

OPEN LETTER TO THE DAILY ECHO

THE SUPER COUNCIL, DEMOCRACY and SERIOUS QUESTIONS

Like many people I have very serious concerns and doubts about the proposed Super Council of Christchurch, East Dorset, Poole and Bournemouth or Poolemouth as it is being called by some.

The residents of both Christchurch and East Dorset are entitled to know what is being done behind closed doors in their name and what deals are being done!

Why would Christchurch a debt free reasonably managed council wish to join with two debt ridden authorities, it makes no sense. Residents may not realise that if this proposal goes ahead all the debts are passed to the new Super Council and Christchurch assets transfer as well so our money helps pay off the debts (Not good business for Christchurch I would suggest). With the suspension of trading by the bank set up by Bournemouth Council, the Failure and cost of the Surf Reef and the millions spent on the Imax business my concerns continue to grow.

As has already been said by others Bournemouth has run out of building land so is building on car parks both Christchurch and East Dorset have a lot of green belt land and it has been known in the past for councils to change designations on land, I believe that originally the land next to the hospital was given by the Cooper Deane family for open space we now have a hotel, offices and the Crown Court built on that land. Under a new Super Council Christchurch would lose control of planning so it could be open season on our open land.

Christchurch and East Dorset between them have some of the largest contributors to Business Rates in Dorset with the airport and business parks, if as the government have stated that as they reduce grants to Local Authorities those authorities will be allowed to keep more and more of those business rates to compensate finishing at 100% under a new Super Authority we will have little or no say where it is spent, (perhaps on more grandiose schemes in Bournemouth).

Our excellent Schools will no longer be controlled by the County Council but by a committee Of Poole, Bournemouth and other councillors.

Why have only the four leaders been involved in the closed door discussions?

Why have all Conservative councillors kept silent on the matter, apart from Cllr.Dyer of East Dorset who was promptly sacked by his leader for raising concerns, is there a Conservative whip on? If so what happened to democracy and councillors speaking for the residents who elected them.

Why the haste to rush this through before the next council elections?

Why have so many senior finance managers and directors resigned from Bournemouth Council?

The Leader of Christchurch Council has stated that we will not have a behind closed doors cabinet system of Local Government in Christchurch, how can that be when all three other councils already operate a Cabinet system? Perhaps he means that Christchurch will have a small Town Council with little or no control over what happens.

All the above are serious issues and questions that the residents of Christchurch need and deserve answers to as it will change our Ancient Borough and Town forever. You have a right to be involved in whatever decisions are to be made in your name and you should be listened to by your councillors.

Cllr Colin Bungey (Independent Leader)

Christchurch Borough Council