

Dear Cllr Evans,

### **Proposals for LGR from Plymouth City Council**

The Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) is a membership organisation for the town and parish sector of local government in the county. Most towns and parishes are DALC members, about 95% of the total. All thirteen parishes that are proposed to be included in the Plymouth Growth Area as described in the documents published by the City Council are members of the Association. I am writing on behalf of them.

One of the thirteen member councils contacted DALC to say that they had been informed that the proposal was being submitted to the DHCLG for 21<sup>st</sup> March and that if it went forward they would have no choice in the matter. This approach to the local councils, assuming it was replicated to the other twelve, is concerning to us. If the situation has been misunderstood, I should be obliged if you would correct it.

DALC does not currently have a position on the best form of reorganisation but it does have a position on the value of local councils. All those thirteen councils are doing good work for their communities and they will want to go on doing it. Without them, the residents of the towns, villages and hamlets would be worse off with reduced community well-being, resilience and social cohesion. The contribution of local councils is recognised by district councils in Devon and by the Minister for Local Government and English Devolution, who has made it clear that towns and parishes should be consulted about reorganisation plans: *"in working up their proposals, I expect local leaders to seek views from their Members of Parliament as well as ensuring wider engagement with other local partners and stakeholders, residents, workforce and their representatives, and businesses. This should include parish and town councils in the spirit of that guidance."* [Jim McMahon, MP 28.02.25]. If and when the time comes for consultation, DALC would be ready to support its councils in engaging with residents and we could also work alongside the city council if such assistance was requested.

LGR is an opportunity for parishing currently unparished areas. The government is keen on this, too, as it "absolutely values the crucial role played by parish and town councils in local government" recognising that local councils can provide the local voice of local people. I note that you do not intend to parish Plymouth under LGR, citing the disruption this would cause to the current 'bespoke' arrangements. Of course, in DALC's view, that is regrettable as we have long experience of supporting councils to do things for their communities that make a measurable contribution, from litter-picks to housing provision.

DALC would welcome the opportunity to explain the work of local councils to Plymouth City Council. Should you decide in future that parishing Plymouth City is a step you want to take, DALC has the expertise to assist in doing that. Whatever the outcome of LGR, DALC will always be in support of establishing local councils to empower local people, get their voice heard and support them in making a difference to their communities.

Best wishes,

Cllr Liz Brookes-Hocking

Chair of the Devon Association of Local Councils