

Agenda Supplement

Dorset County Council



Meeting: County Council

Time: 10.00 am

Date: 10 March 2016

Venue: Council Chamber, County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

Debbie Ward
Chief Executive

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3. **Exploring Options for the Future of Local Government in
Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole**

1 - 6

To receive revised appendices to the report by the Chief Executive.

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Appendix 1

Learning from Other Council Mergers

Case Study: Wiltshire

In December 2007 the government announced that five county areas would become unitary in 2009 – Wiltshire, Cornwall, Shropshire, Northumberland and Durham.

The Wiltshire merger is cited as one of the most successful unitary initiatives in the UK, achieved on time and under budget, and gaining a glowing report from DCLG. It is the successor authority to Wiltshire County Council (1889–2009) and four district councils—Kennet, North Wiltshire, Salisbury, and West Wiltshire—all of which had been created in 1973 and were abolished in 2009 when Wiltshire Council was created. Wiltshire has a population of c. 435,000 who are represented by 98 Councillors (majority Conservative). In December 2007, the Government approved a bid from Wiltshire County

Council for a unitary council to take over the responsibilities for all local government services in those areas in Wiltshire currently served by four district councils and the county council. A Statutory Instrument was subsequently approved by Parliament on 25 February 2008, establishing a new Wiltshire unitary authority from 1 April 2009.

The Boundary Committee for England began an electoral review of the new unitary authority of Wiltshire on 26 February 2008. It completed this review on 14 November 2008. On 11 February 2009 the Electoral Commission decided to accept the Boundary Committee for England's recommendations for the new electoral arrangements for the new unitary authority of Wiltshire (subject to some minor modifications). A high level timeline is shown below.

Wiltshire cites the following benefits of the merger:

- As a unitary, the council was able to achieve savings of just over £100m in the first four years, without having to cut local services.
- A unitary structure has enabled it to more effectively implement government policy (health and social care integration, and the LEP/City Deals process, for example)
- Becoming a unitary has enabled Wiltshire Council to achieve strong strategic leadership of place. This is perceived as important not only to the economy of a place but also its cohesiveness, cultural value and community spirit.
- 'Wiltshire Council has moved from being an organisation that simply “gives” services to passive residents, to becoming an enabler of community self-help. Citizens, civil society and businesses are taking greater initiative in meeting local challenges such as childhood pregnancy and obesity. And Wiltshire Council's transformation has engendered a far greater sense of place, particularly by:
 - Joining up public services – for example the council, the police, fire and rescue, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) are now more closely integrated. The council manages the police's IT and asset management; something that would not have been possible as a two-tier authority.
 - Building a far stronger relationship with communities and helping to carve out a Wiltshire-wide identity.
 - Driving economic development. When Wiltshire consisted of four districts and a county there was no economic development policy – now there is a Wiltshire-wide approach to economic development, allowing the council and partners to

support the development of key industries such as high-tech industries, life sciences and medium size enterprises¹.

Case Study: Cornwall

Like Wiltshire, Cornwall Council was created on 1 April 2009. Before this, Cornwall was administered as a non-metropolitan county by Cornwall County Council with six districts - Caradon, Carrick, Kerrier, North Cornwall, Penwith, and Restormel (a borough). On 1st April these were abolished and replaced by Cornwall Council.

The campaign for Cornish devolution began in 2000 with the founding of the Cornish Constitutional Convention, a cross-party, cross-sector association that campaigns for devolution to Cornwall. The campaign collected nearly 50,000 signatures, including those of the five Cornish Liberal-Democrats MPs.

In 2007, Cornwall County Council predicted the new unitary authority would save taxpayers £17m a year. Subsequent estimations put this figure higher, at £24 million².

In 2009, Liberal Democrat MP Dan Rogerson introduced a bill in parliament seeking to take power from Whitehall and regional bodies and pass it to the new Cornwall Council, with the intention of transforming the new council into an assembly along the lines of National Assembly for Wales.

In November 2010, British Prime Minister David Cameron suggested in comments to the local press that his government would "devolve a lot of power to Cornwall - that will go to the Cornish unitary authority." In 2011, the then Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg said he would meet a cross party group, including the six Cornish MPs, to look at whether more powers could be devolved to Cornwall. The subsequent Localism Act 2011 was expected to achieve this but did not.

In July 2015 Cornwall became the first rural authority in England to agree a devolution deal, including transport, the public estate and the integration of health and social care.³ The Cities and Local Government Devolution Act will provide the legislative framework for the deal.

¹ Briefing paper for 'Local Government Structures: Learning from unitaries?' An RSA 2020 Public Services

² Chris Leslie MP, Labour's Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, in a speech to the Social Market Foundation 25 February 2014

³ <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news-room/media-releases/news-from-2015/news-from-july-2015/cornwall-becomes-first-rural-authority-in-england-to-agree-devolution-deal/?altTemplate=ie7Standard>

Appendix 2

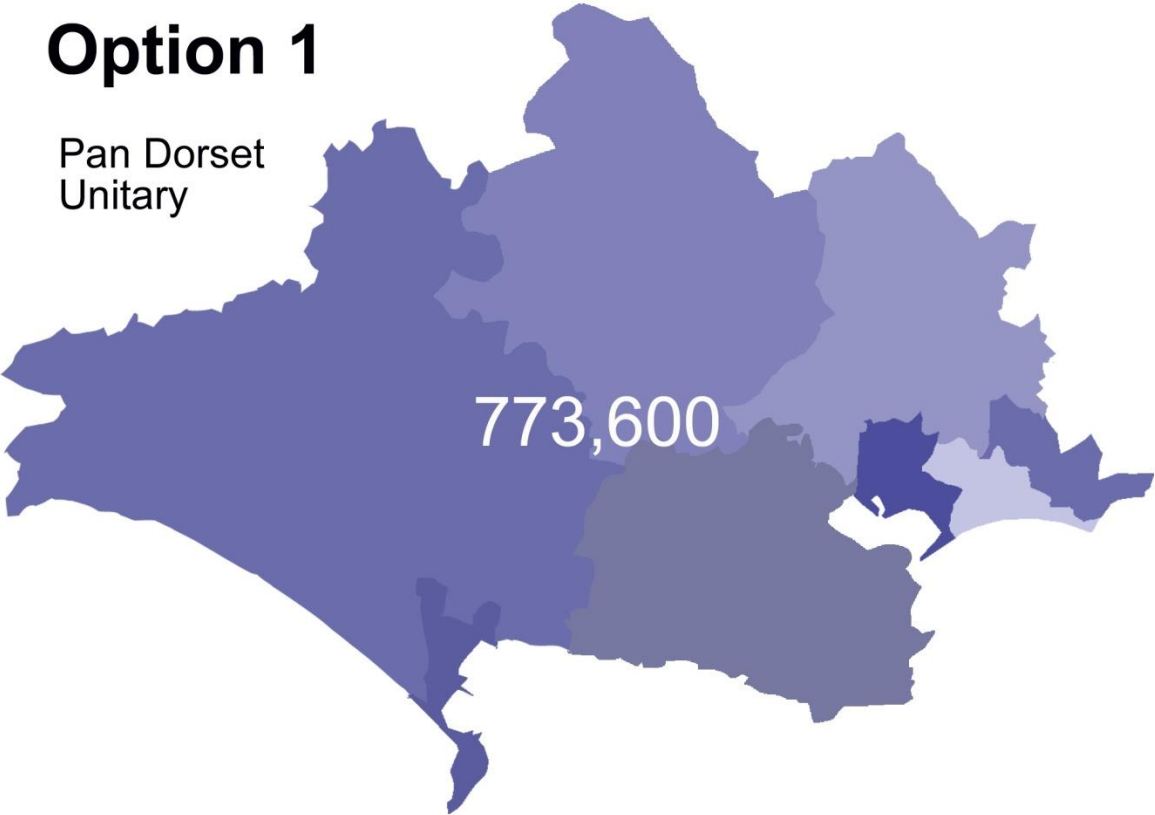
Population Estimates and Forecasts			
			<i>2017</i>
Bournemouth	Persons	All ages	196,800
Poole	Persons	All ages	153,900
Christchurch	Persons	All ages	50,000
East Dorset	Persons	All ages	89,300
North Dorset	Persons	All ages	70,700
Purbeck	Persons	All ages	46,200
West Dorset	Persons	All ages	101,400
Weymouth & Portland	Persons	All ages	65,200
BDP	Persons	All ages	773,600
DCC	Persons	All ages	422,900

Note: numbers have been rounded to the nearest 100 and may not sum because of this.

