

# Public Document Pack

## Council Forum

Thursday, 14th March, 2024

6.30 pm

Council Chamber, Blackburn Town Hall

[Link to Webcast](#)

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### AGENDA

1. **Prayers by Mayor's Chaplain followed by Welcome and Apologies**
2. **Minutes Of The Previous Meeting**  
**Finance Council Minutes** **4 - 12**
3. **Declarations of Interest**  
**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FORM** **13**
4. **Mayoral Communications**
5. **Council Forum**  
To consider any questions from members of the public under Procedure Rule 12.
6. **Motions**  
To consider the following Motion received under Procedure Rule 10:  
  
BWD Council is proud to be viewed as one of the best examples of community cohesion in the country and welcomes the recent opportunity for officers of the council to be able to showcase examples of best practice on an international stage. Sadly, however, this accolade occurs at a time when examples of race hate are growing in society and are becoming increasingly common in public discourse and this is a cause for serious concern among the communities of the borough.  
  
Tell Mama, the public service that records and monitors anti-Muslim incidents, has recorded a 335% increase in anti Muslim hate cases in the last 4 months compared to the similar period in 2022/2023 and the recent verbal attacks on the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, by senior members of the Conservative Party set an alarming precedent in the run-up to what is likely to be an intense set of elections in 2024. At

the same time, the number of recorded anti-semitic incidents is growing, often accompanied by physical violence and this is leaving some members of the Jewish community afraid to walk out on the streets of their towns and cities.

Islamophobic and anti semitic incidents and rhetoric of this kind have no place in the political arena or anywhere in public life in the UK and we call on the Chief Executive to write to the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, and Sir Kier Starmer, leader of the opposition asking them to ensure that any examples of such rhetoric within their parties are treated with the utmost seriousness and that politicians who indulge in this kind of rhetoric are not tolerated within the mainstream political parties.

**Moved by Councillor Phil Riley**  
**Seconded by Councillor Quesir Mahmood**

- |            |   |                      |
|------------|---|----------------------|
| <b>7.</b>  | <b>Devolution to Lancashire - Proposal to create the Lancashire Combined County Authority<br/>BwD Council Forum - LCCA v1.1<br/>Appendix 1 Final Summary of Consultation and Consituent Councils' Response<br/>Appendix 2 Lancashire Devolution Final Proposal_4 March PM<br/>Appendix 3 LCCA Devolution Deal Consultation Executive Summary Report March 2024- PUBLIC<br/>Appendix 4 Final Summary of Communications and Engagement Activity<br/>Appendix 5 Final EIA March 2024</b> | <b>14 - 148</b>      |
| <b>8.</b>  | <b>Mayoralty 2024-25<br/>Mayoralty - from 2024-25</b>   | <b>149 -<br/>150</b> |
| <b>9.</b>  | <b>Review of Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committees<br/>Overview and Scrutiny Report</b>  | <b>151 -<br/>156</b> |
| <b>10.</b> | <b>Updates from Other Committees<br/>Overview and Scrutiny Committees Update March 2024</b>   | <b>157 -<br/>158</b> |
| <b>11.</b> | <b>Reports of the Executive Members with Portfolios</b>   |                      |

|             |   |                      |
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| <b>11.1</b> | <b>Leader</b>   |                      |
|             | <b>Leader's Report 14.3.24</b>  | <b>159 -<br/>160</b> |
| <b>11.2</b> | <b>Report of the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education</b>    |                      |
|             | <b>Report of the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education</b>    | <b>161 -<br/>163</b> |
| <b>11.3</b> | <b>Report of the Executive Member for Growth &amp; Development</b>                |                      |
|             | <b>G&amp;D 14th March 2024</b>  | <b>164 -<br/>170</b> |
| <b>11.4</b> | <b>Report of the Executive Member for Public Health, Prevention and Wellbeing</b> |                      |
|             | <b>Report of the Executive Member for Public Health and Wellbeing</b>             | <b>171 -<br/>173</b> |
| <b>11.5</b> | <b>Report of the Executive Member for Digital and Customer Services</b>           |                      |
|             | <b>Report of the Executive Member for Digital and Customer Services</b>           | <b>174 -<br/>176</b> |
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|             | <b>Report of the Executive Member for Adult Social Care &amp; Health</b>          | <b>177 -<br/>179</b> |
| <b>11.7</b> | <b>Report of the Executive Member for Environment &amp; Operations</b>            |                      |
|             | <b>Report of the Executive Member for Environmental Services</b>                  | <b>180 -<br/>182</b> |
| <b>11.8</b> | <b>Report of the Executive Member for Finance and Governance</b>                  |                      |
|             | <b>Final Report of the Executive Member for Finance and Governance 04.03.2024</b> | <b>183 -<br/>185</b> |
| <b>12.</b>  | <b>Questions from Members</b>   |                      |
|             | To consider any questions received from Members under Procedure Rule 11.          |                      |

Date Published: Wednesday, 06 March 2024  
Denise Park, Chief Executive

Public Document Pack **Agenda Item 2**  
**FINANCE COUNCIL**  
**Monday, 26 February 2024**

**PRESENT** –*The Mayor Councillor Parwaiz Akhtar, Councillors , Casey, Connor, Floyd, Gee, Gunn, Hardman, Harling, Hussain, Khan, Khonat, Liddle, Mahmood, Marrow, McGurk, Rigby, Riley, Shorrocks, Sidat, Slater, Slater, Slater, Slater, Smith, Smith, Talbot, Taylor, Fielding, Humphrys, Imtiaz, Khan, Ali, Raja, Russell, Whittingham, Baldwin, Desai, Jackson, McCaughran, Gibson and Shaw.*

**RESOLUTIONS**

**58 Prayers by the Mayor's Chaplain, followed by Welcome and Apologies**

The Deputy Chief Executive read out the notice convening the meeting.

There then followed Prayers by the Mayor's Chaplain.

Apologies were received from Councillors Akhtar H, Hussain I, Hussain S, Brookfield, Patel A, Patel Alf, Patel S, Desai S, Fazal, and Irfan.

**59 Minutes of the Council Forum Meeting held on 25th January 2024**

**RESOLVED** – The Minutes of the Council Forum Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

**60 Declarations of interest**

No Declarations of Interest were submitted.

**61 Mayoral Communications**

The Mayor reported on events he had attended since the last meeting, in particular, Holocaust Memorial Day and Accrington Pals Service.

The Mayor also referred to the forthcoming Mayor's Ball being held at King George's Hall on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2024, with ticket sales having gone very well with over 250 people expected to attend.

**62 Pay Policy Statement 2024-25**

A report was submitted which updated the Finance Council and shared information relating to salary payments made to employees in Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's employment during 2023-2024. Details of the proposed Pay Policy to be applied in the forthcoming financial year, 2024-2025, were also set out in the report. The report also included details of the Chief Executive and Chief Officers pay scales and the range of salaries across the whole organisation during this period of time. The data was extracted and collated on 31 December 2023.

**RESOLVED** – That Finance Council approve the Pay Policy Statement for

2024-25 as set out in Appendix A.

**63 The Robustness of Estimates 2024-25 and the Adequacy of Reserves**

Finance Council received a report on the robustness of the Council's budget estimates for 2024/25 and the adequacy of financial reserves in accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003.

Members were reminded that under Section 25 there was a statutory requirement on the Council's Chief Financial Officer to report on:

a) the robustness of estimates made for the purposes of the calculations; and b) the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

Members therefore needed to have regard to the report when making decisions on the 2024/25 Budget (Revenue Budget and Capital Programme) and the associated level of Council Tax.

**RESOLVED –**

Finance Council considerED and haD regard to the statements from the Strategic Director Finance and Resources (as the Council's statutory finance officer) as provided at Appendix A and B when determining the budget (Revenue Budget and Capital Programme) and the level of Council Tax for 2024/25.

**64 General Revenue Fund Budget 2024-25 (including update to Financial Strategy 2022-25)**

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance, Councillor Vicky McGurk, on behalf of the Labour Group, presented proposals on the General Revenue Budget 2024/25 (including an update on the Financial Strategy 2022/25).

The report set out the proposed General Fund Revenue Budget for 2024/25. A report elsewhere on the Agenda for the meeting provided details of the proposed Capital Programme for 2024/25.

The report set out details of the Autumn Statement, the Local Government Finance Policy Statement and information on the Local Government Finance Settlement, details of which were confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on 5th February 2024.

The report gave extensive information on the challenging national economic backdrop and the cost pressures faced, and the Council's budget approach, and whilst the proposed budget for 2024/25 was balanced, there remained a budget gap of c£13.2m to 2026/27, and details were provided of the measures to deal with the budget gap.

In accordance with the Local Government (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, which came into force on 25th February 2014, the Council was required to record in the minutes of a budget decision meeting the names of persons who cast a vote for or against the decision or who abstained from voting.

*The report contained the following recommendations, which were voted on in conjunction with the recommendations in the Capital Programme report, following debate on both items.*

## **RESOLVED –**

Finance Council is recommended to:-

- a) Note the requirement for the Council to produce a Productivity Plan for publication on the Council's website by July 2024;
- b) acknowledge the impact of the increase in the Real/National Living Wage as set out below and note that a report on the impact of this on the hourly rates and contract changes for Social Care Providers for 2024/25 will be submitted to the Executive Board in due course;
- c) approve the use of the High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Funding block in 2024/25 as set out at Appendix B;
- d) approve the service investment proposals as set out in the report;
- e) approve the savings proposals as set out at Appendix C;
- f) note the estimated balance of reserves as at 31st March 2025 as shown at Appendix D;
- g) approve the General Fund Budget Requirement for 2024/25 as set out at Appendix E to this report;
- h) require each Portfolio to operate within the individual Portfolio Controllable Budgets for 2024/25 as set out at Appendix E and that these be cash limited and subject to regular monitoring and control;
- i) approve an increase in the general Council Tax of 2.99% (reflecting a weekly increase of £1.02p for Band D Council Tax payers and of £0.68p for Band A Council Tax payers);
- j) approve an additional increase in Council Tax of 2.00% to contribute towards the additional costs of Adult Social Care;
- k) note the update to the Financial Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan for 2022/25 as set out Appendix G and note that a further report on the implementation of the Strategy will be submitted to the Executive Board in June 2024.

## **65 Capital Programme (including Capital Strategy) 2024-27**

The report submitted sought approval for the 2024/25 - 2026/27 Capital Strategy, set out in Appendix 1 and Capital Programme, set out in Appendix 6.

The Capital Strategy gave a high-level overview of how the Council's capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services, along with an overview of how associated risks were managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

Decisions made on capital and treasury management would have financial consequences for the Authority for many years into the future. They were therefore subject to both a national regulatory framework and to a local policy framework, summarised in the report.

In accordance with the Local Government (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, which came into force on 25th February 2014, the Council was required to record in the minutes of a budget decision meeting the names of persons who cast a vote for or against the decision or who abstained from voting.

*The recommendations in the report were then voted on in conjunction with the recommendations in the Revenue Budget Report:*

## **FOR**

*Akhtar P, Khan S, Whittingham, Raja, Shaw, Gibson, Humphrys, Fielding, Floyd, Harling, Smith D, Khan Z, Talbot, Hussain M, Smith J, Riley, Mahmood, Gunn, McGurk, McCaughran, Jackson, Casey, Imtiaz, Taylor, Shorrock and Liddle.*

## **AGAINST**

*Marrow, Connor, Russell, Slater Ju, Baldwin, Slater Jacq, Slater N, Slater Jo, Gee, Hardman and Rigby.*

## **ABSTAIN**

*Sidat, Khonat, Ali, Desai M.*

The recommendations contained in the reports at Agenda Items 7&8 were therefore carried.

## **RESOLVED -**

- 2.1. approve the Capital Strategy for 2024/27 (Appendix 1), including:
- a) agree to the Asset Review (Phase 1) interventions as set out in the Strategy;
  - b) delegate authority to the Growth Programme Director, in consultation with the Deputy Director Legal and Governance, to implement the interventions referred to in 2.1(a) above;
  - c) the Council's Capitalisation Policy, as outlined in Appendix 2;
  - d) the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement, which determines the Council's policy for repayment of debt, noting that the policy is subject to the outcome of a current Government consultation. A further report will be presented if required following the consultation outcome. (Appendix 3);
  - e) the proposed Prudential Indicators for the forthcoming year (Appendix 4);
  - f) the proposed Investment Strategy for 2024/25, as outlined in Appendix 5;

and

2.2. Approve the proposed Capital Programme for 2024/25, as outlined in Appendix 6 and Appendix 6A.

2.3. Note the indicative programmes for 2025/26 to 2026/27 as shown in Appendix 6 and acknowledge that these will be subject to further review as part of the development of future years' capital programmes.

2.4. Delegate authority to the Strategic Director Finance and Resources to determine the most appropriate method of financing the capital programme.

## **66 Council Tax 2024-25**

A report was submitted on the Council's requirement to set amounts of Council

Tax before 11<sup>th</sup> March in the financial year preceding that for which it was set.

In setting its Council Tax requirement, the Council took into account any funding from reserves, income it expected to raise and general funding it would receive from Government as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement.

The Council was also required to set a basic amount of Council Tax for the financial year 2024/25. The Council Tax was set on the basis of:

- a) The precept on the Collection Fund issued by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire.
- b) The precept on the Collection Fund issued by the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority.
- c) The Borough Council's precept on the Collection Fund, which is dependent on two factors: (i) Its Council Tax requirement, and (ii) The precepts issued by the seven Parish / Town Councils.

The Council was recommended to approve the draft resolution setting the Council Tax for 2024/25, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report submitted and in also in the Appendix to these Minutes.

In accordance with the Local Government (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, which came into force on 25th February 2014, the Council was required to record in the minutes of a budget decision meeting the names of persons who cast a vote for or against the decision or who abstained from voting.

Following discussion, Finance Council moved to a recorded vote, with Councillors voting as follows:

**FOR**



*Ali, Akhtar P, Khan S, Whittingham, Raja, Shaw, Gibson, Humphrys, Fielding, Floyd, Harling, Smith D, Khan Z, Talbot, Hussain M, Smith J, Riley, Mahmood, Gunn, McGurk, McCaughran, Jackson, Casey, Imtiaz, Taylor, Shorrocks and Liddle.*

**AGAINST**

*Marrow, Connor, Russell, Slater Ju, Baldwin, Slater Jacq, Slater N, Slater Jo, Gee, Hardman and Rigby.*

**ABSTAIN**

*Sidat, Khonat, and Desai M.*

**RESOLVED –**

That the draft resolution setting the Council Tax for 2024/25, be approved as set out in Appendix 1 of the report submitted and in also in the Appendices to these Minutes.

