

# **Extra Ordinary Management Committee**

## **17 January 2017**

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

#### **For Recommendation**

#### **Briefholder**

Jeff Cant: Leader of the Council

#### **Senior Leadership Team Contact:**

M Prosser, Chief Executive

**Report Author:** Matt Prosser

#### **Statutory Authority**

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and Section 15 of the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 To invite Members to agree to make a submission to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government requesting the restructuring of local government in Dorset along the lines set out in the recommendations below.

#### **Officer Recommendations**

- 2 To recommend the following to Council;

That this Council agrees:

- (a) That there has been a powerful public response acknowledging a compelling case to change local government structures in Dorset.
- (b) That a submission should be made to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government requesting that the existing nine county, district and unitary councils should be replaced by two new unitary councils.
- (c) That based upon the weight of public opinion and the financial and other analytical evidence the two new unitary councils should be based upon the following local authority boundaries;

Unitary A: Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, plus the services currently provided by Dorset County Council in this area.

Unitary B: East Dorset , North Dorset, Purbeck, West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland , plus the services currently provided by Dorset County Council in this area.

- (d) That the Chief Executive be authorised, after consultation with the Leader, the brief holder for Corporate Affairs and Continuous Improvement and Group Leaders to agree the wording of the submission to the Secretary of State demonstrating our ambition for public sector transformation and drawing on the evidence that has been presented to councils, to be made along with any other council that has agreed to support the same option for reorganisation.
- (e) That the Chief Executive be authorised, after consultation with the Leader, the brief holder for Corporate Affairs and Continuous Improvement and Group Leaders to work with other councils that support the same option for reorganisation to develop and implement appropriate plans and allocate appropriate resources to progress local government change in Dorset and that a report on next steps be presented in due course.”
- (f) That subject to agreement on recommendations a) to e) above the Chief Executive, in consultation with Group Leaders, is directed to bring forward to next Full Council plans for a community governance review to explore the formation of a Town Council for Weymouth.

## **Reason for Decision**

- 3. In order to respond to the future challenges facing local government.

## **Background and Reason Decision Needed**

- 4. This report invites Members to consider the recommendations above which relate to the formation of two new unitary councils in Dorset to replace the existing nine councils. Members are referred to the standard report attached at appendix 1, which sets out the evidence concerning these proposals and the reasoning both in relation to the principle of reorganisation and the option being recommended. The standard report has been agreed by all the chief executives for the councils in Dorset. The recommendations presented to Members above have been varied from those in the standard report only to reflect local choice on who should be consulted under recommendation (d) and (e), and to add recommendation (f), relating to the formation of a town council for Weymouth. This latter recommendation is discussed below.
- 5. Members received a report in September on the process to explore creating a town council for Weymouth. Members are asked to refer to that report. As explained in the report, creating a new town council can be undertaken by the Borough Council.
- 6. It has always been understood that Members would need to make a decision about proposals for a town council only in the event that a

decision was made to submit a proposal to the Secretary of State requesting local government reorganisation. Should such a decision be made by Members; officers will bring a report to the next full council, inviting the Council to commence a community governance review to consider the creation of a town council. That review would follow a statutory process involving public consultation; after which the Council could choose to make an order creating a new town council.

7. A community governance review has to be completed within 12 months of being started. If a decision were made to create a town council, the Council would then have to put in place the necessary governance and financial arrangements for the new organisation to come into existence on the same day as new unitary councils (1st April 2019).
8. A contingency reserve has been identified in the draft budget for the year 2017/18, to fund a community governance review, if required. As a new organisation, the town council would derive its first year's revenue funding from the new unitary council; with subsequent years' funding coming from commercial income and precept. The transfer of assets from the Borough to a new town council would be set out in the order setting up the town council.

## **Implications**

### **9. Corporate Plan**

This report engages all Corporate Plan priorities.

### **10. Financial**

The financial implications are set out in the text of the standard report.

### **11. Equalities**

An equalities impact needs assessment is attached to this report as appendix 2 and its implications for this decision and any subsequent decisions are referred to in the standard report.

### **12. Environmental**

No implications specifically arising from this report, although if a decision is made to proceed with local government reorganisation, subsequent decisions will have environmental implications.

### **13. Economic Development**

No implications specifically arising from this report, although if a decision is made to proceed with local government reorganisation, subsequent decisions will have economic development implications.

## 14. **Human Resources**

No implications specifically arising from this report, although if a decision is made to proceed with local government reorganisation, subsequent decisions will have staffing implications.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

A significant public consultation exercise has been carried out across Dorset, which is referenced extensively in the standard report. A summary of the consultation responses from residents in the Council's area is attached as appendix 3.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: The standard report entitled Options for the Future of Local Government in Poole, Bournemouth and Dorset.

Appendix 2: The Equalities Impact Needs Assessment, referenced in the standard report.

Appendix 3: Dorset Councils – Reshaping your Councils Consultation 2016 – Weymouth & Portland Key Results.

## **Background Papers**

The three full reports from Local Partnerships, Opinion Research Services and PWC, which are referenced by a link within the standard report.

## **Footnote**

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

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