



## County Council

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester,  
DT1 1XJ on Thursday, 9 November 2017.

**Present:**

Hilary Cox (Chairman)

Andrew Parry (Vice-Chairman)

Jon Andrews, Shane Bartlett, Derek Beer, Cherry Brooks, Kevin Brookes, Steve Butler, Andy Canning, Andrew Cattaway, Keith Day, Lesley Dedman, Janet Dover, Jean Dunseith, Beryl Ezzard, Tony Ferrari, Spencer Flower, Katharine Garcia, Peter Hall, David Harris, Jill Haynes, Nick Ireland, Colin Jamieson, Susan Jefferies, Ros Kayes, Rebecca Knox, Jon Orrell, Mary Penfold, Bill Pipe, Byron Quayle, David Shortell, Clare Sutton, William Trite, Daryl Turner, Peter Wharf and Kate Wheller.

Officers Attending: Debbie Ward (Chief Executive), Helen Coombes (Transformation Programme Lead for the Adult and Community Forward Together Programme), Mike Harries (Corporate Director for Environment and Economy), Nick Jarman (Interim Director - Children's Services), Jonathan Mair (Head of Organisational Development - Monitoring Officer), Lee Gallagher (Democratic Services Manager) and David Northover (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

(Note: These minutes have been prepared by officers as a record of the meeting and of any decisions reached. They are to be considered and confirmed at the next meeting of the County Council to be held on **Thursday, 22 February 2018.**)

**Apologies for Absence**

54 Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Pauline Batstone, Richard Biggs, Ray Bryan, Graham Carr-Jones, Toni Coombs, Deborah Croney, Steven Lugg and David Walsh.

**Code of Conduct**

55 There were no declarations by members of disclosable pecuniary interests under the Code of Conduct.

**Minutes**

56 The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2017 were confirmed and signed, subject to the addition of Cllr Colin Jamieson's apologies for the meeting.

**Public Participation**

57 Public Speaking

There were no public questions received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(1).

There were no public statements received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(2).

Petitions

The Council considered a report by the Dorset Travel Service Manager on a petition to 'Maintain the Saturday bus service from Yeovil to Bridport' in accordance with the County Council's Petitions Scheme. The report explained what the petition was asking for, why it was considered necessary to maintain the service and what options there were for dealing with the petition.

Ms Emmett, as the lead petitioner, addressed the meeting to explain that in her view the decision made to change the no.40 service, including the removal of the Saturday service, did not include adequate consultation with users. Although efforts were being looked at by the Council and Beaminster Town Council to try to solve this issue no solution had been found. She felt that the whole situation had been mismanaged, had a detrimental effect on people's lives, a negative impact on the economy through trading, removed the ability to attend doctor and hospital appointments, and increased rural isolation for the elderly and vulnerable. Despite the media portraying messages from officers which identified the route as a part of the strategically important part of the inter-urban network there was still no replacement for the service.

Support was expressed regarding the use of the Saturday No.40 service as this could be used as a pilot community transport scheme with support from the Council, in partnership with the Beaminster and Bridport Town Councils. Cllr Kayes, as the local member for Bridport, proposed that the Council consider, with Beaminster and Bridport Town Councils, to include the route in a self-financing community transport scheme with initial funding which would be reimbursed to the Council when the service was running. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Keith Day.

An alternative proposal was suggested by Cllr Turner as the Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment which would see the issue included in a planned Integrated Transport Scrutiny Inquiry Day on 26 February 2018, and to discuss the options raised regarding funding, licencing and vehicle availability, in addition to working closely with groups to develop a community offering. Cllr Kayes expressed concern regarding the urgency to address this issue as soon as possible. On being assured that efforts would be taken to find a solution as a priority, Cllr Kayes withdrew her proposal and seconded Cllr Turners alternative proposal.

As the local member, Cllr Knox acknowledged the situation and called for all parties to get together to address the issues raised to find a solution, and was also concerned about the weekday service. She explained that there was only one subsidised Saturday service remaining in Dorset which would be coming to an end shortly. 96% of routes were now provided through community schemes with an overall aim to reach 100%. Further work was also taking place locally with the Clinical Commissioning Group regarding access to health services, and a closer relationship was needed between Bridport Town Council and the GP practices. Cllr Knox welcomed being part of the discussions as soon as possible to reach a solution.