Signed at a meeting of the Council Forum

On 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024

(being the ensuing meeting on the Finance Council) by

MAYOR

### Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

#### Draft Council Tax Resolution 2024/25 – Finance Council 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024

#### The Council is recommended to resolve as follows:

1. That it be noted that on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2022, the Council calculated the Council Tax Base for the year 2023/24 in accordance with regulations made under Section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the Act):
  - a) 37,069.75 being the Council Tax Base for the whole of the Council area (Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Act); and
  - b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates, as detailed in Appendix 2.
2. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
  - a) £486,872,424 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) (a) to (f) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
  - b) £417,309,028 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) (a) to (d) of the Act.
  - c) £69,563,396 being the amount by which the aggregate at 2 (a) above exceeds the aggregate at 2 (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
  - d) £1,876.55 being the amount at 2 (c) above (Item R) divided by the amount at 1(a) above (Item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
  - e) £186,396.31 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (see Appendix 2).
  - f) £1,871.52 Being the amount at 2 (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 2 (e) above by Item T (1 (a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.

3. That it be noted that for the year 2024/25 the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Lancashire has issued a precept to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as indicated in the tables below.
4. That it be noted that for the year 2024/25 the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority has issued a precept to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as indicated in the tables below, however at the time of writing this report, the precept had yet to be presented to the Lancashire Fire Authority meeting (scheduled for Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024).
5. That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the tables below as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2024/24 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

a) Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

| <u>Part of the Council's Area</u>     | <u>Valuation Bands</u> |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                                       | <u>A</u>               | <u>B</u>  | <u>C</u>  | <u>D</u>  | <u>E</u>  | <u>F</u>  | <u>G</u>  | <u>H</u>  |
| Eccleshill Parish                     | £1,262.95              | £1,473.45 | £1,683.94 | £1,894.43 | £2,315.41 | £2,736.40 | £3,157.38 | £3,788.86 |
| Livesey Parish                        | £1,253.57              | £1,462.50 | £1,671.43 | £1,880.36 | £2,298.22 | £2,716.08 | £3,133.93 | £3,760.72 |
| North Turton Parish                   | £1,266.05              | £1,477.06 | £1,688.07 | £1,899.08 | £2,321.10 | £2,743.12 | £3,165.13 | £3,798.16 |
| Pleasington Parish                    | £1,251.47              | £1,460.04 | £1,668.62 | £1,877.20 | £2,294.36 | £2,711.51 | £3,128.67 | £3,754.40 |
| Tockholes Parish                      | £1,278.49              | £1,491.57 | £1,704.65 | £1,917.73 | £2,343.89 | £2,770.05 | £3,196.22 | £3,835.46 |
| Yate and Pickup Bank Parish           | £1,262.43              | £1,472.84 | £1,683.24 | £1,893.65 | £2,314.46 | £2,735.27 | £3,156.08 | £3,787.30 |
| Darwen Town Council                   | £1,256.00              | £1,465.33 | £1,674.67 | £1,884.00 | £2,302.67 | £2,721.33 | £3,140.00 | £3,768.00 |
| All other parts of the Council's area | £1,247.68              | £1,455.63 | £1,663.57 | £1,871.52 | £2,287.41 | £2,703.31 | £3,119.20 | £3,743.04 |

b) Major Precepting Authorities

| <u>Precepting Authority</u>        | <u>Valuation Bands</u> |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|                                    | <u>A</u>               | <u>B</u> | <u>C</u> | <u>D</u> | <u>E</u> | <u>F</u> | <u>G</u> | <u>H</u> |
| Lancashire Police Authority        | £175.60                | £204.87  | £234.13  | £263.40  | £321.93  | £380.47  | £439.00  | £526.80  |
| Lancashire Combined Fire Authority | £56.49                 | £65.90   | £75.32   | £84.73   | £103.56  | £122.39  | £141.22  | £169.46  |

c) Aggregate Council Tax

| <u>Part of the Council's Area</u>     | <u>Valuation Bands</u> |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                                       | <u>A</u>               | <u>B</u>  | <u>C</u>  | <u>D</u>  | <u>E</u>  | <u>F</u>  | <u>G</u>  | <u>H</u>  |
| Eccleshill Parish                     | £1,495.04              | £1,744.22 | £1,993.39 | £2,242.56 | £2,740.90 | £3,239.26 | £3,737.60 | £4,485.12 |
| Livesey Parish                        | £1,485.66              | £1,733.27 | £1,980.88 | £2,228.49 | £2,723.71 | £3,218.94 | £3,714.15 | £4,456.98 |
| North Turton Parish                   | £1,498.14              | £1,747.83 | £1,997.52 | £2,247.21 | £2,746.59 | £3,245.98 | £3,745.35 | £4,494.42 |
| Pleasington Parish                    | £1,483.56              | £1,730.81 | £1,978.07 | £2,225.33 | £2,719.85 | £3,214.37 | £3,708.89 | £4,450.66 |
| Tockholes Parish                      | £1,510.58              | £1,762.34 | £2,014.10 | £2,265.86 | £2,769.38 | £3,272.91 | £3,776.44 | £4,531.72 |
| Yate and Pickup Bank Parish           | £1,494.52              | £1,743.61 | £1,992.69 | £2,241.78 | £2,739.95 | £3,238.13 | £3,736.30 | £4,483.56 |
| Darwen Town Council                   | £1,488.09              | £1,736.10 | £1,984.12 | £2,232.13 | £2,728.16 | £3,224.19 | £3,720.22 | £4,464.26 |
| All other parts of the Council's area | £1,479.77              | £1,726.40 | £1,973.02 | £2,219.65 | £2,712.90 | £3,206.17 | £3,699.42 | £4,439.30 |

Town and Parish Council Precepts

| <u>Parish / Town Council</u> | <u>2023/24</u>   |                   |                  |                                     | <u>2024/25</u>   |                   |                  |                                     | <u>Council Tax Increase / (Reduction)</u><br>Council Tax Band D<br><u>2024/25 less 2023/24</u> |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
|                              | <u>Tax Base</u>  | <u>Precepts</u>   | <u>Grant</u>     | <u>Council Tax</u><br><u>Band D</u> | <u>Tax Base</u>  | <u>Precepts</u>   | <u>Grant</u>     | <u>Council Tax</u><br><u>Band D</u> |  |
|                              |                  | £                 | £                | £                                   |                  | £                 | £                | £                                   | £  |
| Eccleshill Parish            | 92.44            | 2,429.00          | 413.50           | 26.28                               | 112.89           | 2,586.50          | 413.50           | 22.91                               | (3.37)   |
| Livesey Parish               | 2,335.57         | 19,665.00         | 1,371.00         | 8.42                                | 2,567.59         | 22,697.00         | 1,371.00         | 8.84                                | 0.42   |
| North Turton Parish          | 1,778.74         | 32,159.00         | 1,241.00         | 18.08                               | 1,772.68         | 48,859.00         | 1,241.00         | 27.56                               | 9.48   |
| Pleasington Parish           | 259.25           | 1,450.00          | 0.00             | 5.59                                | 255.06           | 1,450.00          | 0.00             | 5.68                                | (0.09)   |
| Rockholes Parish             | 207.90           | 9,010.96          | 146.00           | 43.34                               | 204.93           | 9,468.81          | 146.00           | 46.21                               | 2.87   |
| Yate and Pickup Bank Parish  | 145.82           | 3,227.00          | 260.00           | 22.13                               | 146.41           | 3,240.00          | 260.00           | 22.13                               | 0.00   |
| Darwen Town Council          | 7,722.97         | 98,095.00         | 23,905.00        | 12.70                               | 7,858.13         | 98,095.00         | 23,905.00        | 12.48                               | (0.22)   |
| <b>TOTAL / AVERAGE</b>       | <b>12,542.69</b> | <b>164,384.02</b> | <b>27,336.50</b> | <b>4.57</b>                         | <b>12,917.69</b> | <b>186,396.31</b> | <b>27,336.50</b> | <b>5.03</b>                         | <b>0.46</b>  |

## DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

**Members attending a Council, Committee, Board or other meeting with a personal interest in a matter on the Agenda must disclose the existence and nature of the interest and, if it is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or an Other Interest under paragraph 16.1 of the Code of Conduct, should leave the meeting during discussion and voting on the item.**

**Members declaring an interest(s) should complete this form and hand it to the Democratic Services Officer at the commencement of the meeting and declare such an interest at the appropriate point on the agenda.**

MEETING:                      **COUNCIL FORUM**

DATE:                              **14<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024**

AGENDA ITEM NO.:

DESCRIPTION (BRIEF):

NATURE OF INTEREST:

DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY/OTHER (delete as appropriate)

SIGNED :

PRINT NAME:

(Paragraphs 8 to 17 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the Council refer)



**REPORT OF:** Leader of the Council

**TO:** Council Forum

**ON:** 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024

## Devolution to Lancashire - Proposal to create the Lancashire Combined County Authority

### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To seek approval of the Proposal to create the Lancashire Combined County Authority for the areas of Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Council and Blackburn with Darwen Council.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Council Forum agrees to:

- i. Consider the outcomes of the consultation on the draft Proposal published in November 2023, as set out in this report and its appendices;
- ii. Approve the updated Proposal (the Proposal) attached at Appendix 2 to this report, taking into consideration and having due regard to the consultation responses and the Public Sector Equality Duty, to create the Lancashire Combined County Authority (LCCA) for the areas of Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Council and Blackburn with Darwen Council;
- iii. Note how the Proposal has been amended to take account of the results of the Consultation, as set out in this report and in more detail within Appendix 2 (the Summary of the Consultation and the Constituent Councils' Response), Appendix 3 (Executive Summary of the Ipsos Consultation Report), and Appendix 4 (the Summary of Communications and Engagement Activity);
- iv. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive to submit the Proposal to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (Secretary of State) after consultation with the Chief Executives of the other two constituent councils to confirm that all constituent councils approve the amended proposal for submission;
- v. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive to approve any typographical or technical amendments to the Proposal which the Chief Executives of the other two constituent councils also agree on, on behalf of Blackburn with Darwen Council, prior to submission; and
- vi. Consent to the making of the necessary Regulations to create the Lancashire Combined County Authority in accordance with the arrangements and principles set out in the report, and delegates to the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council, and subject to the approval of the other two Constituent Councils, final approval of the draft Regulations, subject to those regulations reflecting the principles agreed in the Proposal document and this report.

### 3. BACKGROUND

Devolution offers the opportunity for local areas, under certain conditions, to secure powers and funding devolved from Central Government. This allows the decisions in respect of those powers and funds to be made by local representatives much closer to the electorate and more informed about local issues. In November 2023, Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Council and Blackburn with Darwen Council (the 'Constituent Councils') each unanimously agreed to undertake statutory consultation on a proposal to establish the Lancashire Combined County Authority ('LCCA') across Lancashire, Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen, in accordance with the provisions of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 ("the Act"). This consultation ran for

a period of 8 weeks from 1 December 2023 to 26 January 2024.

To progress the area's devolution deal, under the legislation, the three Constituent Councils must submit to the Government a LCCA Proposal ('the Proposal') that takes into account the results of the consultation and thereby the views of residents and other stakeholders. It is important to note that the obligation on the Constituent Councils under the Act is to carry out a consultation "across the proposed area" and consider the results of that consultation. This is a requirement for each Constituent Council to consider all of the consultation responses not just those provided in their own area.

A summary of the key points raised in the consultation is set out below, and a full consideration of the consultation responses is set out at Appendix 1 and must be considered in full alongside the summary of the Ipsos Consultation Report at Appendix 3 in deciding how to proceed.

The Proposal has now been amended to take account of the outcomes of that consultation. The Proposal is attached at Appendix 2, and Council is now asked to give final approval to the Proposal and agree that it be formally submitted to the Secretary of State subject to the delegations set out above which are required to ensure submission can be made after all three Councils (which will form the Constituent Councils of the LCCA) have approved the Proposal. Agreeing to submit the Proposal at this meeting is key as otherwise it risks the timetable to establish the LCCA in the autumn of this year.

A report in substantively similar terms to this one is being presented to all three Constituent Councils.

#### **4. Context**

In February 2022, the Government published its White Paper on Levelling Up, a significant set of proposals which look to address geographical disparities in funding, productivity and growth across England. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act received Royal Assent in October 2023 and paved the way for the creation of new Combined County Authorities.

Securing a devolution deal has been a long-standing ambition in Lancashire, Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen. Devolution can deliver a range of strategic benefits for the LCCA area including helping to address years of historically low investment and providing a platform for accelerated growth.

The establishment of a LCCA would result in a significant step forward in the capacity and ability for the wider Lancashire area to lead on delivering improvements and investments in the LCCA area. The existing County, Unitary and District Councils in Lancashire will continue to operate, and the proposed LCCA would provide a single body for the whole area to champion its interests, deliver on local priorities and provide greater local accountability and decision-making powers, working in partnership with business and public service providers including District Councils. It would also bring in an initial £20m capital funding in the current Spending Review period to support innovation led growth and net zero ambitions across Lancashire. Evidence shows that combined authorities are just the start in a progressive programme to develop trusted partner status with Central Government, and secure further devolution opportunities for Lancashire.

Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Council and Blackburn with Darwen Council agreed to cooperate at pace on the negotiation of a new devolution deal that would cover their areas and was proposed to be delivered through establishment of a non-mayoral Combined County Authority.

A statement of intent to work towards a devolution deal was signed at Lancaster Castle on 26 November 2023. Following this agreement, a draft proposal document was developed and presented to each of the three Constituent Councils to approve as the basis for a consultation.

Through the work done to date on the proposed creation of a LCCA, the Constituent Councils

have enhanced their standing and status with a range of key organisations at both regional and Lancashire level. The Constituent Councils are now well positioned with Government and aim to build on this elevated status and relationship through successive deals.

## 5. Consultation

In November 2023<sup>1</sup> the Constituent Councils approved the draft Proposal and agreed to formally consult upon the draft Proposal with the residents and stakeholders.

The Constituent Councils subsequently undertook statutory consultation on the Proposal to establish the LCCA across the whole area. This consultation launched on 1st December 2023 and ran to 26th January 2024. The Constituent Councils designed the consultation questions, with Ipsos commissioned to analyse responses and to provide a report of feedback received. A summary of the Ipsos report is attached at Appendix 3. and should be considered in deciding how to proceed alongside the analysis at Appendix 2.

An online consultation portal was established by the Constituent Councils. It included a copy of the proposal document, a summary of the deal, what it would mean, the benefits and an explanation about how the proposed deal would build on the pre-existing strengths of the area.

