

**Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government &  
Local Government Boundary Commission for England**

# **Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council**

## **Council Size Submission**

January 2018

BLANK PAGE

# Contents

Introduction .....	4
Current Governance.....	8
Financial Context.....	13
Future Governance & Ways of Working .....	155
Electoral Equality & Representation .....	20
Electorate Forecasts.....	222
Conclusion.....	233

---

## Appendices

1. Future Dorset Proposal
2. Council Size Options Appraisal
3. Electorate Forecasts
4. Electoral Arrangements Task and Finish Report to Joint Committee

# Introduction

## Summary

1. As part of Local Government Reorganisation preparations across Dorset, it has been determined that a council size of 76 councillors will be able to secure an effective local government for the new Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Unitary Authority. A separate submission will be made by the new Dorset Area Unitary Authority.

## Background

2. Based upon the weight of public opinion, financial analysis and analytical evidence gathered over the past 18 months,<sup>1</sup> and outlined within the Future Dorset proposal to government (appendix 1), the two new unitary councils for Dorset should be based upon the following local authority boundaries;

2.1 **Unitary A:** Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, plus the services currently provided by Dorset County Council in this area.

2.2 **Unitary B:** East Dorset, North Dorset, Purbeck, West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland, plus the services currently provided by Dorset County Council in this area.

3. In collaboration, Council Leaders and Chief Executives across Dorset have worked to support the Unitary-A option for reorganisation implementing appropriate plans and allocating resources to progress local government change. On 7 November 2017, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Rt.Hon. Sajid Javid, MP, announced that he is minded to implement, subject to parliamentary approval, the proposal for restructuring local government in Dorset (as outlined within the Future Dorset proposal).
4. Since the announcement, and in anticipation of a full decision and parliamentary approval, the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Joint Committee has met five times and is progressing with the broad range of complex work necessary to establish a new unitary authority for the area within the challenging timescale<sup>2</sup>.

## Purpose of this document

5. If the Future Dorset proposal is approved, it is the intention of the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to commission a boundary review with the aim of setting new electoral boundaries for the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole authority from 1 April 2019.
6. Should a boundary review for any reason not have been completed in the timeframes set-out, the Structural Change Order (SCO) will include fall-back provisions setting out the size of the council and electoral arrangements based upon existing wards and divisions, which would operate for the elections in May 2019.

---

<sup>1</sup> Reference to evidence sources here.

<sup>2</sup> Reference to April 2019 deadline and reason we need to abide by date.

7. The purpose of this document is, firstly, to support the number and arrangements contained within the SCO and, secondly, to submit evidence for the first phase of the review including: five-year electoral forecasting to 2023, which has been appended to this document, and a recommendation for council size.
8. When considering council size, the three key drivers include: the need to maximise electoral equality; community identities and interests; and effective and convenient local government. In relation to electoral equality the aim is to ensure the number of electors per councillor in each ward deviates from the average by as small a percentage as possible.

### **Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole profile**

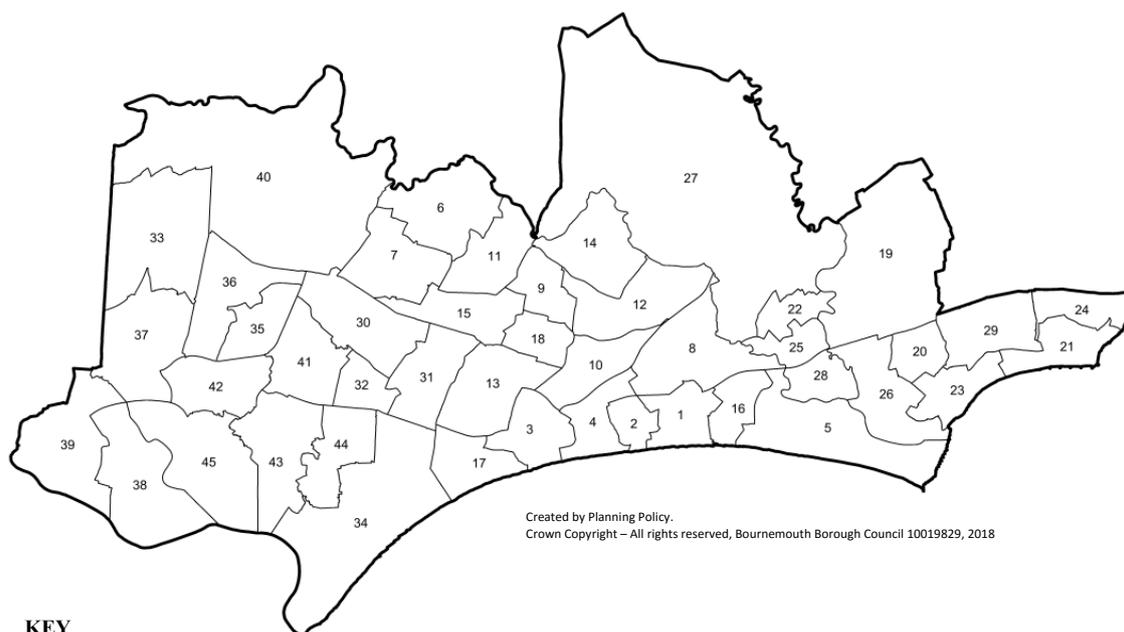
9. With a combined population of almost 400,000<sup>3</sup> Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole are located on the UK's south coast and collectively represent a vibrant and colourful coastal conurbation spread across 62 square miles.<sup>4</sup> The conurbation is served by three major road links, the South West Rail Network and an international airport. Each of the three urban settings (within the conurbation) are uniquely characterised by their heritage, local amenities and political aspirations for the future.

