

## **Bournemouth-Christchurch-Poole Joint Committee**

### **Initial Notes on meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

1. I attended this meeting at Poole Council Offices today along with Cllr Sue Spittle
2. My final note will have to await the publication of the minutes because the acoustics were so bad that the audience heard no more than about 70% of what was said. Why speakers were not provided with a microphone I don't know. If we a Residents Association can provide one at our public meetings it shouldn't be beyond Poole Council.
3. The committee comprises 16 full members (8 from BBC, 6 from PBC, 2 from CBC). Also in attendance are 2 representatives of DCC to address the issue of disaggregation (untangling Christchurch from DCC). CBC is playing a full part and has undertaken not to disrupt the process
4. A new website has been created <https://bcjointcommittee.wordpress.com> where you can find agendas, minutes, submitted papers, etc.
5. The Committee confirmed several points of procedure including its terms of reference and Cllr Janet Walton (Poole Council Leader) as Chair. Two deputies were appointed.
6. A verbal report from Poole Chief Executive indicated that we still don't have a date for the SOS to announce his "minded to" decision.
7. Two of what my old US colleagues would have called "motherhood and apple pie" papers were then discussed
8. A paper by the CEOs of BBC, CBC, PBC and DCC on a structure to manage the various programmes was accepted. The paper envisaged a Programme Board reporting to the Joint Committee running various Programme Teams, each team having a Programme Director.
9. A target date of 21<sup>st</sup> November 2017 was set to produce a programme plan including some ideas on resource availability and allocation. Programmes are likely to include Structural Change, Council Tax Harmonisation and Disaggregation.
10. The Joint Committee will maintain liaison with the Dorset Leaders and Chief Executives Committee. The Dorset Area Joint Committee will likewise liaise with the Dorset Leaders and Chief Executives Committee
11. A paper by the Strategic Director of Corporate Services for BBC and PBC on a programme overview was accepted. The paper highlighted the need to identify key resources. A report on cost implications was promised for 21<sup>st</sup> November 2017.
12. An interesting paper on Council Tax Harmonisation by CBC Strategic Director Ian Milner was accepted but gave rise to some comment and debate. Central Government have made some changes to their original stance. The maximum 20-year period to harmonisation has become 10 years and a new concept of a "Notional Amount (of Band D Council Tax)" has been invented. Each of BBC, CBC and PBC will in 2018-19 have a "Band D Notional Amount" which will differ from the true, actual amount of Band D Council Tax.
13. Any increase in Council Tax required in 2019-20 to effect harmonisation in the new unitary authority will be measured as a % of the Band D Notional Amount rather than the true amount. This will enable BBC and PBC to potentially increase their Band D Council Tax by more than the 2% level that would otherwise trigger a referendum. CBC of course currently has the highest level of Band D Council Tax and the loss of planned revenue caused by freezing (or even reducing) the level of CBC Band D Council Tax may well be explored.
14. Central Government have laid down that if Christchurch decides to create a Town Council within the new unitary then Christchurch residents must not pay any more than if the Town Council didn't exist. Thus, if the 11% of Council Tax that currently funds CBC was to continue

to be used to fund the new Town Council then the new unitary would lose that 11% just as DCC does now.

15. A final paper on Approach to Communication with various parties was adopted.

16. Next meeting Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November 10.00 at Bournemouth Town Hall

**Jim Biggin**

**30<sup>th</sup> October 2017**