

**Local Government  
Boundary Commission  
For England  
Report No.564**

**Principal Area Boundary Review**

MID DEVON DISTRICT/TORRIDGE  
DISTRICT/WEST DEVON  
BOROUGH IN THE COUNTY OF :  
DEVON

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

FOR ENGLAND

REPORT NO. 564

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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PRINCIPAL AREA BOUNDARY REVIEW: MID DEVON DISTRICT/TORRIDGE DISTRICT/WEST DEVON  
BOROUGH IN THE COUNTY OF DEVON

#### COMMISSION'S FINAL PROPOSALS

#### BACKGROUND

1. West Devon Borough Council requested us to undertake a review of various parts of the boundary between the Borough and the Districts of Mid Devon and Torrridge. The initial request arose from a parish boundary review carried out by the Borough Council; its parish review report was submitted to us in August 1981 and our letter, announcing our final proposals under that review, was sent to you on 30 April 1984. The Order, implementing our proposals with modifications, came into effect on 1 April 1987.

2. The Borough Council made suggestions for seven minor changes to its boundary, which would affect the Parish of Cheriton Bishop in the District of Mid Devon; the Parishes of Black Torrington, Broadwoodwidge, Halwill and Petrockstowe in the District of Torrridge; and the Parishes of Beaworthy, Drewsteignton, Germansweek, Highampton and Northlew in the Borough of West Devon.

3. We considered the Council's request, as required by section 48(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, having regard to Department of the Environment Circular 33/78 and to our Report No. 287 (now subsumed in our Report No. 443). We decided to undertake the review as, in our view, it met the criteria set out in paragraph 14 of Department of the Environment Circular 33/78. However, we

also decided to defer the publication of draft proposals until further information was available concerning one of the boundary changes sought, in the Cheriton Bishop/Drewsteignton area, where the village of Crockernwell was divided between the Parish of Cheriton Bishop (District of Mid Devon) and the Parish of Drewsteignton (Borough of West Devon). Both the Borough Council and Mid Devon District Council sought the incorporation of Crockernwell as a whole into its area and each said they were supported in this by the residents.

4. We agreed that the division of the village should not continue but we felt that the evidence before us, especially about local opinion, was inconclusive. We therefore requested the Borough Council and Mid Devon District Council to test public opinion in Crockernwell. The consultation exercise, in the form of a local plebiscite conducted jointly by the two Councils, revealed a narrow majority in favour of incorporating the whole village in West Devon.

#### OUR DRAFT PROPOSALS

5. We decided to issue the following draft proposals, based on the Borough Council's suggestions:-

a. Germansweek Parish (West Devon)/Broadwoodwidge Parish (Torridge)

To place the farmstead of Witherdon wholly in the Parish of Germansweek (see Annex A to this Report - Map 1).

b. Beaworthy Parish (West Devon)/Halwill Parish (Torridge)

To place the hamlet of Halwill Junction wholly in the Parish of Halwill (Annex A - Maps 2 and 2a)

c. Northlew Parish (West Devon)/Halwill Parish (Torridge)

To place the village of Winsford wholly in the Parish of Halwill (Annex A - Maps 2 and 2a).

d. Highampton Parish (West Devon)/Black Torrington Parish (Torrige)  
To place the village of Highampton wholly in the Parish of Highampton  
(Annex A - Map 3).

e. Highampton Parish (West Devon)/Petrockstowe Parish (Torrige)  
The boundary to follow the River Torrige by Bremridge Wood (Annex A - Map  
4).

f. Drewsteignton Parish (West Devon)/Cheriton Bishop Parish (Mid Devon)  
The boundary to follow a road rather than a stream in the vicinity of West  
Fursham and Bakesdown (Annex A - Map 5).

g. Drewsteignton Parish (West Devon)/Cheriton Bishop Parish (Mid Devon)  
To place the village of Crockernwell wholly in the Parish of Drewsteignton  
(Annex A - Map 5).

6. We formulated our draft proposals with the aims of providing clear and readily identifiable boundaries and of removing various anomalous stretches of boundary which divided a number of small communities between two districts.

7. Our draft proposals were published on 11 September 1987, in a letter to all three Councils. Copies were sent to persons and bodies who appeared to us to have an interest in the review of these boundaries. Copies of the draft proposals were deposited for inspection at the main offices of the Councils. Comments were invited by 6 November 1987.

