



Tavistock Town Council

Working for the local community

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Mr A Bates
Chief Executive Officer
West Devon & South Hams Councils
Kilworthy Park
Drake Road
Tavistock
DEVON

7th August, 2026

Dear Andy

SCHEDULED MEETINGS WITH TOWNS ACROSS THE BOROUGH

Following its Meeting on Tuesday last I am instructed by Tavistock Town Council to write to yourself as Joint District LGR Lead and Chief Executive of West Devon Borough Council, as follows:

'To build relationships and create opportunities for the collegiate development and delivery of effective, efficient and economic public services working with Town Councils in the Borough, and to promote and afford opportunity for meaningful involvement, engagement and exchange of views on matters affecting their communities and place, this Council formally requests that West Devon Borough Council hold quarterly meetings with the Mayors and Clerks of the larger Towns in the Borough.'

This arrangement already operates in the South Hams, supported by your Officer Team, and my Council would very much welcome equivalent opportunity in West Devon. As a geographically large, sparsely populated rural district interspersed with settlement hubs the potential benefits are both self-evident and potentially significant. Accordingly my Council would not wish to see either its own, or the other communities of this Borough, materially disadvantaged at this time.

The Town Council is also mindful that, with Local Government Reorganisation briefings being delivered in July to Town Councils by your Officers in South Hams (at a meeting originally scheduled for general business last month – see above), and also Exeter City Council to Town/Parish Councils via a bespoke LGR and Q&A session, there is benefit in engaging - sooner rather than later, with the wider local authority stakeholder group regarding both what is, and what is not known.

It is acknowledged that for now that is likely to only be able to cover preliminaries such as identified workstreams, operation of the Joint Committee and some other transitional governance arrangements – such as progress with the implementation team and implementation plan, alongside timetabling. However, deferral toward the time of legislation being laid before Parliament in the Autumn creates a lacuna in communications which cannot be made up by delay. It also inhibits informed

discussion prior to the normal deadlines for sector precept development and budget setting.

It is therefore to be hoped that regular meetings starting early, and conducted on a collegiate basis, will afford the best opportunity to build trust and understanding and support constructive future partnerships and collaboration across the local authority sector during a time of change on both LGR and other matters of people and place.

You may recall that in 2021 this Council wrote to West Devon requesting co-design of a forum to discuss matters affecting the Town which was not taken up.

On this occasion, and for the reasons outlined, it is very much to be hoped that this request from Tavistock Town Council, echoed by Okehampton Town Council (and no doubt others) for a regular Borough wide meeting at officer and political levels is something that West Devon will agree to and expedite at pace. If either of our authorities can assist please do not hesitate to let myself or Emma know.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Carl Hearn
TOWN CLERK
Tavistock Town Council

Cc Councillor Mrs M Ewings (Leader West Devon Borough Council)
Councillor Mrs A Johnson (Mayor Tavistock Town Council)
Councillor R Colman (Mayor, Okehampton Town Council)

From: Andy Bates
Sent: 19 August 2026 14:35
To: Carl Hearn
Cc: Cllr Mandy Ewings
Subject: FW: Letter of 7 August

Dear Carl

Thank you for your letter dated 7 August 2026 which I have discussed with the Leader of the Council. I am writing to confirm that starting in the autumn we intend to arrange quarterly meetings with towns across the borough and we will write to you and colleagues in those towns in due course.

Best wishes

Andy

Andy Bates
Chief Executive South Hams DC and West Devon BC

From: Carl Hearn
Sent: 19 August 2026 16:13
To: 'Andy Bates' **Cc:** Cllr Mandy Ewings; Anne Johnson
Subject: RE: Letter of 7 August

Dear Andy

Many thanks, I trust you are well.

Whilst it will no doubt be disappointing to be running so far behind the LGR meetings held by some of the other principal authorities WD's commitment to reinstatement of regular scheduled meetings for the larger settlements will I am sure be welcomed by all concerned. Thank you.

Kind regards
Carl.

Carl Hearn FCIS
TOWN CLERK
Tavistock Town Council