

Last Month I reported that Devon County Council and Torbay Council have formally submitted a joint proposal for a Combined County Authority (CCA) to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

It was expected that Government would make the legislative regulations to create the CCA over the summer months, with a view to the Devon and Torbay CCA holding its first meeting in the Autumn.

But the General Election in July changes that timetable. Speaking at Devon County Council's Full Council, the new Leader, Cllr James McInnes, said: "We are seeking clarity from Government officials on how the legislative process for setting up the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority will be affected following the announcement of the General Election.

"We met with Torbay Council and both organisations remain committed to bringing forward our agreed devolution arrangement as soon as possible, and we collectively await clarity from Government officials. We have already been in touch with Government colleagues within DLUHC (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) to secure the £16m capital investment agreed with Government.

"The Leader of Torbay Council, the nominated District Council Leader, and I unanimously approved 16 excellent projects this week which will be recommended to the County Council as the accountable body.

"These schemes span housing, skills, business support and green infrastructure and can have an immediate impact on our local economy.

"There would be schemes in each district area with the potential to bring forward affordable homes, decarbonise existing properties, support more than 1000 learners in green and net zero skills and creation of jobs and apprenticeships.

"Working with District Councils, Dartmoor National Park, Exmoor National Park and the Devon Association of Local Councils we are progressing the establishment of the Team Devon Joint Committee. This will support joint working on a number of areas including economic development."

A new series of the highly successful 'Let's Talk' webinars has launched, and this time it is specifically for parents and carers of neurodivergent young people and those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The free, open access online programme provides a space for parents and carers to discuss the challenges facing young people today and understand the tools and techniques that they can use to support them.

The sessions have been developed with parents and carers of neurodivergent young people and those with SEND, and will cover topics including mental health and emotional wellbeing, anger and challenging behaviour, healthy relationships and online safety.

The tickets are free, and you can sign up now using the links below:

[Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing](#) at 7pm on Tuesday 2 July 2024; [Anger and Challenging Behaviour](#) at 7pm on Thursday 4 July 2024; [Healthy Relationships](#) at 7pm on Tuesday 9 July 2024; [Online Safety and Exploitation](#) at 7pm on Thursday 11 July 2024.

Increasing resource base provision in Devon is part of Devon's strategy to meet growing demand for special educational needs provision and capacity in mainstream schools.

Pupils who go to resource bases benefit from there being a more individually-tailored level of support. That might include small group work, access to specialist resources, while still being part of their mainstream school community alongside their friends.

It's part of the strategy to help schools support local children whose needs can't be met entirely in mainstream school environments, but who with additional support, will thrive with their peers.

There are currently too few resource places, but we are planning additional places in areas with greatest need, to be operational this coming academic year. Improving the quality and availability of provision for pupils with high level needs is a local and national priority.

It's predicted that within five years there will be an additional 200 places provided across Devon through a combination of expansion and new provision.

It will ensure a better offer for children and young people that is local and suitable to their needs, that facilitates better access to the curriculum and avoids the need for children to travel to an appropriate school further away from their local community.

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