

North Devon Councillor's Report

18th June 2026

By the middle of July the government should announce the boundaries of the new unitary councils that will take over from the abolished District and County Councils. It should happen before Parliament breaks up for the summer on 16th July.

After that, later in the year there will be legislation dealing with implementing the new councils. That is very likely to mean that there will be elections to shadow versions of the new councils in May 2027. For the first year these shadow councils won't be delivering services like refuse collection or road maintenance, the old District/County will, instead they will be setting up new organisations. The great majority of the people that work for the current councils and deliver the services we receive will simply find that from April 2028 they will work for a new organisation with little change in their day to day activity. However, there will be a vast amount of work to do to set up the new councils.

What is this work that needs to be done? And who will do it?

Each of the current councils are quite different organisations and will have a large range of long term contracts, different employment policies, widely different IT systems, a large variety of assets and much much more that will need to be translated into a different organisation. And it will need to be done without the services you receive deteriorating. It also seems likely that the boundaries of the present councils will be broken meaning part of existing councils will be in one unitary and part in another. This change can take years; for example, in a unitary council that was created six years ago they are only now starting to break up the pre-existing social services arrangements that were delivered by the defunct County Council.

As for who will do all this, it will be the people that presently work for the Districts and County, and who would otherwise be delivering, and trying to improve, the services we all receive. It is a massive challenge.

A side effect of all this is that elections to the District Councils that would have taken place next May are very likely to be cancelled with the present District Councillors (e.g. me) staying for an extra year while the old councils run in parallel to the new. It also seems likely that Parish & Town Councillors that are elected in May 2027 will be asked to serve for 5 years instead of 4; this is to allow the next elections to be at the same time as the unitary elections.

Back to the present. In case you didn't know from 1 April 2026, you can add a few more items to your kerbside recycling. Tetra Paks (like orange juice and milk cartons) and crisp tubes (such as Pringles) will now be accepted. Simply flatten and pop them in your brown recycling bag with the rest of your recycling.

John

john.patrinos@northdevon.gov.uk
[07975 746860](tel:07975746860)