

Verwood County Council Report –May 2018
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Dorset Unitary Council - Joint Committee 15 May 2018 - Highlighted below are some of the main outcomes from the latest Dorset Area Joint Committee. The DAJC is made up of representatives of the six Dorset area councils and has been set up to make preparations for the new unitary council moving forward.

Medium term financial plan - The medium term financial plan across all councils in the Dorset Area was agreed. Early indications suggest there are no major problems involved in the councils living within their agreed budgets. The districts and boroughs net expenditure will total approximately £38m and is on track. The net budget of the County Council is £276m and current projections suggest a £1m overspend.

However, the budget of the County Council always carries substantial risks from the demand led budgets of adult and children's social care. The disaggregation of the County Council's services is continuing and so the proportion of its expenditure committed in Christchurch has not been finalised. Work on disaggregating service costs should complete by the end of June.

Finance Order - The Structural Change Order, which is needed to create a new council, is currently going through Parliament and is expected to be agreed on Wednesday 23 May. The Finance Order is being negotiated with senior civil servants over the next six weeks, which will ensure the new councils will be able to operate financially, for example to raise and collect council tax among other considerations.

Consequential Orders - On 29 March 2018 the draft Structural Change Order (SCO) was laid in Parliament. Subject to Parliamentary approval, the Order will be made in early June. Once this has been made, the Secretary of State will be able to lay the Consequential Orders in Parliament. These supplement the main Structural Change Order and together form the legislation that creates the new unitary authorities. There are three consequential orders to go through Parliament:

- 1) Finance
- 2) Staffing
- 3) Civic Functions

The Joint Committee noted the progress on the development of the Orders and agreed for it to be considered further by the Governance Task and Finish Group before final approval is sought from the Shadow Executive in June.

The process to select the interim Chief Executive, the interim Monitoring Officer and the interim 151 (Finance) Officer for the Shadow Dorset Council has commenced. All existing post holders across all councils can express interest by 24 May. Interviews will be held w/c 4 June. The successful candidates will be recommended for appointment at the first meeting of the Shadow Dorset Council.

Plans for recruitment of the permanent Chief Executive of the new Dorset Council are ready and, once agreed with the Shadow Dorset Council in its first meeting, this role will be advertised externally. The new Chief Executive is expected to be appointed by the last week of July 2018. The LGA have provided a draft person specification and job description for the Chief Executive role which will be revised in consultation with the recruitment agency before the role is advertised. The LGA have

recommended a salary in the range of £160k - £175k for a unitary authority of this size. This range compares with other similar positions recently filled in the sector and would attract candidates of appropriate quality. An independent HR agency will manage the process.

Constitution for Shadow Authority - Dorset Council will officially be created in early June, after which there are 14 days in which to hold the first meeting of the Shadow Authority. The committee agreed the proposed constitution for the Shadow Authority which will allow a smooth transfer from the existing councils to the new unitary councils. It will consist of 206 council seats across the Dorset Area, but accounting for twin hatted Members, this equates to 175 councillors. It will have a shadow executive committee of 20 members providing a balance of representation from the Dorset Area. The Shadow Authority will meet on at least three occasions, firstly to appoint a Shadow Executive (SE), which would then take charge of the vast majority of the transition function and secondly to agree the new council's budget.

Ward Boundary Review - Following a significant piece of work to review and propose the ward boundaries for the new unitary councils (i.e. future electoral wards) the work has been completed by the Task and Finish Group and submitted to the Boundary Commission. The Boundary Commission will run an eight week public consultation, starting on 3 July. This consultation is an opportunity for members of the public and town & parish councils to review proposals and have their say. This was a complex piece of work successfully completed on time and in accordance with the LGCBE guidance.

LGR Programme highlight report

The overall programme status is described as Amber. There are some delays and issues, but they are recoverable for delivery on day 1. Many of the workstreams are on track and progressing well and the work for example on disaggregation is highly progressed. The recruitment of the team is nearing completion for the current phase, although the detail emerging from the workshops may bring about further need.

Over the next few weeks, the LGR programme will be working on:

- business continuity workshops
- preparations for the first full Shadow Dorset Council meeting
- completion of the disaggregation work
- completion of the shared Sharepoint site which will be called 'Shaping Dorset Council' and the refocusing of the Dorset Area Joint Committee Wordpress site & social media channels in readiness of the Shadow Authority.

Springfield Road Verwood – The new road was open to traffic as planned at the beginning of May and has been welcomed by the community as a big improvement to access to the schools in Howe Lane and to local residents living in that vicinity.

The works were completed later than expected due to issues with water supplies, but came in on budget and to the design standard.