#### RESPONSE TO OUR DRAFT PROPOSALS

8. In response to our draft proposals we received letters from: Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council, West Devon Borough Council, the Parish Councils of Black Torrington, Broadwoodwidge, Cheriton Bishop, Drewsteignton and Halwill and from one member of the public.

9. Devon County Council had no objections to our draft proposals.
  
10. Broadwoodwidge Parish Council, in the District of Torridge, objected strongly to our proposal to transfer that part of the farmstead of Witherdon currently in its Parish to the Parish of Germansweek in the Borough of West Devon. The Parish Council felt that the loss of rate revenue resulting from the change would cause hardship.
  
11. Halwill Parish Council, in the District of Torridge, supported our draft proposal to unite the hamlet of Halwill Junction in its Parish by transferring to it that part of the hamlet which currently lies in the Parish of Beaworthy in the Borough of West Devon. A member of the public wrote to us to say that our draft proposal would result in her house being transferred from the Borough of West Devon to the District of Torridge while a field belonging to her would remain in West Devon and asking that our proposed boundary be amended to leave all of her property in West Devon.
  
12. Black Torrington Parish Council, in the District of Torridge, agreed with our draft proposal to unite the village of Highampton in its Parish by transferring to it that part of the village that currently lies in the Parish of Highampton in the Borough of West Devon but was concerned about compensation for loss of rate revenue.
  
13. Some confusion appeared to have arisen concerning our draft proposal to alter the boundary between the Parish of Cheriton Bishop (Mid Devon) and the Parish of Drewsteignton (West Devon) in the vicinity of West Fursham and Bakesdown. Mid Devon District Council and Cheriton Bishop Parish Council both said that they had not previously been aware of the proposal and they were concerned that they had not been consulted before publication of our draft proposal. However, we noted that the proposal had been included, in the form of a map, in West Devon Borough Council's draft recommendations, even though the text did not mention it and that the draft recommendations had been available

for inspection by those who would be affected by the changes. Since eight weeks had been allowed for comments after the publication of our draft proposals we felt that the District Council and Parish Council had had adequate opportunity to make their views known.

14. Mid Devon District Council subsequently acknowledged that it had a copy of the relevant map from the Borough Council's draft recommendations and said it did not formally object to the draft proposal, although it did question the rationale behind it. Cheriton Bishop Parish Council had no comment to make.

15. Mid Devon District Council strongly opposed our draft proposal for uniting the village of Crockernwell in the Borough of West Devon. The Council acknowledged that the boundary at Crockernwell was anomalous and recognised that the line of the new A30, to the north of the village, was an attractive option for a new district/parish boundary. However, it felt that social factors were very much more important than a convenient boundary.

16. The District Council was still of the opinion that, by reason of geography, character, community ties and service provision, Crockernwell related to Cheriton Bishop and Mid Devon rather than Drewsteignton and West Devon. It felt that the plebiscite had been inconclusive and suggested a site meeting with a representative of the Commission.

17. Cheriton Bishop Parish Council objected strongly to the way in which the plebiscite had been carried out by the District Council and West Devon Borough Council. It also felt that the result was inconclusive and it, too, held to its position of considering Crockernwell more closely related to Cheriton Bishop than to Drewsteignton. The Parish Council suggested that a public meeting be held so that members of the public could air their views.

18. West Devon Borough Council felt that the result of the plebiscite was clear-cut and should be adhered to.

19. Both the District and the Borough Council brought up the question of the current review by the Countryside Commission of the boundaries of the Dartmoor National Park. There were conflicting views on whether the final outcome of that review would be the inclusion or exclusion of Crockernwell from the National Park and both Councils drew their own inferences about what either result implied in respect of the perception of the character of Crockernwell and whether it was a true Dartmoor village or not.

#### DECISION TO HOLD A LOCAL MEETING

20. We accepted that the result of the plebiscite was only a rather narrow majority in favour of uniting Crockernwell in the Borough of West Devon. However, we also noted that a higher proportion of those living Mid Devon elected to go to West Devon than vice-versa.

21. We felt that we were still lacking information about the provision of local government and associated services - an important factor in the consideration of the benefits of the change in terms of effective and convenient local government. There were no representations from residents of Crockernwell to throw light on these factors.

22. Taking these points together with the requests from the Mid Devon local authorities for a meeting, we decided that we should hold a local meeting as the most practicable way of filling the gaps in our information.

23. A letter announcing our intention to hold a local meeting was, therefore, published on 6 April 1988. Copies were sent to Devon County Council, West Devon Borough Council, the District Councils of Mid Devon and Torrington, the Parish Councils of Cheriton Bishop and Drewsteignton, the Members of Parliament for the constituencies concerned, local radio and television stations, local newspapers circulating in the area, and to the editors of the Local Government Chronicle and Municipal Journal. The Borough and District Councils were asked to

publicise the meeting by displaying a notice on public noticeboards in the area and by publishing a notice in local newspapers for two successive weeks.

#### THE LOCAL MEETING

24. The meeting was held on Wednesday 1 June 1988 at 6.30 pm in Cheriton Bishop Village Hall. The Deputy Chairman of the Commission conducted it with the assistance of one other member. Representatives of Mid Devon District Council, West Devon Borough Council and the Parish Councils of Cheriton Bishop and Drewsteignton attended, as did over fifty members of the public, including many residents of Crockernwell as well as people from Cheriton Bishop and Drewsteignton.

25. The local authorities were asked to speak first, and each of them made a submission. Following this, members of the public were invited to air their views, and many of them took the opportunity to do so.

26. The local authorities all adhered to their previously stated positions and deployed again many of the arguments in their written representations. Their submissions brought out some of the information we had sought about the provision of services in the area. While some of the services they mentioned, such as education were not, strictly speaking, relevant to a review of district boundaries, being county council functions, they helped bring out people's perceptions of Crockernwell's place in the local pattern of communities. Perhaps most important of all, the meeting provided a clearer idea of local ties and of the wishes of the residents of Crockernwell.

27. The overall impression given by the representations of private individuals at the meeting reflected the fine balance of considerations evident from earlier correspondence. The preponderance of concern appeared to lie with parish rather than district-level issues, though there was a recognition that the latter were relevant to our consideration of the review.

## OUR FINAL PROPOSALS

28. We have re-assessed our draft proposals in the light of the representations we received and the local meeting we held. We note that there is still a general lack of comment on most of the issues, especially from members of the public.

29. We have considered the objections of Broadwoodwidge Parish Council (concerning the farmstead of Witherdon) and a member of the public (concerning the village of Halwill Junction). We note that the objections hinge on loss of rate revenue and land ownership respectively and in neither case do we feel that there is a compelling reason to modify or withdraw our draft proposals.

30. In the case of Crockernwell we have concluded that, despite the cogency of the case presented by Mid Devon and Cheriton Bishop, the plebiscite result and the written representations we received, taken together with the submissions made at the local meeting, point towards uniting the village in West Devon. We feel that the boundary we proposed (along the new A30) and which was based on West Devon Borough Council's recommendation, is both clear and readily identifiable; it can also be expected to be relatively permanent. In addition, this choice of boundary also resolves a further minor anomaly at Hooperton Cross.

31. From the point of view of the provision of services, West Devon appears to be better placed. In particular, Okehampton appears to be more accessible as a service centre than Crediton. Overall, the local residents seem to us to have indicated a preference for West Devon, though the argument in terms of local loyalties remains finely balanced.

33. In the light of all these considerations we have come to the conclusion that the changes we had in mind are desirable in the interests of effective and convenient local government. We have accordingly decided to confirm our draft proposals, as set out in paragraph 5 above, as our final proposals. Our

proposal for Crockernwell includes a minor amendment, suggested by Ordnance Survey, to improve the definition of the boundary.

#### PUBLICATION

34. A separate letter enclosing copies of this report is being sent to Mid Devon District Council, Torrington District Council and West Devon Borough Council, asking them to deposit copies of the report at their main offices and to put notices to this effect on public noticeboards and in the local press. The text of the notices will explain that the Commission has fulfilled its statutory role in the matter and it now falls to you, if you think fit, to make an Order implementing the proposals, though not earlier than six weeks from the date they are submitted to you. Copies of the report and annexes are also being sent to those who appear to us to have an interest in the boundary issues.

