

**BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE JOINT COMMITTEE  
16 April 2018**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor Janet Walton	Borough of Poole - Chair
Councillor John Beesley	Bournemouth Borough Council - Vice-Chair
Councillor David Flagg	Christchurch Borough Council - Vice-Chair
Councillor Philip Broadhead	Bournemouth Borough Council
Councillor David Brown	Borough of Poole
Councillor John Challinor	Borough of Poole
Councillor Blair Crawford	Bournemouth Borough Council
Councillor Beverley Dunlop	Bournemouth Borough Council
Councillor Tony Ferrari	Dorset County Council
Councillor Anne Filer	Bournemouth Borough Council
Councillor May Haines	Borough of Poole
Councillor Trish Jamieson	Christchurch Borough Council
Councillor Jane Kelly	Bournemouth Borough Council
Councillor Robert Lawton	Bournemouth Borough Council
Councillor Drew Mellor	Borough of Poole
Councillor Patrick Oakley	Bournemouth Borough Council
Councillor Karen Rampton	Borough of Poole

**OFFICERS:**

Andrew Flockhart, Chief Executive, Borough of Poole  
David McIntosh, Chief Executive, Christchurch and East Dorset Councils  
Jane Portman, Managing Director, Bournemouth Borough Council  
Debbie Ward, Chief Executive, Dorset County Council  
Richard Bates, Chief Financial Officer, Dorset County Council  
Julian Osgathorpe, Joint Executive Director, Corporate Services  
Tanya Coulter, Joint Service Director, Legal and Democratic & Monitoring Officer  
Adam Richens, Joint Service Director, Strategic Finance & Section 151 Officer

The meeting commenced at 10.31 am

**Note: To see a copy of the public reports that were considered by the Committee at this meeting please visit:**

<https://bcpjointcommittee.wordpress.com/meetings/>

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**41. APOLOGIES**

The Joint Committee was advised that Councillor Peter Wharf had replaced Councillor David Jones as a permanent member of the Joint Committee for Dorset County Council.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mike Greene and Nicola Greene - Bournemouth Borough Council. Named Substitute Members, Councillors Beverley Dunlop and Patrick Oakley were in attendance.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Deborah Croney and Peter Wharf - Dorset County Council. Named Substitute Member, Councillor Tony Ferrari was in attendance.

**42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interests by Joint Committee Members.

**43. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**DECISION MADE:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2018, be confirmed.

**44. PUBLIC ISSUES - DEPUTATIONS/QUESTIONS/PETITIONS**

There were no public items for this meeting of the Joint Committee.

**45. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS/COMMITTEES**

- a. Christchurch Borough Council - Scrutiny and Policy Overview Committee - 12 April 2018

The Chairman welcomed Councillor David Jones, Vice-Chairman of the Christchurch Borough Council Scrutiny and Policy Overview Committee to present the minutes of the meeting on 12 April 2018, within which the following recommendations were noted by the Joint Committee:-

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Programme Update

1. **How will the aspirations for the different authorities be captured? How will improved efficiencies be achieved? What provisions will be made so local democracy continues?**

Programme Mobilisation and Resourcing

2. **The risk matrix be a standing item on future Joint Committee meeting agendas.**

Parliamentary Orders

3. **That the Constitution for the new authority allow for as much public participation and openness of meetings as possible.**

Council Tax Harmonisation

4. **The policy of Christchurch Borough Council remains harmonisation on day one.**

Joint Overview and Scrutiny Working Group

5. **That the Members agreed the draft terms of reference and nominated 5 Members and deputies to the Working Group.**

Councillor Jones expressed concern that recommendations presented to the Joint Committee were generally referred directly to the relevant Task and Finish Group without discussion. Furthermore, Councillor Jones highlighted the recommendation to work with all sections of the community to continue and enhance local democracy.

In respect of the first part of recommendation 1, the Chairman confirmed that the Programme Director would respond in presenting report 7 on the agenda. In respect of the second part of the recommendation and also recommendation 3, the Service Director, Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer reported that the work by the Shadow Authority and Executive would include the consideration of options for the future Constitution of the new Council and related governance arrangements. Members would be able to engage in this and work currently being undertaken by Scrutiny Members of the three Councils would be key to making sure that the Overview and Scrutiny function of the Shadow Authority was effective and engaged in the development of the new Council's arrangements.

