



# Future Dorset

Healthy, prosperous, vibrant, inclusive



Formal proposal to Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP  
Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government







Aerial view of Bournemouth

# Creating Future Dorset

We\* formally request agreement from the Secretary of State to replace Dorset's existing nine councils with two new unitary authorities.

**A solution**

That reduces costs and improves public services.

**An opportunity**

To stimulate growth through a global profile.

**The chance of a lifetime**

To improve people's quality of life and prosperity.

**75% of voting members across all nine Dorset councils support this proposal**

Dorset's three top-tier Councils representing the whole county, support this change, along with three districts/boroughs in which no member voted against this proposal.



Cllr John Beesley  
Leader,  
Bournemouth  
Borough Council



Cllr Rebecca Knox  
Leader, Dorset  
County Council



Cllr Graham Carr-Jones  
Leader,  
North Dorset  
District Council



Cllr Janet Walton  
Leader, Borough  
of Poole



Cllr Anthony Alford  
Leader, West  
Dorset District  
Council



Cllr Jeff Cant  
Leader, Weymouth  
& Portland  
Borough Council

\*Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset County Council, North Dorset District Council, Borough of Poole, West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council



# Our vision for Future Dorset

## Aspirational and ambitious

A place where people want to live, visit, learn and work; a place of aspiration where plans are made and ambitions achieved, with an economy that works for local people.

## Competing internationally

A place competing on an international stage, rivalling the iconic coastal economies of the world.

## Healthy, prosperous, vibrant, inclusive

A healthy and exciting place where people live independently and which contributes to the future Dorset is creating.

## Overwhelming evidence supporting this change

- Six of Dorset's nine existing councils back this proposal, with 75% of voting members in favour
- 73% of residents support change\*
- 65% of residents support proposed geographical composition\*
- 89% of businesses back change, as does the Dorset LEP\*
- £108million of savings projected in the first six years\*\*
- Evidence that all Government criteria are met\*\*\*
- Strategic focus with the Combined Authority\*\*\*
- Health and local authority planning and delivery boundaries aligned.\*\*\*

“

The new councils would have more influence within their region and on the national stage.\*

PwC report \*pg. 47

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Weymouth Harbour

\*Dorset's Councils – Reshaping Your Councils Consultation 2016 – Final report Opinion Research Services – December 2016 pg. 71, 78, 151

\*\*Dorset Councils – potential options for the reconfiguration of local authorities. Local Partnerships August 2016 pg. 3

\*\*\*Case for Change: Local government reorganisation in Dorset, PwC, December 2016 pg. 12-16, pg. 44-46, pg. 47-49



# Our proposal

## Two new unitary authorities for Dorset





# Our residents back Future Dorset

“Across both quantitative and deliberative means of consultation, there was clear and even emphatic support for moving to two councils.”

“In general, across all the areas of Dorset, there was an emphatic preference [for two councils based on these geographic boundaries] as the fairest and most balanced option...”

Opinion Research Services (ORS)\*

## Town and parish councils back Future Dorset

120 Dorset town and parish councils responded to our consultation. 72% support change, with 65% favouring this specific proposal.\*\*\*\*\*

Representative household survey

73%\*\*

support two councils instead of nine

Open questionnaire

68%\*\*\*

Representative household survey

65%\*\*\*\*

support new urban and rural councils

Open questionnaire

53%\*\*\*\*\*

\*Dorset's Councils – Reshaping Your Councils Consultation 2016 – Final report Opinion Research Services – December 2016

\*pg.20 para 1.64, para 1.66 \*\*pg.71 fig41 \*\*\*pg.40 fig7 \*\*\*\*pg.80 fig 51

\*\*\*\*\*pg.101 fig74 and pg.102 fig 75 \*\*\*\*\*pg.46 fig14 para 3.41

# Partners back Future Dorset

“Heading up the recently merged Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, I have seen first-hand the efficiencies and service transformations that are possible when sustainable solutions are realised.”

**Ben Ansell, Chief Fire Officer, Dorset & Wiltshire FRS**

“With our focus on current and future jobs needs, we equip students to get the jobs they want in growing industries. Working with just two councils to facilitate this will make it easier to match skills to our regional industries.”

**Diane Grannell, Chief Executive, Bournemouth & Poole College of Further Education**

“The number of separate local authorities in Dorset at present makes partnership working complex – the unification of services such as housing and social care would improve people’s health and well-being.”

**Tim Goodson, Chief Officer, Dorset CCG**

“We are producing some of the digital creatives who will be very significant to the creative economy, not just for the area but to the UK and indeed internationally. Clear support for the economy locally helps to put the skills of our students even more firmly on the map.”

