

Okehampton Town Council 27th July 2026 Meeting Report

Date:	20 th July 2026
Name:	Emma James

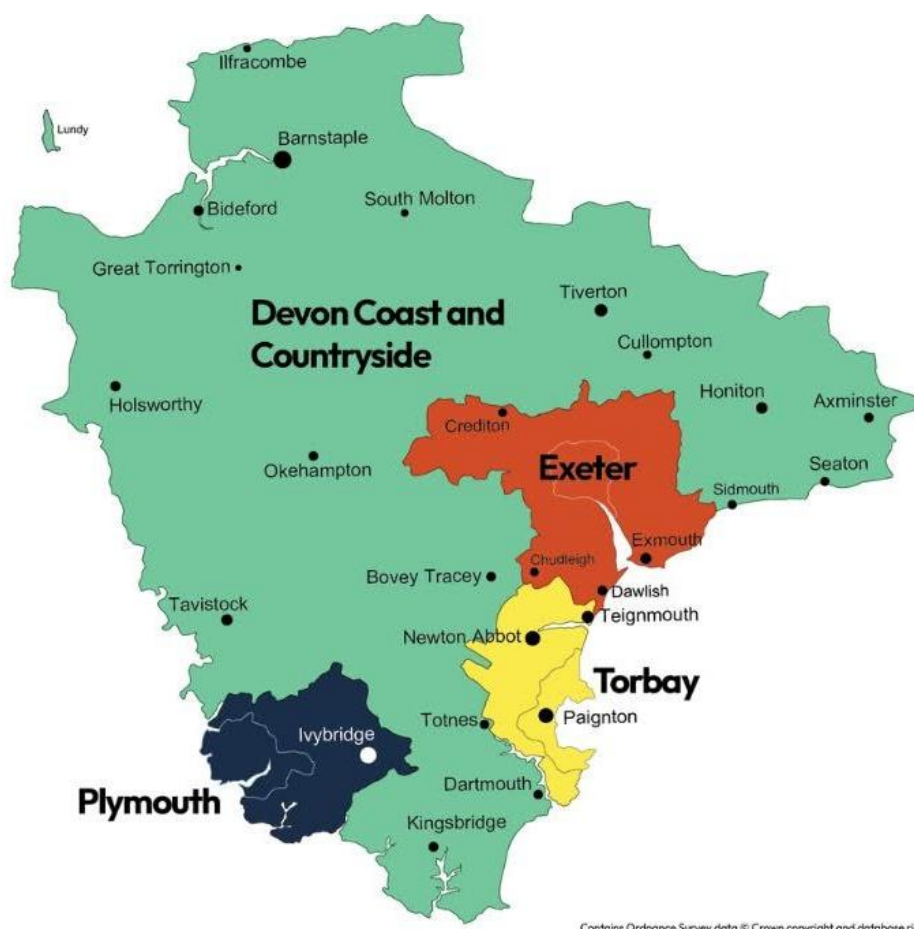
Local Government Reorganisation – To consider the Government announcement that Devon will consist of 4 Unitary Councils with elections scheduled for May 2027 ahead of vesting day when the new councils to begin delivering services in April 2028

The Unitary Councils will be:

- Expanded Plymouth
- New and Expanded Exeter
- Expanded Torbay
- New Devon Coast and Countryside which is where OTC will be

The Government have issued a statement confirm that Devon will consist of 4 Unitary councils <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2026-07-16/hcws286>

The executive summary of the proposal can be found here <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-11/Joint-Executive-Summary.pdf>



Neighbourhood Plan – To consider progression of the plan and if required, the draft application statement

Statement confirming why the proposed plan area is appropriate:

Application under Part 2 (5) (1) of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 for the designation of a Neighbourhood Area.

Okehampton Town Council (OTC) give notice that we wish to make an application under Part 2 (5) (1) of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012/2015 for the designation of a Neighbourhood Area for the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

A map identifying the area to which the application relates, being the area covered by the introduction of the new Okehampton Town Boundary in 2027, as agreed following the Community Governance Boundary Review between OTC and Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council (OHPC).

OHPC resolved to give OTC permission, at a meeting on 1st April 2025, for the land that will transfer to the Town in 2027 to be included with the Okehampton Neighbourhood Plan. OHPC have written to West Devon Borough Council to confirm this statement.

This area is considered appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area for the following reasons:

OTC have agreed that the area for which its responsibilities will serve should be covered by a Neighbourhood Plan, to ensure the interests of the Community are upheld in future planning. To provide a vision for the future of Okehampton, while maintaining the standards of properties and developments to suit the demands of a growing Town in Devon.