The communications strategy for the Consultation focused on driving visitors to the website and engaging through in-person events across the proposed Combined County Authority area. Communication channels included media releases, social media activity, newsletters, stakeholder engagement via email, in person and event communications, and internal communications and events. A summary of consultation and engagement activity is attached at Appendix 4. The following points outline the performance across the different communication channels.

- Coverage by regional television, radio and other news outlets resulted in more than 100 media reports;
- Engagement with more than 1,500 individuals at over 50 events;
- 16,825 unique visits to the devolution consultation website; and
- our best performing social media channels were Facebook, reaching over 167,000 views and 3,627 clicks to the website, and LinkedIn with over 134,000 views and 3,625 clicks to the website.

In total, 1,881 responses were received within the 8 week consultation period. This included 1,695 responses from individuals and 186 responses from businesses, organisations and representative groups. Full details on the results of the consultation are included within the Ipsos Consultation Report which is summarised at Appendix 3 which includes details of where to access the full report) and a Summary of the Consultation together with the Constituent Councils' Response at Appendix 1.

Responses to the consultation came from residents from all areas. The consultation survey was self-selecting, therefore no area was specifically targeted, however there is a good split of responses from all areas of the three Constituent Councils and no one area is over represented. The overall number of responses achieved was slightly higher than expected and similar to some recent Level 3 Mayoral deals e.g., York and North Yorkshire, 1,971 responses.

Details of the demographics of respondents are available in the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) at Appendix 5. In summary:

- 50% of respondents were Male, 42% Female, 1% non-binary, and 7% preferred not to say.
- Those aged 45 to 64 had a higher response rate to the consultation when compared to the resident population. Those aged 24 and below had a lower response rate when

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<sup>1</sup> Council approval dates; Lancashire County Council on 27<sup>th</sup> November, Blackpool Council on 29<sup>th</sup> November and Blackburn with Darwen on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023.



compared to the resident population.

- In terms of the ethnic group of respondents, the proportion of White respondents (87%) was higher than the proportion of ethnic minority community respondents (4%) when compared to the resident population.
- 30% of respondents listed their religion as None. 46% listed their religion as Christian, and 2% of respondents listing their religion as Muslim.

Analysis undertaken as part of the EIA (attached at Appendix 5) provides a summary of findings from the protected characteristic groups. In addition to the consideration of protected characteristics and/or Groups within the EIA, as required by the Equality Act 2010, the Council has also considered the impact of the Proposal on other groups and individuals, in certain cases in line with other statutory duties. These are outlined in the EIA section of this report, along with the actual or potential positive and/or negative outcomes and impacts on those groups and/or individuals.

### **Feedback on the consultation process**

The Ipsos Consultation Report sets out that some participants raised issues about aspects of the consultation process including that the consultation period was considered to have been inadequate, questions could only be answered in a way that suggested support for the proposal, the proposals were vague and there was insufficient effort made to communicate with people. The Constituent Councils are content that the consultation was undertaken lawfully, and in line with the Gunning principles.

There is no statutory minimum period for a public consultation. Due to the Christmas holiday period an additional two weeks was factored into the length of the consultation, which ran from 1 December 2023 to 26 January 2024, a period of 8 weeks. This was a sufficient period for the consultation which is evident from the extent of responses received.

There were both closed questions, where respondents could indicate from strong agreement to strong disagreement with the Proposal. The consultation document also allowed for free text responses in which respondents could include any response at length, and it is therefore not correct to suggest that responses were in some way restricted in nature.

The Proposal sets out the intentions of the proposed LCCA in relation to the various functions that the Constituent Councils seek to be devolved. Should the LCCA be formed, more detailed plans will be developed across the thematic areas in formulating the policy position of the proposed LCCA. These detailed plans will, where appropriate, be subject to further consultation. Decisions required in the planning of the proposed LCCA will be taken publicly by the Constituent Councils, ensuring the process is transparent.

## **6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

### **Key findings and recommendations**

Overall, the consultation findings outlined in the Ipsos Consultation Report summarised at Appendix 3 are largely positive, demonstrating a broad support for the proposed devolution. This support is reflected in each of the eight thematic areas set out in the consultation, as well as in the comments received. The results demonstrate particularly strong support for the proposals from stakeholder organisations, including businesses in Lancashire. There are therefore positive grounds for taking forward the Proposal document and making a formal submission to government.

As evidence that more consultees agree than disagree with the proposal, net agreement from those who completed a response form is positive for each of the priority areas consulted on. For the eight priority areas this is as follows:

- Innovation, Trade and Investment: 59% agreed with the proposals for Innovation, Trade and Investment, compared to 29% disagreeing (+30).
- Skills: 64% agreed with the proposals for Skills, compared to 25% disagreeing (+39).

- Transport: 62% agreed with the proposals for Transport, compared to 27% disagreeing (+35).
- Net Zero and Climate Change: 56% agreed with the proposals for Net zero and climate change, compared to 28% disagreeing (+28).
- Digital and Cyber: 59% agreed with the proposals for Digital and cyber, compared to 25% disagreeing (+34).
- Culture and Tourism: 59% agreed with the proposals for Culture and tourism, compared to 25% disagreeing (+34).
- Housing and Land: 50% agreed with the proposals for Housing and land, compared to 35% disagreeing (+15).
- Delivering Our Ambitions: 51% agreed with the proposals for Delivering our ambitions, compared to 32% disagreeing (+19)

However, in the responses, a number of key themes, issues and findings emerged. A summary of the main issues raised, and our response, including where changes have been made to the Proposal document as a result is provided in the Summary of the Consultation together with the Constituent Councils' Response at Appendix 1.

Amendments to the Proposal include responses to concerns about UKSPF delivery and how the LCCA can ensure that it delivers benefits across the whole of the CCA area. Further information on the Lancashire Data Observatory has been included in the Proposal, setting out how this service will provide the CCA with evidence to inform its decision making.

In addition to the above, some minor changes have been made to the Proposal document to reflect updated advice from government and legal clarifications. This includes some small changes to references to sections of Acts of Parliament in the Powers Table, and some changes to wording on remuneration. These changes are technical in nature and do not affect the aims and objectives of the Proposal.

Based on the above, a revised Proposal document is now presented, and Council is asked to approve the Proposal for submission to the Secretary of State. The reference in the proposal document regarding the ownership and operation of Blackpool Transport Services Ltd (BTS) and it remaining as an arm's length company owned by Blackpool Council has not changed following the consultation. Neither has the safeguards in respect of voting in connection with BTS, as set out in the report to the last Council meeting and the proposal document.

Should the Secretary of State accept the submitted Proposal, Regulations will be laid before Parliament to establish the Combined County Authority. Those Regulations will be based on the Proposal document agreed by Council Forum.

### **Regulations**

The Regulations are the legal document that establish the LCCA, set out the framework for how it will operate and the powers it will exercise. The Regulations in effect simply set out in legal terms the arrangements set out in the Proposal. There are, however, some issues not directly addressed in the Proposal which will feature in the Regulations, for example that the LCCA will have a Vice Chair, and what the quoracy rules will be.

Amongst the issues which will be covered are that the Chair will be elected every year, with arrangements in place for regular reviews. There will also be a Vice Chair to be appointed from a different Constituent Council to the Chair. Authorities will nominate up to two substitute members each, and quoracy will be at least one member from each authority, to include the Chair or vice Chair.

In relation to finances, there will be capacity funding from government in the initial stages, and work is ongoing to agree arrangements for how projects and initiatives are funded. However, the Regulations require that a "fall-back" position is set out, in the event that there are any costs for which the constituent authorities cannot otherwise identify or agree funding sources. It is proposed

that, in that event, any costs would be apportioned between the three constituent councils on the ratio of 4:1:1 by Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Council and Blackburn with Darwen Council respectively.

Voting arrangements will be as set out in the Deal and Proposal document, with local flexibility to agree which policies will form the Policy Framework and therefore be subject to unanimity.

The Regulations are currently being drafted by Government before they can be laid before parliament. In order to ensure there is no delay, it is proposed that Council Forum delegate the formal sign off of the final Regulations to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, and subject to the consent of the other two Constituent Councils. The delegation would be contingent on the Regulations reflecting the terms of the original Deal, the Proposal and this report. Government has made it clear that the aim of the Regulations is to put into law the agreements already made with the Constituent Councils, and have given assurances that this will be the case, as well as confirming that the Regulations will be drafted in consultation with the constituent councils, which will allow officers to ensure that the draft meets the expectations set out by Council Forum.

Some further detail relating to running of the LCCA, such as the arrangements for meetings, scheme of delegation to officers and details of audit and scrutiny will be matters for the constitution of the LCCA. A further report will come to Full Council in June or July to present a draft constitution for approval by the three Constituent Councils.

### **Alternative Options Considered**

To agree not to submit a Proposal to the Secretary of State to establish a LCCA. This is not recommended as it is not in accordance with the majority of views expressed in during the consultation process, the LCCA could not be established and no powers or funding would be devolved. In order to allow powers and funding to be devolved, the Government's policy requires that a Combined County Authority must be established in the area.

To agree to submit the original draft Proposal to the Secretary of State without amendment. This option is not recommended as the Proposal submitted to the Secretary of State will not take account of the views expressed in the consultation. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act requires that authorities must have regard to the results of the consultation in preparing the proposal for submission.

To agree to submit an alternative version of the Proposal to the Secretary of State. For the reasons set out on this report and its appendices, it is considered that the Proposal contains the necessary amendments to take account of the consultation and additional amendments are not considered appropriate.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Subject to all three Constituent Councils agreeing to submit the Proposal there will be an ongoing need for enabling activities from the Constituent Councils to continue pending Government approval and receipt of capacity and other funding. The Government will provide capacity funding of £1m in total, payable in phases of £0.25m in 2024-25 once the establishing legislation is made a further £0.5m in 2025-26 to meet the costs of enabling activities, and the remaining funding of £0.25m being made in 2026-27.

As referred to earlier in the report, the Regulations require that a "fall-back" position is set out, in the event that there are any costs for which the constituent authorities cannot otherwise identify or agree funding sources. It is proposed that, in that event, any costs would be split on the ratio 4:1:1 by Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Council and Blackburn with Darwen Council respectively.

Detailed work will be required to understand the budgeting changes required for those activities transferring to the Combined Authority from the Constituent Councils following the proposal document and the Regulations laid before government.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act established a new type of combined county authority. Whilst the Constituent Councils agreed a devolution deal with Government and have undertaken the required consultation, the creation of a new combined county authority is now subject to the Constituent Councils submitting a formal Proposal to Government, and approval of secondary legislation.

## **9. RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

Should Council Forum agree to formally submit the Proposal to Government, and subject to the approval of the Proposal by the Secretary of State, each of the affected Councils will identify any potential future workforce implications and ensure that these are dealt with in accordance with agreed HR policies and procedures. In addition, the appropriate workforce communications will be considered and enacted as needed.

## **10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

The decision to submit the Proposal about the establishment of an LCCA will not in itself directly affect carbon emissions in a material way. If subsequently established, it is anticipated that the LCCA will develop its own plans and strategies to reduce carbon emissions which will be subject to its own approval processes and approaching the issues from a wider strategic and geographic position may beneficially impact the development of more consistent and measurable carbon reduction measures.

## **11. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The programme for creating a LCCA takes into account the risk of a general election being called part way through the legislative process. Measures to mitigate that risk have been built into the programme by running numerous workstreams simultaneously so as to avoid any unnecessary lengthening of the timescales.

## **12. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

In coming to a decision, the Council is required to have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been prepared and is appended to this report (appendix 5). The Council must have due regard to this report to ensure that it is satisfied that any adverse impact and the proposed mitigation allows it to meet the legal obligations set out in the PSED. The duty cannot be delegated and must be discharged by the decision-maker. To discharge the statutory duty the decision-maker must analyse all the relevant material with the specific statutory obligations in mind. If a risk of adverse impact is identified consideration must be given to measures to avoid that impact as part of the decision-making process.

The EIA recognises that the Proposal has the potential to provide significant benefits to all communities, but specifically for people from the protected characteristic groups and deprived communities. However, this will be dependent on the implementation of the Proposal and the systems and processes that the Constituent Councils put in place; and how the LCCA will look to address inequality as an integral part of everything it does and every decision it makes.

As the new LCCA will become subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 this will require the authority to set equality objectives, publish annual equalities information and have due regard for equality matters when carrying out its functions, making decisions and delivering projects and programmes.

The EIA sets out that the LCCA should give early thought to how it can begin to meet these and other duties, especially as it further develops its priorities, becomes established and finalises its workstreams.

### 13. CONSULTATIONS

Clause 43(4) of the Act provides that: "Before submitting a proposal under this section to the Secretary of State, the authority or authorities preparing the proposal must:

- a. carry out a public consultation across the proposed area on the proposal, and
- b. have regard to the results of the consultation in preparing the proposal for submission to the Secretary of State."

The approach to the consultation set out in the report meets those requirements, and is in line with the "Gunning principles" for consultations.

#### **Weight to be given to responses**

The law relating to consultation requires proper consideration of the consultation responses. Whilst there may be some occasions where it is appropriate to give certain categories of response more weight than others, generally speaking, if a point is made in a consultation response, it should be reasonably considered whatever the origin of the point. The question for the decision maker should be whether the point causes them to change their view.

In this case, different weight should not be given to responses made by stakeholders (as defined by Ipsos), and non-stakeholders (as defined by Ipsos). The question for the Council remains whether the point made causes it to change its view, and it is entirely lawful for the decision maker to take a view different than even an expert body on a question in a consultation.

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>  | Denise Park   |
| <b>DATE:</b>             | 5th March 2024  |
| <b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b> | Appendix 1 - Summary of the Consultation and the Constituent Councils' Response (You Said We Did) Report<br>(Appendix 2 - Revised Proposal<br>Appendix 3 - Summary of Ipsos Consultation Report<br>Appendix 4 - Summary of Communications and Engagement Activity<br>Appendix 5 - EIA |

## Appendix 1 - Summary of the Consultation and the Constituent Councils' Response

This report is based upon the main themes identified through the consultation and outlines the changes to Lancashire's Combined County Authority (CCA) Proposal.

