

## **News from County Hall, April 2023**

**Cllr Dan Thomas.**

### **Devolution deal for Devon, Plymouth and Torbay moves a step closer**

A new deal that will transfer money and powers into the hands of local Leaders across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, has moved a step closer with the backing of the Government's Levelling Up Minister, Dehenna Davison. Outline approval has been given for a Devon-wide devolution deal which could bring greater local control and allow partners to tap into additional resources to help tackle key local priorities, such as affordable housing, better public transport and connectivity, and providing for the skills that the local economy needs.

The deal wouldn't require a change to the established democratic structures across the area, or the need for an elected Mayor. Instead, new powers would be devolved to a partnership of existing local councils who would deliver on a joint programme working alongside a wide range of other local stakeholders. Local partners across Devon have now been invited to work together to prepare a final business case to present to Government for approval later in the year.

Any final deal would require local consent with the full agreement of all the constituent councils as well as Parliamentary approval.

### **Every penny of the extra £9.4m will be spent making our roads more resilient**

Every penny of the extra £9.4 million for Devon, announced in the Chancellor's budget recently, will be spent on improving our roads and making them more resilient. Most of it will go towards the Local Area Capital Programmes, which will reflect local priorities identified through our elected members and Neighbourhood Highway Officers.

Using inspections and survey data, the remaining funding will be directed to preventative works to stop potholes forming in the first place. Prolonged spells of very wet weather and freezing road temperatures this winter have been hugely detrimental to the condition of our 8,000 mile road network. To tackle it, over the past few months, we doubled the number of pothole teams, introduced weekend working and extended working hours across the network. That resulted in up to 2,200 potholes being repaired each week.

### **New emergency alert system launched by UK Government on Sunday 23 April 2023 at 3pm**

You may have heard in the news that the [UK Government's new Emergency Alerts system](#) is now live. The system will enable people to be contacted

through their mobile phone if their lives are at risk in an emergency. The service will be used to warn you about life-threatening emergencies, for example severe flooding.

Emergency Alerts are messages sent to all compatible 4G and 5G mobile phones when there's a danger to your life, health or property in the area you're located. They don't need your location or phone number and only the Government and the emergency services can send them. If you don't have a mobile, you'll still be kept informed through other channels.

There will be a UK-wide test of the Emergency Alerts system taking place on Sunday 23 April 2023. If you have a compatible phone, you will receive a welcome message. You do not need to do anything when you receive it, as it's just a test to ensure the service is working effectively.