

Local Government reorganisation (LGR)

Why do it?

Dorset's nine councils spend £920 million a year delivering services. This year, the amount of money the Government passed on to Dorset's councils to run services was £51.9 million. That is £142 million less received in Government funding today than in 2010/11. Dorset's councils must have reduced costs by £200million per year by 2019/20. Despite all our hard work to make our councils more efficient, the current structure of local government is not sustainable. A further £30.4 million must be found between 2019 and 2025. Many services will have to change drastically, or even stop altogether if savings cannot be made. **It is now essential that change is considered in order to minimise cuts to services beyond 2019/20, and ensure councils are sustainable for the future.** Whilst £30.4 million may seem a relatively small proportion of overall budgets, it is in addition to the £200 million already saved. This makes considering change a priority now.

What is the proposal?

Dorset has the 16th largest urban area in the UK – Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch – alongside stunning countryside, several protected natural sites and a beautiful, world-renowned coastline. These two naturally complementary communities – the urban and the rural – have very different needs. To best protect public services and represent the whole of Dorset as the government continues to reduce the funding it gives to local councils, the proposal is to replace the existing nine authorities with two unitary councils for all of Dorset.

- **Urban Dorset** (population 2019 est. 410,300) – Currently served by Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch councils (and Dorset County Council in Christchurch).
- **Rural Dorset** (population 2019 est. 376,600) – Currently served by Dorset County, East Dorset, North Dorset, Purbeck, West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland councils.

How are council services provided at the moment?

Currently nine local authorities provide council services in Dorset.

Borough of Poole and **Bournemouth Borough Council** are unitary authorities, providing all council services for residents in their area. **Dorset County Council** provides some council services for residents across the whole of the rest of the county, including education, highways, libraries and social services. **Christchurch Borough Council, East Dorset District Council, North Dorset District Council, Purbeck District Council, West Dorset District Council** and **Weymouth & Portland Borough Council** provide other council services for residents in their area, including parks, revenues and benefits, housing, leisure and planning. While these arrangements have served us well, six of the nine councils in Dorset now think it is time to look at a different, more cost-effective approach for the future.

Benefits of change

Having considered the most efficient and effective options for delivering local services six of Dorset's nine councils are putting forward a proposal to reduce the number of local authorities in the county from nine to two. This reform would:

- **Protect frontline services** such as children's social care, road maintenance, libraries, parks, housing, planning and adult social services - by creating councils that are sustainable, cost-effective, and able to deliver good local services in the long-term.
- **Reduce costs and give better value for money** by cutting duplication, increasing economies of scale and improving efficiency. Although reorganisation

would have a one-off cost of around £25 million, it would result in substantial savings - of at least £108 million in the first six years.

- **Focus on people and areas** by simplifying council structures and basing services around the way people live their lives and identify with a particular area, and how businesses operate.
- **Continue to make councils accountable to local people** and retain each area's local characteristics.
- **Stimulate jobs and promote prosperity**, by focusing on the economic opportunities within their respective areas.

What's happening next?

The Secretary of State will ultimately decide the structure of local government in Dorset but there will be various decisions for each Council to make along the way. We anticipate a decision soon but currently we are still in purdah until the general election is completed.

What happens now?

This timeline shows the timescales that Dorset councils are working towards.



More information can be found on www.futuredorset.co.uk

Joint Services

What is joint services?

Borough of Poole and Bournemouth Borough Council are committed to working closely together to reduce costs and provide services to residents more efficiently. Whether collaborating as part of business as usual, commissioning service provision from each other or formally creating joint service delivery vehicles, there is a huge amount of good work already underway. It is important that, together, we have a clear direction and oversight for this work, with a specific governance arrangement needed for joint service delivery in particular. By 'joint services,' we mean the planning & implementation of service transformation across both Councils through merged delivery and the creation of a single team / structure or delivery vehicle. Joint Services are part of the [Poole2020 programme](#), acting responsibly and preparing for the future.

How decisions are made

As services, managers and individuals bring forward joint proposals for change, either to support the MTFP or the LGR agenda, it will be the responsibility of the key decision making groups at various management tiers to approve, plan, resource and steer those proposals to fruition.

We have now moved forward with the designed change programme within 'corporate services'. The recruitment process for Joint Heads of Service for HR, ICT and Legal and Democratic has taken place and are as follows:

- HR – Saskia De Vries
- ICT – Katie Lacey
- Legal and Democratic – Tanya Coulter

These are in addition to Adam Richens (Financial Services) to complete a full Joint Management Team for the Directorate led by Julian Oglethorpe as Strategic Director for Joint Corporate Services.

What does this mean for SACRE?

In 2016 both Poole and Bournemouth SACRE's were presented with the attached paper 'Proposal for Joint Bournemouth & Poole SACREs Meetings' No formal vote or resolution was passed at that time.

Since 2016 this proposal has been formally supported by Poole and Bournemouth Heads of School Improvement and by the new Joint Head of Legal and Democratic as proposed interim arrangements until a timescale for LGR is finalised. A joint budget has been agreed between the Heads of School Improvement for the provision of an RE expert to support both SACREs, attend meetings and develop an action plan for them to work towards preparation for one SACRE as part of LGR.

SACREs are now in a position to take this forward in time for the next Academic Year. It is recommended that both Bournemouth and Poole SACREs revisit this proposal and formally vote on it in their June meetings.