### 1. Cross cutting themes

|     | Consultation response theme  | Constituent Council's response   | Change to CCA Proposal |
|-----|--|--|------------------------|
| 1.1 | <p>Some concerns in relation to conduct of the consultation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the period for consultation from mid-December to mid-January, with Christmas in between was inadequate</li> <li>• That questions could only be answered in a way that would give a false impression of support, and not allow true feelings of respondents to be expressed</li> <li>• That insufficient effort was made to communicate with people</li> </ul> | <p>The consultation period is considered to have been adequate. There is no statutory minimum period for a public consultation. The holiday period was factored into the consultation period. The consultation ran from 1 December 2023 to 26 January 2024, a period of 8 weeks. This was a sufficient period for the consultation, which is evident from the extent of responses, both in support of and in opposition to the Proposal.</p> <p>With regard to questions only being able to be answered in a certain way, this is not the case. There were both closed questions, where respondents could indicate from strong agreement to strong disagreement with the Proposal. The consultation document also allowed for free text responses in which respondents could include any response at length, and it is therefore not correct to suggest that responses were in some way restricted in nature. Comments were received setting out the reasons for opposition to the Proposal. These have been identified by the Ipsos Report and considered within this report document.</p> <p>The communications strategy for the Lancashire Devolution Consultation focused on driving visitors to the website and engaging through in-person events across the proposed CCA area.</p> <p>Results included: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coverage by regional television, radio and other news outlets resulted in more than 100 media reports</li> <li>• Best performing social media channels were Facebook, reaching over 167,000 views and LinkedIn with 134,000 views</li> <li>• Engagement with more than 1,500 individuals at over 50 events</li> </ul> | No change.             |

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| 1.2 | Concern that the proposals are vague and lacking detail.  | <p>The Proposal sets out the intentions of the proposed CCA in relation to the various functions that the Constituent Councils seek to be devolved to the proposed CCA should it be established.</p> <p>Should the CCA be formed, more detailed plans will be developed across the thematic areas in formulating the policy position of the proposed CCA. These detailed plans will, where appropriate, be subject to further consultation. Decisions required in the planning of the proposed CCA will be taken publicly by the Councils and through the Joint Committee, ensuring the process is transparent.</p>  | No change. |
| 1.3 | Concern the proposed CCA would create an additional layer of local government, with high running and administration costs.  | <p>The proposed CCA would have a role in co-ordinating the work of Councils across Lancashire, helping to improve places by being smarter about what we do. The proposed CCA will bring the governance that currently sits at national government level down into the CCA area, much closer to businesses and communities. Place making functions will be delivered through the existing arrangements, such as planning.</p> <p>The Constituent Councils consider therefore that rather than adding a further layer of governance, the proposed CCA would fulfil an additional role which is beneficial to the existing regional structures of governance.</p> <p>If approved, the Constituent Councils expect the proposed CCA to be funded from committed central Government funding associated with the proposed CCA, including capacity funding. In addition, the proposed CCA will be expected to generate additional income over time that will allow it to scale up its operation in line with increased levels of funding.</p> | No change. |
| 1.4 | Concerns that the proposed arrangements would be undemocratic; that there would be reduced transparency and accountability; that there would be mismanagement of funds; and, that promises would be broken. | <p>The proposed CCA if established would be subject to usual rules about finance, conduct and management that are designed to ensure the appropriate management of investment.</p> <p>Careful consideration has been given to the intended structure of the proposed CCA. The proposed governance structure is intended to ensure accountability, including representation from outside of the Constituent Councils.</p> <p>The proposed internal structures of the proposed CCA would also provide safeguards, including by way of at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee,</p>  | No change. |

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|            |  | <p>and an Audit Committee. Consideration will be given in establishing other elements of the internal governance structure of the proposed CCA with a view to ensuring accountability, scrutiny and transparency.</p>   |                  |
| <p>1.5</p> | <p>Concern the proposed CCA would not ensure an equitable approach towards the deployment of investment funding and would focus on larger towns and cities, thereby exacerbating regional inequalities and not benefitting local people. Concerns were expressed in relation to rural areas being overlooked and local people would not have a say in decision making, weakening the power and influence of district councils.</p> | <p>This concern was expressed in comments in relation to the various theme areas specifically, as well as comments made more generally. The response of the Constituent Councils applies to all these comments and is addressed here.</p> <p>The role of all the members of the proposed CCA would be to make decisions in the best interests of the Lancashire CCA area. Investment decisions will be made in the best interests of the whole of the CCA area based on data and need, ensuring equity, transparency and accountability.</p> <p>Principle five of the Proposal relates to working collaboratively, providing that “we will work collaboratively on our collective priorities sharing ideas, assets, skills and knowledge”.</p> <p>The establishment of the proposed CCA would enable decisions to be taken at a Lancashire wide level, considering the interests of all areas and residents. The Proposal recognises the long history of Lancashire local authorities of joint working to deliver projects and services for the whole county. The establishment of the proposed CCA will enhance this by devolving functions which currently sit at a national level to Lancashire and much closer to businesses and communities.</p> <p>The membership of the proposed CCA has also been designed to ensure that the interests across Lancashire are represented, including two non-constituent members to be nominated directly by the District Councils acting jointly.</p> <p>The Proposal will not result in funding being withdrawn from existing local authorities, though it is acknowledged that funding streams may be received by the proposed CCA as opposed to directly to the Councils within Lancashire if the proposed CCA is established. Where this is the case then the Constituent Councils consider that such funding would be applied, considering the best interests of the whole of the CCA area. The proposed CCA would be better placed to secure additional funding streams.</p> | <p>No change</p> |



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|     |   | <p>The Proposal acknowledges that some priorities will be focussed on urban areas and others on market towns and others on rural areas. New investment will be aimed at delivering regional wide benefits.</p> <p>Finally, principle seven of the Proposal “listening to residents” provides that “we will be active listeners in building our plans for Lancashire. Everyone will be able to contribute to shaping our shared future”.</p>   |   |
| 1.6 | <p>Concern the CCA will take UKSPF away from districts councils and therefore diminish the effectiveness of the fund.</p>   | <p>The proposed changes to the national UKSPF programme are being led by national Government and not by the Constituent Councils. The Constituent Councils and Government recognise the continued importance of Lancashire's districts in delivering any future rounds of UKSPF. Additional wording has previously been incorporated within the Lancashire Deal text (section 36) to reflect this point.</p> <p>The potential benefits of the changes proposed include that Lancashire would be able to 1) generate economies of scale from managing the funds, and 2) allow for the development of projects that area better placed to respond to Lancashire wide challenges.</p> <p>UKSPF was brought in to replace European Structural Funds (ESF), previously managed at the regional and sub regional level. Any future UKSPF funding will be focused in those areas that have the highest need, as was the case with ESF. For example, when Lancashire County Council had strategic oversight of ESF it set priorities for skills and employment provision based on evidence (residents, geography, sectors) and then monitored the delivery and worked with local authorities and providers to close gaps.</p> | <p>Reference to be added that priorities for UKSPF will be evidence-based and funds will be directed towards areas of need.</p> |
| 1.7 | <p>Concern £20m of capital funding is insufficient and does not compare to the level of funding in other devolved areas. On this basis some respondents considered the devolution deal to be poor and that it should be rejected.</p> | <p>The initial funding is just that. The proposed CCA will be much better positioned to receive further investment, either through bidding into Government funds or being directly awarded funding, as continues to be seen in other combined authority areas.</p> <p>The amount of funding to be provided is consistent with a Level 2 deal, which is what Government are prepared to offer to Lancashire at this time.</p> <p>The Constituent Councils note that a number of respondents to the consultation advocated for a Level 3 deal with an elected Mayor. A Level 3 deal</p>   | <p>No change.</p>   |

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|      |   | <p>would offer the most potential for additional funding. This was not considered to be an appropriate step for Lancashire at this time, and the deal that has been offered by Government is a Level 2 deal.</p> <p>The Constituent Councils do not consider that the devolution deal should be rejected on the basis of this level of funding being provided.</p>   |            |
| 1.8  | <p>Desire for a referendum or other form of vote on the question of formation of a CCA.</p>   | <p>The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act requires a consultation to be undertaken across the area before a Proposal for a CCA can be submitted to the Secretary of State. A referendum could not replace a consultation in this context and so a consultation was legally required to be carried out. Any referendum would also be limited in the scope of the response that would be provided, and further consultation in relation to a proposal would be required subsequent to any such referendum. The responses to closed questions within the consultation indicate an overwhelming support for the Proposal overall.</p>   | No change. |
| 1.9  | <p>View a more fundamental local government re-organisation is required, or that devolution was not necessary to deliver the matters within the Proposal.</p> <p>This included suggestions to dissolve the three Constituent Councils and create a smaller unitary authority.</p> | <p>The Proposal responds to the opportunity for Lancashire to form a CCA (as set out in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act) to give Lancashire a national voice and ensure that decisions about Lancashire are made locally.</p> <p>Local government re-organisation would be an expensive and timely distraction for Lancashire in terms of establishing devolution.</p> <p>With regard to devolution not being necessary to deliver matters within the Proposal, this is not accurate. The creation of the CCA will enable powers and funding to be transferred to it which otherwise sit at a national or individual Council level. For example, skills powers and funding currently sit with Westminster.</p> <p>The suggestions to dissolve the three Constituent Councils and to create a smaller unitary authority were made by only 9 and 7 people respectively. Fundamental reform of this nature would involve significant legislative change and decision from central Government. These suggestions are therefore not considered to be viable at this time.</p> | No change. |
| 1.10 | <p>Doubts over the securing or realising significant or long-term</p>   | <p>As set out in the Proposal, devolution in Lancashire would ensure that the area benefits from a boost in Government funding.</p>  | No change. |

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|      | investment. Any investment would be only short term. | <p>The Constituent Councils believe that in establishing the proposed CCA they would put Lancashire in a stronger position with regard to bidding for Government funding.</p> <p>In the longer term the benefits that the Constituent Councils intends to be realised in relation to each of the focus areas of the Proposal would lead to a more prosperous Lancashire and create a self-perpetuating cycle of improvement and greater wealth of the area that would lead to the ability to continue to invest and improve. The Constituent Councils recognise that investment does not only come from Government but also in the form of investment into the area from business. The Proposal would make Lancashire a more attractive prospect for business investment for the reasons set out in the Proposal.</p> |            |
| 1.11 | General disagreement with the Proposal               | The Ipsos Report indicates that general disagreement was expressed to the Proposal by a number of respondents. The Constituent Councils are unable to respond substantively where no further detail has been provided in relation to the reasons for disagreement or opposition to the Proposal. In contrast however, the overwhelming support for the Proposal as indicated in responses to closed questions across all themes is noted by the Constituent Councils. The Ipsos Report also indicates that comments were made providing general support for the Proposal.   | No change. |
| 1.12 | Concerns that council tax would increase             | As stated in the Proposal, the proposed CCA would not have the power to raise a precept and so will not be able to raise money through increasing Council Tax.  | No change. |

## Consideration of consultation responses for each Theme Group area

### 2. Delivering our ambitions (Governance)

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| 2.1 | Positive comments were received in support of the Proposal (10.3.1 and 10.4.1 of the Ipsos Report) | The Constituent Councils notes the positive responses received on this aspect of the Proposal.  | No change.   |
| 2.2 | Concern the CCA will not include appropriate representation from district authorities.             | The commitment to a meaningful role for district councils is reflected in the principles set out on page 26 of the Proposal, including 'Effective leadership', 'Working collaboratively' and 'Being open and transparent'. This includes membership of the proposed CCA itself, which means that district councils would be participating in transport & adult skills decisions (both upper tier functions) | Amended to increase the district representation on the Audit committee to two members from district councils. There remains a wider commitment to ensure |

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|     |   | <p>for the first time, and therefore this represents a positive opportunity for district influence.</p> <p>Districts would also be offered seats on the Audit and Scrutiny committees of the proposed CCA, meaning they would also be able to have oversight of the proposed CCA's decisions, activities and spending. The Constituent Councils have stressed repeatedly the importance of district engagement and will continue to seek to work with districts.</p> | <p>representation from district councils in the governance structures of the CCA</p> |
| 2.3 | <p>Concern CCA members will not be representative of local areas and might not care about local issues.</p> | <p>Members of the proposed CCA will be drawn from elected representatives from across Lancashire. This will mean that decisions about Lancashire currently taken by central Government will in future be taken by people who represent, understand and care about the local area.</p>  | <p>No change.</p>  |

### 3. Innovation Trade and Investment

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| 3.1 | <p>A number of comments were received in support of the Proposal (3.3.1 of the Ipsos Report)</p>                                  | <p>The Constituent Councils note the positive comments that were provided in relation to the Proposal in relation to innovation, trade and investment.</p>   | <p>No change.</p>  |
| 3.2 | <p>Both positive and negative comments that proposals would (and would not) stimulate productivity and local economic growth.</p> | <p>Devolution offers opportunities to advance Lancashire's strategic economic development plans, including the Innovation Plan. Whilst there may be some doubt as to whether the proposals for innovation, trade and investment may be achievable the Constituent Councils do not consider this to be a reason not to proceed with the Proposal. The Constituent Councils consider there to be significant benefits to be gained from the Proposal and it will be for the proposed CCA if established to appropriately manage matters to ensure their success.</p> | <p>Information on the duty to produce an economic assessment of the proposed CCA area.</p>           |
| 3.3 | <p>Concern plans do not consider-how inequalities, socio-economic factors and social mobility will be addressed.</p>              | <p>Lancashire strategic economic development plans will continue to take account of the need for inclusive economic growth.</p> <p>The concept of 'social value' forms an important aspect of Lancashire's Proposal and builds upon previous joint work carried out at the Lancashire level (including through the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership).</p>   | <p>Additional information on the proposed social value framework linked to the Data Observatory.</p> |

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| 3.4 | Concern existing functions of the Local Enterprise Partnership had not been built upon by the proposal.  | LEP integration is an important part of the Proposal. Both government and the Constituent Councils are committed to a strong business voice on the proposed CCA. The Proposal includes the appointment of an Associate Member who can represent the views of business on the proposed CCA, integrating this function of the LEP into the proposed CCA by way of the creation of a Business Board. A level of detail in relation to the proposed Business Board is included already within the Proposal, but it is considered by the Constituent Councils that further information in this regard is appropriate in light of the comments from respondents. | No change. |
| 3.5 | Views expressed that small businesses and SMEs should be prioritised and that certain sectors including the voluntary and community sector needed to have more consideration | We recognise that SMEs (including freelancers) make up a very significant proportion of Lancashire's business base. This will be relevant to the formulation of policy and exercise of functions of the CCA if established.  | No change. |
| 3.6 | Suggestion to stimulate the local economy; invest in small businesses and SMEs; invest in local high streets and city centres; and, to reduce business rates                 | <p>If the proposed CCA is established then the suggestions raised will be relevant to the formulation of future policy and application of the functions afforded to the proposed CCA.</p> <p>The suggestion that various local organisations would need to collaborate to ensure the Proposal's success is noted. The Constituent Councils consider that the establishment of the proposed CCA will provide enhanced opportunities in this regard. Principle five of the Proposal explicitly recognises the need to work collaboratively.</p>  | No change. |