**Stuart Bartholomew, Principal, Arts University Bournemouth**

“The Trust Board fully supports the creation of two new unitary councils in Dorset. We have concluded that this proposal is the best way forward. We look forward to working with the new Council structure in Dorset both during the transition and in the new structures going forward, as part of the Dorset Sustainability and Transformation Programme (STP).”

**Debbie Fleming, Chief Executive, Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust**

# Local MPs back Future Dorset

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We are convinced that local government in Dorset will be able to provide the crucial public services on which our constituents depend in the 2020s only if significant savings can be made in the administrative overhead before 2020. We believe that the recommendations put forward... constitute a realistic and sensible way of achieving those savings.

**Rt Hon Sir Oliver Letwin MP** (West Dorset)  
**Conor Burns MP** (Bournemouth West)  
**Michael Tomlinson MP** (Mid Dorset & North Poole)  
**Robert Symms MP** (Poole)  
**Tobias Ellwood MP** (Bournemouth East)  
**Simon Hoare MP** (North Dorset)

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“

In workshops, 89% of businesses backed change.\*

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# Business backs Future Dorset

“Dorset LEP strongly supports the creation of two new unitary councils. We expect the new Unitary Councils to form a Dorset-wide Combined Authority of which the Dorset LEP will be a member. This will facilitate better working with the Dorset LEP, a more strategic approach across Dorset and lead to increased productivity across the county.”

**Gordon Page, Chairman, Dorset LEP**

“Dorset’s strong county economy has a wide range of sectors, from manufacturing to production to service industries. Businesses want strong representation for their area and consistent policies – two councils for Dorset will help to make this happen.”

**Anthony Woodhouse, Hall & Woodhouse**

“There is a thriving business park on site. We have plans to expand that, creating more jobs for local people. Better infrastructure and inward investment co-ordination will make these plans easier to realise.”

**Paul Knight, Managing Director, Bournemouth International Airport**

“A consistent approach to infrastructure and housing planning will make the county more attractive to businesses wanting to relocate.”

**Ian Girling, DCCI**

“This proposal will help improve things further by helping plan the housing needs of the type of people who will live and work in Dorset – young families and first time buyers who want to get on the housing ladder instead of the rental sector.”

**Mandy Williams, Nationwide Building Society**

\*Dorset’s Councils – Reshaping Your Councils Consultation 2016 – Final report Opinion Research Services – December 2016 pg.151 para 7.125



# A compelling case for change

**“The Dorset councils have bold ambitions, but the county needs a structure of local government that will help to achieve them.”\***

**PriceWaterhouseCoopers**

Two natural and symbiotic unitary authorities for Dorset will create the conditions for realising Future Dorset.

They will create agile, effective, sustainable, 21st century services for our communities.

## Government requirements are met and exceeded

- Deliver improved services and outcomes for local residents
- Demonstrate improved value for money and efficiency
- Deliver significant cost savings, and show that the cost of change can be recovered over a fixed period
- Support stronger and more accountable leadership
- Demonstrate the new model is sustainable in the medium to long term, both in service delivery and financial terms.

“

There is a compelling case for local government reorganisation in Dorset.\*

PwC

\*Case for Change: Local government reorganisation in Dorset, PwC, December 2016 pg. 95

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Twin Sails Bridge, Poole



# Our Future Dorset looks like this

Healthy, prosperous, vibrant, inclusive

## Infrastructure, housing & environment in Future Dorset

- Unlocked housing sites and effective use of land assets
- Improved transport links
- Strong, cohesive voice with Government and developers
- Increased digital connectivity

“The local response to infrastructure, housing and environment issues is shaped by policies that reflect the ambitions of two, rather than nine, local authorities.”\*

## Health & well-being in Future Dorset

- Delivering Dorset’s Sustainability and Transformation Plan
- Consistent, effective and efficient delivery of health and social care services
- Health and social care market risks reduced and costs for health and social care addressed

“The proposed changes...offer the chance to redesign the relationship between health and care providers, as well as the local commissioning landscape, to deliver further benefits to local people.”\*\*

## The economy in Future Dorset

- Faster economic growth and innovation
- A world class workforce
- Enhance environmental economy based on increased natural capital value, including World Heritage Site, the Jurassic Coast
- The right conditions for inward investment
- Collaboration between councils and industry

“The proposal would ... raise productivity, attract high value employers, build a world class workforce and increase the value of Dorset’s natural capital.”\*\*\*

## Education & skills in Future Dorset

- A highly-skilled and well-trained labour market
- Education planning linked to market needs
- More effective partnerships with our universities, driving innovation and growth
- Stronger collaboration between education and business

“This...would enhance the ability of the councils to work with higher education in the county, helping them to match their offer to the skills requirements of local employers and areas of future growth.”\*\*\*\*



# Sustainability in Future Dorset



“The establishment of two new councils, and the savings that would be achieved as a result, would provide greater capacity to support people with health and care needs.\*”

Aerial view of Gillingham

PwC report \*pg. 48

\*Dorset Councils – potential options for the reconfiguration of local authorities. Local Partnerships August 2016.  
 \*\*Financial savings – The lower level of savings comes from the reduction in primarily management overheads of changing from 9 to 2 councils. The higher level of savings, of up to £66m each year, come from the redesign of service delivery to the public. This entails modernising public services, using the latest technology.

