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EXTRAORDINARY CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S CIRCULAR

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW (LGR)

DAPTC CHAIRMAN SPEAKS AT SHADOW DORSET COUNCIL

DAPTC Chairman John Parker made a statement to the first meeting of the new Shadow Dorset Council.

He attended the meeting on 7 June with DAPTC Chief Executive Hilary Trevorah as members of the public. John made his statement in the public participation part of the meeting, reminding the Shadow Council that the parish and town council tier will remain after 1 April 2019 and that DAPTC was keen to build relationships with both shadow authorities on behalf of its members.

Devolution was also raised by John. He said:

“Devolution to town and parish councils will be a fundamental issue for shaping future services. Achieving this in an adequately resourced and cooperative manner is in the interests of all our communities.

“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 and ease the implementation of change.”

A full copy of John's statement is being circulated with this document or can be read via <http://www.dorset-aptc.gov.uk/DAPTC-Web/Default.aspx>

The Shadow Dorset Council consists of all 174 members for the Dorset Area (drawn from the existing Dorset area councils). It was established when the Structural Order, confirming the creation of the new unitary council, was approved by Parliament and ratified by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, James Brokenshire MP.

The BCP Shadow Authority is made up of all 125 council seats across the four preceding councils and includes a total of 120 people as the five councillors representing the Christchurch divisions of Dorset County Council are also Christchurch Borough Council councillors.

A video of the process to create the unitary councils is at https://youtu.be/7Z_bLpJnVU

PROPOSED WARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR UNITARY COUNCILS

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) held briefing sessions for parish and town councils about an electoral review of wards for the two unitary councils on 11 June.

For councils that were unable to send representatives, a presentation is available here [/DAPTC-Web/UserFiles/Files/Dorset_parishespresentation-NN.pdf](#)

Details of the proposed warding arrangements can be read at agenda item 11 of the Dorset Area Joint Committee at <https://dorsetareacouncils.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/15-may-2018-agenda-and-reports.pdf>

DAPTC action on behalf of its members

As an association which represents local councils across the county, including those in the proposed urban unitary area, we are aiming to raise the profile of our members at the highest strategic level.

The main message on behalf of DAPTC to its members is:

- There will be no instant changes in services if unitary authorities are set up in 2019, however take care that your level of precept and reserves allow for possible future change
- DAPTC will keep its members informed so please look out for this information and circulate it to all your council members.

DAPTC LGR survey – please give your Council's views

The Chairmen of the DAPTC Area Committees have written to all Chairmen and Clerks of the DAPTC member councils with a simple survey.

If you are unaware of these letters, please contact your Clerk for a copy.

The DAPTC Executive Committee is aware that LGR is causing concern for some of our members, particularly about future service delivery.

Given the very limited time available to create the new unitary authorities, it is almost certain that the devolution of services (possibly together with assets) to parish and town councils will not occur by April 2019. The priority for establishing a new authority will be to make sure it is legally constituted and able to deliver safely its statutory responsibilities such as education and social care from day one.

As a new authority it will have new ways of operating and it will need, over its first couple of years existence, to decide how its discretionary services could be delivered and by whom. It will also need to consider some form of local decision making given the large and diverse area it will cover. What is certain is that parish and town councils will still exist as the tier of local government closest to communities.

DAPTC believe it is important for its members that the association be involved at an early stage in the design of how and by whom, services should be delivered and of the structure of local decision making. The DAPTC Executive Committee are working towards a vision of what town and parish councils would like to see in these areas under a unitary authority.

The Area Chairmen's letters, which were emailed on 30 April, are asking for each council to respond to two questions on LGR:

- (a) What services you feel should realistically be retained – no need to identify who would provide and pay for them**
- (b) How your council would like to see local decision making operate, including communications.**

A form for each question has been issued with the letters. If your council has not already submitted its responses, please could the forms be completed on behalf of each council and sent to the DAPTC office by 1 July.