

## REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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CCLM

### Emergency budget – members seminar

You should have all now received letters regarding the special members seminar that the Council is holding on June 28, 2010 at 6pm, following the emergency budget which is being delivered by the Chancellor on June 22, 2010. I feel this is important for all members to be briefed on the key messages from the Chancellors budget and the possible implications for Blackburn with Darwen.

### Pat on the Back

On Monday June 14, I attended the Pat on the Back awards ceremony, which was held at Ewood Park. The evening was a great success and enjoyed by all. Over 130 nominations were received of people and teams which had done exceptional or outstanding work this year. The awards recognise and value the hard work, commitment and achievements of staff across the LSP, which includes the Council, the NHS, Capita, Lancashire police, fire and rescue, Blackburn College and voluntary and community workers. Congratulations to all the teams and employees nominated and to the winners. 15 awards were presented in total and I was delighted to present the Team of the Year award to the Women's Aid Team. All winners received £700 to spend on improving their services.

### Regenerate Pennine Lancashire

Some of you may already be aware that Max Steinberg, Chief Executive, will be leaving Regenerate Pennine Lancashire at the end of June. Max has chosen to take up the post of Chief Executive at Liverpool Vision in his home town.

### 4NW update

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) announced on May 24 that it was ending central Government funding for 4NW (the regional leaders board for the north west). A debate is now underway between regional leaders regarding the merit of keeping a non-statutory regional leaders board, supported by a significantly reduced secretariat. This would draw on funding from local authorities existing subscriptions and support from the North West Development Agency (NWDA). It is argued that the Board performs an important role in providing a voice for the North West.

The future of the NWDA is also in some doubt, however post election there now appears to be a softening of view, particularly related to the northern regional development agencies (RDAs). Senior members of the coalition government have spoken of the need to rebalance the economy and transform RDAs in those parts of the country where they command the support of local authorities and business.

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## **5<sup>th</sup> Pennine Lancashire Festival of Food and Culture**

The 5<sup>th</sup> Pennine Lancashire Food Festival is being held this year and will run from August to September. The programme is currently being developed and will be available in due course. As part of the festival, Nigel Howarth is doing a food show at Ewood Park on August 8, 2010. Further details are also available at [www.penninelancashirefestivals.com](http://www.penninelancashirefestivals.com)

### **Members seminar**

A members seminar is being held on October 26, 2010. All Pennine Lancashire members will be invited to the seminar, which is being held at the ACE centre in Nelson. The seminar will provide opportunity for all members to be updated on progress of the multi area agreement (MAA) and wider Pennine Lancashire issues. A number of guest speakers have been invited to the event including Robert Hough, Chair of the NWDA.

### **Employment and skills board update**

The Employment and skills board met in May and signed off the terms of reference, position statement and the interim work and skills plan. Work will continue over the summer on refining the 16-19 commissioning statement for 2011/12 before finally producing the Commissioning Plan. This will identify what provision will be procured in the area. In May, the NWDA also held an Employment and skills board workshop and it was clear that other areas in the region are tackling similar issues to us.

### **AGMA (Association of Greater Manchester Authorities) – neighbouring authorities joint working**

The Council is currently looking at closer working opportunities with AGMA. At the end of March, Ministers gave their approval to the submission for the creation of a Combined GM Authority. AGMA are keen to engage with neighbouring authorities to understand how other areas can contribute to their City Region growth agenda. As such a number of groups have been set up to explore the potential benefits of closer collaboration based on the Greater Manchester Strategy priorities. These have been identified as: skills, transport, public service reform, inward investment, spatial planning, and the environment.

### **Visit to university sites**

At the end of May, PLACE hosted a visit from Mark Allanson, Regional Consultant for the North from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and Gordon McKenzie, Director from Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). The visitors met with the principals from both Blackburn and Burnley universities, council officers and HEEL. The visit provided a valuable opportunity to highlight the role of the universities in supporting economic growth and the MAA request for increased higher education places.