

ACRA Informal Meeting with CBC Directorate 12th July 2013

CBC were represented by Cllr Ray Nottage, David McIntosh and Neil Farmer (David Barnes is on holiday)

ACRA were represented by Mike Collard (ACRA Chairman) and Jim Biggin (ACRA Secretary)

The Amalgamation of CBC and EDDC Administrations

This project remains on schedule and on budget with a strong understanding from staff at all levels.

The Approach by Purbeck District Council (PDC)

CBC confirmed that PDC had approached CBC-EDDC with a view to exploring their potential utilisation of the joint administration. Their head office is based in Wareham where 87 full time and 78 part time staff are employed. They have 24 Councillors (leader Gary Suttle, Conservative, Swanage South) comprising 13 Conservatives, 10 Liberal Democrats and 1 Independent. The CEO is Steve Mackenzie. Population is approximately 45,000.

CBC-EDDC will apply due diligence to this approach and a business case will be raised and debated by all involved parties.

The Potential Rationalisation of CBC and EDDC Head Offices

The project continues with no major hold-ups. The potential impact of Purbeck will be ignored at this stage to avoid a loss of time, money and momentum should their proposed amalgamation not come to fruition

Druitt Hall

CBC are still negotiating with the various involved parties

Navitus Bay

CBC is still preparing the local area impact analysis. This document may potentially be examined in the future by a public enquiry. This makes it imperative that the document is based upon fact rather than opinion, analysis and not emotion.

ACRA outlined the on-going activities of the large and active opposition lobby that has been generated by local Residents Associations, MPs and others but also drew attention to the residents who support the wind-farm as well as those who remain undecided. Jim Biggin undertook to pass examples of e-mails received from such residents to CBC

There remained agreement that only action in the back rooms of Whitehall could stop the plan.

Post-event Planning Applications

ACRA were concerned about some aspects of Planning procedures, in particular retrospective applications, of which there have recently been some high profile examples. CBC shared our dislike of post-event applications, but pointed out that the process, including appeal, was exactly the same post- or pre- development, so there was little deterrence. ACRA welcomed the activity of the

relatively new Enforcement Officer and trusted that he would be fully supported by the Council. CBC will pass on our approval.

ACRA Meeting With Dorset Councillor Robert Gould

ACRA agreed to press the case for local delivery of services

Likely Impact of Recently Announced Council Tax Freeze 2014-15 and 2015-16

Full details are not yet known. However the continued capping of this tax at below the level of inflation means that future income will continue to be out of line with expenses. This will provoke a search for further sources of income to prevent services from being cut.

The move away from the system under which Central Government simply doles out formulated sums of money continues. The system is moving to a more competitive environment wherein local government bids for funds available from a variety of sources. This should benefit the more entrepreneurial councils.

Local Nature Partnership (LNP)

Dorset, led by the Wildlife Trust, is making progress with the establishment of an LNP. The DEFRA requirement is for local authorities to: drive positive change in the local natural environment; contribute to achieving local and national environmental priorities; become local champions for the natural environment. An application for formal recognition as an LNP was submitted to DEFRA and has just recently been approved.

City Deal

Two projects were identified: the transport infrastructure that underpins Bournemouth International Airport; the transport infrastructure that underpins Poole Port. The Airport part of the bid addresses the B3073 from Blackwater to Parley Cross as well as the internal road system at the Airport and associated Industrial Estates.

The bid has been prepared and submitted and is being considered by Central Government with eventual approval not due before spring 2014.

Superfast Broadband

DCC have granted a contract for installation to BT.

It is being stressed that whilst the target is 97% coverage local councils will not abandon those that for whatever reason can't obtain access to digital facilities

ACRA undertook to remind residents to register an interest

Grass Verges

ACRA members have been expressing dissatisfaction over the state of roadside verges and some open spaces. CBC agrees that the DCC decision to reduce their frequency of mowing is not proving satisfactory, but that ACRA should not raise members' expectations too much. The Contract for this

year is set. Even with a new contract it would be expensive to move to a selective mowing regime from the current 'one size fits all' contract.

Jim Biggin

July 2013