---

<sup>3</sup> Population estimate is 398,638 (figures are consistent with [published](#) mid-2016 local authority and Lower Layer Super Output Area population estimates).

<sup>4</sup> Based on [published](#) ONS figures used to calculate population density at 16,132 hectares.

10. Ward profile:



**KEY**

Bournemouth area

1. Boscombe East
2. Boscombe West
3. Central
4. East Cliff and Springbourne
5. East Southbourne and Tuckton
6. Kinson North
7. Kinson South
8. Littledown and Iford
9. Moordown
10. Queens Park
11. Redhill and Northbourne
12. Strouden Park
13. Talbot and Branksome Woods
14. Throop and Muscliff
15. Wallisdown and Winton West
16. West Southbourne
17. Westbourne and West Cliff
18. Winton East

Christchurch area

19. Burton and Winkton
20. Grange
21. Highcliffe
22. Jumpers
23. Mudeford and Friars Cliff
24. North Highcliffe and Walkford
25. Portfield
26. Purewell and Stanpit
27. St Catherine's and Hurn
28. Town Centre
29. West Highcliffe

Poole area

30. Alderney
31. Branksome East
32. Branksome West
33. Broadstone
34. Canford Cliffs
35. Canford Heath East
36. Canford Heath West
37. Creekmoor
38. Hamworthy East
39. Hamworthy West
40. Merley and Bearwood
41. Newton
42. Oakdale
43. Parkstone
44. Penn Hill
45. Poole Town

11. Elected Members for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole councils are represented as follows:

	Cons	Labour	Lib Dem	UKIP	Independent	Green	Poole People	Total
Bournemouth	51	-	-	-	2	1	-	54
Christchurch	22	-	-	-	2	-	-	24
Poole	29	-	7	1	2	-	3	42

12. There is a total of 45 wards across the conurbation. Population per ward varies, ranging from 3,500 in Highcliffe to over 14,400 in East Cliff and Springbourne. The current electorate for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole is 301,003, representing 92% of the total population aged 18+ (324,098)<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Mid-2016 Population Estimates, ONS, Crown Copyright.

## Why Review?

13. One of the drivers for the Future Dorset Local Government Reorganisation Proposal is to promote efficient and effective local government across Dorset. Contributing to this ambition is the proposal to reduce the total number of councillors across the area. Currently the nine councils operate varying structures, which present an inconsistent and confusing picture to residents. It can also result in decision making being unnecessarily time consuming and costly and impede effective partnership working. Research into other structures shows other rural and urban unitaries have embraced change for the future.
14. Reorganisation presents an opportunity to establish a more consistent and streamlined approach to governance and accountability. In removing the current two tier system, and establishing a new unitary for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, re-organisation will enable a reviewed and refreshed way of working, taking advantage of new digital methods to ensure the right balance for local communities with clear decision making and lines of accountability within the democratic process.
15. Taking the opportunity presented by LGR and building on the initial work carried out by PWC in the Future Dorset proposals, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole have reviewed current ratios. Maximising electoral equality where appropriate across the preceding councils, it has been determined that 76 councillors will be able to secure effective local government for the new Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Unitary Authority. Ultimately, this will ensure that everyone knows who they are electing and who will be accountable for what in the future.

## Current Governance

16. Dorset is currently administered by the unitary authorities of Bournemouth and Poole and a two-tier system serving the remainder of the county, which comprises Dorset County Council and the district and borough councils of Christchurch, East Dorset, North Dorset, Purbeck, West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland.
17. As unitary authorities (created in 1997), Bournemouth and Poole Councils undertake the full range of local government service provision within their boundaries. Christchurch is currently part of the two-tier system and work is underway to disaggregate those services provided by Dorset County Council to residents in Christchurch. The County Council is responsible for the organisation and provision of children's services, adult social care, libraries, education, trading standards, specialist planning (e.g. minerals), highways, transportation, economic development and waste disposal. As a district council, Christchurch has retained responsibility for revenues and benefits, waste collection, development control, housing and homelessness, community and leisure services, environmental health, licencing, environment and economic development. Both tiers have some involvement in providing planning services.
18. The democratic structures operated by the nine current authorities vary. Many have opted for an executive arrangement, where a cabinet is responsible for much of the overall business of the council. Others, including Christchurch, have retained the committee system.

