

# Joint Public Health Board

## 3 February 2020

### Future of Public Health Dorset: Update

## For Decision

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr L Miller, Adult Social Care and Health, Dorset Council  
Cllr L Dedman, Adult Social Care and Health,  
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council

**Local Councillor(s):** All

**Executive Director:** Sam Crowe, Director of Public Health

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**Report Status:** Public

**Recommendation:** That the Joint Public Health Board considers the information in this report as an update on progress towards renewing the partnership agreement for the service.

**Reason for Recommendation:** To keep Board members updated on progress with renewing the partnership agreement for the public health shared service.

#### 1. **Executive Summary**

This report provides a brief update on progress with renewing the partnership agreement for Public Health Dorset. The Director of Public Health met with the Monitoring Officers for both Councils, and Section 151 Officer for Dorset Council to review the 2013 agreement. Given the current uncertainty over the future financing of public health and lack of information available in the 2019 Local Government Settlement at the time of writing, it was agreed to take a longer period to refresh the agreement, including the financial annex. This would provide more clarity as to how the agreement should operate between the two Councils. The agreement will be re-written for approval at the May 2020 Board.

**2. Financial Implications**

The partnership agreement between Dorset and BCP Councils covers the terms under which each Council pays a contribution from its Public Health Grant into the partnership. The combined total paid under this agreement in 2019/20 was £27.7m.

**3. Climate implications**

No direct implications.

**4. Other Implications**

N/A

**5. Risk Assessment**

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: LOW

Residual Risk: LOW

**6. Equalities Impact Assessment**

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not considered necessary for this agreement.

**7. Appendices**

None

**8. Background Papers**

None

**1 Introduction**

1.1 This report provides a brief update on progress with renewing the partnership agreement for providing the shared public health service to Dorset and BCP Councils.

1.2 The Shadow Executive Committees of both Councils supported a recommendation to continue the public health partnership (Public Health Dorset) for a minimum of 12 months in February 2019.

- 1.3 Members of the reformed Joint Public Health Board supported a recommendation in November 2019 to renew the partnership agreement, and approved a timeline for the process.

## **2 Current position**

- 2.1 The Director of Public Health met with the Monitoring officers for Dorset and BCP Councils in late December to review the partnership agreement first drawn up in 2013. The Section 151 officer for Dorset Council also joined the meeting to consider finance issues including the existing financial annex.
- 2.2 The meeting agreed in principle to begin the work to review and refresh the legal agreement between the Councils governing the shared service. Both Section 151 Officers will also be involved in reviewing the elements of the agreement relating to governance of the finances, as set out in the current financial appendix.
- 2.3 A business partner from legal and democratic services at Dorset Council is supporting the work, and is considering timescales and the sign off process for the revised agreement. A key consideration is whether the revised agreement would need to go via each Cabinet, for example.
- 2.4 It was agreed that there was not enough time for the necessary work to be undertaken in order for a revised partnership agreement to be considered by the February 2020 Board. For this reason, the new partnership agreement is being developed ready for approval at the May 2020 Joint Public Health Board

## **3 Next steps**

- 3.1 Allowing more time for the agreement to be developed will also ensure greater clarity over the financial support to the shared service, as the final local government settlement and implications for the Public Health Grant in future should be known in late January.

- 3.2 A key consideration is whether the Government plans to continue exploring alternative funding mechanisms to the public health Grant, including removal of the ring-fence and funding via retained business rates. Again, more detail on future intentions around how the Grant is paid to Councils is expected, which will be helpful in any revision of the agreement.

**Footnote:**

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.