Source: 2014-based population projections, DCC

Option 1

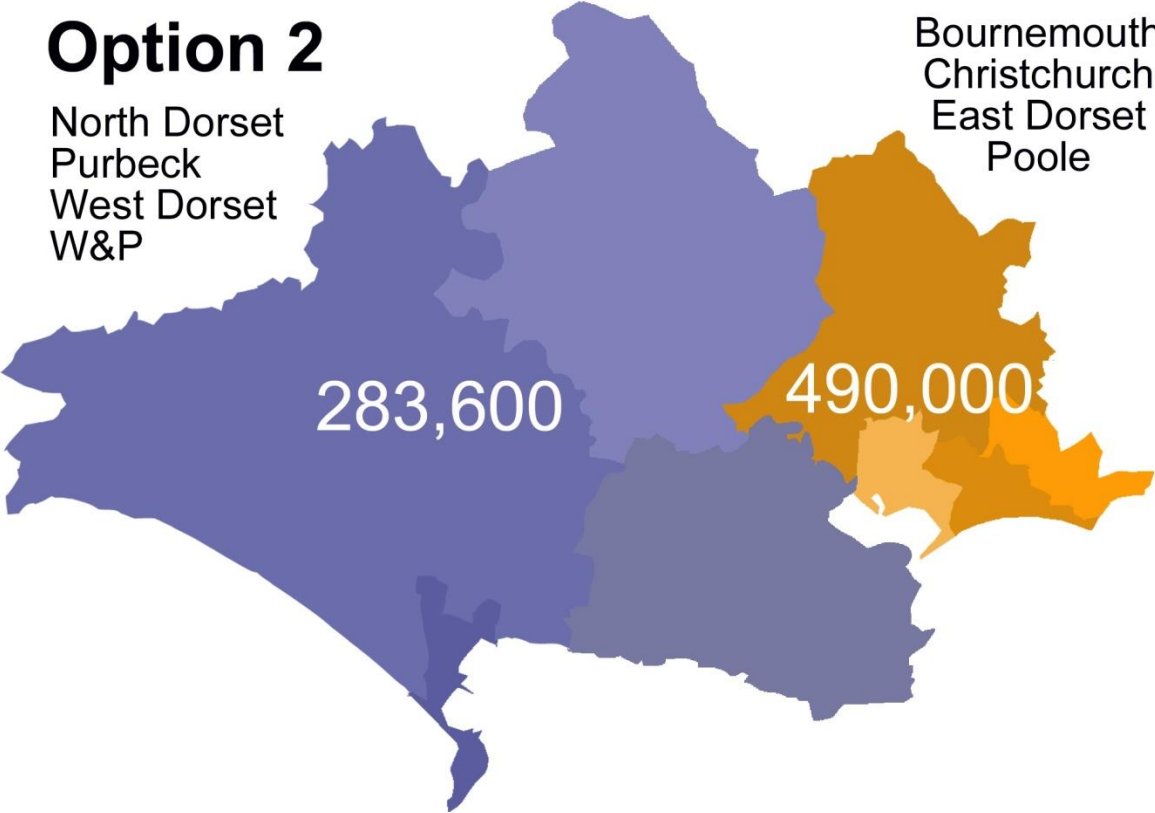
Pan Dorset
Unitary



Option 2

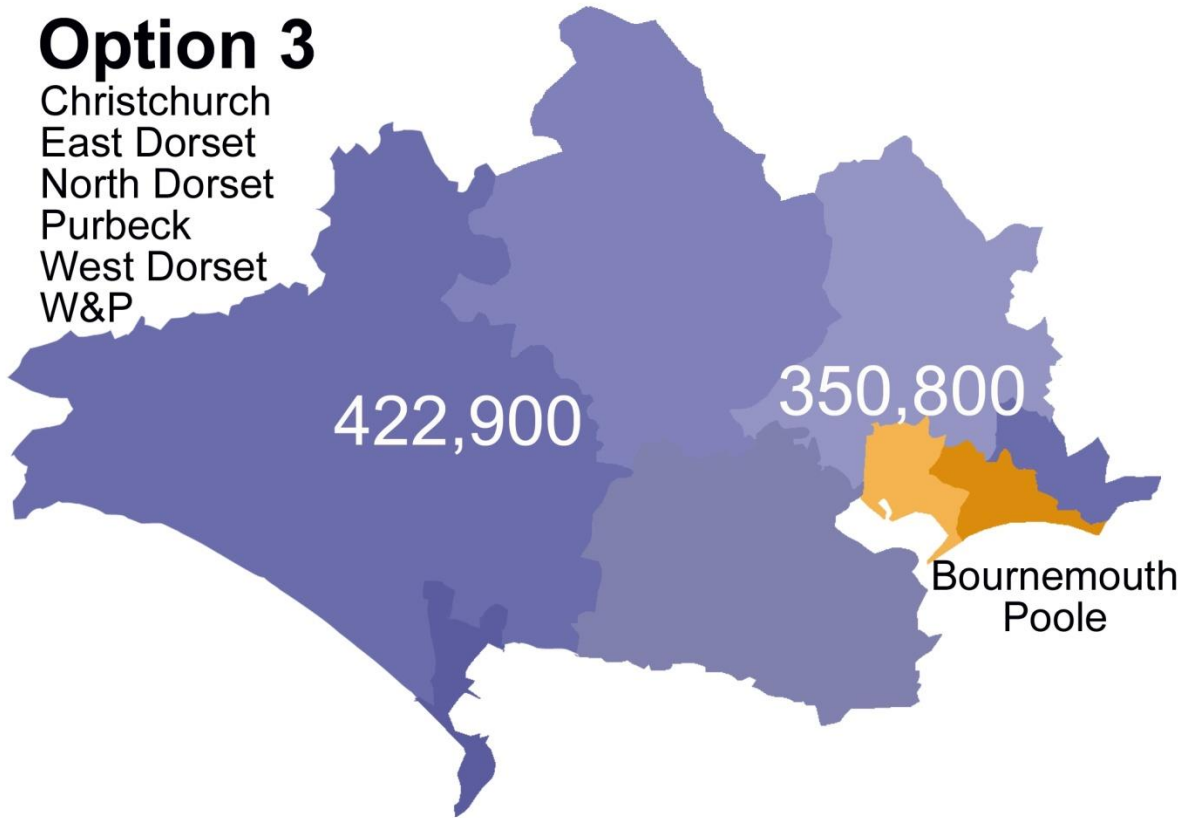
North Dorset
Purbeck
West Dorset
W&P

Bournemouth
Christchurch
East Dorset
Poole



