

TOWN & PARISH COUNCILS BRIEFING / 21.08.18

COUNTDOWN TO 1 APRIL 2019

223 DAYS TO GO (as of 21 August)

We know that town and parish councils are key partners in delivering quality services for Dorset Council residents, so we want to keep you updated as we approach day one of the new council.

We hope you find this fortnightly briefing useful. If you have any questions or feedback, please email shapingdorsetcouncil@dorsetcc.gov.uk

IN-HOUSE TEAM TO DESIGN NEW DORSET COUNCIL BRANDING

A small team of Dorset Area comms and design colleagues is working to develop the Dorset Council branding and logo. Our aim is to keep the cost of this work to an absolute minimum, so our in-house graphic designers will be designing the new logo, rather than an external agency. We'll be testing design options for the new logo with local residents, members and staff.

The new logo and branding will be ready in early January, and we plan to replace council branding in a managed way over time. We'll prioritise branding of critical items, such as council tax bills, ID badges and the council website. We won't be replacing all branding across the board from Day One as this would not represent a good use of taxpayers' money.

CHRISTCHURCH BC JUDICIAL REVIEW DISMISSED

The judicial review brought by Christchurch Borough Council was heard on 30 July and has since been dismissed.

Following this, Christchurch BC has agreed NOT to appeal the decision.

WEYMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Weymouth & Portland Borough Council has approved plans to create a new Weymouth Town Council, covering the whole of the borough apart from the area covered by Portland Town Council.

Work is underway to plan the services, resources and assets the new town council will need and it is hoped that a Town Clerk will be appointed by early September, following a recruitment process. We will keep you updated as this progresses.

WHAT'S ON IN SEPTEMBER

17 SEP ■ Shadow Executive Committee, 4pm, South Walks House, Dorchester.

27 SEP ■ Shadow Dorset Council, 6.30pm, South Walks House, Dorchester.



THE SHAPING DORSET COUNCIL PROGRAMME

The Shaping Dorset Council programme was established in Spring 2018, following the Secretary of State's decision to approve the creation of two new unitary authorities for Dorset.

The programme is being led Programme Director, Keith Cheesman, and is organised around three phases:

PHASE ONE: LEGAL CREATION OF THE NEW COUNCILS

Phase 1 was the process to create the new unitary authorities and included creating the [Future Dorset proposal](#), engaging with central government, submitting the final proposal in 2017, gaining final agreement from government in February 2018, setting up the two new Joint Committees and then replacing these with the Shadow Authorities once parliament had passed the necessary legislation.

PHASE TWO: DELIVERING SERVICES ON 1 APRIL 2019

The programme is currently focused on Phase 2, which will ensure Dorset Council's services continue safely and legally from Day One (1 April 2019). A significant amount of analysis has taken place across the councils so far and this will shape and influence what changes need to be made for services to continue seamlessly in the new authority. Implementation plans are being finalised which will ensure these changes are in place for Day One.

PHASE THREE: DESIGNING THE NEW AUTHORITY

Phase 3 will focus on the vision, design and operating model of the new Dorset Council and will form an exciting part of the programme. As a brand new authority, Dorset Council has the chance to deliver new ways of working, transform how we deliver services and establish a forward-thinking and innovative culture.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT

The closing date for applications for the Chief Executive for Dorset Council was Monday 9 July and the role was advertised to both internal and external candidates.

This will be the first senior appointment for the new council and there will be a robust selection process involving the Shadow Council Senior Appointments Committee and other stakeholders.

Longlisting for the role has taken place and shortlisting will be complete by the end of August. Final interviews will take place in September and the recommendation for appointment will be made at the next meeting of the Shadow Dorset Council on Thursday 27 September.

ELECTORAL BOUNDARY REVIEW



The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is holding a public consultation on its recommendations for the new electoral arrangements for Dorset Council, which closes on 27 August.

It is proposed that 82 councillors should be elected and new electoral ward boundaries should be created.

LGBCE will publish their final recommendations in October which will be subject to parliamentary scrutiny before coming into effect in time for the authority's first election on 4 May 2019.

You can find more information, view interactive maps and respond to the proposals on the [LGBCE website](#).

TRANSFER OF ASSETS TO TOWN & PARISH COUNCILS

Some town and parish councils have approached the district and borough councils to request the transfer of some assets to them before 1 April 2019. To create some consistency across Dorset, the Shadow Executive Committee agreed the following principles:

i. All assets required for the delivery of council services and those capable of generating income are transferred to the new unitary Dorset Council, but the unique circumstances of Weymouth Town Council and Portland Town Council will be considered separately.

ii. Any resolution prior to 26 May 2018 (when the Secretary of State's announcement was made) by a sovereign council to dispose of an asset but not yet legally completed may continue unless it contradicts these principles.

iii. Property held as public open space, community buildings, free car parks and public toilets can be considered for transfer to the appropriate town or parish council. It would be expected that a free car park would remain free if the car park was transferred to the town or parish council.

iv. Any transfer of assets will usually be by transfer of the freehold to a public or charitable body or via a long lease (25 years minimum). Transfer will also be dependent on an assessment of the capacity of the receiving authority/organisation to take on the asset. The council would need to be sure that if there is an ongoing maintenance cost or management role, the organisation can take this on.

v. Councils can consider asset transfer to community groups other than parish and town councils where appropriate and subject to the same assessment of the capacity of the group, but such transfers are considered to be lower priority because of timescales and capacity.

vi. Any transfer (other than by a lease) of open spaces will contain overage clauses that will retain the land for public use or, if the land is sold the new Dorset Council will receive a proportion of the proceeds from the sale. When land is transferred legally, the council will put conditions on the deeds and land registration. E.g. for open spaces, generally the expectation will be for the land to be retained as open space for public use. Overage clauses entitle the transferring authority to an additional payment if the land use changes and its value increases.

vii. Where a council has negotiated the devolution of a service to a town or parish council and asset is transferred to support the delivery of that service, there will be no financial loss to the new Dorset Council i.e. the transfer is cost neutral. E.g. if open spaces were transferred, Dorset Council would not pay for grass cutting, but could enter into an agreement with the town or parish council to maintain the land subject to an appropriate payment being made.

viii. No financial agreement will be made with a town or parish council, or other receiving body to support the maintenance and running of a transferred asset after 1 April 2019.

ix. Any asset transfer that could have a financial impact upon the new Dorset Council will be initially assessed by the interim Section 151 Officer and, if it has a significant financial impact, or potential significant impact, seek approval by the Shadow Executive. If an asset exceeds this value, the transfer will be reflected as a loss on the council's balance sheet. E.g. at Corfe Castle, the parish council have requested transfer of the public toilets but their current value exceeds £100,000. These situations will be referred to the Shadow Executive Committee for a decision.