LS

Signed: G J ELLERTON (Chairman)

J G POWELL (Deputy Chairman)

G E CHERRY

K F J ENNALS

G R PRENTICE

HELEN SARKANY

B SCHOLES

S T GARRISH

Secretary

20 July 1988

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND

PRINCIPAL AREAS BOUNDARY REVIEW

WEST DEVON BOROUGH/TORRIDGE DISTRICT/  
MID DEVON DISTRICT

FINAL PROPOSALS

Existing District Boundary	
Proposed District Boundary	
Existing CP Boundary	

# LOCATION DIAGRAM

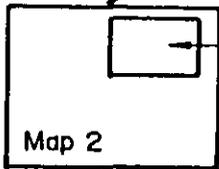
TORRIDGE DISTRICT

MID DEVON DISTRICT

WEST DEVON BOROUGH



Map 1



Map 2

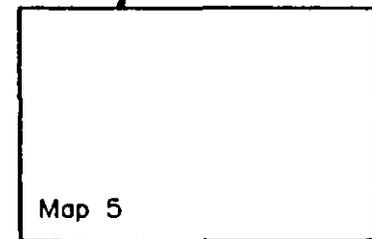
Map 2a



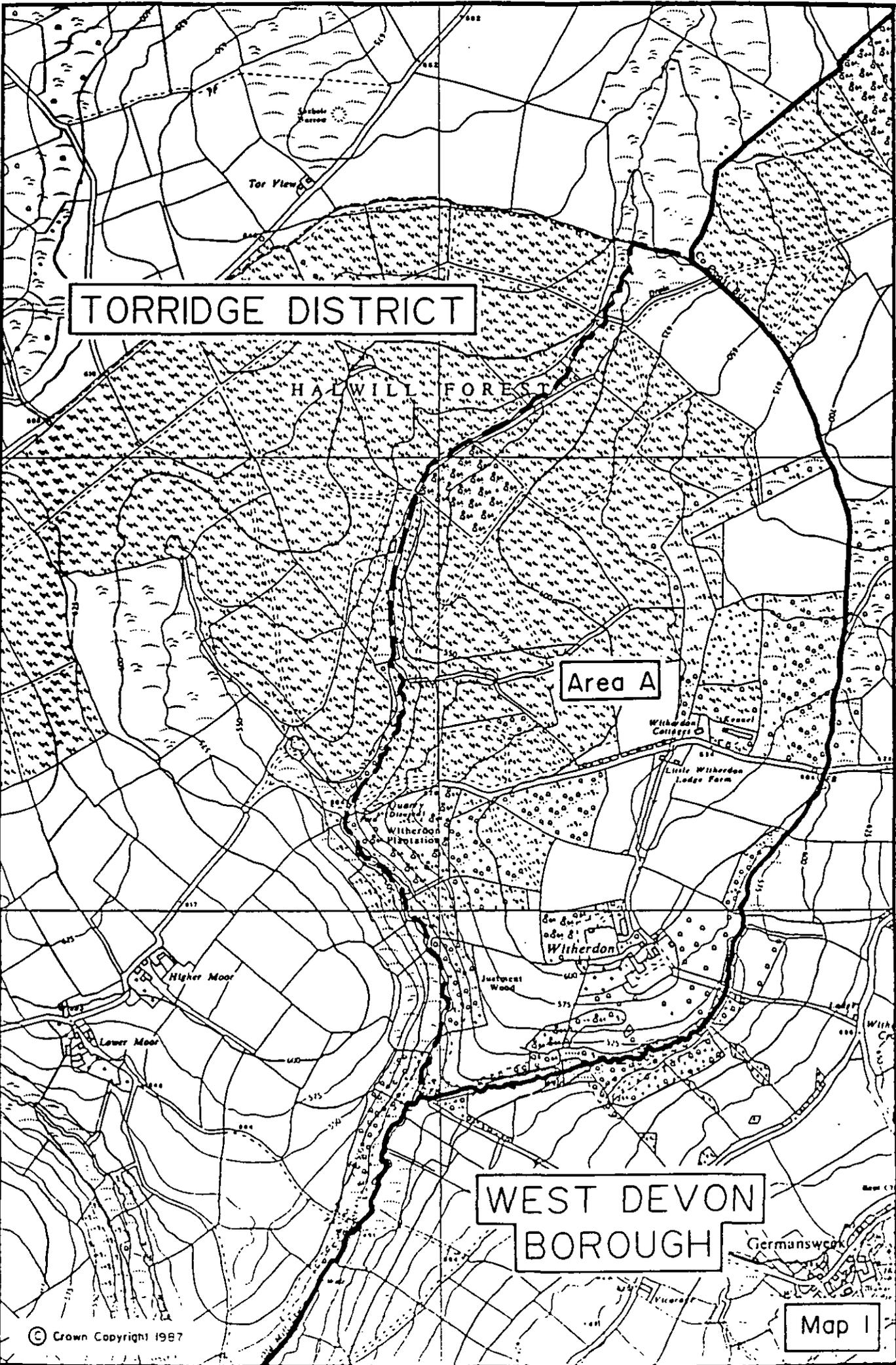
Map 3



Map 4



Map 5



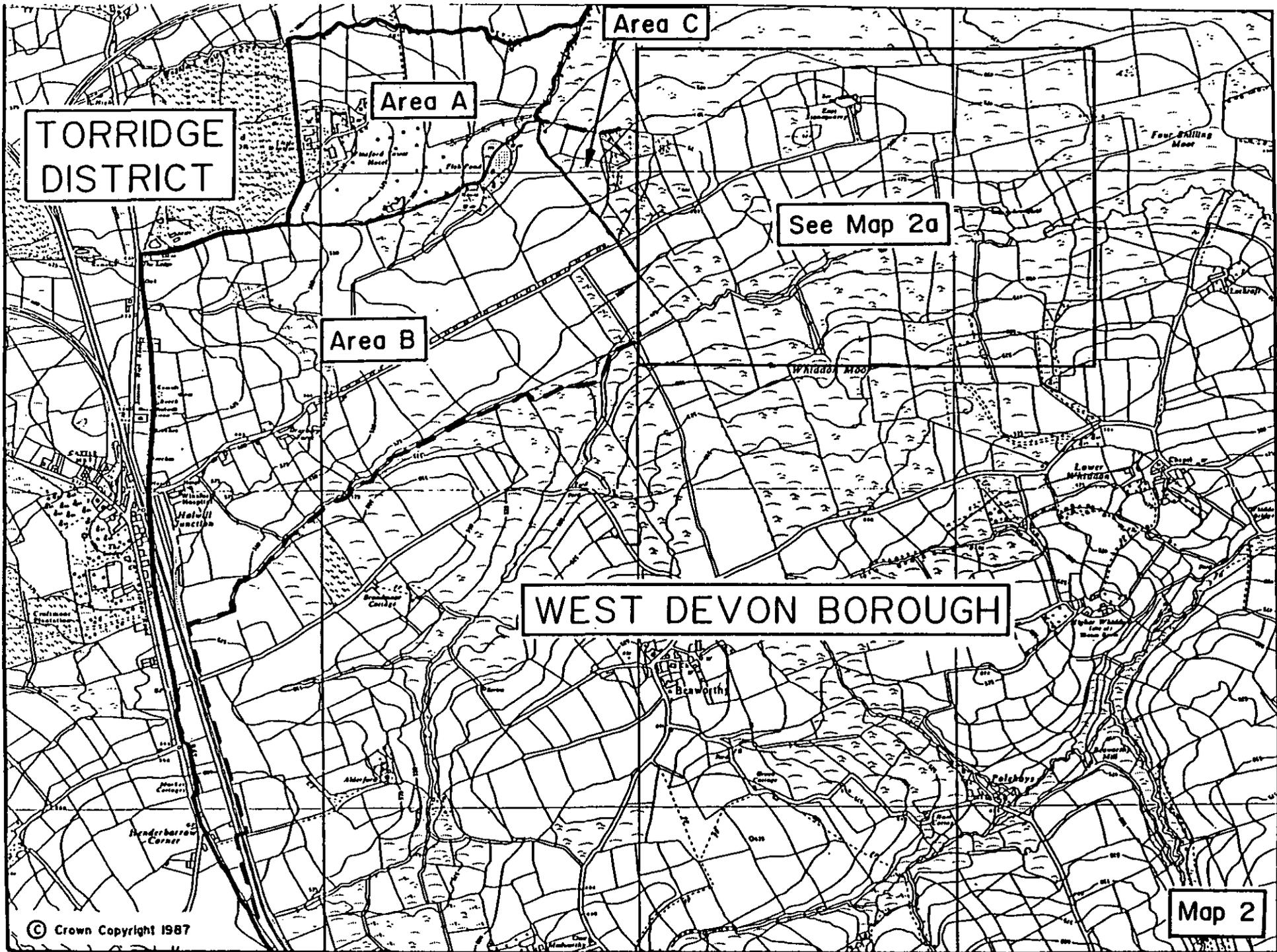
TORRIDGE DISTRICT

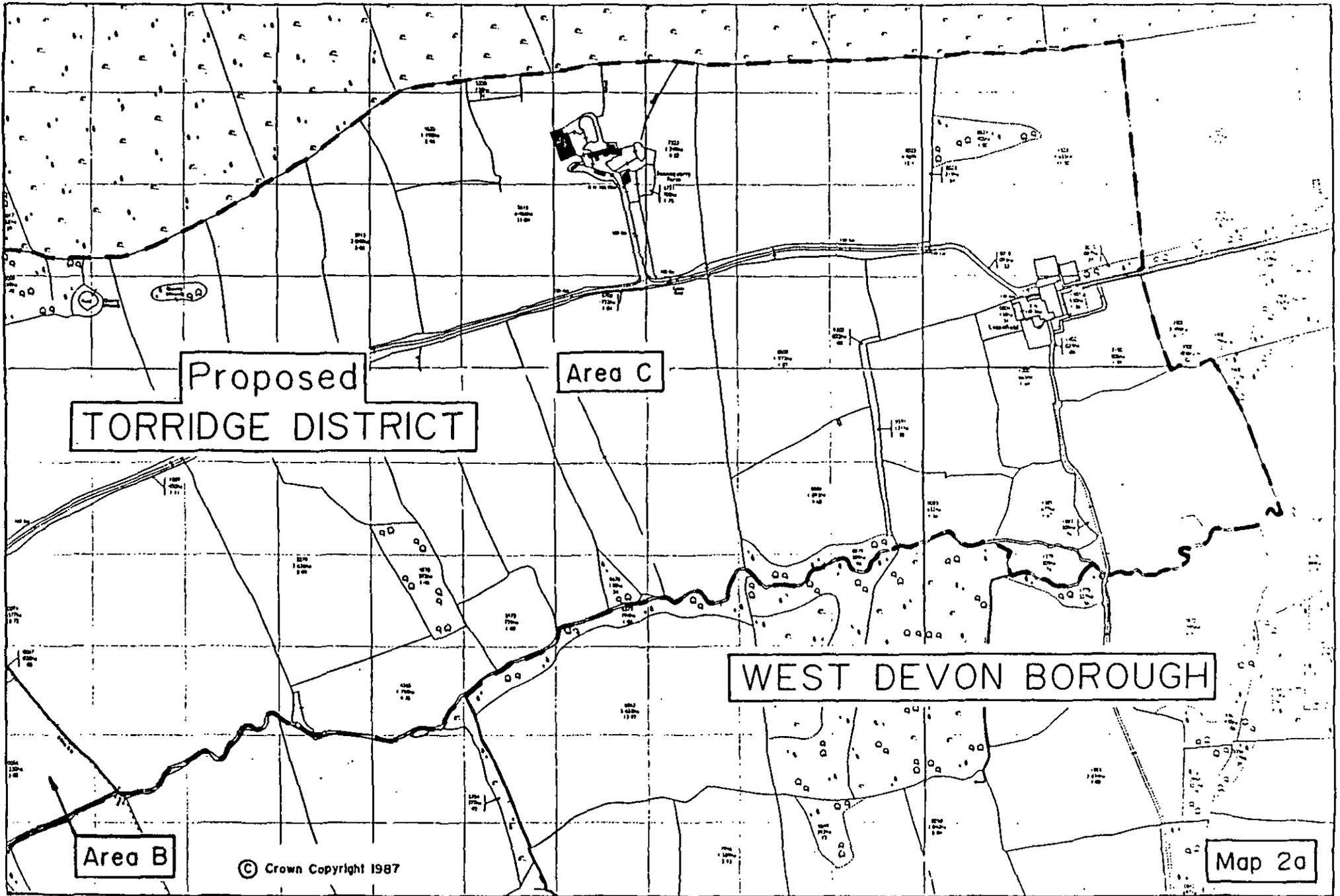
HALWILL FOREST

Area A

Witherdon

WEST DEVON  
BOROUGH





Proposed  
TORRIDGE DISTRICT

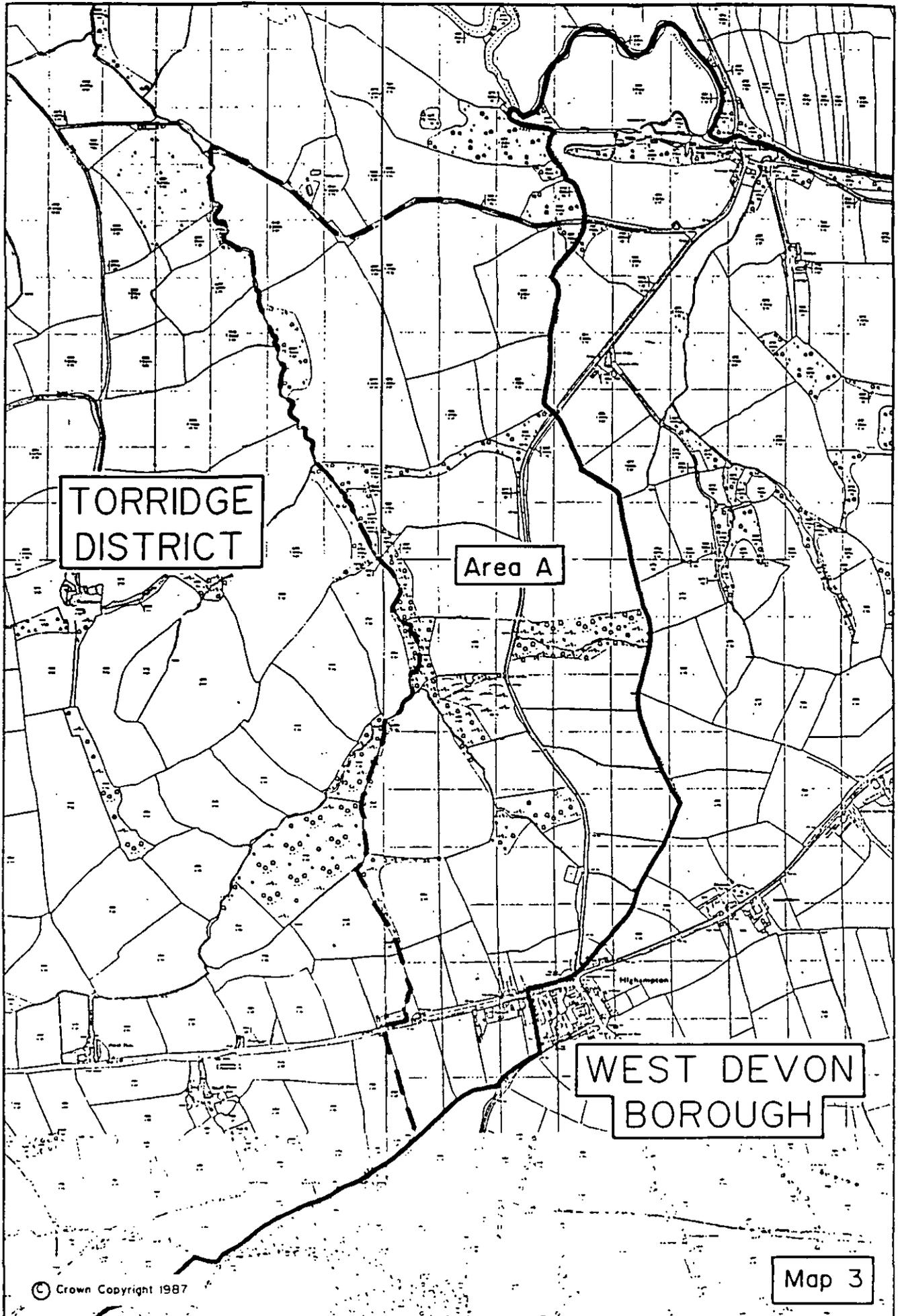
Area C

WEST DEVON BOROUGH

Area B

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Map 2a