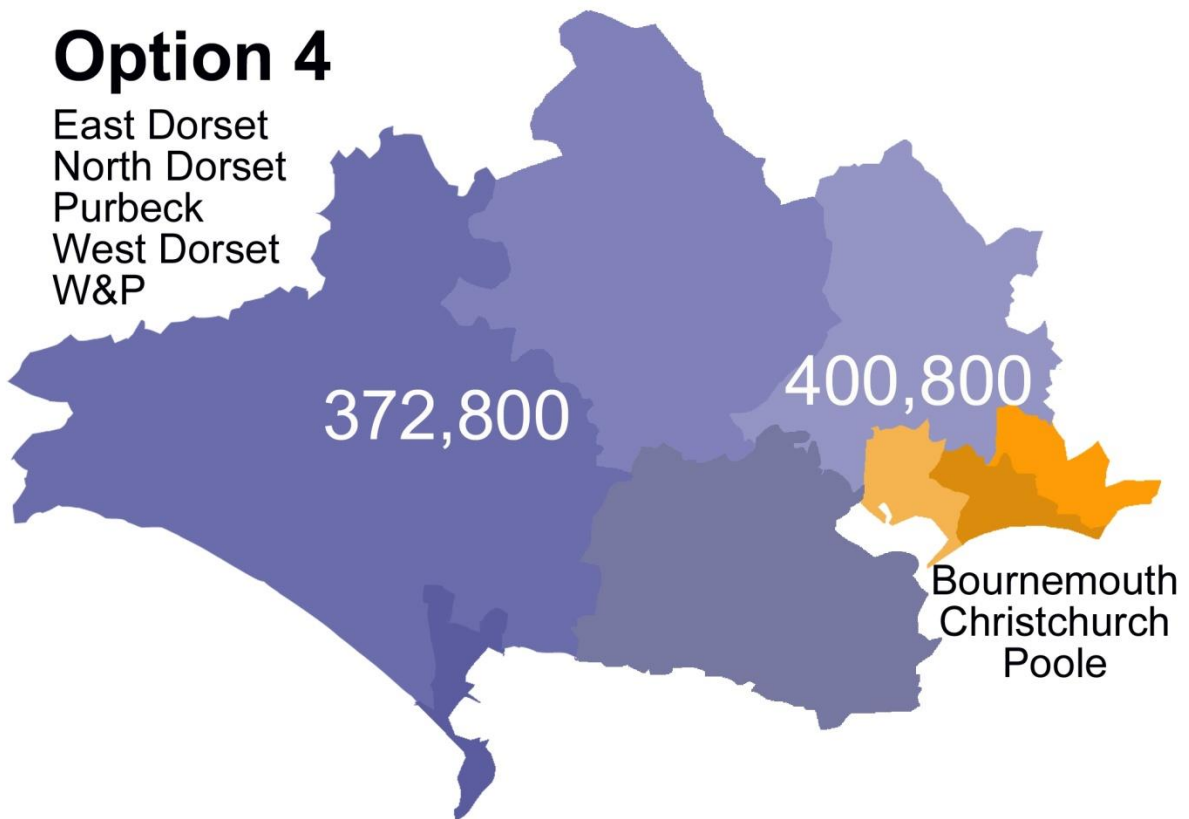
Option 3

Christchurch
East Dorset
North Dorset
Purbeck
West Dorset
W&P



Option 4

East Dorset
North Dorset
Purbeck
West Dorset
W&P



Option 5

Christchurch
North Dorset
Purbeck
West Dorset
W&P

Bournemouth
East Dorset
Poole