In respect of recommendation 2, the Chairman confirmed that the Programme Director would respond in presenting reports 6 and 7 on the agenda.

The Joint Committee noted recommendation 4 as a matter for Christchurch Borough Council that was well established at meetings of the Task and Finish Group on Council Tax Harmonisation.

- b. **Borough of Poole - Business Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee - 10 April 2018.**

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The Chairman welcomed Councillor Ron Parker to the meeting to present the following recommendation and comments of the Borough of Poole Business Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee to the Joint Committee:-

That the Joint Committee:-

**Notes the support of the Sub-Committee in relation to recommendation (ii) detailed in the report on Council Tax Harmonisation presented as item 9 on today's agenda.**

Comments:

It was reaffirmed that there were currently five favoured models for harmonisation, which met the principles set by the Joint Committee and that a decision had not yet been made as to which option to pursue.

The Sub-Committee were pleased to note that the proposal would give the new Authority the flexibility to amend its strategy should emerging financial information require it and would not rule out shorter harmonisation periods.

The Chairman advised that this recommendation would be referred to the Task and Finish Group on Council Tax Harmonisation.

**46. PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Joint Committee considered a report by the Programme Director circulated at '6'. The report detailed an overview of programme activity undertaken on behalf of the Joint Committee. The Programme Director highlighted that there should be a similar paragraph replicated within the report to paragraph 9, in respect of the Task and Finish Group on Governance Arrangements.

In responding to the recommendation from the Christchurch Borough Council Scrutiny and Policy Overview Committee relating to the risk matrix, the Programme Director highlighted the adopted approach that the Joint Committee reviewed risks by exception, although any Overview and Scrutiny Panels or Committees across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole were welcome to request any information for review.

**DECISION MADE:**

That the Joint Committee:

1. Notes the progress made since the last Joint Committee on approved workstreams.

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2. Notes the proposed activity to progress approved workstreams in the lead up to the next Joint Committee.

**47. PROGRAMME MOBILISATION AND RESOURCING**

The Joint Committee considered a report by the Programme Director, circulated at '7'. The report sought the Joint Committee's approval of a number of recommendations to agree initial estimates of resources, governance arrangements and delegations required to deliver Phase 1 and 2 of the agreed Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Programme.

The Programme Director introduced the report and drew attention to appendix 1 as the high level programme plan. Appendix 2 provided an update on costs already incurred in connection with the programme, apportioned by each of the preceding authorities. The residual available resources of approximately £1.61 million was highlighted in the context of future phase 3 financing and the proposals within the report to agree £1.16m from this for initial estimated costs of programme mobilisation. Further to the future financing requirements, the Joint Committee was asked to note that the programme would be unable to deliver without additional resource as detailed at appendices 4 and 5 of the report. It was acknowledged that it was too early to reliably estimate restructure implications. The creation of a strategic Task and Finish Group to provide oversight and leadership to the programme was proposed, in view of the pace and complexity of the programme.

In response to the Christchurch Vice-Chair's question, the Programme Director reported on appendix 5 and specifically the estimated costs associated with relocation. Although the expectation from 1 April 2019 would be that services continued to be delivered, some aspects of the new authority may be required to move. Until such time as the workstreams progressed, it was difficult to estimate these costs.

One Member drew attention to appendix 2 and wished to highlight that the total initial estimate of approximately £2.5 million was shared across the nine preceding authorities and not met entirely by one authority.

A number of questions were put in respect of appendices 4 and 5, in relation to the estimated costs required to deliver the programme. The Programme Director informed the Joint Committee that appendix 4 referenced specific external specialist advice required, rather than future requirements in the mobilisation of resource within services and the back office of the preceding authorities. These resource requirements would be brought forward once the workstreams progressed sufficiently to accurately determine the requirements. In relation to consultation with trade unions on staffing arrangements, it was confirmed that local union branches had been engaged

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with the programme for some time and each authority was running extensive communications programmes with staff, inclusive of face to face briefings.

The Programme Director spoke briefly on the timeline and deliverability of the programme following questions from Members on officers' confidence in the challenge ahead. It was noted that the next 12 months would present a series of challenges, with the recommendations arising from the report seeking to meet these challenges. It was considered that whilst the extra year 'Future Dorset' had hoped to have in delivering two new unitary authorities for the County of Dorset was not available, the programme was being set up to give the best possible chance of being successful.

