District Councillor's report to LMPC Council 20th. November 2017

The key recent event is the Minister having said he is minded to proceed with the 2 Unitary Authorities in Dorset. The expectation is that he will confirm this decision soon after 8th. January 2018. Bodies can make representation to him in the meantime.

There is a Joint Committee working on all aspects of implementing the Rural Dorset Unitary Authority. Purbeck DC are participating in this on the grounds that, although they oppose the Unitary, not being involved could leave it at a disadvantage when it comes to arrangements for a local presence and the structure for dealing with planning.

The Minister also stated that he would look at the Combined Authority for the geographic County of Dorset i.e. Rural Dorset and the Urban Dorset Unitaries together. This, the requirement for a Statement of Common Ground setting out a strategy for housing over a wide area and the Local Enterprise Partnership being the conduit for money for infrastructure, employment and grants for garden villages etc. means that getting Purbeck's voice heard is going to be important. The long term challenges to the integrity of the green belt are in my opinion of a high order.

A number of papers in relation to the Purbeck Local plan review have been released with many more including those on AONB and Green Belt due out with the new proposals for consultation early in 2018. The new proposed methodology for assessing housing need has dropped the expected housing numbers considerably but there still remains the tricky task of allocating whatever number finally emerges to potential sites.

One of the consequences of the Unitary Authority formation is bound to be a greater role in the provision of services to local communities by Town and Parish Councils. This is talked about at nearly every meeting I attend . There are only 18 months until the new Unitaries are due to start.

PDC are experiencing difficulties retaining or recruiting staff as a result of the Unitary situation. I would hope there is no deterioration in service.

Peter Webb