### **Full Council**

19. The role of full council for each of the preceding authorities is to determine policies that structure the way the council carries out its duties and to set the council's budget and Council Tax levels.
20. Full Council for each of the preceding authorities agree membership of boards and committees in accordance with their individual constitutions. All elected members are expected to attend full council meetings. Currently the number of elected members for each authority are as follows: Dorset 46 (including 5 for Christchurch divisions), Bournemouth 54, Christchurch 24, and Poole 42. Each councillor represents a specific area and their work includes holding surgeries to help local residents, support local organisations, campaign on local issues, and develop links with all parts of the community.
21. The constitutions of all four organisations operate similarly allowing full council to provide a platform where members of the public may ask questions of specific elected members, provided formal written notice has been lodged beforehand. Likewise, members of the council may in some cases present petitions on behalf of local residents, question other members of the cabinet on their functions and the council's services and ask questions of the chairs of other council committees.
22. Under the Local Authorities (Members Allowances - England) Regulations 2003, payments are made available to councillors for incidental expenses, including a basic allowance and a special responsibility allowance (SRA) for additional duties such as being a cabinet or overview and scrutiny member.

23. However, each of the three preceding council schemes differ slightly and a review will be required to align calculations, ensure that the scheme accurately reflects any new responsibilities, and ensure that any amendments are fit for future purpose.

#### **Executive**

24. Current Executive arrangements in both Bournemouth and Poole are operated as a leader and cabinet style of governance in accordance with the Local Government Act.
25. In Bournemouth, the cabinet is made up of the leader of the council, who is chosen by the full council, and nine other councillors including the deputy leader who is selected by the leader. The leader is chair of the cabinet and the deputy leader is vice-chair. These ten members comprise the Executive decision function of the council and each is assigned their own portfolio and area of responsibility:

##### Bournemouth Cabinet Portfolios

Leader of the Council & Resources  
Deputy Leader, Education & Children's Services  
Adult Social Care  
Regeneration & Public Health  
Corporate Efficiency  
Local Government Reorganisation & Economic Growth  
Tourism, Leisure & The Arts  
Planning & Environment  
Transport, Cleansing & Waste  
Housing

26. Similarly, in Poole, the cabinet is made up of the leader of the council, who is chosen by the full council, and other councillors including the deputy leader who is selected by the leader. The leader is chair of the cabinet and the deputy leader is vice-chair. In Poole the cabinet comprises of eight members who are assigned their own portfolio and area of responsibility:

##### Poole Cabinet Portfolios

Leader of the Council, Strategic overview leadership of the Council including corporate and financial strategies  
Deputy Leader of the Council, Finance and Corporate Services  
Economy, Culture and Learning, Community Engagement  
Operational Support, Public Health, Corporate Estates, Strategic Commercialisation and Communications  
Planning, Regeneration and Transportation  
Environment and Open Spaces  
Health and Social Care and Housing  
Children and Young People Services and Capital Projects

27. As part of the current two-tier arrangement, Christchurch retains a committee system whilst Dorset County Council, which currently has responsibility for a significant proportion of services provided within the boundary of Christchurch, also operate a leader and cabinet (Executive) style of governance comprising the leader and six portfolio holders:

##### Dorset Cabinet Portfolios

Leader of the Council

Deputy Leader of the Council, Health and Care  
Safeguarding  
Economy, Education, Learning and Skills  
Community and Resources  
Natural and Built Environment  
Workforce.

28. Christchurch Borough Council operates a committee system comprising two committees: Resources Committee and Community Committee.

### **Overview & Scrutiny (O&S)**

29. O&S panels are essential tools for monitoring and measuring performance, contributing to strategic thinking and policy development, holding decision-makers to account, and involving the community in decision-making by considering and sharing local concerns.
30. There is no national standard for the operation of O&S functions within local authorities. However, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, councils must have at least one O&S committee. Currently Bournemouth has six, Christchurch has one, Dorset has five and Poole has five.
31. Each panel meets in public, subject to the Access to Information Rules, to discuss and make recommendations on the development of the councils' various plans and strategies, and on reports going forward to cabinet and/or council.

### **Regulatory**

32. The preceding councils operate regulatory licencing and planning panels/committees responsible for decisions on large planning applications and licensing matters, some of which are devolved to sub-committees.