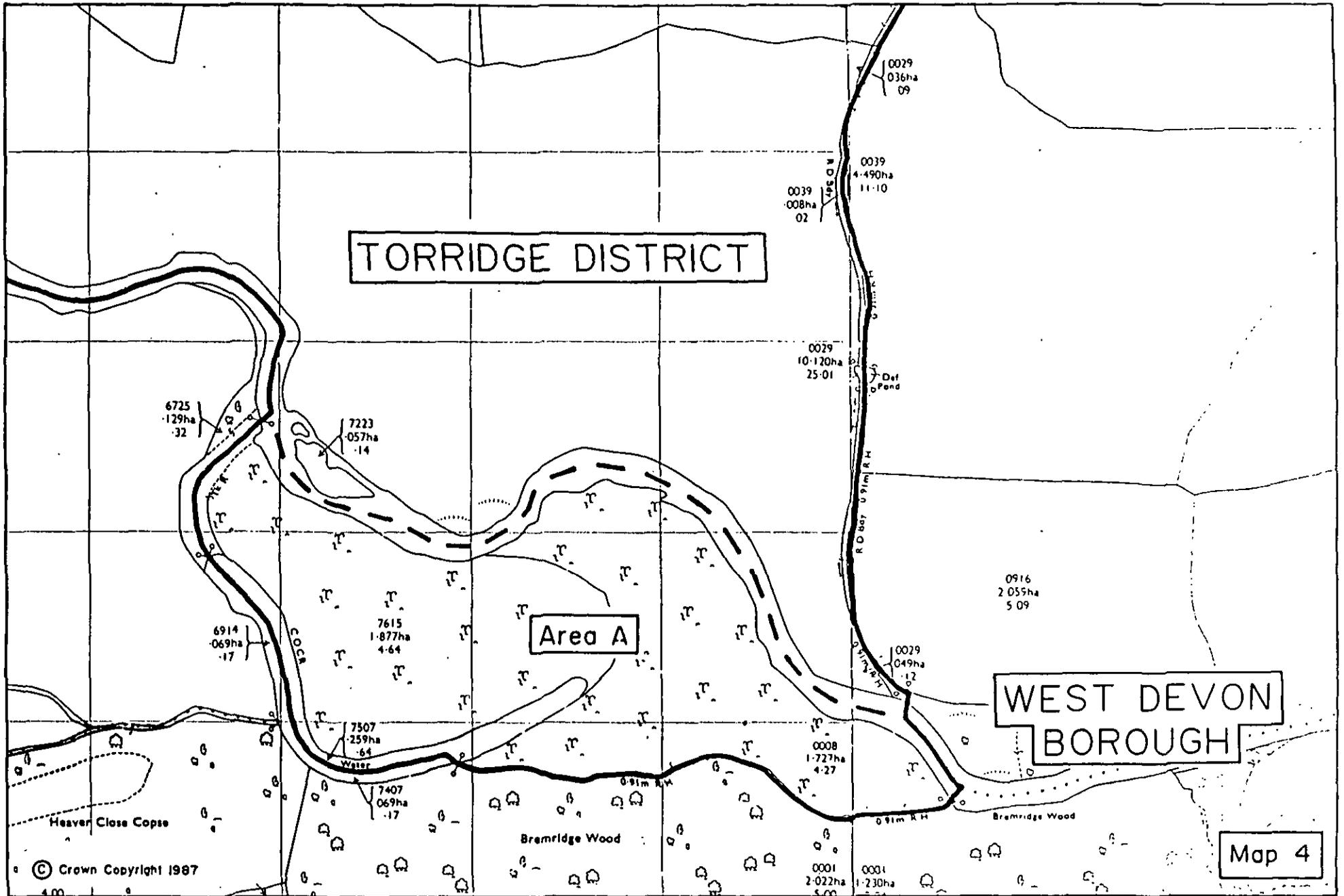


TORRIDGE  
DISTRICT

Area A

WEST DEVON  
BOROUGH

Highampton





# CONSEQUENTIAL CHANGES

ANNEX B

MAP NO.	AREA REF.	FROM	TO	MAP NO.	AREA REF.	FROM	TO
1	A	Torrige District Broadwoodwidge CP Broadheath Ward Holsworthy Rural ED	West Devon Borough Germansweek CP Bridestowe Ward Okehampton Rural ED	3	A	Torrige District Black Torrington CP Coham Bridge Ward Torrington Rural ED	West Devon Borough Highampton CP Hatherleigh Ward Hatherleigh and Chagford ED