#### 4. Skills

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| 4.1 | A number of comments were received in support of the Proposal (4.3.1 of the Ipsos Report)   | The Constituent Councils note the positive comments that were provided in relation to the Proposal with regard to skills.   | No change.   |
| 4.2 | Suggestions to focus on improvements in local people's skills to benefit the local economy; a focus on employment through practical skills; enhanced opportunities to retrain and upskill | The majority of the suggestions received are supportive of the Proposal so far as it relates to skills. The Adult Education Budget would be devolved as part of the devolution deal if the proposed CCA is established and this does not involve apprenticeships. The level and type of education courses that would be funded will form part of the considerations of the proposed CCA if it is established. | Reference to the proposed skills and employment strategy for the CCA area. |

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|     | local residents; adopting a tailored approach to different areas across Lancashire; aligning training and education to the needs of local businesses; a focus on the long term unemployed; and promoting apprenticeships. |   |  |
| 4.3 | Concern that adult education would be underfunded and provide courses that are not relevant to the labour market needs.   | <p>The devolution of the Adult Education Budget provides a route to influence how skills provision can link to the needs of our regional economy. There are significant sectors with huge growth potential, and we need to ensure that we are training people appropriately to fill these gaps. Examples include skills gaps in 'cyber' and 'low carbon and energy'. Devolution will enable Adult Education provision to be viewed as part of a wider jigsaw of skills and employment provision, which will enable adults to develop their skills and progress towards better paid employment.</p> <p>If a decision is taken to progress the proposed CCA, the Constituent Councils propose the development and agreement of a single, shared evidence base. The work of the proposed CCA would be informed by a Lancashire Data Observatory that would be an alliance of local authorities, industry experts and academic researchers delivering sub-regional research. This would need to draw on quantitative and qualitative information over a range of socio-economic factors (including issues raised via the consultation process around matters such as rurality, deprivation, business need, green agenda and groups furthest from the skills/ job market). This evidence base would then be used to continue to provide a focus for skills interventions and prioritisation for the proposed CCA area.</p> | Additional information on the proposed Data Observatory.   |
| 4.4 | View that the Proposal would not improve the education of children and young people, and that the CCA should invest in - schools / early years / education of children.   | <p>These age groups are out of scope for Level 2 deals and could be considered under future deals.</p> <p>That said, the Skills and Employment Hub supports all secondary schools and colleges, including special schools and alternative providers to develop careers programme that meet national standards of excellence - based on local labour market intelligence. This also includes encounters with employers and</p>   | Wording in skills section of the Proposal changed to make it clear that the focus is on adult education, including change to the title of the section to 'Skills & Adult Education'. |

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|     |   | experiences of the workplace, so young people are better informed about local businesses and future job opportunities.   | Additional text to be inserted regarding the Lancashire Careers Hub. |
| 4.5 | Doubts as to whether the Proposal would prevent a skills drain to regions outside of Lancashire.  | <p>Concern was expressed from respondents that the lack of skilled workers in the area was not due to funding of training, but due to those with skills and qualifications moving out of the area because of the low pay for the same job.</p> <p>The Constituent Councils do not consider this to be a reason not to proceed with investment in local skills. Improving skills in the local area has the potential to attract businesses to the area and will improve the prospects of residents of Lancashire in itself. Together with investment in innovation and trade then there is the potential for the Proposal to benefit the economic performance of Lancashire whilst improving the skills and prospects of residents.</p> | No change.   |
| 4.6 | Perceived lack of benefit for local universities, and a suggestion to have coordinated efforts with universities and higher education institutions. | <p>The proposed CCA will only receive devolved Adult Education Budget. This budget is specifically targeted at those who are aged 19 or above and on qualifications that are up to and including Level 3 skills. This does not therefore include university level courses or qualifications. Funding for Free Courses for Jobs would also be devolved under the devolution deal, but this again is not targeted at university level education.</p> <p>Note: All HEIs operating in Lancashire have provided their written support for the devolution plans.</p>   | No change.   |
| 4.7 | Exclusion of the voluntary and charitable sector from the Proposal.   | The Constituent Councils do not consider that the voluntary and charitable sector has specifically been excluded from the Proposal. As set out above, if the proposed CCA is established then it will draw on an appropriate evidence base so as to determine a focus for skills interventions and prioritisation for the proposed CCA area.   | No change.   |

## 5. Transport

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| 5.1 | A number of comments were received in support of the Proposal (5.3.1 and 5.4.1 of the Ipsos Report) | The Constituent Councils note the positive comments that were provided in relation to the Proposal about transport.                               | No change. |
| 5.2 | Concern about level of funding and perceived inadequacy of funding/budget; and also views           | This is a theme dealt with in the cross-cutting section above but was also specifically raised by respondents in relation to transport proposals. | No change. |

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|     | that the economic benefit of transport proposals will not be realised  | As set out above, the funding which will be received and which is specified in the Proposal is new and additional funding. Enabling the Lancashire CCA area to spend on transport networks outside of the big city regions, bus improvement plans and potholes at a regional level which will lead to better co-ordination and integration of the transport offer, which will in turn lead to economic benefits for the area. This would not be possible without the CCA.   |            |
| 5.3 | Concerns that there will be unequal treatment of transport with rural areas particularly missing out.  | Again, this is a cross-cutting theme which has been raised above but has also been specifically raised in relation to transport.<br><br>The funding already announced and allocated, and detailed in the Proposal specifically includes funding to improve transport links outside of the big city areas. We are aware that rural transport networks could be improved and we consider that the CCA will allow this to be achieved more effectively, with additional funding and in a more joined up way.   | No change. |
| 5.4 | Doubts that local transport will improve or that the integrated transport network would be realised or that decision making will improve; and general disagreement with the proposal on transport. | It is proposed that the CCA will use its powers to improve and better integrate local transport and strengthen co-ordination across public transport.<br><br>Without the CCA it is not possible to co-ordinate transport across the areas of the three councils in the ways proposed. Accordingly, it is our view that the delivery of transport generally, and the decision making in relation to it will be improved by the creation of the CCA.<br><br>As set out in the cross-cutting themes above we cannot respond to general disagreement on the proposal without further specifics. | No change. |
| 5.5 | Concerns that net zero targets and targets around active travel will not be achieved or supported by the proposals.  | The CCA has clear ambitions on net zero and on active travel and intends to exercise its transport functions in a way designed to achieve those objectives.<br><br>The Proposal includes specific proposals around EV charging, as well as increased spending on active travel.   | No change. |
| 5.6 | Views that there should be greater investment in public transport services, active travel, and improving and maintaining road and rail infrastructure to create a                                  | The proposed CCA will be much better positioned to receive further investment, either through bidding into Government funds or being directly awarded funding, as continues to be seen in other combined authority areas.   | No change. |



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|     | more joined up, affordable and integrated transport network.  | The CCA proposals do not include powers in relation to rail or motorways. However, wherever possible the CCA will use its greater influence to influence national policy and investment in these areas. |           |
| 5.7 | Views that the plans are a step in the right direction need to go further and show greater levels of ambition | The proposals reflect the level of opportunity under a Level 2 deal. Future deals would be able to build upon the current proposals in terms of level of ambition.                                      | No change |

## 6. Net Zero and Climate Change

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| 6.1 | A number of comments were received in support of the Proposal (6.3.1 and 6.4.1 of the Ipsos Report)   | The Constituent Councils note the positive comments that were provided in relation to the Proposal with regard to net zero and climate change.   | No change. |
| 6.2 | Devolution not necessary to achieve a focus on net zero and climate change  | The Constituent Councils acknowledge that the Government has set targets for 2050 in relation to net zero and these will apply regardless of whether the proposed CCA is established. However, the Proposal would assist in achieving net zero and providing climate change benefits. This will require funding and the establishment of the proposed CCA is anticipated to provide further opportunities for the Lancashire area to bid for and benefit from additional funding sources. The anticipated £2m additional capital investment for the Cosy Homes in Lancashire retrofit scheme is one example of this. | No change. |
| 6.3 | Some respondents disagreed with the proposals suggesting that the targets were unrealistic and that residents may not be able to afford low carbon measures | The ambitions on net zero align with the national ambition and UK Net Zero targets. (There are no specific net zero targets proposed for Lancashire). The Proposal seeks to support residents with the transition to net zero, with additional investment in the Cosy Homes in Lancashire scheme to support with domestic retrofit, delivery of affordable low carbon transport options, and Electric Vehicle Infrastructure. The Constituent Councils have taken into account the negative comments set out in part 6.4.2 of the Ipsos report.  | No change. |
| 6.4 | Action to mitigate climate change must be a priority. How will devolution make a difference?  | The investment included in the proposed devolution deal will support delivery of local low carbon and nature recovery schemes, such as Cosy Homes in Lancashire, low carbon travel opportunities and delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. It provides opportunity for the CCA to take on a key role in future energy planning and the delivery of heat decarbonisation infrastructure in Lancashire, as well as supporting the growth of the low carbon sector and development of new technology to support the move to net zero.   | No change. |

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| 6.5 | Concern that the Proposal was vague or lacking detail, that it should go further, and is unclear on how it would work to achieve objectives. | The Constituent Councils acknowledge that the Proposal does not include all of the detail as to how the elements of the Proposal relating to net zero and climate change will be achieved. The Proposal is intended to set out the initial details on the proposed steps that would be taken were the CCA to be established. It will be for the proposed CCA to further develop the detail in relation to these matters in formulating policy and exercising the functions of the CCA. | No change. |
| 6.6 | Suggestions at part 6.3.3 and 6.4.3 of the Ipsos Report.   | A number of suggestions are made which the Constituent Councils interpret as being consistent with the Proposal. The proposed CCA will take these into account in the formulation of policy, should the CCA be established.  | No change. |

## 7. Digital and Cyber

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| 7.1 | A number of comments were received in support of the Proposal (7.3.1 and 7.4.1 of the Ipsos Report)  | The Constituent Councils note the positive comments that were provided in relation to the Proposal regarding digital and cyber.   | No change. |
| 7.2 | That devolution was not necessary to achieve the ambitions and objectives, including that it is not required to set up a National Cyber Force in Samlesbury. | The point regarding devolution not being necessary to achieve aims and ambitions is one which is made in relation to a number of the focus areas and is addressed in the cross-cutting themes section above. In relation to National Cyber Force, the Proposal intends that this will benefit from allocation of a proportion of the £20m capital in the current spending review that will be provided to support innovation led growth. This funding will be used to secure assets to maximise the benefits of the National Cyber Force in Samlesbury. The Proposal would also bring £6m investment to establish an Innovation Hub in the Samlesbury Enterprise Zone which will help to maximise the benefits of the National Cyber Force in Samlesbury. Such funding would be made possible by the establishment of the proposed CCA. | No change. |
| 7.3 | Concerns about the increased use of CCTV and erosion of privacy.   | The Proposal does not include the increased use of CCTV or other forms of digital monitoring. To the extent that any initiatives or projects in relation to digital infrastructure that might be considered by the proposed CCA if it is established in Lancashire might involve elements of monitoring or the processing of personal data then these would be subject to the legal requirements of the data protection legislation and duties relating to confidentiality, as well as any other applicable legislation relating to monitoring and surveillance. This might include, for example, undertaking appropriate data protection impact assessments prior to a project proceeding and liaison with the Information Commissioner's Office as might be required pursuant to relevant legislation.                                | No change. |

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| 7.4 | Suggestions at part 7.3.3 and 7.4.3 of the Ipsos Report. | <p>There are a number of suggestions made by respondents within these parts of the Ipsos Report. These comments do not raise opposition to the Proposal but make suggestions as to the formulation of policy by the proposed CCA should it be established. If established then these matters will be considered by the proposed CCA in formulating policy, and in the application/exercise of functions afforded to the CCA.</p> <p>A number of the suggestions also raise matters that are addressed in the cross cutting themes section above.</p> | No change. |
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## 8.Culture and Tourism

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| 8.1 | A number of comments were received in support of the Proposal (8.3.1 and 8.4.1 of the Ipsos Report)   | The Constituent Councils note the positive comments that were provided in relation to the Proposal about culture and tourism.   | No change.                         |
| 8.2 | Some considered that devolution is not needed to deliver the proposals, in particular indicating that Eden Morecambe has been announced before the devolution deal has been announced, and expressing the view specifically that devolution was not required to set up a Local Visitor Economy Partnership. | Integrating these elements into the devolution deal presents distinctive opportunities to guarantee the enduring influence of Lancashire's tourism and culture within the broader Lancashire offer. While devolution may not be essential for delivering specific culture and tourism proposals, the inclusion of these aspects in the devolution deal establishes a strategic foundation to protect and elevate Lancashire's standing as an appealing destination. The collaborative engagement with DCMS ALBs and tourism-focused organisations signifies a dedication to optimising the region's cultural and economic potential within the overarching framework of devolution. | No change                          |
| 8.3 | No reference to Blackpool Pleasure Beach Resort.  | To add reference to Pleasure Beach Resort as an example of a major asset in relation to culture and tourism.  | Reference to Pleasure Beach Resort |
| 8.4 | Suggestions at parts 8.3.3 and 8.4.3 of the Ipsos Report.   | There are a number of suggestions made at these parts of the Ipsos Report and the Constituent Councils interpret these are being supportive of the Proposal. The suggestions will be relevant to policy formulation and the exercise of the functions of the proposed CCA if established.   | No change.                         |