To investigate and suggests ways to support the local infrastructure, from roads to public services like healthcare, transport, education and development of local employment opportunities. This list is not limited to these suggestions.

It is true that there is limited scope for any further developments of any kind within the boundary of OTC, the greater scope is within that of the hamlets. Currently the expansion of Okehampton continues to grow in, particularly within the parish of OHPC to the East of the Town. This being the area that will transfer from OHPC to OTC in 2027.

The new Town boundary offers the scope for various projects and in many ways blue sky thinking. The Neighbourhood Plan will assist in this process, looking at all aspects of planning and regeneration to help make Okehampton become the thriving Town it used to be with community at its heart.

OTC resolved to develop a plan for the neighbourhood area a meeting of the council on 2nd June 2025 and an application was submitted shortly thereafter. This application was refused, copy attached, and the reasons for this refusal are addressed as follows:

1. The application refers to the Okehampton Town Council as being the relevant body for the purposes of section 61G of the 1990 Act, being the parish council for the entire area being applied for. As the community governance order giving effect to the revised boundaries for the Town Council has not come into force and will not do so until April 2027, the application is premature.

OHPC have resolved permission for the land that will transfer into the Town boundary in 2027 to be included within the Neighbourhood Plan and have written to West Devon Borough Council confirming this decision.

OTC considers this reason to have been fully addressed.

2. The area proposed would have the effect of modifying an existing designated area covering both the Town Council and the Hamlets areas. Consequently, the modification may only be made with the Hamlet's consent and there is no formal evidence that the Hamlets has consented to the proposed modification (though this is alluded to within minutes supplied). Without this clear and written consent, the current application is invalid.

Both OTC and OHPC have confirmed to West Devon Borough Council their resolution not to continue with the previous, unsuccessful plan/designated area. OHPC have also confirmed that they do not wish to be involved with this application and subsequent creation of a Neighbourhood Plan.

OTC considers this reason to have been fully addressed.

3. Even were this consent to have been received, to accept such an application would be to agree to split a currently designated neighbourhood area, which would be undesirable since it would result in The Hamlets ceasing to be designated as a neighbourhood area. The Borough Council considers that the reduced size of the remaining Hamlets area would be a barrier in bringing forward a plan for that area separately, thus leaving the area without a neighbourhood plan or the future ability to create one. There is therefore a strong presumption in favour of maintaining the existing boundary of the area already designated a neighbourhood area.

OHPC have consented to the inclusion of the land within a new Neighbourhood Area and confirmed that they no longer wish to take forward the previous, unsuccessful, Neighbourhood Plan. Due to the Community Governance Boundary Change due to be implemented in 2027, the size of the Hamlets will ultimately be reduced.

OTC considers this reason to have been fully addressed.

4. It is noted that Okehampton Parish Council could delay designation until 2027 at which time the boundary change, previously agreed, would come into effect and the Borough Council would be obliged to agree the designation. However, it would be far timelier to roll back the existing draft plan and work to remedy the defects identified by the examiner since this would achieve the Town Council's objectives in a far shorter timescale than starting afresh.

OTC does not wish to resurrect the unsuccessful Neighbourhood Plan because of the length of time its creation took, that OHPC no longer wish to be involved and that due to the timescales involved since its inception, the documentation, surveys and the large majority of other work would need to be revisited and refreshed.

The community agreed that a Neighbourhood Plan should be developed several years ago. Unfortunately, this plan did not pass the required standard, and therefore a new Neighbourhood Plan is required.

Should the plan be approved, a steering group will be created by OTC to take the Neighbourhood Plan forward. A copy of the Terms of Reference for this group, as approved by OTC, is attached.

OTC is the relevant body for the purposes of Section 61G of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act, being the parish council for the area and with the permission of OHPC as explained within this document.

Emerging Dartmoor Local Plan 2026 – To consider a response to Dartmoor National Parks scoping consultation which closes on 23rd August 2026.

Details of the consultation can be found at <https://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/living-and-working/business/planning-policy/emerging-local-plan>

In accordance with Regulation 20 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, Dartmoor National Park Authority gives notice that it is undertaking a Scoping Consultation on the emerging Dartmoor Local Plan 2026.

This is an early opportunity for communities, organisations, businesses and other interested parties to help shape the matters the new Local Plan should address and the way the Authority engages people during plan preparation.

The Authority is seeking views on:

- the vision for the new Local Plan;
- the scope and content of the new Local Plan, including how well the current Local Plan is performing;
- how the Authority should engage with people throughout the plan-making process, and what could be improved.

To help inform this discussion, we have prepared a [SWOT](#) (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis based on evidence gathered through the [State of the Park Report](#), [Local Plan monitoring](#), and [workshops](#) held during the development of the Partnership Plan.