## Significant cost savings\*

- Reorganisation delivers £28m cost savings in each year
- The payback period for the investment of £25m in reorganisation is less than one year
- Transformational change could deliver savings of up to £66m each year\*\*
- Opportunity for savings to be reinvested in services for the public, in particular to support people with health and care needs.

## Council Tax harmonised

- Steady harmonisation plan
- Minimises the loss of Council Tax during a period of harmonisation in which no taxpayer would see increases greater than those accepted in the referenda thresholds.

## Improved value for money and efficiency

- Reduced overheads
- Appetite for transformation
- Optimised digital services
- Strong commercial focus
- Redesigned customer experience
- An agile workforce.

## Stronger and more accountable leadership

- Brand new councils structured around communities
- Shared place leadership
- Strategic, digitally connected councillors
- 21st century governance
- Town and Parish Councils support local decision-making.



# Efficient, co-ordinated and simplified

## Increased efficiency

Organisational redesign will facilitate an agile, data-driven and commercially-aware workforce, operating in a culture of innovation and digital empowerment. There will be increased economies of scale from fewer, larger departments and service delivery will be consolidated.

## A sustainable solution

Reorganisation means improved local government in Dorset, with public services sustainable in the long term.

## Financial savings

Savings would come not just from reduced staffing and asset overheads, but from redesigned more efficient service delivery through reorganisation.

Annual savings of up to £66m\* are achievable across both new councils, dependent on the level of transformation and service redesign adopted. This proposal ensures the least possible amount of Council Tax is forfeited across the county during the harmonisation period.

## Dorset’s Combined Authority

Working with the Combined Authority, a shared vision for Dorset can be achieved.

Two councils instead of nine means clarity over roles, decision-making and responsibilities, and provides for simplified membership of the Dorset Combined Authority.

Influence at a national level would be further strengthened through the Combined Authority, facilitating enhanced collaboration between the two new councils for key strategic issues, in particular transport, economic development, housing and land use.

## Dorset’s Sustainability and Transformation Plan

Savings generated through reorganisation would mean greater capacity to support people with health and care needs through better co-ordinated clinical services, community health provision and social care. Social care services will be aligned to the vision set out in our Sustainability and Transformation Plan, and commissioning relationships will be simplified.



# A once in a lifetime opportunity

Our proposal sets out a bold ambition for Dorset. It draws on expert analysis by three experienced independent organisations; PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Opinion Research Services and Local Partnerships. We intend to secure strategic advantage through the creation of a Combined Authority alongside this restructure of local government. Two new, 21st century councils will help Dorset build on this momentum, strengthen its voice regionally and nationally, and deliver significant savings.

## Improved services


This proposal presents the opportunity not just to reduce costs through restructuring but to transform and collaborate in order to secure and strengthen public services in Dorset. Services will be more accessible and customer services will be transformed.

Benefits will be realised throughout public services in Dorset, with more co-ordination strategically and operationally across the health and care, infrastructure, housing and education sectors.

## Stronger leadership

Two councils would mean the ability to demonstrate shared place leadership for the area, optimising the link between local government boundaries and the county's economic geography.

New councils would be better placed to work with town and parish councils, embracing proposals to set up a new Town Council for Weymouth and any other future new town or parish councils. 21st century councillors will be digitally capable, strategic and connected with their communities.



“Reorganisation offers the chance to enhance the relationships between councils, their members and their communities.\*”

PwC report \*pg. 76 para 6.2

Residents discuss possible changes with councils during one of over 40 roadshows across Dorset about the proposed changes





# Making Future Dorset happen

We are committed to achieving this vision of a bright and sustainable future for Dorset. We know we have the backing of our residents and key stakeholders.

The six councils proposing this change are committed to working together, with established town and parish councils, to achieve the stated benefits across all of Dorset. We welcome any other existing Dorset local authorities to join our implementation discussions.

We have put in place the required programme infrastructure and associated resources to deliver change.

## February 2017

- Proposal to the Secretary of State

## March 2017

- Secretary of State determines his view
- Programme Team established

## Summer 2017

- Prepare Parliamentary Orders

## December 2017

- Approval of Parliamentary Orders

## January 2018

- Implementation Executives appointed

## Throughout 2018

- Transition and preparation arrangements: services, staff and assets

## February 2019

- New councils' budgets set

## April 2019

- New councils become operational

## May 2019

- Local elections to both new councils