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# EXETER'S SUBMISSION FOR UNITARY STATUS

## SOWTON FORUM PRESENTATION

16 FEBRUARY 2007



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## The City's track record -

- 'Excellent' rating
- 4<sup>th</sup> lowest Council Tax
- Debt free
- Met Office
- Employment Growth
- City Centre redevelopment
- Regional City



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## The City's track record – continued

- Partnership ethos:
  - Vision Partnership
  - Science Park
  - New growth point
  - EHOD
  - Business Forum



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# The Local Government White Paper

- Key themes
  - Stronger local leadership
  - Community engagement
  - Increased efficiency
  - Strong cities



## The Local Government White Paper

- Recognises problems of two-tier system:
  - ambiguous leadership
  - blurred accountability
  - public confusion
  - duplication
  - inefficiency



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# The Local Government White Paper

- Proposes 2 ways forward:
  1. Unitary status
  2. ‘New models of two-tier working’



## New Models of Two-Tier Working:

- Stronger LAA at County level (10 times more central funding streams to go into central countywide pot by 2009)
- Indistinguishable service standards across whole county area
- Shared services with unified staff across county
- ‘Single cadre of councillors’
- A ‘virtual’ county unitary



## What would this mean for Exeter?

- Significantly less control over major funding streams and key decisions at Exeter level
- Greater bureaucracy, delay and transaction costs
- No focus on Exeter's uniquely urban issues
- Even less clarity of leadership, focus and accountability
- Disempowerment of local partnership working



## We are at a crossroads -

- Government is committed to these radical changes
- Two-tier governance will be fundamentally different in 5 years time
- No change is not an option
- Last chance for Exeter to re-establish its rightful position as a unitary authority



## So what will a unitary Exeter be like?

- Own LAA – all Government funding streams guaranteed to stay within the city under control of all our partner agencies and stakeholders, including business
- Clarity of urban focus and clarity of city leadership – one leader and one council to coherently lead and be unambiguously accountable for everything that happens or is planned in the city



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- Complete integration of local authority services
- Opportunities for new ways of working and efficiencies
- Even stronger capacity and motivation to work in partnership and be externally focused
- Rest of Devon will become itself a stronger ‘virtual county unitary’ area making partnership working between the city and its hinterland even easier than now



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- An historic opportunity for Exeter
- All party political support
- A strong case and a good chance of success – particularly with stakeholder support
- There will still be a strong Devon and we will work constructively with it



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## Exeter's Submission

- Robust business case
- Transition costs
- Efficiency savings
- New ways of working
- Joined-up services
- Broad basis of support



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## Timetable

- Business Case submitted 25 January
- Preliminary decision- March 2007
- CLG consults locally- Spring
- Final Decision- July 2007
- Shadow Council- May 2008
- New Council- April 2009



There may never be another chance, so

- Back one of England's most successful regional cities
- Back the City Council's excellent track record
- Show vision and confidence in the city's potential
- Seize the very real once-only opportunity the Government has offered Exeter