

ACRA Informal Meeting with CBC Directorate 4th April 2013

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

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

City Deal

CBC has combined with EDDC, Bournemouth Council (BBC) and Poole Council (PBC) to make a joint bid for Central Government funds under an initiative known as City Deal. This working relationship is referred to as involving "Combined Authorities". It is important to note that this does not infer any form of merger, merely a work oriented linkage.

One considerable benefit of this joint initiative is that working relationships with particularly BBC have strengthened

The objective of the City Deal initiative is to stimulate economic growth.

The scheme does not involve any new money. Instead, future capital spend can be brought forward without incurring a charge. The joint bidders must supplement the capital with funds of their own and the overall scheme must demonstrate that it will generate economic growth.

Two projects have been identified: the transport infrastructure that underpins Bournemouth International Airport; the transport infrastructure that underpins Poole Port. The bid is currently being prepared and will be submitted by July 2013 with eventual approval due before the end of 2013.

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.

ACRA briefly outlined plans that Residents Associations had presented in the past to ease the traffic problems on the B3073 from Blackwater to Bargates that included the creation of one-way traffic flows within the town centre.

Navitus Bay

CBC is preparing a 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. The current sentiment of the CBC is against the Wind Farm although no formal position has yet been adopted.

ACRA outlined the large and active opposition lobby that has been generated by local Residents Associations, MPs and others.

There was agreement that only action in the back rooms of Whitehall could stop the plan, which dictated that strictly local issues such as the distance from the shore and height of the turbines are of paramount importance

The Potential Rationalisation of CBC and EDDC Head Offices

It was noted that the CBC Resources Committee had approved the expenditure of £40,000 (to be matched by an additional £40,000 from EDDC, making £80,000 in total) plus shared Officer's time to further explore the option of moving all staff to Christchurch, the creation of a Wimborne Civic Hub and consequential matters.

In addition a working party comprising Councillors from both CBC and EDDC will be set up. It is anticipated that the next stage will be a report to be produced by November 2013 with full implementation taking some 3 to 4 years. If this move happens, it will be an interim solution for 5-10 years; a subsequent further move could be away from the current site, which could be sold as valuable development land in the long term.

The Amalgamation of CBC and EDDC Administrations

This project remains on schedule and on budget

Druitt Hall

CBC's preferred location for the Hall does necessitate a land swap; Mathews are being co-operative on that.

CBC is allowing some time for the 'Druitt Hall Group' to produce a viable business plan. CBC believes that if there is funding within that plan (£1.5M has been mentioned before), the cost of demolition will be almost 'loose change' and should be included within the business plan rather than a cost placed on Council Tax-payers. ACRA agreed with that.

New Town Centre Signage

It was noted that the change of signage had been approved by CBC Councillors quite some time ago

Super-fast Broadband

The Airport and its environs are currently among the worst served local area for broadband. It is important that people and businesses in Christchurch register an interest in super-fast broadband so that our profile is raised above that of other areas. Details are on the Dorset for You website. *(JB note: I have since registered and can confirm that it is a very straightforward process. I have indicated that I would be prepared to be a local champion)*

Jim Biggin

April 2013