### **Other Panels, Forums and Committees**

33. Each of the preceding authorities has numerous boards, panels, committees, working groups and forums. Some of these involve appointments to outside bodies and membership on boards for council-owned trading companies, whilst others support public sector services or are run collaboratively with partners such as Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue and Dorset Police (which are explored more fully in the following section).

### **Joint Working Arrangements**

34. The councils in Dorset already work successfully together to plan and deliver a wide range of services. Maintaining and developing these partnerships to maximise their potential is a key ambition for the proposed two new unitary authorities. For example:
- Public Health Dorset undertakes a countywide public health role on behalf of Dorset County Council, Bournemouth Borough Council and Poole Borough Council.
  - All nine councils have all worked together to develop a shared approach to affordable housing allocation and a single Housing Register (Dorset Home Choice).

- The councils have worked in a number of configurations on planning related issues, for example commissioning a Joint Retail Study (Christchurch, East Dorset, North Dorset and Purbeck) and adopting a shared Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework (Bournemouth, Christchurch, East Dorset, Poole and Purbeck).
- Bournemouth and Poole Borough Councils and Dorset County Council have collaborated innovatively to create a Local Authority Trading Company ('Tricuro') providing adult health and social care services across Dorset.
- Bournemouth and Poole Borough Councils and Dorset County Council have produced a single Local Transport Plan which explains how local transport improvements will be made.
- Bournemouth and Poole Borough Councils and Dorset County Council operate a combined Youth Offending service led by Bournemouth Borough Council and a shared Adult Learning service led by the Borough of Poole.
- Dorset County Council and the six district and borough councils operate a shared Waste Partnership ('Dorset Waste Partnership') hosted by Dorset County Council.
- Christchurch, East Dorset, North Dorset and Poole operate a shared Revenues and Benefits service, as do West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland and Purbeck.
- Corporate service functions – IT, HR and Organisational Development, Legal and Democratic and Financial services incorporating Accountancy, Audit and Procurement – are now operating as shared services on behalf of Bournemouth and Poole.
- Library services and Seafront and Tourism Services operate as shared services for Bournemouth and Poole
- Aspire Adoption is the regional adoption agency serving Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Councils, hosted by Bournemouth Borough Council.
- Joint Archives service hosted by DCC
- The Coroners Service is provided by Bournemouth Borough Council in partnership with Poole and Dorset

### **Partnerships with other service providers**

35. Dorset has a strong track record of effective multi-agency working and supports a range of such partnerships currently.
36. Dorset's LEP is a voluntary, business led partnership between all nine Dorset councils and the private sector with the principal aim of promoting local economic growth and prosperity. Its membership comprises local authority representatives, business leaders from different sectors and representatives from higher and further education. Its priorities are to create more jobs, aid the up-skilling of Dorset's workforce, drive long term growth of the local economy, and support housing development.
37. The provision of new housing, especially affordable housing, is a concern for all nine Dorset councils and features prominently in corporate plans. Bournemouth Borough Council has its own development programme. The other eight councils primarily rely on working in partnership to deliver new affordable housing supply and regeneration. Key delivery partners comprise a range of housing associations, some of which were created when the councils transferred their housing stock. In the context of reducing grant, rent reductions and welfare reform, housing associations themselves face significant challenges in developing new affordable housing.
38. The health and wellbeing of residents is also a key strategic priority for all Dorset councils. They work closely with a range of local health organisations through the Dorset Health and Wellbeing Board and the Bournemouth and Poole Health and Wellbeing Board to take a joint strategic approach to the development of health and social care across the county. More recently, the

councils and health bodies have been working together to address the anticipated funding gap that will arise unless the current health and care system can be transformed. This work has been compiled within Dorset's Sustainability and Transformation Plan. The health and social care leaders are in wave one nationally in developing an Accountable Care System.

39. Joint working between local authorities and the health sector is critical to delivering outcomes for children and young people. Dorset Children's Trust, Bournemouth Children's Trust and Poole Children's Trust each bring together key representatives from the public and voluntary sectors to address issues holistically at a strategic level and publish a Children and Young People's Plan. The Trusts work closely with their respective local Health and Wellbeing Boards and Local Safeguarding Children Boards to ensure outcomes are delivered.
40. Fire and Rescue services in the county are provided by the newly formed Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service which brought together services across Bournemouth, Dorset, Poole, Swindon and Wiltshire from April 2016, anticipating annual savings of £6m from 2017/18. The Service works closely with the Dorset councils to deliver a joint community safety plan.
41. Policing is provided by Dorset Police, which acquired its current geographical remit in 1974 and employs over 2,600 people. The Dorset councils work with Dorset Police, Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, the National Probation Trust, the Dorset, Devon and Cornwall Community Rehabilitation Company, and Dorset CCG through three Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) to protect local communities from crime. The Dorset Police convene all relevant public and voluntary sector partners in a Local Resilience Forum in line with the Civil Contingencies Act.

## Financial Context

42. Over the course of the past five years, local authorities across the UK have experienced a period of unprecedented pressure. Reductions in public spending at a national level have forced all councils to streamline their operations, improve their processes and reduce provision in all but the most critical service areas (and in many places even these types of service have been impacted). In addition to the downward pressure on spending, demand for services in many areas has increased.
43. Local government reorganisation offers Dorset the opportunity to address the councils' projected financial pressures at the same time as providing them with the levers to help Dorset make a broader contribution to growth in the UK.
44. A culture of strong financial management will be fundamental to the success of a new unitary in delivering services and meeting its statutory obligations. Significant progress has already been made since February 2016 in ensuring the MTFPs of Bournemouth and Poole Unitary Councils are consistent as a result of appointing a shared Chief Financial Officer.
45. This strong financial culture is being further advanced by the Joint Committee's overview of a consolidated MTFP and ensuring sovereign councils are aware of any decisions which will have financial implications for the new unitary council and providing important context to the purpose and work programme of the shadow authority for the new unitary council.
46. The table below presents the consolidated MTFP position for Bournemouth and Poole as at December 2017. The forecast funding gap for Dorset County Council is shown in the second table. Further work is underway to determine the appropriate apportionment for service delivered on behalf of Christchurch by Dorset County Council.

	2018/19 £000s	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s	Total £000s
Bournemouth	1,457	4,146	7,514	13,117
Christchurch	0	134	97	231
Poole	1,001	4,361	2,516	7,878
<b>Annual Funding Gap</b>	<b>2,458</b>	<b>8,641</b>	<b>10,127</b>	<b>21,226</b>
<b>Cumulative Funding Gap</b>	<b>2,458</b>	<b>11,099</b>	<b>21,226</b>	

	2018/19 £000s	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s	Total £000s
Dorset County Council	10,900	15,300	7,700	33,900
<b>Annual Funding Gap</b>	<b>10,900</b>	<b>15,300</b>	<b>7,700</b>	<b>33,900</b>
<b>Cumulative Funding Gap</b>	<b>10,900</b>	<b>26,200</b>	<b>33,900</b>	

47. Dorset County Council has developed a Forward Together programme designed to support the delivery of the required savings with particular emphasis on the current 2018/19 budget gap and the consequences of any ongoing implications associated with in-year pressures.
48. Although broadly similar, each council currently follows a slightly different annual budget setting process and therefore maybe at different stages in confirming the actions necessary to enable a balanced 2018/19 budget to be presented or any further future year MTFP contributions.
49. The disaggregation work-stream within the LGR programme will enable the forecast MTFP deficit of DCC to be broken down between the two new unitaries.
50. Alongside the consolidated MTFP, the Joint Committee for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole also receives reports from the Chief Financial Officers highlighting any decisions which will have significant financial implications for the proposed new unitary council. Once the shadow authority has been established the Chief Financial Officers will highlight decisions which will have either a significant financial impact or involve significant financial risk exposure to the new unitary council.
51. The Future Dorset business case envisages potential savings across the following areas:
- Workforce – the reduction in the overall number of full time equivalents (FTE) across all levels of the new organisations.
  - Property – reduced running and maintenance costs and the potential for a return on surplus property.
  - ICT / Technology – savings arising from reduced licensing costs and application rationalisation.
  - Other non-FTE benefits and costs
  - Member allowances.
52. In relation to democratic costs the proposal identified recurring annual savings in the region of £2.1m across Dorset, including savings from reducing the overall number of elected members.
53. Currently all members receive a basic allowance of £9290.64 in Bournemouth, £4154 in Christchurch, £9552.96 in Poole, and £10641 at Dorset County Council each year. Taking the average allowance of the upper tier councils (£9828), and reducing the number of elected members across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole from 125 (120 plus 5 from Dorset representing Christchurch divisions) to the recommended 76, the new unitary authority will achieve annual savings of £481,572. Further savings in special responsibility allowances will be made by consolidating the number of committees and reducing duplication, and costs will be significantly reduced through the streamlined election process.
54. It is important to highlight that the creation of two councils instead of nine in Dorset has been designed to help protect local services in the future. These lower overheads mean that a greater proportion of local authority resources can be spent on frontline services such as parks, road repairs, libraries, children’s services and adult social care.

# Future Governance & Ways of Working

55. Current governance arrangements and ways of working across the nine councils are complicated, inconsistent, and can be confusing for residents. Decision making can be unnecessarily time consuming, costly, and can impede effective partnership working; and different processes, the use of multiple systems, and information requirements have resulted in duplication of time, cost and effort.
56. Reorganisation presents an opportunity to establish a more consistent and streamlined approach to governance, accountability, decision making, and ways-of-working.

## Partnership Working

57. Currently the nine councils across Dorset operate varying structures which can result in decision making being unnecessarily time consuming and impede effective partnership working. For example, a project undertaken across multiple councils could involve reporting to multiple scrutiny committees. In most instances, each scrutiny committee will require different information to be submitted, or information to be provided in multiple formats.
58. Moving to two new unitary authorities will reduce the number of partnerships with which local government in Dorset need to engage. Consolidating local government voices involved in those partnerships will focus efforts and provide clearer direction. Local authorities will be able to speak more easily with a single voice for the residents they represent. Ultimately, the new members for the two unitary authorities will be able to hold more effective conversations with partners and negotiate better value for money for the people they represent.

## Use of Technology

59. Currently the role of councillors is varied across Dorset, and the manner in which different councillors organise their work also differs. Councillors engage with their ward residents in a range of ways, including via letter, email, leaflet drops, telephone calls, face-to-face discussions, ward surgeries and social media. Christchurch also has two Parish Councils, Hurn and Burton, and a Parish meeting for Holdenhurst exists for Bournemouth.
60. Since the last round of national local government reorganisation in 2009, technology, and the degree to which it has been adopted by individuals and communities, has developed at a staggering rate. Though legitimate concerns around the degree to which all age groups and sectors of society have access to technology remain, the advances in our digital capability represents a significant opportunity for local councillors. Across the country, elected representatives are using technology to reach out to their communities and engage directly with the people they serve.
61. The new Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Unitary Authority plans to not only take advantage of these trends but to be at the forefront of digital evolution. Live streaming of council meetings is already commonplace nationally and the use of online transactions, information sharing platforms, and social media are being maximised.
62. The move to a unitary structure will allow the new organisation to consider how technology can be used to share and promote what is happening across the wider area of Bournemouth,

Christchurch and Poole, facilitating greater engagement in the democratic process. A fully implemented digital platform, taking advantage of excellent local connectivity, will allow members to extend their reach into the community and to interact with the public, making use of a range of technology from live streaming to bespoke, interactive apps. Online consultation could also be enhanced using interactive webcasts, allowing a wider range of participation, and service users could give feedback in real-time. Video surgeries could be conducted by councillors, reducing travel time and allowing residents with limited mobility to have their views considered.

63. The digital culture already fostered in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole has not only changed the way councillors interact with the community but has altered ways of working substantially. Anecdotal feedback from councillors has confirmed that although technology has increased the ability of residents to contact councillors, the time taken to respond has been greatly reduced: time spent in meetings has decreased with access to live streaming; the need for lengthy telephone conversations has reduced with the introduction of texts and social media; and physical visits are more productive with the use of mobile technology.
64. In response to both councillor feedback, and in recognition of the opportunity technology provides, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole will provide support to members to enhance access to mobile working devices. This support will be responsive to skills analysis and will provide targeted training to promote agile working and ensure that our elected members are equipped as true 21<sup>st</sup> century councillors with the skills, tools and equipment to be even more effective and efficient.

### **Governance Structures**

65. Currently the conurbation is served by two unitary authorities covering a common urban area, and two-tier arrangements where Dorset County Council provides upper-tier services to the residents of Christchurch. This devolved model sees residents living very close to each other raising issues with different councillors from different councils - purely because they live on different sides of the street - even though their issues may well be the same. This model is different again in Christchurch where a resident may have to deal with one councillor at a district level for housing and another councillor from Dorset County Council for home care services within the same geographical area.
66. Work will be carried out once the Structural Change Order has been made to adopt a new Constitution for the new Council, which will include the policy framework, codes and protocols and 'job descriptions' for councillors, etc.
67. It is therefore not possible to provide details of the role and functions of councillors elected to serve on the new Council, however, it is anticipated that all Councillors will:-
- collectively be the ultimate policy makers and carry out a number of strategic and corporate leadership functions;
  - represent their communities and bring their views into the Council's decision making process, i.e. become the advocate of and for their communities;
  - deal with individual casework and act as an advocate for constituents in resolving particular concerns or grievances;
  - balance different interests identified within the electoral ward and represent the ward as a whole;

- be involved in decision making;
- be available to represent the Council on other bodies;
- promote and maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics

68. The table below illustrates the possible governance arrangements, number of meetings, and potential meeting attendances that each councillor on the new Council will be expected to achieve.

69. This is calculated based on existing structures of the current councils, whilst reflecting the potential for the new authority to decide to establish some area based decision making for certain functions.

<b>Meeting Name</b>	<b>No. of Members</b>	<b>No. of meetings per annum</b>	<b>No. of attendances per annum</b>
Full Council	76	10	760
Cabinet	10	12	120
Audit and Governance	10	4	40
Children and Adult Services Appeal	7	12	84
Staffing Committee	10	6	60
Standards Committee	6	4	24
Scrutiny Committees (between 3-5)	48	6	288
Planning Committees (between 1-5 – potential for options around area committees and policy framework committees)	36	12	432
Licensing Committees (between 1-5 – potential for options around area committees and policy committees)	36	12	432
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>1808</b>

\* Using the median value for the variables shown above, the total attendances for ordinary meetings is projected to be in the region of 1808 or 24 attendances per annum per councillor. This equates to an average of two meetings per month per councillor.

70. The removal of the current two-tier system, and the consolidation of all three preceding authorities will greatly improve lines of accountability and transparency for residents. Instead of fragmented services and decision making; area based planning with amalgamated responsibility, pooled budgets, and a consistent approach to service will be provided by one authority.

71. The new local authority will also have a wider geographical remit than the existing authorities and will be better placed to take a more holistic view across the whole of the conurbation. The new authority will be bigger, with more resources and more influence at a national level, enhancing its ability to provide stronger leadership of place.
72. Leaders within the new unitary authorities will be able to make strategic decisions across administrative boundaries which reflect the way people live their lives. This will be particularly significant in relation to planning, housing and highways decisions, the implications of which frequently extend beyond administrative boundaries.
73. As part of the preparations for the creation of the new unitary authority for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, future governance arrangements are being considered that will enable elected members to operate more effectively whilst encouraging accountability, transparency and efficiency. Detailed arrangements will be considered by the shadow authority and be in place by the proposed vesting day of 1st April 2019. For the time being it is assumed that the Cabinet/Executive system will be adopted.
74. The cabinet system offers stability, particularly in the initial years of an electoral cycle, clarity and consistency of strategic direction, quick and straightforward decision making and it is relatively cost effective.
75. At present, the preceding councils operate with numerous formal committees and panels. The use of a Cabinet/Executive model (likely to be made up of ten elected members) will reduce the requirement for so many meetings, and it is anticipated that the shadow authority will streamline these significantly through the merging of panels, the redirection of agenda items to other appropriate committees, or by the transformation of existing panels into needs-led task and finish groups.
76. Arrangements for overview and scrutiny (O&S) in both the shadow authority and the new unitary authority will be supported by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS), using their experience of authorities that have undergone similar transformation, to deliver a high-quality scrutiny function.
77. Using funded support the CfPS have proposed a two-stage approach to delivery. Stage one will provide scrutiny members of the shadow authority with the framework they will need to pursue a focussed and directed work programme, and stage two will reflect on the way that scrutiny is transacted at the preceding councils to build strong and effective long-term scrutiny arrangements for the new council once it takes on its service delivery responsibilities on 1 April 2019.
78. As is common in all Councils, different approaches to O&S operate across all authorities in order to respond to their own political climate and community needs, with there being no one right way to deliver scrutiny. In reviewing O&S arrangements, maximising O&S to enable the voice and concerns of the public will be a desired outcome, in line with the four principles of good scrutiny as set out by the CfPS. This will ensure that the decision-making structure provides an effective conduit for addressing varying local needs across the conurbation.
79. Streamlining decision-making bodies from four authorities to one will release capacity to enable governance arrangements to focus on public participation that ensures localised decision-

making. This may include areas-based working such as area committees covering planning and licensing, for example.

80. Whilst assumptions as to the structure and composition of the new unitary authority are outlined above, the exact number of councillors within the Executive, scrutiny and regulatory functions will be agreed by the new Council in accordance with the new authority's adopted constitution.

## Electoral Equality & Representation

81. In terms of democratic representation, Dorset currently has 172 electoral areas (divisions and wards). These are served by 189 district council members, 96 unitary authority council members and 46 county council members. Excluding town and parish councillors, this amounts to 331 elected members across Dorset.

82. The table below indicates that the ratio of members to the electorate currently varies significantly across the nine authorities.

<b>Authority</b>	<b>Council members</b>	<b>Members per electoral area</b>	<b>Electoral areas</b>	<b>Electorate per member</b>
Bournemouth	54	3	18	2,590
Christchurch	24	2.2	11	1,592
Dorset	46	1.2	40	6,937
East Dorset	29	1.8	16	2,418
North Dorset	33	1.7	19	1,508
Poole	42	2.6	16	2,648
Purbeck	25	1.9	13	1,396
West Dorset	42	1.8	24	1,860
Weymouth and Portland	36	2.4	15	1,332

83. During the last round of local government reorganisation in 2009, many new unitary authorities reduced the number of council members per division in comparison to more established local authorities. Among the unitary authorities created in 2009, Cornwall, Northumberland and Wiltshire unitary authorities have the lowest council members per electoral area ratio (one member per division), while the other seven new authorities have a range between 1.17 and 2.

<b>Authority</b>	<b>Council members</b>	<b>Members per electoral area</b>	<b>Electoral areas</b>	<b>Electorate per member</b>
Bedford	40	1.5	27	3,167
Central Bedfordshire	59	1.9	31	3,414
Cheshire East	82	1.6	52	3,351
Cheshire West and Chester	75	1.6	46	3,469
Cornwall	123	1	122	3,215
County Durham	126	2	63	3,017
Northumberland	67	1	66	3,482
Shropshire	74	1.2	63	3,135
Wiltshire	98	1	98	3,579

84. The Future Dorset proposal anticipates that the number of elected members in a new unitary council covering the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area will be 76. This equates to a figure of 3960 electorate per member based on December 2017 data.

85. Although, in the main, the 2009 authorities discussed above chose a higher number of members in relation to the electorate (Cornwall for example at 3215 per member and Wiltshire at 3579

per member), these are generally rural communities with a broader geographical sprawling electorate than the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole submission which refers to a far more urban conurbation.

86. Therefore, the ratio adopted by similar urban authorities (using factors such as electorate per hectare) such as Bristol and Sheffield - which more closely resemble the geographical nature of the new Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole unitary authority - were considered.
87. Both Bristol and Sheffield opted for a lower number of councillors for a higher electorate than are being recommended by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. Indeed, the Boundary Commission approved Bristol's submission in 2014 for a council size of 70 members for an electorate of 323,711 (equalling 4624 per elected member); in comparison with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole's recommendation of 76 for an electorate of 301,003 (equalling 3960 per elected member). Similarly, the Commission carried out an electoral review of Sheffield between March 2014 - November 2015 to ensure electoral equality which saw a reduction in its councillors to 84 for an electorate of 397,155 (equalling 4728 per elected member).
88. Based on the information above and the forecasting of the electorate across the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area for the next five years, the proposed number of councillors who will form the new council is 76. This figure was considered and approved by the Joint Committee at its meeting on 30th January 2018.
89. In regard to warding arrangements, the Joint Committee has established a Task and Finish Group to oversee and co-ordinate recommendations for electoral arrangements. This Group has considered the issue of council size and agreed the proposal of 76, and following this recommendation, BCP Joint Committee has agreed an option for the Structural Change Order fall-back position based on existing ward boundaries. The option proposed as a fall-back position complies with statutory guidance and is a more positive position in terms of electoral equality than exists currently.
90. The Joint Committee will continue its work to consider future warding options which could form the basis of an option to inform a boundary review. This will need to ensure that proposals take account not only of electoral equality but also crucially that wards reflect a sense of community identity.

## Electorate Forecasts

91. As part of the proposed electoral boundary review first stage electorate forecasts are required for the whole of Dorset in line with anticipated housing growth by polling districts which have been included at appendix 3.
92. To provide this information it was critical that all nine councils use the same methodology and projections to ensure a consistent approach and population assumption. To ensure this, officers from Dorset County Council have worked alongside officers at Bournemouth and Poole to complete a single set of population forecasts to inform the electorate review.
93. Projections have been produced using software from PopGroup. This uses a standard cohort component methodology for projecting a population. This is the same method as used by the ONS which begins with a base population and assumptions of births, deaths and migration, adding in births, subtracting deaths and allowing for in and out migration into the area.
94. Population base is the 2016 mid-year population estimates from ONS with assumptions for fertility, mortality and migration based upon data from the last 5 years, assuming that those trends will remain the same.
95. To ensure population growth is in line with anticipated housing growth in the local area they will be constrained with anticipated dwelling completions. This approach assumes that the population will grow to meet with housing development.
96. The resulting projections were then disaggregated to meet with polling districts and the 18+ electorate population, through a proportional assumption of population distribution based upon electorate data.

## Conclusion

97. The proposal contained with this submission provides the background information and evidence to support the proposed new council size of 76. It takes into account the statutory guidance, and the need to ensure effective and convenient local government; electoral equality and the need to provide warding arrangements which reflect community identity.
98. The proposal to reduce the overall number of councils will result in leadership being clearer and less fragmented in the future. The two new authorities more closely reflect the distinctive geographies of the conurbation (Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole) and the predominantly rural part of Dorset. This will enable the new authorities' leaders to focus on the delivery of strategic ambitions and the issues that matter in both areas. The scale of the new organisations will ensure the Dorset councils have a stronger leadership presence within the region, as well as on the national stage. Finally, the establishment of two entirely new councils will offer an opportunity to build new cultures, empower the workforce, encourage leadership at all levels and model the sorts of behaviours that will enable the Dorset councils to respond more effectively to future opportunities and challenges.
99. At a local level, reorganisation will be used to enhance the role of the Elected Member, giving them the tools and capabilities to engage with their communities more effectively and more directly. Layers of cost and bureaucracy will be removed; simplifying the role of the Elected Member, encouraging accountability and transparency, improving sustainability, efficiency and productivity, and enabling partners to focus on the key outcomes that matter to local residents.