2	A C	West Devon Borough Northlew CP Lew Valley Ward Hatherleigh and Chagford ED	Torrige District Halwill CP Forest Ward Holsworthy Rural ED	4	A	Torrige District Petrockstowe CP Heanton Ward Torrington Rural ED	West Devon Borough Highampton CP Hatherleigh Ward Hatherleigh and Chagford ED
	B	West Devon Borough Beaworthy CP Lew Valley Ward Hatherleigh and Chagford ED	Torrige District Halwill CP Forest Ward Holsworthy Rural ED	5	A D F G	West Devon Borough Drewsteignton CP Drewsteignton Ward Hatherleigh and Chagford ED	Mid Devon District Cheriton Bishop CP Yeo Ward Crediton Rural ED
2a	B	West Devon Borough Beaworthy CP Lew Valley Ward Hatherleigh and Chagford ED	Torrige District Halwill CP Forest Ward Holsworthy Rural ED		B C E	Mid Devon District Cheriton Bishop CP Yeo Ward Crediton Rural ED	West Devon Borough Drewsteignton CP Drewsteignton Ward Hatherleigh and Chagford ED
	C	West Devon Borough Northlew CP Lew Valley Ward Hatherleigh and Chagford ED	Torrige District Halwill CP Forest Ward Holsworthy Rural ED				

