  - c. There will be election to a 'shadow authority' in May 2027. This will work alongside the existing councils for a year.
  - d. The new authority will come into existence on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2028.
  - e. There will be many years of adjustment as the services harmonise – don't expect to see any change on day 1.
- 3) Why do this?**
  - a. To provide clarity of service.
  - b. To save money (although in the short term there will be more costs as services harmonise. Precepts will go up).
  - c. To streamline decision making and make change / improvements/ development more likely to happen.
  - d. To provide the basis for devolution of further powers from central government.
- 4) What are the advantages and disadvantages for Newton St Cyres?**
  - a. Disadvantages include being too small a voice to be heard, becoming part of the urban Exeter sprawl, having our semi-rural nature ignored or misunderstood,
  - b. Chaos during the reorganisation period leading to poor services and increased costs in the short term.
  - c. Advantages may include improved services and cheaper costs in the long term.
  - d. May provide for a better way for local people to have their views heard.
- 5) What should Newton St Cyres Parish Council do?**
  - a. We can't do anything until we know what's happening. However, it is suggested that we might be thinking about our role. But frankly we shouldn't waste much time on it.
  - b. We could identify discretionary services that DCC and MDDC provide for the Parish. These may get 'lost' as budgets will be tight.
  - c. We could debate if we could take these on, perhaps in collaboration with other Parishes. This might mean contracting for some services such as verge cutting
  - d. It might be helpful up a buffer in our resources so we can take on services.