In addition to the No.40 service, other members expressed the need for the Integrated Transport Inquiry Day to address public transport concerns with other local services and rural isolation. There was a need to publicise the Inquiry Day widely with members to ensure full participation.

### **Resolved**

1. That the issue of Bus subsidies on Saturday Services will be included in the discussions at the Transport Inquiry day on 26 February 2018.
2. That the Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment, together with the local members for Bridport and Beaminster area meet with the Service Director – Economy, responsible for Transport, to discuss the proposals put forward by Councillor Kayes and potential collaboration with Bridport Town Council for a Saturday Service. Meeting to consider funding, licensing and vehicle availability and assess whether the proposal is a viable financial and sustainable option. To be arranged as soon as practicable.

### **Reason for Decision**

In order to comply with the County Council's published scheme for responding to petitions and so as to enable local people to connect with local elected decision makers.

### **Chairman's Announcements**

58 The Chairman reported the deaths of two serving officers since the last meeting. David Wilson was the Council's Data Protection Officer and Hannah Richardson worked in the Pension team. Councillors agreed to send condolences to both families.

The Chairman reported civic events attended by herself and the Vice-Chairman since the last meeting, which included many civic days held by district, borough and town councils; Dorset's Best Kept Village Competition; the High Sheriff's Legal Service, the first concert of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's winter season; the Dorset Association of Town and Parish Councils Annual General Meeting, and the Awards for the Combined Cadets Force.

The Chairman also asked members to share posters in relation to the role of the foster carers that had been sent to them to encourage new foster carers to come forward.

Note: At this point the Chairman adjourned the meeting to enable all County Councillors to attend a Remembrance Day Service at County Hall. The meeting restarted immediately after the service.

### **Leader's Announcements**

59 The Leader of the Council reported on the following issues facing the Council, and invited questions from all members:

#### Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, had now announced that he was minded to support the Future Dorset proposal to replace Dorset's nine councils with two new unitary authorities. Although there had been a lengthy wait for the announcement to be made, the County Council and its partners could now make significant progress in ensuring that this was as successful as it could be and that it brought the anticipated benefits to the residents of Dorset. Progress on LGR would be communicated widely with regular updates for members.

Whilst there would be some uncertainty until a final decision was made, measures were in place to ensure the continued effective delivery of services and for the County Council to be as adaptable and responsive as possible. The Leader was confident that this would be achieved as it was in Dorset's interests that this was successful to meet the challenges and benefit from the opportunities which lay ahead.

Dorset Community Action and the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Council's had expressed commitment to Future Dorset and wanted to be integral to what was being delivered. They welcomed the opportunity for closer working arrangements with the new Council so that greater community based services could be established. It was anticipated that the new Council would be able to help facilitate and enable this. The Clinical Commissioning Group also wanted to be able to help improve outcomes for health and wellbeing in partnership with the new Council.

#### The LiveWell Programme

LiveWell was now being successfully implemented across Dorset. A series of roadshows demonstrating healthy outcomes and signposting people to help were being held. The benefits it brought had been well received. The Leader thanked the Cabinet Member for Health and Care and Public Health staff for what had been done to ensure LiveWell was successful.

#### Cabinet Member for Workforce

Cllr Peter Wharf was welcomed to the Cabinet with the portfolio for Workforce. Having a Cabinet Member for Workforce was seen to be an important and significant

step towards ensuring that the Council had the means to be able to continue to deliver services and in a way that met community needs.

### **Local Government Reorganisation in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole**

60 In considering the future of Local Government in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole, an overview of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government's 'minded to' announcement was provided by the Chief Executive, in addition to a summary of the work of the two joint committees which had been established to consider closer working between Dorset councils. However, clarification that the joint committees were not 'implementation committees' would be made to the Secretary of State. The letter and statement is attached to these minutes as an annexure.

The final decision would be made by the Secretary of State in January 2018, following consultation and the opportunity for further representations, alterations or alternative proposals to be made. The Secretary of State wished to see clear evidence that every effort had been made between all councils and communities to reach a consensus on the benefits of Future Dorset. The Chief Executive confirmed that there was every intention to do this and was confident that this could be achieved.

