



Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils
(Affiliated to the National Association of Local Councils)

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14 June 2018

**Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch Shadow Executive Committee – 15 June 2018 –
Request to make a statement**

I would like to make the following statement to the Shadow Executive as set out at item 5 of the agenda.

I am Councillor John Parker, Chairman of Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils.

The first meeting of this Shadow Executive Committee is a significant moment. The introduction of a brand new unitary council will make it more important than ever to keep links with the many individual communities that it will serve. As the parish and town council tier of local government will remain, that tier will have an essential role to play in representing the needs of their surrounding neighbourhoods.

Our association has a membership of 160 parish and town councils across the whole of Dorset, including all the town councils. In total, over 98% of local councils in Dorset are members. The association provides advice, support, training and assistance to its members and is affiliated to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

We have an established communication network with our members and have already made them aware of the processes for establishing the new authorities. On behalf of the Dorset LGR Programme Team, we are disseminating information on the Boundary Commission's reviews of proposed wards for **both** unitary councils.

Christchurch Borough Community Governance Review is currently being carried out and I am very pleased that we are contributing to this. We have been contacted by a local group for information on the implications of setting up a parish council. Our association together with the national association of local councils (NALC) and with the encouragement of central government, very much encourages the establishment of new parish and town councils as the tier of local government that is closest to communities. Existing town councils in Dorset are very proud guardians of their historical, cultural and mayoral heritage as well as constantly striving to represent the ever-changing needs of their residents.

Our association believes it is in a unique position to be a positive voice in ensuring that our members are engaged with the new councils, not only in collaborative design of services for the many different communities in Dorset, but also in all aspects which would help build relationships, ease the implementation of change and increase the potential for local control over local matters.

Thank you.

Councillor John Parker, Chairman of Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils