

# County Council

## Dorset County Council



Date of Meeting	9 November 2017
Officer	Debbie Ward, Chief Executive
<b>Subject of Report</b>	Local Government Reorganisation in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole
Executive Summary	<p>In July 2017 the County Council agreed to participate in two new Joint Committees to progress the creation of the two new unitary councils proposed in the 'Future Dorset' submission for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).</p> <p>This report provides an update on the development of the Joint Committees and, as requested by County Council on 20 July 2017, appends the draft minutes of the meetings that have been held.</p> <p>The County Council initially confirmed that it was willing to discuss the future of Local Government across Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole at a special meeting on 10 March 2016. Since then the County Council has considered further reports to lead this process at its meetings on 21 April 2016, 21 July 2016 and 10 November 2016. This work was shaped by member-led groups, under the auspices of the cross-party Shaping Dorset's Future programme, and culminated in the County Council agreeing to support LGR, as set out in the Future Dorset proposal, on 27 January 2017. A formal proposal was submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government a few weeks later, in February 2017.</p> <p>At the time of writing, councils are still awaiting an announcement from the Secretary of State on the proposal. DCLG officials have advised that the announcement is possible in November, so a verbal update will be provided to Council as necessary.</p>
Impact Assessment:	Equalities Impact Assessment: An Equalities Impact Assessment was presented to Council on 20 July 2017 and can be found in the background papers.

	<p>Use of Evidence: This report has been written in light of verbal advice from DCLG officials and discussions with neighbouring councils.</p> <p>Budget: The Dorset Area Joint Committee agreed at its meeting on 13 October 2017 to allocate £250,000, split between partners, to resource the Dorset Area Programme. The draft minutes of this meeting are attached at Appendix 2.</p> <p>Risk Assessment: Having considered the risks associated with this decision using the County Council's approved risk management methodology, the level of risk has been identified as:</p> <p>Current Risk: HIGH Residual Risk HIGH</p> <p>The risks are identified as high to reflect the ongoing delay in an announcement from Government and the reduction in time available for alternative strategies should LGR not proceed.</p> <p>Other Implications: LGR has implications for every aspect of local authority services. Risks are being managed through a central risk register and will form part of the delivery of the workstreams as they develop.</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>That the County Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notes the development of the Dorset Area Joint Committee and the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Joint Committee;</li> <li>2. Receives the draft minutes of the Dorset Area Joint Committee meetings held on 20 September and 13 October 2017; and</li> <li>3. Receives the draft minutes of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole Joint Committee meeting held on 30 October 2017 (to follow)</li> </ol>
<p>Reason for Recommendation</p>	<p>To ensure local government services are sustainable and residents, businesses and communities are supported by optimum local government arrangements</p>
<p>Appendices</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1: Draft minutes of the Dorset Area Joint Committee meeting 20 September 2017</li> <li>2: Draft minutes of the Dorset Area Joint Committee meeting 13 October 2017</li> <li>3: Draft minutes of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole Joint Committee meeting 30 October 2017 (to follow)</li> </ol>

Background Papers	People & Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 26 June 2017 (Item 7)  Dorset County Council, 20 July 2017 (Item 11)
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## **1. Progress To-Date: The Dorset Area Joint Committee**

- 1.1 The Dorset Area Joint Committee has held two formal meetings, on 20 September and 13 October 2017. All the papers can be found at <https://dorsetareacouncils.wordpress.com/>. A full narrative of the meetings is not repeated here, but the draft minutes are attached at Appendixes 1 and 2.
- 1.2 The County Council is represented by six members on the Joint Committee – Cllr Bartlett, Cllr Haynes, Cllr Kayes, Cllr Knox, Cllr Pipe and Cllr Quayle. The Chairman is the Leader of the County Council and the Vice-Chairman is the Leader of West Dorset District Council, Cllr Anthony Alford.
- 1.3 In addition to the formal meetings, members of the Dorset Area Joint Committee have held two informal workshops, on 14 August and 20 September 2017, to develop relations amongst members and discuss potential joint working and collaboration between councils. Informal feedback from these meetings, which were facilitated by an independent consultant, is that they were positive and helpful and will inform the work of the Committee as it develops.
- 1.4 The formal meetings have covered a range of issues including:
  - Communication and engagement
  - Programme resourcing
  - Workplan
- 1.5 Details of the Committee's discussions are contained in the minutes but members may want to note that, at the meeting on 13 October, the Joint Committee agreed to create a shared budget of £250,000 for the recruitment of initial key posts to drive the work forward. Once appointed, these officers will lead the development of work with members to shape the new authority and areas of collaboration and joint working. The councils' Chief Financial Officers have been asked to agree a cost allocation model, based on previous partnership arrangements, which will identify the County Council's contribution to this cost.
- 1.6 The Dorset Area Joint Committee will meet again on 15 November and 13 December 2017.

## **2. The Bournemouth Christchurch Poole Joint Committee**

- 2.1 The Bournemouth Christchurch Poole Joint Committee had its first formal meeting on 30 October 2017. The papers for the Joint Committee can be found at <https://bcpjointcommittee.wordpress.com/>. As with the Dorset Area Joint Committee, an informal meeting was held on 5 October, which was well received.
- 2.2 The County Council is represented by two members – Cllr Croney and Cllr Jones - for the purposes of disaggregation only. The Chairman is Cllr Janet Walton, Leader of the Borough of Poole, and the Vice Chairmen are Cllr John Beesley, Leader of Bournemouth Borough Council, and Cllr David Flagg, Leader of Christchurch Borough Council.
- 2.3 At its first meeting the Joint Committee discussed a number of issues including:
  - Programme governance
  - An overview of the work programme
  - Council Tax Harmonisation principles

- Communications

2.4 The Bournemouth Christchurch Poole Joint Committee will meet again on 21 November and 15 December 2017.

### **3. The 'Minded' Announcement and Next Steps**

- 3.1 At the time of writing an announcement from Government on the Future Dorset proposal is still awaited. Government are legally obliged to respond, and officials have indicated that this is likely to happen before the end of 2017.
- 3.2 Representatives of the 'Future Dorset' councils have been in communication with MPs and the Secretary of State, and on 27 September the Leaders and Chief Executives of the six consenting councils attended a meeting with the Secretary of State to stress the need for an urgent announcement.
- 3.3 Once the initial 'minded' announcement is made, there is a minimum of a six week period for representations to be made to the Minister, either supporting or opposing his initial view. The first 'minded' announcement is followed by a final decision which, on this timeline, would be made in January 2018.
- 3.4 Once the final announcement has been made, the Structural Change Order will be laid before Parliament which creates the formal governance arrangements that will replace the Joint Committees. These will be an Implementation Executive in the Dorset area, and a Shadow Authority in the Bournemouth, Christchurch Poole area. Both joint committees have been established to reflect the likely composition of these new bodies to ensure a smooth transition. Once these new bodies are in place, they will replace the Joint Committees and provide the governance for the LGR programmes until the new councils are created on 1 April 2019.

### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 Members are asked to note the development of the Joint Committees and receive the draft minutes of the Committees' meetings.

Debbie Ward  
Chief Executive  
October 2017