



# Consultation - Creating a New Council

V1.2

Towns and Parishes

## Agenda

- 1. Welcome and Introductions;**
- 2. Short run through of background to the proposal and consultation approach;**
- 3. Group Exercise;**
- 4. Our ask of you.**

## What is the proposal?



To replace Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council with a single new district council (by early 2019)

- Keeps both areas whole;
- SCC unchanged;
- Existing Towns and Parishes unchanged;
- Electoral Wards would be reviewed by Boundary Commission – fewer district councillors.

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## Background

**2012** - WSC approach TDBC to explore working together. Both need to reduce costs - WSC to remain viable, TDBC to continue to invest in growth;

**2013** – Joint Management and Shared Services (JMASS) business case approved. Saves **£1.8m** a year. ONE team;


**2015** – Hinkley B rates appeal - retrospective rate refund. Wipes out WSC JMASS savings.

**March 2016** Councils authorise production of high-level business case to explore transformation possibilities in three structural scenarios to address projected budget gaps (£2.5m TDBC and £1.2m WSC by 2020/21);

**Summer 2016** – both councils consider the options within the high-level business case and decide on preferred option to progress further.

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## Options considered

1. Introduce **new ways of working**, continue to **share staff**, the **two councils** remaining as separate, democratically independent authorities (**Saves £2.6m a year**);
2.  Introduce **new ways of working**, but have a **single new district council**, one set of officers and councillors serve the entire geographical area of the current areas (**saves £3.1m a year – an extra £0.5m a year over option 1** to further help protect valuable front line services and keep Council Tax at reasonable levels);
3. The two councils progress change on their own, a **separation of the joint working arrangements**, offering very different outcomes for the communities they serve, based on what the individual councils can afford.

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## What about Unitary and Wider Sharing?

**Open invitation from the outset to all Som councils. CEOs and Leaders have met.**

### What about a Unitary option?

- No current proposal from any of the Somerset councils;
- No time for lengthy discussions – the WSC and TDBC need is pressing;
- A new district council doesn't prevent that in the future.

### What about Sedgemoor?

- No detailed proposals put forward;
- Expressed preference for boundary commission route;
- Suggested a fresh start - taking WSC/TDBC back 3 years - No time for lengthy discussions;
- WSC and TDBC already closely working with Sedgemoor (Private sector housing, Building control, Waste, Audit etc) – A new council doesn't undo these partnerships nor prevent further closer working.

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### Why do we want control of our future?

- Government have made it very clear [no extra cash](#) for WSC or TDBC;
- Avoids solution being imposed;
- Our solution keeps West Somerset and Taunton Deane whole – preserving sense of community and identity and delivers additional £0.5m per year – helping protect services;
- Maintains and enhances natural links between the two existing areas;
- Avoids unpicking of present management and staff sharing – preserving the existing £1.8m a year savings from joint working which have been in place since 2013.

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### Consultation

- 12<sup>th</sup> December to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017; (early March for Parish Councils)
- Information gathering exercise to inform the [Secretary of State's decision](#) on whether to form a new council. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government is the decision maker;
- It is [NOT](#) about Transformation (working differently) as that is already underway;
- It is [NOT](#) a vote/referendum on whether a new council should be created.

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## Public events – Roadshows(drop-ins) - 12-26 Jan

**Watchet**  
Phoenix Centre  
**12 Jan**  
(10-3pm)

**Wellington**  
Library  
**17 Jan**  
(10-3pm)

**Dulverton**  
Library  
**17 Jan**  
(10-1 1.30-3pm)

**Taunton**  
Taunton Library  
**19 Jan**  
(10-3pm)

**Minehead**  
Beach Hotel  
**20 Jan**  
(10-3pm)

**Wiveliscombe**  
Comm Centre  
**26 Jan**  
(10-3pm)



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## How we gather views

- Online at [www.yournewcouncil.org](http://www.yournewcouncil.org)
- Paper questionnaires at WSH, DH;
- Paper questionnaires at roadshows;
- Letters to key stakeholders;
- Letters to equalities groups.

All feedback received will be included within our submission to the Secretary of State, which we plan to issue toward end March 2017.

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## Questions

# Questions?

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## Group Exercise

We would like to capture your thoughts this evening on the following:

1. Do you have a suggestion for the name, if the new council is created?
2. Your Hopes, Fears, Challenges and Opportunities around the creation and operation of the new council

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## Our Ask of You

- A letter or minute indicating your Council's position on this matter would really be welcomed;
- Raise awareness of the consultation in your communities.