## 9.Housing and Land

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| 9.1     | A number of comments were received in support of the Proposal (9.3.1 and 9.4.1 of the Ipsos Report)                | The Constituent Councils note the positive comments that were provided in relation to the Proposal with regard to housing and land.   | No change  |
| 9.2     | Suggestions are made in relation to the Proposal at part 9.3.3 and 9.4.3 of the Ipsos Report.                      | <p>The suggestions made at these parts of the Ipsos Report are largely supportive of the Proposal. These will be taken into account in formulating the policy position of the proposed CCA if established.</p> <p>A number of the suggestions also relate to matters that would be taken into account as part of any decision in relation to individual planning applications or in granting consent to development proposals. Such matters would be taken into account in the planning process.</p> <p>It is noted that general comments are made as to the perceived vagueness of the Proposal. These are comments made elsewhere in relation to the key areas of the Proposal and are addressed in the cross cutting themes above.</p>   | Reference to the Lancashire Strategic Employment Sites Report (Stantec) recently developed in support of the Lancashire Infrastructure Strategy. |
| Page 36 | Support for the proposals included investment in Cosy Homes in Lancashire (although £2m is too little)             | <p>It is recognised that the additional investment secured for CHL is a relatively small amount. The proposed CCA would have the ability to bid for more funding for retrofit schemes to improve housing.</p> <p>This point was also raised in relation to net zero and is also addressed above.</p>  | No change.   |
| 9.4     | Opposition to the compulsory purchase of land, and that devolution is not a pre-requisite for compulsory purchase. | <p>The compulsory purchase of land is subject to a specific statutory regime, and it would be a matter for the proposed CCA if established to decide on a case by case basis whether or not it would be appropriate to exercise the power to compulsorily purchase land.</p> <p>It is noted that suggestions to the Proposal at 9.4.2 of the Ipsos Report refer to redeveloping or renovating older buildings, derelict houses and brownfield sites. This accords with the Proposal but which also recognises that ownership can lead to a blocker in the redevelopment of these sites, alongside issues such as the contamination of land. The power to compulsorily purchase land can be of particular benefit in such circumstances and enable the redevelopment of these sites to take place.</p> | No change.   |

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|     |  | The Proposal intends that the exercise of compulsory purchase powers by the proposed CCA would require the consent of the local authority in whose area the land intended to be purchased is located.  |            |
| 9.5 | Plans would lead to overdevelopment and overcrowding, urban sprawl, erosion of the countryside and overstretched infrastructure. | Operating at a regional level, if established, the proposed CCA would be able to support prioritisation of new housing linked more coherently to future anticipated areas of economic growth and seek to ensure coordination with infrastructure investments. This would contribute to enhancement of the self-containment of the proposed CCA area's regional economy, reducing the need for net commuting into the region and reducing average journey to work distances. The current planning powers remain the same.   | No change  |
| 9.6 | Concerns as to overstretched services not keeping up with housing developments.  | <p>This is a recognised concern in relation to all local authority areas both within and outside of Lancashire. The Constituent Councils agree with the need for development to be supported by appropriate infrastructure and services, including education and healthcare for example.</p> <p>The planning process enables the imposition of conditions and obligations requiring the impacts of development to be appropriately mitigated. This can involve the requirement for payment of financial contributions to be utilised in the provision of infrastructure and services, or requirements for these to be provided as part of any development directly by the developer.</p> <p>By working in a joined up way across the region, the proposed CCA will seek to support the regional pipeline of proposed housing schemes, as well as focusing investment on infrastructure to enable such development.</p> | No change. |
| 9.7 | The Proposal would not deliver more affordable homes.  | <p>No further detail is provided in the responses as to why it is considered that the Proposal would not deliver affordable homes. The Proposal explicitly recognises the need for more affordable homes. As stated in the Proposal, there is a clear understanding across Lancashire as to the brownfield opportunities. By affording the proposed CCA the proposed planning powers, including in relation to compulsory purchase, then this provides the potential for the proposed CCA to drive regeneration of sites that might otherwise not come forward for regeneration, build more affordable homes, increase supply, and bring down existing costs.</p> <p>It is therefore envisaged that the Proposal has the potential to increase the supply of affordable homes across Lancashire.</p>   | No change. |

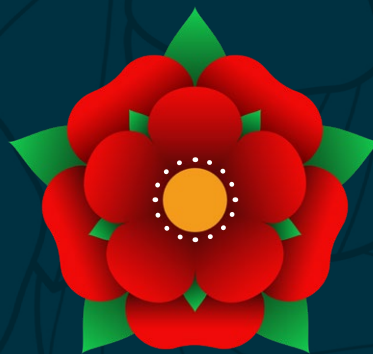
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| 9.8 | The Proposal would lead to negative impacts on the countryside and open space. | <p>The Proposal envisages the redevelopment of brownfield sites as a priority and recognises the current issue blocking the regeneration of such sites. The Proposal is aimed at addressing these matters with a view to enabling the regeneration of these brownfield sites.</p> <p>If the proposed CCA is established then national planning policy would still apply. This prioritises brownfield land for development.</p> <p>In this context it is not envisaged that the Proposal would lead to potential negative impacts to development any greater than currently exist, but it would provide greater opportunity to avoid such impacts by focusing development in relation to the regeneration of brownfield sites.</p> | No change. |
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# LANCASHIRE COMBINED COUNTY AUTHORITY

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## THE PROPOSAL



March 2024

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This document has been prepared by  
**Lancashire County Council,**  
**Blackburn with Darwen Council**  
and **Blackpool Council.**





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# HERBES



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document outlines our Proposal for a Lancashire Combined County Authority (“LCCA”) model of local government. It has been prepared by the three upper tier councils of Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council and Blackpool Council which have negotiated a proposed Devolution Deal with Government. If the proposals are accepted, Government would give additional powers and funding to the LCCA and more control over the decision-making that affects Lancashire’s residents and businesses.

The proposed LCCA is intended to work collaboratively with the 12 district councils across Lancashire and would cover the whole Lancashire area. The creation of the LCCA would not result in the merger or take-over of councils in the Area.

## Objectives

The objectives for the Proposal reflect regional and national strategy and are designed to ensure a positive future for our county and its people. Together they offer a bold and strategic framework so that:

- Lancashire competes better for its share of national resources and investment
- Lancashire’s public, private and voluntary sectors collaborate better to maximise the best use of our resources
- Lancashire has a strong and clear voice that responds innovatively to new opportunities and challenges
- Lancashire has a rich, meaningful and strategic dialogue with central government about the future of our county
- Lancashire is better positioned to respond to Government’s

Levelling Up objectives:

- Boosting productivity, pay, skills, jobs and living standards
- Spreading opportunities and improving public services
- Restoring a sense of community, local pride and belonging
- Empowering local leaders and communities.

## Context

A thriving Lancashire remains one of the prerequisites to a successful economy in the North of England. With a population of 1.53 million residents and a GVA of £35 billion, Lancashire already makes a major contribution and offers enormous potential to UK PLC. It has over 55,000 businesses providing over 728,000 jobs. It is a coherent economic area and has a range of significant future-looking sectors with potential for growth, including advanced manufacturing and engineering (one of the world's largest aerospace clusters), cyber, digital and low carbon, as well as traditional strengths in areas such as tourism and food production.

However, alongside this, the LCCA Area also experiences challenges which impact on productivity and employment levels and the ability to grow. The historic structure of Lancashire's economy has a range of sectors which are gradually losing jobs. Economic shocks can hit harder and take longer to bounce-back from than in neighbouring economies. There are clear and profound disparities in skill levels, health, economic productivity measures and resident prosperity across the county which, in turn impact more widely on people's life chances.

## The Proposal

Our vision is for the 1.53 million people in Lancashire to be able to enjoy greater health, prosperity and wellbeing through the opportunities available to them within an inclusive and confident Lancashire.

We propose to use devolution to build upon Lancashire's substantial strengths in delivering benefits for its residents. This initial Proposal, if approved by the Secretary of State, will focus on the following priorities and will also establish our case for enhanced future deals.

### **Innovation, Trade, and Investment**

We will work with local and national stakeholders to become a globally recognised and sustainable economy, distinguished by its quality of life, connectivity, and access to opportunities.

### **Skills and Adult Education**

We will work collaboratively with employers, skills and training providers, local authorities and other stakeholders to support people to develop their skills throughout their lives and attract business to Lancashire because of our highly skilled workforce.

### **Transport**

We will work with transport providers inside and outside Lancashire to create better connected infrastructure that links opportunity to need and delivers travel choices that are safe, inclusive, affordable and low carbon.

### **Net Zero and Climate Change**

We will work across Lancashire to meet our low carbon ambitions, promote clean energy, and enhance our natural environment. Our ambition is that Lancashire becomes internationally recognised as a leader in the creation of 'green jobs', building upon our world class engineering and manufacturing capabilities.

### **Digital and Cyber**

We will work across Lancashire to continue to transform our digital infrastructure and knowledge-based sectors to balance and modernise our industrial base.

### **Culture and Tourism**

We recognise the fundamental importance of our culture and tourism assets and will work with stakeholders across Lancashire to strengthen these. This work includes the creation of a Local Visitor Economy Partnership to help further develop the region's visitor economy.

### **Housing and Land**

We will support the delivery of decent, affordable and low carbon housing for every community. High quality housing will benefit existing residents, as well as attract and retain the people required to drive the economy over the long term.

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The county is again on the cusp of another transformative chapter in its industrial and commercial history.

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## **Delivery**

We will implement streamlined governance and decision-making arrangements with a strong business voice to address the big opportunities and challenges for Lancashire<sup>1</sup>.

The Proposal includes up to £20 million capital funding in the current Spending Review period to support innovation led growth (including assets to maximise the benefits of the National Cyber Force in Samlesbury) and net zero ambitions across Lancashire .

<sup>1</sup> Subject to agreement of the relevant business cases

## Principles

Our Proposal is based upon the four principles for levelling up set out in the Levelling Up White Paper:

Principle one: **Effective leadership** with a revised governance model across the LCCA Area.

Principle two: **Sensible geography** – the LCCA Area covered by this devolution deal has a clear functional economic geography as identified in the Lancashire independent Economic Review (2021).

Principle three: **Flexibility** – the Proposal recognises the unique needs and ambitions of the LCCA Area in terms of its governance and priorities.

Principle four: **Appropriate accountability** – the Constituent Councils have, should the Proposal be approved by the Secretary of State, committed to developing a Constitution and Assurance Framework that will confirm, clarify and formalise the intention of institutions and local leaders to continue to be transparent and accountable, work closely with local businesses, seek the best value for taxpayers' money and maintain strong ethical standards.

Our principles also include the local commitments established through the Lancashire 2050 Strategic Framework:

Principle five: **Work collaboratively** – we will work collaboratively on our collective priorities sharing ideas, assets, skills and knowledge.

Principle six: **Cross-cutting themes** – we will ensure our commitments to diversity and inclusion, reducing inequalities, children and families, climate and improving quality of life are addressed through the LCCA priorities.

Principle seven: **Listening to residents** – we will be active listeners in building our plans for Lancashire. Everyone will be able to contribute to shaping our shared future.

Principle eight: **Being open and transparent** – we will ensure decisions are made democratically and transparently, so residents can easily understand progress against our priorities.

## Benefits of the Proposal

We believe the time is now for devolution for Lancashire – drawing power from Whitehall to give Lancashire greater control over our public services and funding. The proposed LCCA would give Lancashire a stronger voice both nationally and in the North West, allowing the region to compete on a more even playing field with our neighbours in Manchester and Liverpool.

Devolution in Lancashire would:

- Ensure we benefit from a boost in government funding, allowing the proposed LCCA to tackle the issues that matter most to the people of Lancashire
- Give us new powers to drive regeneration in our town and city centres and build more affordable homes across Lancashire
- Enable us to support new jobs in growing industries such as low carbon technologies, cyber security and energy, making sure we have the right skills to take advantage of these opportunities
- Enable greater co-ordination of investment in, and management of our expertise, priorities, and investment in our transport infrastructure to ensure that it meets the needs of people across the region
- Drive investment across Lancashire, ensuring no area is left behind.

## Next steps

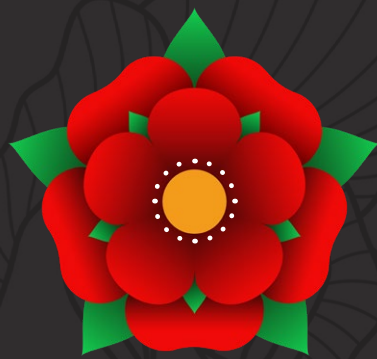
To gain feedback on the Proposal and to inform the decision as to whether to proceed to advance the Proposal (with any potential amendments) to the Secretary of State, an eight-week consultation was held between 1st December 2023 and 26th January 2024. Transition to the proposed LCCA is dependent on a number of factors:

- This Proposal being accepted by the constituent councils as a result of public consultation
- This Proposal then being accepted by Government
- The approval by Parliament of the necessary secondary legislation implementing the deal.

The transition to a formal LCCA in Autumn 2024 is planned to be in three stages:

- Stage 1: Establishing transition arrangements – by Summer 2024
- Stage 2: Working as a shadow organisation – Summer 2024 to Autumn 2024
- Stage 3: Formal establishment of the LCCA – Autumn 2024 onwards.

Lancashire partners recognise that devolution is a journey, not a one-off event. This Proposal is the first step in a process of further intended devolution. As institutions mature, they can gain greater responsibility, and Lancashire will seek to deepen its devolution arrangements over time, subject to Government agreement.





# 1. INTRODUCTION

Lancashire is a diverse county with a rich history and culture. The emblem of the historic county of Lancashire is the Red Rose of the English royal House of Lancaster. The contrasting geography of the area, along with the creativity and friendliness of its people, combines to make Lancashire a great place to live, learn and work. Lancashire has a long tradition of innovation and entrepreneurship which has gone on to change the world. Today, over 250 years since Richard Arkwright's cotton spinning technology helped to reshape the global economy, the county is again on the cusp of another transformative chapter in its industrial and commercial history.

On the 22 November 2023 the government announced the potential for a devolution deal for Lancashire. The potential signing of the proposed deal would, subject to relevant approvals and consultation, represent a significant milestone in the region's development, addressing decades of historically low investment and providing a platform for innovation-led growth.

A thriving Lancashire remains one of the prerequisites to a successful economy in the North of England. With a population of 1.53 million residents and a GVA of £35 billion, Lancashire already makes a major contribution and offers enormous potential to UK PLC. It has over 55,000 businesses providing over 728,000 jobs. It is a coherent economic area and has a range of significant future-looking sectors with potential for growth, including advanced manufacturing and engineering (one of the world's largest aerospace clusters), cyber, digital and low carbon, as well as traditional strengths in areas such as tourism and food production.

However, alongside this, Lancashire also experiences challenges which impact on productivity and employment levels and the ability to grow. The historic structure of Lancashire's economy has a range of sectors which are gradually losing jobs. Economic shocks can hit harder and take longer to bounce-back from than in neighbouring economies.

A thriving Lancashire remains one of the prerequisites to a successful economy in the North of England.

There are clear and profound disparities in skill levels, health, economic productivity measures and resident prosperity across the county which, in turn impact more widely on people's life chances. 2021 data (latest) on Gross Disposable Household Income shows considerable variation across Lancashire, with around £10,000 difference between the households in Lancashire with the lowest disposable household income (Blackburn with Darwen (£15,025) and the highest Ribble Valley (£24,734).

As a result of their devolution agreements, other areas such as Greater Manchester have seen significant benefits and stronger economic performance. Lancashire now has its opportunity to access greater local powers and funding to address its challenges and exploit its significant opportunities.

