



**YEALMPTON PARISH COUNCIL**  
Yealmpton Community Centre  
Stray Park, Yealmpton, PL8 2HF

Alison McGovern MP  
Minister of State  
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

By Post and email

17th November 2025

Dear Minister

**Re: LGR – Collective Rejection of Plymouth City Council’s Growth Area Proposal**

We write as the collective voice of the below listed Parish Councils directly affected by Plymouth City Council’s Growth Area proposal. Following detailed analysis, review and widespread consultation with residents across our communities, we submit this letter as a firm and united rejection of the proposal.

Plymouth City Council’s proposal undermines the principles the government has clearly laid out in the English Devolution White Paper.

The White Paper sets a clear expectation: any structural reorganisation must be driven by demonstrable improvements in governance, service delivery, and resilience. Plymouth City Council’s proposal fails to meet any of these targets.

The White Paper is unequivocal: any proposal for local government reorganisation must command broad local support and fully engage those most affected, i.e. the residents of the thirteen parish and town councils.

We urge you in the strongest terms to reject this submission on the following grounds.

1. **No Clear Benefits for Parishioners:** The proposal offers no demonstrable advantages to our residents. There is no clarity on how the suggested changes would improve services, infrastructure, or quality of life for those living in our parishes and towns.
2. **Erosion of Local Representation:** The proposed governance model would reduce the number of councillors serving larger, more diverse areas—diluting accountability and undermining the democratic voice of our communities.
3. **Lack of Rural Understanding:** Plymouth City Council’s approach shows little awareness knowledge and comprehension of rural priorities, challenges, culture and values.

4. **Threat to Community Identity:** Our parishes have distinct historical, cultural, and social identities. The proposed changes would dilute these identities and risk eroding the sense of place that underpins community engagement and resilience.
5. **Disregard for Existing District Boundaries:** The proposal fails to respect long-established district boundaries. The thirteen parishes and towns are integral to the South Hams community, maintaining deep historical, economic, and social ties with neighbouring parishes. Any move to separate us from this established network would disrupt vital relationships, compromise service delivery, and weaken community cohesion. The existing district boundaries provide a stable and logical framework for governance, ensuring consistency and continuity for our residents. The proposal would remove approximately 40% of South Hams' land mass and transfer around 33,000 residents from a predominantly rural district into a metropolitan authority with little experience or infrastructure for managing rural needs. This raises serious questions about whether Plymouth City Council can deliver equitable, high-quality services in areas it neither understands nor currently serves. It also calls into question whether the financial case is sustainable—particularly as Plymouth City Council lacks the officers, resources, or precept structure needed to manage rural environments effectively.

We are also mindful of the six criteria outlined in the Secretary of State's invitation to councils considering reorganisation, and we strongly assert that Plymouth City Council's proposal falls short in multiple respects. In particular:

1. **Improved Service Delivery:** Proposals must demonstrate how they will enhance public services. No such evidence has been provided, and the risk of fragmentation and disruption is considerable.
2. **Local Support and Engagement:** The process has been marked by a lack of transparency and collaboration. We are now faced with three competing proposals (Plymouth City, South Hams District, and Devon County Council), which has created confusion among residents and undermined confidence in the process. Government guidance makes clear that local leaders are expected to work together to develop coherent, joint proposals. This has not happened. Furthermore, Plymouth City Council's engagement efforts have shown a limited understanding of the role and structure of parish councils, and their roadshows failed to meaningfully understand and address local concerns. The referendum conducted by MP Rebecca Smith also demonstrated clear public opposition to Plymouth City Council's proposed expansion.
3. **Boundary Changes and Financial Sustainability:** Government guidance states that boundary changes must be justified by strong service delivery and financial sustainability arguments. Plymouth City Council's proposal does not meet this threshold. The complexities of absorbing large rural populations—without the governance, officer infrastructure, or council precept systems to support them—could lead to long-term inefficiencies, under-investment, and further centralisation, which is counter to the government's devolution ambitions.

We urge you take these points into account when reaching your decision regarding Devon's political future, and ensure that any reorganisation reflects genuine local support, sound governance, and long-term resilience.

Yours sincerely,



Sasha Walton-Jackman

Clerk to Yealmpton Parish Council

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Also sent on behalf of;

Brixton Parish Council

Newton and Noss Parish Council

Wembury Parish Council

Ugborough Parish Council

Ermington Parish Council

Holbeton Parish Council

Cornwood Parish Council

Bickleigh Parish Council

*Cc Tracey Lee, CEO of Plymouth City Council*

*Tudor Evans, Leader of Plymouth City Council*

*Andy Bates, CEO of South Hams District Council*

*Dan Thomas, Leader of South Hams District Council*

*Donna Manson, CEO of Devon County Council*

*Julian Brazil, Leader of Devon County Council*

*Rebecca Smith MP*