

Report from Councillor Dan Thomas

December 2024

An update from County after Storm Bert.

Our flood risk team is working closely with the Environment Agency and District Councils to review the communities and properties in Devon which were flooded during Storm Bert. Strong winds and heavy rain battered Devon the weekend before last and we received reports that approximately 40 properties suffered internal flooding. The results of the investigation, which will be published in the New Year, will help us identify which properties and areas would most benefit from future resilience measures, in line with other priorities, workload and funding opportunities.

Our initial investigations, which includes feedback from communities, shows that in the communities where we have delivered flood schemes in recent years, such as Ivybridge, Sidmouth, Axminster, Uplyme and Stokeinteignhead, flooding was prevented. The number of flooded properties across the county would certainly have been much higher without these essential flood improvements. In Modbury for instance, approximately 4 million litres of water (4,000 cubic metres) was held behind a specially constructed dam without which many properties would have been flooded. The dam was part of a £1.1million scheme delivered in 2019 and it helps control the flow of water through the drainage system in Modbury town centre by storing excess water behind it and redirecting the flow of water from certain fields.

Councillor Roger Croad, Cabinet Member with responsibility for flood resilience said: “We are committed to implementing measures to reduce flood risk to communities across Devon and we will continue to work to maximise funding to make a real difference to our residents.”

Please make sure you have let me know of any areas where homes were flooded so that we make sure not to miss any homes.

Devolution Latest

The ‘Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority Regulations 2024’, a ‘statutory instrument’ (SI), has been laid in Parliament, paving the way towards the creation of the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority. The Regulations will be debated in in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. When they are signed by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Angela Rayner MP, under powers delegated by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority (CCA) will come into being. The CCA will make decisions about the powers and funding devolved from Whitehall to Devon and Torbay through the deal that was agreed in January this year.

Paul Arnott, Leader of East Devon District Council & Chair of Devon Districts’ Forum, said: “This legislation is an important precursor to the establishment of the Combined County Authority for Devon and Torbay. All the District Councils in Devon will continue to work together and with our partners to ensure that the benefits for local communities arising from the transfer of powers and resources are maximised, including in relation to the forthcoming Devolution White Paper for England.”

I have put the last bit in bold as it is probably the most relevant part – devolution is not over just because the CCA is being created, This will very much be the first iteration.

A very Merry Christmas to all Parish Councillors and Clerks. See you in the New Year.

Best,

Dan

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