How the two joint committees would oversee the unitary process and the part they would play in the establishment of the two new unitary authorities was explained. The joint committees would be succeeded by either an implementation executive or a shadow arrangement and would be responsible decision making bodies for the lead up to the new authorities in 2019. Funding had been allocated to support this process. Information about the committees and their work programmes was publicly available.

Existing Councils were still obliged to ensure the delivery of their services throughout the process and that statutory commitments were met. The County Council had measures, resources and funding in place to ensure continued effective delivery of services.

How Parish and Town Councils could play a practical part in the way future local government functioned was given consideration. It was necessary to know what they would be able to do as part of any new arrangements and the timescales for any changes. A governance structure and workstreams were being developed to address this and would be considered by both joint committees at their respective meetings in December 2017. Members would be able to participate in helping to shape the workstreams.

#### Resolved

1. That the development of the Dorset Area Joint Committee and the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Joint Committee be noted;
2. That the draft minutes of the Dorset Area Joint Committee meetings held on 20 September and 13 October 2017 be received; and
3. That the draft minutes of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole Joint Committee meeting held on 30 October 2017 be received.

#### Reason for Decision

To ensure local government services were sustainable and residents, businesses and communities were supported by optimum local government.

### **Questions from County Councillors**

61 The following questions were asked under Standing Order 20:

1. Cllr Jon Andrews asked the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Community and Resources a question in relation to Central Government Funding.
2. Cllr Susan Jefferies asked the Cabinet Member for Economy, Education, Learning

and Skills a question in relation to the Youth Service.

3. Cllr Susan Jefferies asked the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Economy, Education, Learning and Skills a question in relation to the Children's Transport Appeals process.

The questions and answers are attached to these minutes as Annexure 1.

### **Meeting on 19 July 2017**

#### 62 Minute 90(b): Executive Advisory Panel on Pathways to Independence - 23 June 2017

Clarification of the working arrangements for Executive Advisory Panels was sought, particularly in relation to the need to ensure that the work of all panels was coordinated and shared with the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to help with monitoring of policy development and scrutiny. The transparency of the work of the panels was acknowledged and information would be made more widely available, although outcomes from meetings were routinely reported to the Cabinet. However, it was recognised that it was also important to see what the panels were planning to consider at an early stage.

#### Minute 90(a): Dorset Health and Wellbeing Board - 21 June 2017

Interest in the formation of locally based Health and Wellbeing Boards, and how members could get involved with them, was raised. They had been developed to include partners from councils and health, and were managed by district council representatives of the Health and Wellbeing Board. The boards had been formed very recently and were being developed, with some working well and others not fully operational yet. Work was ongoing to identify the locality leads who needed to be involved in them. In addition it was recognised that the GP localities were the operating boundaries for the boards, and that these would become the building blocks for wider work on Local Government Reorganisation and Prevention at Scale. A full briefing note would be prepared and shared with members in January 2018.

#### Minute 97: Integrated Prevention and Support Service

Concerns were expressed about the budgetary impact of saving £782k in a review of the Partnership of Older People Programme (POPPs) to inform the development of the Integrated Prevention and Support (IPS) Service. Although complex in nature, the review was explained and that work continued with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG who funded 50% of POPPs). A briefing would be held in due course on the progress of the review, and the Cabinet Member offered to discuss the review with any members outside of meeting.

A specific request was made to include addiction recovery services, in addition to Mental Health recovery services, as part of the development of the IPS. The Cabinet Member confirmed that this would happen as the two areas were very closely linked.

#### **Resolved**

That the report of the meeting held on 19 July 2017 be adopted.

### **Meeting on 6 September 2017**

#### 63 Minute 104: Tricuro Executive Shareholder Group - 27 June 2017

The monitoring of Tricuro through the People and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee was raised as this had not happened following the change of scrutiny arrangements when the Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee used to undertake the monitoring role. The Cabinet Member confirmed that this had slightly slipped and was happy to ask for monitoring to feature at the next meeting of the Committee.

#### **Resolved**

That the report of the meeting held on 6 September 2017 be adopted and recommendation 109 be approved.