Government's devolution framework places a strong emphasis on strong local governance and joint working across functional economic geographies. The upper tier local authorities of Lancashire and Government have agreed a historic Level 2 devolution deal which will provide powers and funding to enable Lancashire to unleash its economic potential and in doing so level up, raise living standards for its communities and make a greater contribution to the UK economy. The Proposal shows how levelling up can be done within a complex geographical area – with clear alignment to the 12 headline Levelling Up missions.

Combined County Authorities (CCAs) are a new model of devolution, outlined in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023). Establishing a CCA is a formal, legal step, allowing upper tier councils across the region to work more closely together in a more structured way. A CCA for the region would be a new statutory authority created to lead collaboration between councils and would act as the recipient of powers and funding from Government.

The creation of the proposed LCCA would not result in the merger or take-over of councils in the Area nor would it require individual councils to give up their powers, except in the specific area of transportation, where some powers would be transferred from the upper tier authorities to the LCCA. Cooperation in transport matters between the LCCA and the councils would also continue into the longer term with certain powers to be held concurrently moving forward to enable the parties to work together effectively in the years ahead. The LCCA would work as one democratically accountable body on key priorities such as economic development, regeneration and transport, enhancing the investment capability of the LCCA Area and individual authorities to support growth.

We believe the time is now for devolution for Lancashire – drawing power from Whitehall to give Lancashire greater control over our public services and funding. The LCCA will give Lancashire a stronger voice both nationally and in the North West, allowing the region to compete on a more even playing field with our neighbours in Manchester and Liverpool.

Devolution in Lancashire would:

- ensure we benefit from a boost in government funding, allowing the proposed new LCCA to tackle the issues that matter most to the people of Lancashire
- give us new powers to drive regeneration in our town and city centres and build more affordable homes across Lancashire
- enable us to support new jobs in growing industries such as low carbon technologies, cyber security and energy, making sure we have the right skills to take advantage of these opportunities
- enable greater co-ordination of investment in, and management of our expertise, priorities, and investment in our transport infrastructure to ensure that it meets the needs of people across the region
- drive investment across Lancashire, ensuring no area is left behind.

Whilst the devolution of power and responsibilities would be to the LCCA whose constituent members are the three upper tier local authorities, the Proposal respects the importance of the continued role of the district / borough councils<sup>2</sup> (see Figure 1 below) whose powers and functions remain intact and who would also have specified consenting rights in respect of the exercise of some powers by the LCCA.

**If devolution goes ahead, all local councils in Lancashire will continue to exist, as they do now. Councils will continue to have the responsibilities they do now, providing vital services to their communities and championing their towns, rural communities, and cities.**

Lancashire partners recognise that devolution is a journey, not a one-off event. This Proposal is the first step in a process of further devolution. As institutions mature, they can gain greater responsibility, and Lancashire would intend to deepen its devolution arrangements over time, subject to Government agreement.

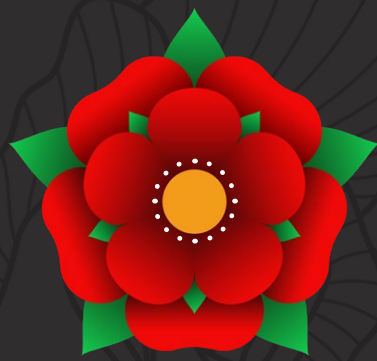
This Proposal document sets out further detail on our plans<sup>3</sup>.



**Figure 1** Map of the proposed LCCA Area and local authority boundaries. The area covered by Lancashire County Council is shown in light blue.

<sup>2</sup> Burnley Borough Council, Chorley Council, Fylde Borough Council, Hyndburn Borough Council, Lancaster City Council, Pendle Borough Council, Preston City Council, Ribble Valley Borough Council, Rossendale Borough Council, South Ribble Borough Council, West Lancashire Borough Council and Wyre Borough Council.

<sup>3</sup> In line with guidance from Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, this Proposal adopts and acknowledges best practice from a range of devolution documents from other areas, including the EMCCA.



## 2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Lancashire is 'polycentric' with a strong network of urban centres set amongst areas of outstanding natural beauty. Home to the cities of Preston and Lancaster and the larger towns of Blackpool and Blackburn, the area brings together a range of nationally significant businesses and assets including BAE Systems and Springfields Nuclear Fuels, combined with a highly capable engineering and manufacturing supply chain. Our county contains four world class universities and 11 further education colleges, which provide excellence in research, skills development, and business support. The area has a rich quality of place offer that complements the more urban offers of Manchester and Liverpool, with its population living within easy access of countryside and coast.

Partners across Lancashire already work closely together on many collaborative large-scale initiatives such as major inward investment projects and the underpinning evidence base and strategies. The proposed LCCA supports the growing recognition that our extensive range of strengths and opportunities as a functional local area complement each other. The Proposal's focus on Lancashire-wide issues will improve cohesion between local areas and with other areas.

### Population

The proposed LCCA Area will cover a population of more than 1.53 million people. This compares to:

- West Midlands Combined Authority - 2.9 million
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority - 2.9 million
- West Yorkshire Combined Authority - 1.9 million
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority - 1.56 million
- North East Combined Authority - 1.16 million
- South Yorkshire Combined Authority - 1.41 million
- West of England Combined Authority - 0.95 million
- Tees Valley Combined Authority - 0.66 million.

This would make the proposed LCCA comparable in size to mid-sized combined authority areas. The Proposal would play a key role in driving new economic, social and cultural opportunities to ensure the LCCA Area is better able to compete with other sub-regional economies.

## Economy

The proposed LCCA is very significant, covering almost as many residents and working age residents as the Liverpool City Region, and contributing £35bn in GVA to the UK economy<sup>i</sup>.

In 1998, Lancashire was the second-largest economy in the North West, this continued for the next decade until the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, when Lancashire was badly impacted. Along with Cumbria and the Liverpool City Region, Lancashire's economy did not recover to pre-2008 levels until 2014, whilst both Greater Manchester and Cheshire had recovered by 2011. Cumbria and the Liverpool City Region both enjoyed a stronger recovery than Lancashire did, with Cumbria recovering to 3.3% above pre-crisis levels and Liverpool City Region to 2% above – with Lancashire recovering to just 1% above. By the time Lancashire's economy had recovered to pre-crisis levels of output, it had fallen to the third largest in the North West, having been overtaken by the Liverpool City Region.

Pre-Pandemic, Lancashire's economy was still the third largest economy in the North West, but economic data for 2021 shows Lancashire's economy is still 3% smaller than pre-pandemic in real terms<sup>ii</sup>. History dictates a change of tack is needed to ensure Lancashire's recovery from the pandemic does not take as long as the recovery from the Global Financial Crisis – implementation of this Proposal would unlock policy levers to better stimulate, recover and grow Lancashire's economy.

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The Proposal would play a key role in driving new economic, social and cultural opportunities to ensure the LCCA Area is better able to compete with other sub-regional economies.

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The functional economic area (areas that share a number of similar economic factors with boundaries that ideally reflect the drivers of the local economy) has been strengthened through the Local Enterprise Partnership, in place since 2011. This footprint renews those boundaries, and will cover a combined 1.53 million residents, and more than 700,000 jobs. 88% of employed Lancashire residents also work in jobs in Lancashire, though Lancashire residents are also working in large numbers in neighbouring areas like Greater Manchester (38,000), Liverpool City Region (15,000), Cumbria (4,500), Cheshire and Warrington (4,000) and as far as the Leeds City Region (3,800) and York and North Yorkshire (3,400). The integration of these economies and labour markets works both ways, with Lancashire attracting talent from all over the North, with some 30,000 from Greater Manchester, 16,000 from the Liverpool City Region, and more than 3,000 from both Cumbria and the Leeds City Region<sup>iii</sup>.

## Transport and Infrastructure

The proposed LCCA Area benefits from a huge amount of strategic assets summarised as follows:

- 104 miles of motorways, the M6, M55, M58, M61 and M65 as well as 616 miles of major roads, and more than 5,000 miles of roads in total<sup>iv</sup>
- High levels of strategic rail connectivity, including stations on the West Coast Mainline, and stations connected to Merseyrail, Northern, and Transpennine Express
- Preston Railway Station is a key stop and saw more than 4.1million entries and exits in 2021-22, the 70th most used rail station of more than 2,500 nationally, with direct trains to London in 2 hours and 15 minutes<sup>v</sup>
- In total, stations in Lancashire handled more than 16 million entries and exits in 2021-22<sup>vi</sup>
- Heysham Port with links to Ireland and the Isle of Man, connected to the M6 via The Bay Gateway
- Blackpool Airport and Blackpool's connectivity to the North Atlantic Loop
- Enterprise Zones at Blackpool Airport, Samlesbury, Warton, and Hillhouse
- An established pipeline of major development and infrastructure projects with the potential to secure over £20bn of investment over the next decade<sup>vii</sup>

## Business and Manufacturing

The proposed LCCA Area has 627,000 employed people<sup>viii</sup> with 55,000 businesses, and 220 large employers<sup>ix</sup>. The proposed LCCA Area benefits from an exceptionally strong advanced manufacturing base and one of the largest aerospace clusters in the world. The manufacturing sector in Lancashire:

- Generated £6.4bn in 2021 - 8th highest of any enterprise region
- Employs 84,000 people in Lancashire
- Its contribution to the Lancashire economy is almost double what is typical nationally<sup>x</sup>.

Lancashire is a world leader in transport equipment manufacturing, in both aerospace and automotive, with prime manufacturers such as BAE Systems in Warton and Samlesbury, which has two of its three largest sites in the UK situated within Lancashire, employing 10,000 people. Other major employers include Rolls Royce in Barnoldswick, Safran Nacelles in Burnley, and Leyland Trucks in South Ribble. Lancashire is home to the North West Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC), supporting manufacturing innovation across Lancashire.

Lancashire also has a strong food manufacturing sector, which contributes almost 3.5% of Lancashire's economy (compared to around 2% nationally), with large employers such as Fox's Biscuits, Huntapac, and Flavourfresh Salads.

These draw on Lancashire's strong and concentrated Food and Agriculture businesses, which provide more than £2bn a year to Lancashire's economy, accounting for almost 7% of Lancashire's economy, compared to 5% nationally<sup>xi</sup>.

Nuclear technology is also significant in Lancashire given the presence of EDF's Nuclear Power Stations at Heysham, currently the only site in the UK with two operating nuclear power stations. Lancashire also plays host to The National Nuclear Laboratory in Salwick with Springfields Nuclear Fuels, where the design and manufacture of nuclear fuels takes place. Alongside Springfields is Westinghouse's Clean Energy Technology Park, an innovation campus open to the nuclear supply chain, academia, and technology developers to collaborate to develop and demonstrate advanced nuclear technologies. Lancashire's nuclear specialisms dovetail well with its Low Carbon story, producing almost 10% of the UK's wind power in 2022<sup>xii</sup>, as well as being forecast to be home to the highest number of Low Carbon Electricity jobs per head of the population by 2030<sup>xiii</sup>.

Lancashire also has a burgeoning Healthcare sector, which employs more than 100,000 people, 16% of employment in Lancashire comes from this sector, almost a fifth higher than the national average<sup>xiv</sup>. This comes with the presence of large hospitals, such as Blackpool Victoria, Royal Preston and Royal Blackburn teaching Hospitals, as well as from our base of innovative businesses working across MedTech, Life Sciences, diagnostics, and clinical research. Lancashire's health sector is also supported by the presence of innovation assets such as Lancaster University's Health Innovation Campus, and the THRIVE research centre at University of Central Lancashire, amongst many others.

Our science and innovation ecosystem are underpinned by Lancashire's three universities, Edge Hill, Lancaster University and the University of Central Lancashire, as well as the Lancaster Campus of the University of Cumbria. In 2021, 91% of research undertaken within Lancaster University's Faculty of Health and Medicine's was rated as "world leading" or "internationally excellent".

Its Management School is rated as the number one business school in the UK for research power, and its Environment centre is ranked 5th nationally for "research power".

The University of Central Lancashire opened its £35m Engineering Innovation Centre in 2019 supporting innovation in engineering and manufacturing in Lancashire.

Lancashire is also to be the permanent home of the National Cyber Force (NCF), and will create the North West Cyber Corridor in collaboration with Greater Manchester, joining NCF with GCHQ in Manchester. This will cement the North West as the Cyber Centre of the UK, with Lancashire playing a leading role.



The investment in the National Cyber Force will bring 2,000 jobs to Lancashire, long-term sustainable funding and will catalyse clustering and agglomeration of digital and cyber businesses in Lancashire, creating high-quality well-paid jobs, and bringing further prosperity.

Outside of our two cities, Lancaster and Preston, the businesses and activities located in the proposed LCCA Area's districts and boroughs generate almost 80% of our GVA<sup>xv</sup>. The share of Lancashire's economy that comes from its cities has remained largely unchanged in the last 20 years, but there have been winners and losers in the distribution of the remainder. The Fylde coast accounts for 1.7% less of Lancashire's economy now than it did in 1998, and there are shrinking shares of the economy that come from most districts and boroughs of East Lancashire. These towns, boroughs and rural economies play host to key manufacturing sites, large employers and thriving small businesses, and are home to much of Lancashire's workforce too.

## Commuting and Labour Force

The proposed LCCA Area is already a highly functional economic geography, with the Lancashire LEP area having 88% of its workforce living in Lancashire, and 14% of residents working outside of Lancashire in areas like Greater Manchester, the Liverpool City Region, Cheshire and Warrington, and Cumbria. Whilst there is a large labour force locally to provide businesses with employees (940,000 working age residents), the proposed LCCA Area will need to continue to catalyse the delivery of great opportunities for work, housing and leisure in order to remain attractive to those who live and work here. This will include building a more attractive proposition to retain more of the graduates from Lancashire's three universities, with around a quarter of graduates from Lancashire universities in the last three years staying to work in Lancashire after they graduate. Lancashire's retention of graduates is the second lowest of all areas of the North, and below the national average of an area retaining a third of its graduates in employment after they graduate<sup>xvi</sup>.

Whilst Lancashire does have a large working age population, post-pandemic the proportion of Lancashire residents who are economically active (that is they are employed or are looking for work) has fallen considerably. Lancashire has more than 220,000 residents who are economically inactive, which is almost a quarter of its working age population. Lancashire has long had an economically inactive cohort which has been greater in proportion of the workforce than was typical nationally, but this has become more acute post-pandemic, with the gap between Lancashire's economic inactivity rate and the national rate growing from 0.4% to 3.3%<sup>xvii</sup>.

