

ACRA Informal Meeting with CBC-EDDC Directorate 2nd April 2014

CBC-EDDC were represented by David McIntosh, Neil Farmer and David Barnes

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

Budgets 2014-15 and 2015-16

Thanks to actions taken in previous years these budgets continue to be in reasonably good shape. The way in which the retention of business rates by Local Authorities will work is still not completely resolved.

The Amalgamation of CBC and EDDC Administrations

This project remains on schedule and on budget and continues to contribute cost savings as planned, which should eventually amount to £1.4 million. With continued reductions in Central Government funding this savings figure will continue to grow. The final service areas to be brought together are Leisure and Open Spaces and the HR departments.

The Potential Rationalisation of CBC and EDDC Head Offices

The project based upon using Wimborne as a hub continues although strictly still at the feasibility stage. The Trustees of The Allendale Centre are involved whilst some potential hub users have not yet fully committed. There is currently considerable interest in the potential sale of the Furzehill building.

City Deal

Central Government have amalgamated this project in with projects emanating from the Local Enterprise Partnerships. The work done was useful in establishing links with Bournemouth and Poole and may again be of value if and when a further bid for funds is mounted.

NHS Funding and Local Authorities

The Government's stated intention of bringing together certain aspects of healthcare – particularly those related to preventative services – and Local Authority responsibilities still remains little more than that and further developments are still awaited. The NHS is proving to be a rather inflexible negotiating partner.

Planning

The apparent delay in issuing formal consents to applicants once a planning decision has been taken by the Planning Committee is due largely to the involvement of lawyers who are required to draft what are fundamental legal papers and agree them with the applicant. CBC agreed to look into the possibility of sending out "early notifications" of Planning Committee decisions via e-mail.

New IT System

The system specifications are now being written prior to comparisons being made against packaged software from a variety of potential suppliers. East Dorset currently use Oracle based software whilst CBC use a Microsoft database so the ability of the supplier to convert from both to the new entity will also be crucial.

CBC Press Releases

ACRA suggested that if they were to receive CBC Press Releases this would both save them time keeping abreast of developments and better enable them to report matters to their members. CBC agreed to this request (*Note: which has since been implemented*)

Superfast Broadband

Creation of the infrastructure remains on target. It is projected that 98% of Dorset will be covered. The problem of getting users to take up the new facilities still remains.

Response of EDDC-CBC Staff to Winter Storms

The response of all staff, but particularly those in the front line, had been beyond the call of duty and demonstrated a very high level of commitment by those people to serving their community

Cost of Coastal Damage

CBC has claimed £1.5 million from DEFRA for repairs against overall costs which exceed £2 million. DEFRA are using Christchurch as a model when dealing with other claims.

Highcliffe Castle

The Highcliffe Castle bid for Lottery funds has progressed beyond stage one. They have been granted £293,000 to use in developing their bid to the next stage of assessment. This process will release over £2.86 million of HLF funding to complete the refurbishment of the Castle and its grounds.

CBC Road Shows 2014-15

CBC asked ACRA to establish if RAs would welcome CBC Roadshows in 2014-15. ACRA agreed to do this.

Jim Biggin

April 2014