

## Bournemouth-Christchurch-Poole Joint Committee

### Notes on meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> November 2017

1. I attended this second meeting of the Joint Committee at Bournemouth Council Offices yesterday along with Cllr Sue Spittle
2. All the papers referred to can be found at <https://bcpjointcommittee.wordpress.com/meetings/>
3. **The first paper** related to the definition of the critical path and the identification of the resources required to create the new council. Five activities were identified as critical
  - 3.1. Disaggregation
  - 3.2. Producing the Parliamentary Order authorising change
  - 3.3. The strategy for Council Tax harmonisation
  - 3.4. Setting a budget for the new authority for the 2019-20 fiscal year
  - 3.5. Issuing Council Tax bills for 2019-20
4. The Finance Officers of the three councils BCC, DCC and PBC have proposed a set of principles for the apportionment of costs between themselves. I've looked at them and they seem equitable.
5. The original report by Local Partnerships estimated a conversion cost of £25 to £27 million which included a provision of £2.5 million for project management. This has been re-examined and still appears realistic. This report was approved unanimously
6. **The second paper** concerned working with Central Government to produce the Parliamentary Order authorising change, which will address: the name of the new authority; the establishment of a "shadow authority" as part of the conversion process; the dissolution of the existing councils; the creation in law of the new authority
7. It was unanimously decided to create a separate working group to investigate the preservation of the office of Mayor in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. The main paper was passed unanimously
8. **The third paper** concerned disaggregation (the process of moving Christchurch out of Dorchester and splitting it from East Dorset). Some principles were proposed:
  - 8.1. The transfer of services from one authority to another must not disadvantage any individual that is receiving that service. *This is regarded as an over-riding principle*
  - 8.2. Partners and stakeholders involved in delivering services will be fully engaged to ensure a smooth transition. Where a service is already structured as a shared service it will be left as is and not disaggregated
  - 8.3. The criteria for calculating the financial implications of splitting will be kept as simple as possible
9. A major factor as far as Council Tax payers are concerned will be the harmonisation of Council Tax rates. There is little room to manoeuvre here because of Government constraints. It was proposed that:
  - 9.1. Nobody in Bournemouth or Poole should receive a tax demand that is higher than they would have paid had the merger not proceeded. That means no higher than the Government Cap of 2%
  - 9.2. Council Tax payers in Christchurch will have their Council Tax frozen or even reduced until rates have been harmonised. It was not stated at the meeting, but I subsequently established that this would be for between 4 and 7 years
10. The proposal and the paper were approved unanimously

11. **The remaining paper** concerned the procedure for appointing a Chief Executive for the new council using the services of the LGA. It was unanimously approved.
12. The next meeting is at Christchurch on 15<sup>th</sup> December

**Jim Biggin**

**22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017**