Recommendation 81 - Youth Justice Plan 2017-18  
*That the Youth Justice Plan 2017-18 be approved.*

Reason for Decision

*The draft Youth Justice Plan was approved by the Youth Offending Service (YOS) Management Board. The Plan reviewed achievements in the previous year, detailed the structure, governance and resources of the YOS, and set out the priorities for 2017-18.*

**Meeting on 27 September 2017**

64 Minute 123 - Residential Homes - Children's Services

The implications of recent developments regarding residential care homes for children, bearing in mind recent Ofsted inspections, were raised. A particular question was asked about the future of Maumbury House in Dorchester and the Cherries in Weymouth. A briefing outside of the meeting was offered by the Leader of the Council.

Following concerns raised regarding residential care homes, a request was made for assurance from the Cabinet Member for Safeguarding that homes would be visited and assessed, with the outcomes being reported back to the Corporate Parenting Board and Cabinet as necessary. It was confirmed that information would be reported to either body as needed. The Director for Children's Services also gave assurance that a review was underway and an urgent decision would be needed about Maumbury House shortly.

Views regarding the use of Council buildings were expressed, including the need for a clear service plan for Children's Services' building needs for the future. The link between the Council's management of assets and the One Public Estate were explained as there was a need to have a holistic approach with public sector partners, which included areas such as provision of key worker housing. There was also recognition of a need to have a joint discussion based on evidence, business cases and finances available locally and from Government. The approach needed to look ahead and plan for need, and for decisions to be based on evidence in a planned way. Some of the work may involve consideration by the Executive Advisory Panel on Forward Together for Children's Services. Members were also encouraged to share any ideas and suggestions with Cabinet members.

Minute 81: Fostering Modernisation Plan

Additional investment in the fostering service, and its relationship with the wider budget position in Children's Services including an increase in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) funding, was raised as a concern. A request was made for the Audit and Governance Committee to consider the budget position to provide assurance regarding decisions. A summary of the budget position for fostering was provided including the steps to modernise the service. The Cabinet Member offered to discuss the matter with members outside of the meeting.

A further concern was raised that the Fostering Panel had not been consulted on any changes that were being made to the service although it had expressed concerns with officers for over two years. The report had now been circulated to the panel. The Cabinet Member apologised that the Panel had not been consulted. Further efforts would be made to keep the Panel and the Corporate Parenting Board well informed.

**Resolved**

That the report of the meeting held on 27 September 2017 be adopted.

### Meeting on 18 October 2017

#### 65 Minute 129(a): Executive Advisory Panel (EAP) on Forward Together for Children's Services - 5 September 2017

In respect of a decision made on Transforming Youth Services in Dorset, a number of views were expressed about how youth centres could access the 'start up' contribution for youth centres of £1000. The Cabinet Member confirmed that the money would have 'no strings attached' and information about how to access the funding would be made available to all centres. The Cabinet member undertook to follow up the arrangements outside of the meeting.

Further questions were asked about the £200k transformation fund available to youth centres, linked with crowd funding. The Cabinet Member confirmed that the work required to use crowd funding and maximise access to the fund was underestimated, and that the funding would be spent on centres in the 2017/18 financial year.

However, it was explained that the transformation fund was only available for the rest of the year and for 2018/19. Members of the EAP were concerned about the access to funding as it was explained at the meeting on 5 September that the £1k for youth centres would be funded from transformation fund savings in the previous year, and that the transformation fund for 2017/18 would remain at £200k. The Cabinet Member explained that this was not the case and undertook to respond to members and clarify outside of the meeting.

#### **Resolved**

That the report of the meeting held on 18 October 2017 be adopted.

### People and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Meeting held on 11 October 2017

#### 66 The Vice-Chairman of the Committee introduced the minutes of the meeting and sought their adoption.

Clarification was provided over the commitment to hold an Inquiry Day about the delivery of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and how this would be addressed. The Leader confirmed that the opportunity to address this, including looking at the budgetary situation, would be done by the most appropriate means and all members could to contribute towards this.

How housing was addressing the issue of homelessness was seen to be an important issue and it was clarified that District Councils had the primary responsibility for this.

#### **Resolved**

That the report be adopted.

### Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Meeting held on 12 October 2017

#### 67 The Vice-Chairman of the Committee introduced the minutes of the meeting and moved their adoption.

#### **Resolved**

That the report be adopted.

### Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Meeting held on 16 October 2017

#### 68 The Vice-Chairman of the Committee introduced the minutes of the meeting and moved their adoption.

The opportunity was taken for issues to be added to the Work Programme with the Western Growth Corridor being suggested as an item for future consideration. It was asked that member involvement in this should be widened. The Leader considered that the membership of the Western Growth Board was already sufficient to cover all

that it needed to, but asked that members let her know if concerns remained.

**Resolved**

That the report be adopted.

**Dorset Health Scrutiny Committee - Meeting held on 4 September 2017**

69 Cllr Ros Kayes introduced the minutes of the meeting.

As part of wider changes to health provision across Dorset, a specific question was raised regarding transport to hospitals, and any proposed expansion to the Accident and Emergency Provision at Dorset County Hospital in addition to what was planned for Royal Bournemouth Hospital. This was in relation to increased traffic issues around the Bournemouth area and people going to Dorchester as an alternative. It was agreed that the question would be raised with the Chairman of the Dorset Health Scrutiny Committee, to be raised at the meeting on Monday 13 November 2017.

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting be received.

**Appointments to Committees**

70 The following changes to appointments to committees were reported at the meeting:

- Cllr Peter Wharf to replace Cllr Andrew Parry on the Staffing Committee.
- Cllr Byron Quayle to withdraw from the Regulatory Committee (pending a review of the size of the Committee).

**Resolved**

That the changes to appointments be approved.

**Annexure 1**

71

Meeting Duration: 10.00 am - 12.45 pm





## Department for Communities and Local Government

Debbie Ward  
Chief Executive  
Dorset County Council,  
County Hall, Colliton Park,  
Dorchester DT1 1XJ

7 November 2017

*Dear Debbie,*

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN DORSET**

I am writing to let you know that the Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, has announced that he is minded to implement, subject to Parliamentary approval, the proposal for restructuring local government in Dorset, which your and five other Dorset councils submitted to him on 9 February 2017. Please find enclosed a copy of the Written Ministerial Statement which the Secretary of State made today.

As you can see from that statement, he has carefully considered the proposal and the representations made to him. Based on all the information and material currently available to him, he has reached an initial view that the proposal, if implemented, is likely to improve the area's local government, that it commands a good deal of local support, and that the area of each of the proposed new unitary authorities is a credible geography.

There is now a period until 8 January 2018 during which those interested may make representations to the Secretary of State. These representations can include suggested modifications to the proposal, and it is also open for any council in the area to come forward with an alternative proposal.

Moreover, during this period the Secretary of State has said that further steps should be taken to secure local consent, and he hopes that his announcement will facilitate the necessary discussions to conclude this.

Once this period of representations has ended, the Secretary of State will carefully consider all the material and representations available to him and reach a final decision as to how to proceed.

I understand that all the nine Dorset councils are working together in Joint Implementation Committees – your council participating in the Implementation Committees for both the proposed Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole unitary and for the proposed rural unitary. The Secretary of State’s announcement that he is minded to implement, subject to Parliament’s approval, the proposal submitted means that my team will now be looking to engage with your councils’ teams supporting the Implementation Committees. This is to help prepare us for drafting the legislation that would be necessary if the final decision is to implement the proposal submitted.

As indicated previously, once a final decision on the unitary proposal is made, the Secretary of State also intends to decide whether to implement, subject to Parliamentary approval, the Dorset councils’ proposal for a Dorset Combined Authority.

The Secretary of State has written to the leaders of all Dorset councils to inform them of his initial decision, the chair of the Dorset LEP and the Lord Lieutenant.

Yours sincerely,



**P ROWSELL**

# House of Commons: Written Statement (HCWS232)

## Department for Communities and Local Government

Written Statement made by: **Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Sajid Javid)** on 07 Nov 2017.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT IMPROVEMENT

#### Local government in Dorset

I am announcing today that, having carefully considered all the material and representations I have received, I am 'minded to' implement the locally-led proposal for improving local government in Dorset. This was submitted to me in February 2017. In the Dorset area, there are currently two small unitary councils (created in the 1990s) of Bournemouth and of Poole. They are surrounded by a two-tier structure of Dorset County Council and the district councils of Christchurch, East Dorset, North Dorset, Purbeck, West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland.

