

Bournemouth-Christchurch-Poole Joint Committee

Notes on meeting of 16th April 2018

1. I attended this the seventh meeting of the Joint Committee at Poole Council Offices. The number of members of the public attending was the lowest since these meetings began – fewer than 20
2. All the papers referred to can be found at <https://bcjointcommittee.wordpress.com/meetings/>
3. The meeting was informed that committee member Councillor Jones (Christchurch representing DCC) had been replaced by Councillor Wharf (Bere Regis representing DCC).
4. The meeting received a written report with verbal commentary from Councillor Jones representing the Christchurch Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He expressed the committee's concern about the preservation of aspirations of different authorities, the attainment of improved efficiency and the support for local democracy. He requested that the risk matrix should be a standing item on future Joint Committee meeting agendas. This suggestion was subsequently resisted by Programme Director Julian Osgathorpe who believes that risk management must be undertaken on an exception basis rather by blanket appraisal – a sensible point in my personal view.
5. A verbal report from Councillor Parker from Poole expressed support for the approach to Council Tax Harmonisation (see below)
6. **The first paper** concerned progress on the overall programme. There were no exceptional items. The paper was passed unanimously
7. **The second paper** concerned the management of the programme and its resourcing. This is an excellent paper including an exploration of an approach based upon matrix management and several Councillors remarked on that. The paper confirms that at this stage no attempt will be made to redesign work methods – that will come later – and staff will predominantly remain where they are although some minor geographical relocations may be needed. It was confirmed that the trades unions are being consulted and staff are being kept fully informed. I can confirm that from my personal contacts. If you are interested it's better if you read the paper for yourself. For clarification, the schedule of additional resources relates to the use of temporary, external specialist staff and not to permanent hires. The paper was passed unanimously
8. **Verbal Report.** The committee received a verbal report on the progress of the Parliamentary Orders. It is envisaged that the first meeting of the Shadow Authority will be in mid-June – a venue has not been decided. A question was asked about the CBC Jones-Phipps-Chope initiative to derail the entire process. The legal officer replied that only the SOS could deal with that matter.
9. **The third paper** concerned Council Tax Harmonisation. The most valuable information was the proposed wording of the Finance Order: *that the harmonisation of council tax in the BCP unitary council takes place over a period of less than eight years and in each year the differential between the highest and the lowest prevailing rates will reduce.* This approach gives much needed flexibility. The paper was carried 14 to 2 with Christchurch voting against.
10. **The fourth paper** concerned Disaggregation. We were told that progress is on schedule but not much more than that! The paper was approved unanimously.
11. **The fifth paper** concerned the forward plan. The Chair drew attention to the long agenda that would be necessary for the May meeting.
12. The next meeting is at Bournemouth on 23rd May 2018 at 2pm.

Jim Biggin, 17th April 2018