

## **Councils to Share Services**

Staff from West Dorset District Council and Weymouth and Portland Borough Council will soon find themselves working together in the biggest shake up in local government in the area for 35 years.

Weymouth and Portland councillors last night backed plans to deliver shared services across both areas.

Councillors were told how the move, which has not been attempted anywhere else in the country, would protect and improve services and save around £8.5 million over the next five years. There would be a single officer structure for both councils, including one chief executive and one management team instead of the current two.

The joint workforce would deliver services to 162,000 residents, over 6,100 businesses and the millions of visitors to the areas governed by West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council.

Both Councils have experience of successfully working together, through their pioneering Revenues & Benefits Partnership, where they have improved services and saved £200,000 each year making a total saving of £1,000,000 since the partnership began.

Weymouth and Portland Borough Council's Corporate Affairs and Continuous Improvement Brief holder, Councillor Geoff Petherick said "Local government is facing huge financial pressures, which could lead to devastating cuts in service. Although we will still face some difficult choices, by sharing our officer structures across two councils, we can make significant savings and efficiencies that can be used to help protect vital services and make improvements where needed.

In preparing the Business Case we have given consideration as to how this Partnership fits into wider arrangements for collaboration with other public sector providers across Dorset, and with Bournemouth and Poole, with the aim being to ensure that nothing prejudices further wider collaboration in the medium to long term"

## **Ends**

### **For further information please contact**

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