I am satisfied on the basis of the information currently available to me that this proposal if implemented is likely to improve local government across the area, establishing two new councils with a credible geography, and which would command local support. The existing nine councils will be replaced by a single council for the areas of Bournemouth, Poole, and that part of the county of Dorset currently comprising the Borough of Christchurch, and by a single council for the remainder of the current county area.

I understand that all the councils in the area are already working together in joint implementation committees. However, further steps are needed to secure local consent, and I hope this announcement will facilitate the necessary discussions to conclude this.

Before I take my final decision, there is now a period until 8 January 2018 during which those interested may make further representations to me, including that if the proposal is implemented it is with suggested modifications. It is also open to any council in the area to come forward with an alternative proposal. The final decision would also be subject to Parliamentary approval.

Once I have made my final decision on the Dorset proposal, I will also decide whether to implement, subject to Parliamentary approval, Dorset councils' proposal for a combined authority to facilitate collaboration on certain matters between whatever councils are to be in place in Dorset.

#### Local government in Suffolk

I am also announcing today that having carefully considered all the material and representations I have received, I am 'minded to' implement the locally-led proposal I received from Suffolk Coastal and Waveney district councils in February 2017 to merge their two respective councils to become a single, new district council.

I have reached this decision on the basis that I consider:

the proposal is likely to improve local government in the area (by improving service delivery, giving greater value for money, yielding cost savings, providing stronger strategic and local leadership, and/or delivering more sustainable structures);

the proposal commands local support, in particular that the merger is proposed by all councils which are to be merged and there is evidence of a good deal of local support; and

the proposed merged area is a credible geography, consisting of two or more existing local government areas that are adjacent, and which, if established, would not pose an obstacle to locally-led proposals for authorities to combine to serve their communities better and would facilitate joint working between local authorities.

I intend to assess any further locally-led merger proposals that I receive against these criteria.

Before I take my final decision on this proposed merger there is now a period until 8 January 2018 during which those interested may make further representations to me, including that if the proposal is implemented it is with suggested modifications. The final decision would also be subject to Parliamentary approval.

## House of Commons: Written Statement (HCWS232)

Department for Communities and Local Government

Written Statement made by: **Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Sajid Javid)** on 07 Nov 2017.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT IMPROVEMENT

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I am satisfied on the basis of the information currently available to me that this proposal if implemented is likely to improve local government across the area, establishing two new councils with a credible geography, and which would command local support. The existing nine councils will be replaced by a single council for the areas of Bournemouth, Poole, and that part of the county of Dorset currently comprising the Borough of Christchurch, and by a single council for the remainder of the current county area.

I understand that all the councils in the area are already working together in joint implementation committees. However, further steps are needed to secure local consent, and I hope this announcement will facilitate the necessary discussions to conclude this.

Before I take my final decision, there is now a period until 8 January 2018 during which those interested may make further representations to me, including that if the proposal is implemented it is with suggested modifications. It is also open to any council in the area to come forward with an alternative proposal. The final decision would also be subject to Parliamentary approval.

Once I have made my final decision on the Dorset proposal, I will also decide whether to implement, subject to Parliamentary approval, Dorset councils' proposal for a combined authority to facilitate collaboration on certain matters between whatever councils are to be in place in Dorset.

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the proposed merged area is a credible geography, consisting of two or more existing local government areas that are adjacent, and which, if established, would not pose an obstacle to locally-led proposals for authorities to combine to serve their communities better and would facilitate joint working between local authorities.

I intend to assess any further locally-led merger proposals that I receive against these criteria.

Before I take my final decision on this proposed merger there is now a period until 8 January 2018 during which those interested may make further representations to me, including that if the proposal is implemented it is with suggested modifications. The final decision would also be subject to Parliamentary approval.

County Council – 9 November 2017

## Questions from County Councillors

### **Questions from Cllr Jon Andrews to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Community and Resources in relation to Central Government Funding**

#### Question

What representation has our new cabinet made in pressuring our Dorset MPs to get the Treasury to look at the unfair central government funding formula.