**DECISION MADE:**

That the Joint Committee:

1. Agree the initial estimated new costs and budget of £1.1m required to support Phases 1 and 2 of the BCP Programme.
2. Agree to allocate the residual unallocated resources of £1.16m already set aside by the preceding authorities to the BCP unitary to cover the initial estimated costs.
3. Note and endorse the principle that additional resources will be required to support the preceding authorities in delivering BCP Programme while also delivering day to day services.
4. Delegate authority to the BCP Programme Board to allocate the budget(s) within and across the categories outlined within the report, in consultation with the appropriate senior officers from the preceding authorities where necessary.
5. Agree the creation of a strategic Task and Finish Working Group to provide oversight and leadership to the programme.
6. Agree to the changes in the composition of the BCP Programme Board.

**48. PARLIAMENTARY ORDERS**

The Joint Committee received a verbal update from the Service Director, Legal and Democratic & Monitoring Officer, in relation to the process following the draft legislation laid before parliament before the Easter recess.

The Service Director, Legal and Democratic & Monitoring Officer reported that the first meeting of the Shadow Authority could take place in early to mid June, should the parliamentary timetable flow smoothly. Further consequential orders and statutory instruments would be laid before

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parliament during July, concerning issues such as finance, assets, civic functions, human resources and policy and procedure, allowing services to smoothly transition into the responsibility of the new authority from 1 April 2019.

Officers would continue to engage with the department to establish what input the preceding authorities could have into the arrangements for the Shadow Authority, although many would be legal and procedural and therefore input may be limited.

One Member noted recent press coverage in relation to allegations of unlawfulness associated with the parliamentary process. The Service Director, Legal and Democratic & Monitoring Officer highlighted that whilst this was an issue for government to respond to, it was her view that the process seemed appropriate and lawful.

**DECISION MADE:**

That the update be noted.

**49. COUNCIL TAX HARMONISATION**

The Joint Committee considered a report of the Council Tax Harmonisation Task and Finish Group, circulated at '9'. The report updated the Joint Committee on the work of the Task and Finish Group and contained a recommendation in respect of the information required for the Finance Order, one of the consequential orders to the Structural Change Order.

The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group introduced the report and drew attention to the specific recommendation for approval in respect of the Finance Order. Further to paragraph 8 of the report, it was noted that five models remained that were consistent with the Joint Committee's direction. As testing continued on the impact of various options available, a final recommendation was dependent on a number of factors, including the disaggregation strategy.

Attention was drawn to paragraph 3 of the report, which outlined the terms of reference for the Task and Finish Group. Further to this, the recommendations from the scrutiny function of both the Borough of Poole and Christchurch Borough Council were duly noted. The Borough of Poole support for the ongoing work was welcomed, whilst the position of Christchurch Borough Council in respect of Council Tax Harmonisation from day one was well established. A Christchurch Borough Council Member emphasised this position.

**DECISION MADE:**

That the Joint Committee:-

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1. Note the content of the report.
2. Approve that the following Council Tax Harmonisation principle is included in 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 lowest prevailing rates will reduce.*

Note:-

Councillors David Flagg and Trish Jamieson requested that their dissent from the decisions above be recorded.

## **50. DISAGGREGATION**

The Joint Committee considered a report by the Programme Manager, circulated at '10'. The report outlined the progress being made on the disaggregation of services, assets and liabilities to support the formation of the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Unitary Authority. The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group introduced the report and highlighted the use of service templates for each area of disaggregation, which would be tested against the relevant criteria for analysis.

It was noted that previous concerns had been raised on resourcing and the pace in which progress was being made, however, this workstream was now back on schedule. One Member endorsed these comments. The next meeting of the Task and Finish Group would take place within the next few days as collaboration with the Dorset Area Task and Finish Group gathered pace, with the assessment of some 185 different service streams scheduled for the upcoming months.

### **DECISION MADE:**

That the update be noted.

## **51. FORWARD PLAN FOR THE JOINT COMMITTEE**

The Joint Committee considered their forward plan, circulated at '11'. It was noted that the next meeting of the Joint Committee would take place at 2.00 pm on 23 May 2018, in the HMS Phoebe Committee Room, Town Hall, Bournemouth. It was noted that a significant level of business was scheduled for this meeting.

### **DECISION MADE:**

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That the Forward Plan be noted.

The meeting closed at 11.26 am.

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