



Ministry of Housing,
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The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Secretary of State

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Cllr David Flagg
Leader of Christchurch Borough Council
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16 January 2018

Dear David

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN DORSET

Thank you for your letter of 4 January 2018 putting forward your Council's representations on local government reorganisation in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole. I will carefully consider these representations before I take my final decision on the proposal for restructuring local government across Dorset submitted by Dorset councils.

I note that your Council has requested that sufficient time be allowed, before any final decision is taken, in order for it to develop fully the alternative proposal for reorganisation which your Council has outlined in its representations. I have carefully considered this request, along with representations I have received from other Dorset councils for me to take my final decision as soon as practicable.

Whatever the merits of my proceeding to a particular timetable, where a Council puts forward an alternative proposal during the representation period I would be prepared to allow time for that proposal to be fully worked up, where I considered that there was a likelihood that the proposal could be implemented and improve local government in the area.

However, I do not consider that the alternative proposal that your Council has outlined has any realistic likelihood of being implemented. An essential element of your proposal is the merger of two unitary councils, wholly outwith the area of your Council, and there is no element of unitarisation within it. The Government's criteria for mergers, as set out in my statement of 7 November 2017, included that any merger proposal is 'proposed by all councils which are to be merged'. In their representations,

both Borough Councils expressly state, with reasons, that they are not prepared to consider a single merged unitary authority of Bournemouth and Poole.

Finally I would mention that I have also seen your letter of 21 December 2017, requesting an extension to the representation period, given the difficulty of obtaining information from your officers needed for a "Full response" to be provided by 8 January 2018. In the event, I have now received from your Council extensive representations which, as I have said, I will carefully consider before taking my final decision. If, during my consideration of your Council's representations I consider this necessary, I will, of course, seek clarification from your Council.



RT HON SAJID JAVID MP