This formula is having a severe impact on DCC's ability to provide statutory services let alone the non-statutory services that our residents expect. An £11.5 million cut in 2018/2019 is not sustainable. The average shire county gets an additional £70 per person more than us and we have to bear in mind that we keep the average down.

Has the Dorset shortfall been brought up with MPs and if so when? What action has been decided?

Will the Leader commit to sending a delegation to Westminster to lobby for change both to the new funding formula and the Dorset shortfall and to ensuring that all political parties are involved?

#### Answer

I believe this question arose from Councillor briefing where Cllr Andrews talked about contacting our MPs about the inappropriate way Dorset is financed by central government. Not being one for tilting at windmills we took that comment away and looked what might be a reasonable change in Government policy. We considered other options but the route that appears achievable for central government to fund, but substantial in its impact on us, is changing the Revenue Support Grant calculation only in that the RSG cannot go negative. That seems a sensible principled position, grants should not be taking something away from you. To put this in context this affects a relatively small number of councils, but those who are affected are badly affected. In 18/19 seven councils, of which we are one, will have 46% of all the negative grants in the country.

We are in the process of exploring the possibilities of how to take forwards this with our MPs. We will, of course, work with our MPs to obtain the best outcome for Dorset and if sending a delegation is the best way to achieve that, a delegation is what we will send.

We will update councillors as the position evolves.

**Question from Cllr Susan Jefferies to the Cabinet Member for Economy, Education, Learning and Skills in relation to the Youth Service**

Questions

1. Is it true that less than 2 years after the last reorganization of the Youth Service, which saw all the Youth Clubs closing and the majority of Youth Workers lost, that more consultation and reductions are planned? That newly created DCC Family Zones are to be reviewed and Youth Worker posts to go?
2. How is this going to leave our Young People, particularly when they have to wait for an appointment with the CAMHS service for too long?
3. Has an Equality Impact Assessment been done? Does this chime with the pledge to increase Early Intervention?

Answers

1. Since September 2016, the targeted youth service have worked with 565 vulnerable children, and the current review of family partnership zones is an exercise which seeks to simplify, strengthen and consolidate the management structure and create a flexible and multi-skilled workforce which can deliver a comprehensive early help offer.  
  
No youth work posts will be lost as a result of this process and the targeted youth offer will not change where it is required. In addition, youth workers will be included as part of Reinvigorating Social Work.
2. A targeted youth service was created as part of our family partnership zones which delivers evidence based group and individual based work and interventions to young people who have been proactively identified as having the potential to benefit from an early help offer. This includes support around health and wellbeing. CAMHS is an NHS service, and I understand that waiting times have been improving and new referral guidance has been produced that is helping in this matter.
3. As with all consultation an Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken. The arrangements that are proposed in the consultation are to strengthen both the management and frontline delivery of family workers in order that we can work with more families in need of early intervention. Family Partnership Zones are Children's services approach to making an offer to families where needs have been identified through a range of indicators. Our commitment to early intervention and prevention remains, as it always has, as our preferred delivery option.



**Question from Cllr Susan Jefferies to the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Economy, Education, Learning and Skills in relation to the Children's Transport Appeals process**

Questions

I understand from the Children's Transport Appeals process that the County Council is now using a new GIS system to more accurately calculate distance from children's homes to schools. This system is apparently not available to the public, nor easy to use without training. This means it is not available to the general public, in particular to parents, when making decisions about applications for School admission. Does the Leader of the Council consider that this is transparent and fair to the Council Tax payers?

Answers

This is complex and this is not a new system.

Within the admissions team a GIS system that maps each individual property and school to a set point is used. We then use these fixed points to measure straight line distances. We have always had this type of system. They are referred to as Eastings and Northings. There has never been access to this system to the public. The measurements are consistent across all systems.

When parents apply they are given the straight-line distance from their home address to the various schools they may be considering. So parents at the point of application do have that information about which is their nearest school.

There are web applications that are open access where eastings and northings can be entered and measurements between two points can be made – they will generate the same results as our system.

It would be impossible to supply every family with the Easting and Northing that we hold for their property.

Training with Members who sit on transport appeal committee, to explain in detail how we use this system, will take place on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

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