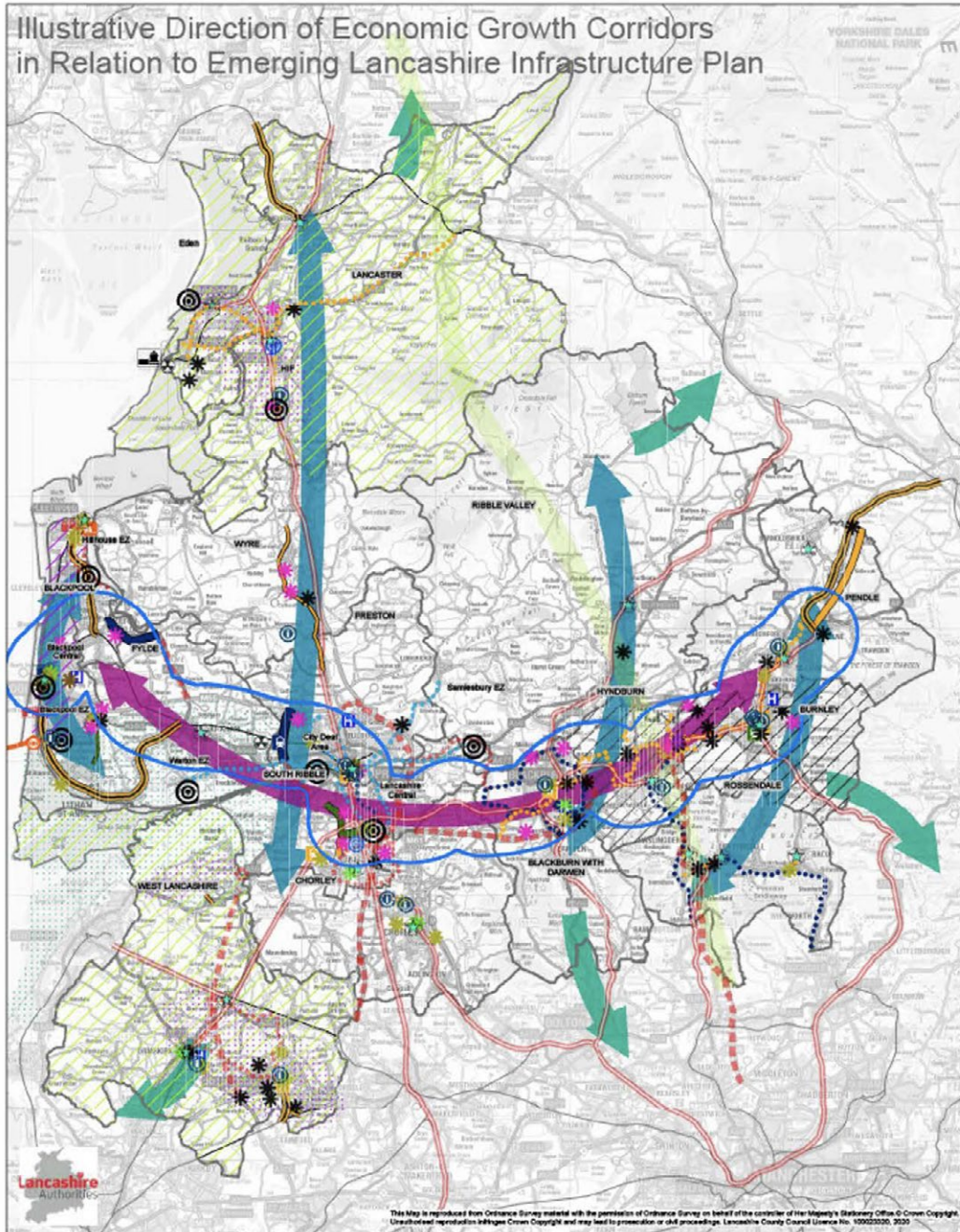


Figure 2 - Map of Economic Corridors in Lancashire, source: LIER 2021

## Housing

Across the country, mismatches of demand for housing and housing supply are ubiquitous. In many areas, this leads to increasingly unaffordable and, in some areas, unsuitable dwellings. The proposed LCCA Area, like much of the nation, has seen a shortage in housing supply. An estimated 5,200 homes a year are required to meet local need<sup>xvii</sup>. Over the last five years, an average of 4,560 homes a year have been completed<sup>xix</sup>. Based on these trends, we are likely to see a shortfall of over 6,400 homes over the next 10 years, which adds to the existing lack of supply.

This is a challenge, but Lancashire is somewhat insulated from lack of affordability for existing housing (relative to the typical position nationally), with a median house price to earnings ratio of 5.64:1, compared to the England average of 8.91:1 and the North West average of 6.47:1<sup>xx</sup>.

For newly built dwellings though, Lancashire's house price to workplace-based earnings ratio is 8.66:1 (i.e. earnings typical for someone working in a Lancashire workplace, as opposed to earnings from Lancashire residents who may work outside of Lancashire) - this is much closer to the England average of 8.91:1 for existing dwellings, and 9.85:1 for newly built dwellings<sup>xxi</sup>.

Newly built homes are not being built quickly enough in Lancashire and the gap between housing need and housing provision is widening every year. Despite being the third most affordable new-builds of all "Shire Counties," the affordability of new-builds has dipped by a factor of more than four times the median income in Lancashire since 1998, and they are increasingly unaffordable for Lancashire residents.

## Parity of investment

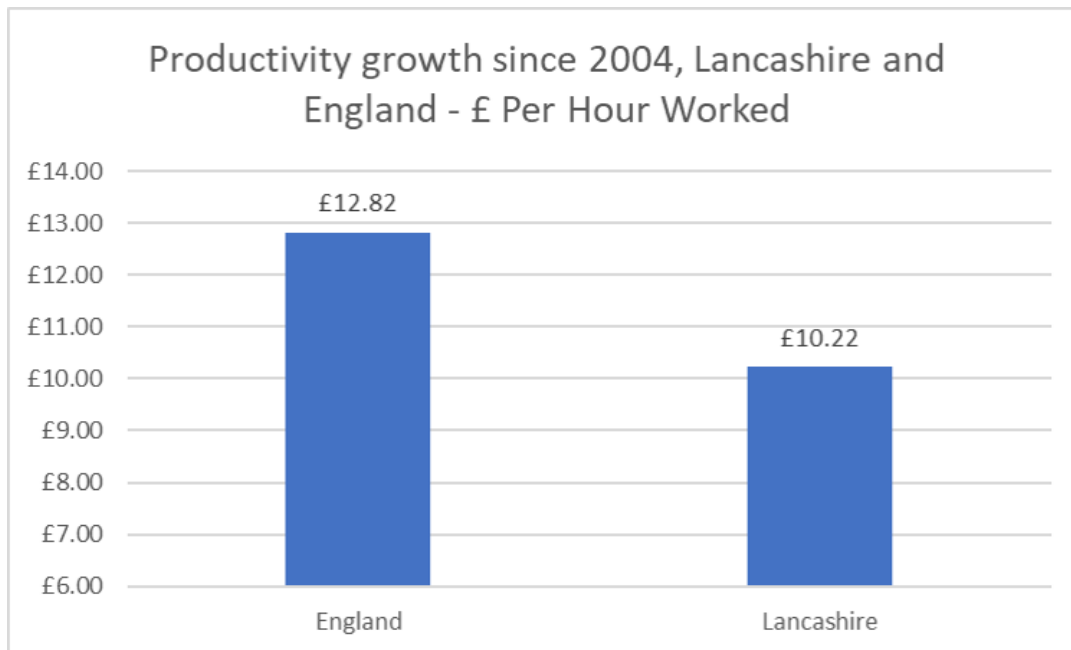
Investment spending in Lancashire has grown on average by 0.8% a year since the Global Financial Crisis. This rate of growth in investment spending puts Lancashire in the bottom fifth of areas nationally, and looking at growth from 1997 onwards, Lancashire is the worst performing region in the country for growth in investment spend. In the North West, only Cumbria had a lower investment spend than Lancashire in 2020, but investment in Cumbria totalled around £11,300 per head, in Lancashire it was just £3,700<sup>xxii</sup>.

## Addressing productivity, skills, and employment

Improvements in productivity can help lift wages and provide high quality jobs across all parts of the country. Across the proposed LCCA Area there has been a long-standing gap in productivity compared to England as a whole. Despite an increase in productivity of almost 45% since 2004, this has been slower than the growth nationally (49.1%), and so the gap between Lancashire's productivity and the national average rate of productivity has grown.

In 2004, Lancashire's productivity was 12.7% below the national average, as of 2021 this gap has grown, and Lancashire's productivity is 15.3% below the national average<sup>xxiii</sup>.

A devolved LCCA can support the improvement of skills and qualifications in Lancashire residents, boosting workforce participation and employment, enhancing productivity, improving earnings and standards of living.



**Figure 3 – Graph of Productivity Growth in Lancashire and England**

Source: Subregional productivity: labour productivity indices by UK ITL2 and ITL3 subregions - Gross Value Added (Balanced) per hour worked at Current Prices 2004-2021 2023, ONS  
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After the recovery from the Global Financial Crisis, and prior to COVID-19, the proposed LCCA Area’s economy had grown by an average of 1.9%, slightly below the rate seen in Cheshire and Warrington and 1.3% below Greater Manchester. During this time, Lancashire saw improvements in skills, with an additional 47,000 residents holding Level 4 or above qualifications, and in high value employment opportunities, with an additional 25,000 people working in the most highly qualified occupations. Despite these improvements there remains a significant gap between Lancashire’s economic performance and that of England and there remains some fundamental challenges to be addressed:

- A loss of £3.8 billion in GVA during the first year of COVID-19, and Lancashire’s economy still almost 3% smaller than pre-pandemic. <sup>xxiv</sup>
- An estimated 22% of jobs in the Area will be affected by the transition to a net-zero carbon economy requiring the upskilling of 70,000 workers. <sup>xxv</sup>
- Poor east-west connectivity by road and rail, more than half of Lancashire’s population live along the east-west axis between Colne and Blackpool, and the four largest settlements in Lancashire lie along this stretch. <sup>xxvi</sup>
- The Area has a low skill low wage economy with the median annual pay of both residents and workplaces in the proposed Area being almost 11% lower than the United Kingdom average. <sup>xxvii</sup>
- Four of the proposed Area’s 14 local authorities rank in the bottom 10% (decile) of all authorities across the United Kingdom on median gross annual workplace pay, and half are in the bottom third. <sup>xxviii</sup>

- Lower than average labour market participation with the Area's employment rate (72.5%) falling below the Great Britain (75.6%) average. Lancashire has a higher rate of economic inactivity amongst the working age population (24.7%) than is typical across Great Britain (21.4%). <sup>xxix</sup>

In terms of levelling up measures there are significant differences between different district/borough localities in the Area:

- Productivity, with three of the Area's local authorities in the top 25% (quartile) nationally in 2021 (South Ribble, Fylde and Ribble Valley), but six falling in the lowest performing quartile, including Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool, which were in the bottom 10% (decile) nationally, and a total of nine in the bottom third. <sup>xxx</sup>
- Workplace pay, with Ribble Valley in the best-paid 50 local authorities nationally where pay is around 9% higher than the UK average, but six of the Area's authorities amongst the lowest ranking 25.0% nationally (Blackburn with Darwen, Wyre, Blackpool, Rossendale, Pendle and Burnley) where weekly pay is up to 22% below the UK average. <sup>xxxi</sup>
- Employment rate, with two District/Borough areas in the best performing quartile (Fylde, South Ribble) nationally, but eight in the worst performing 25.0%, including Pendle, ranked second lowest in the country (after Brent), with Wyre fourth lowest, and Chorley 10th lowest. <sup>xxxii</sup>

## Reducing wider inequalities

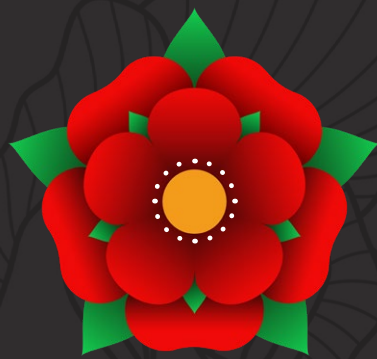
The proposed LCCA Area experiences persistent and systemic deprivation, with almost a fifth of neighbourhoods in Lancashire considered to be in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods across England. <sup>xxxiii</sup> There are significant pockets of deprivation right across Lancashire, with 8 of the 10 most deprived neighbourhoods in the country coming from Blackpool alone, and a further 33 neighbourhoods in the most deprived 1% across the country. On a district/borough level, Blackpool is the most deprived in the country, Burnley and Blackburn with Darwen are in the top 10, and Hyndburn, Pendle and Preston are in the 50 most deprived nationally.

In Lancashire, there are significant differences in outcomes depending on where you live:

- Both males and females have a lower healthy life expectancy than is typical nationally across all upper tier authorities of the proposed LCCA. In Blackpool, males and females both have the worst recorded healthy life expectancy of any local authority in the county, at 74.1 years for males and 79 years for females, compared to a national average of 79.4 and 83.1 years respectively. For males across Lancashire, healthy life expectancy is particularly challenging, with eight of the proposed LCCA's 14 district/unitary authorities amongst the lowest fifth of local authorities in the country by healthy life expectancy. <sup>xxxiv</sup>

- From a health standpoint, more than a third of economic inactivity in Lancashire is due to long-term ill health, compared to 26.6% nationally – Lancashire’s proportion of inactivity due to ill health is the 7th highest area in the country. <sup>xxxv</sup>
- GCSE Average attainment 8 scores at Key Stage 4 for all upper tier authorities in the proposed LCCA are below the England average. <sup>xxxvi</sup> Across the districts/boroughs, attainment varies considerably, Blackpool was the third lowest performing district authority nationally at Key Stage 4 in 2022/23, with four other Lancashire districts in the worst performing fifth. On the other hand, Chorley, Ribble Valley, and Rossendale are in the best performing third nationally. <sup>xxxvii</sup>
- At the early years foundation stage, four of Lancashire’s district/boroughs are in the lowest 10% (decile) nationally on children meeting the expected level on early learning goals for five-year-olds <sup>xxxviii</sup>. Additionally, 10 of the Area’s 14 local authorities are in the poorest performing 25% of areas nationally, only Ribble Valley and Fylde are in the top 50% of local authorities by this measure.
- A lower proportion of adults are qualified to NVQ level 3+ than England (47.7%: 50.8% respectively), and six of Lancashire’s 14 districts are in the least well qualified third of local authorities nationally. <sup>xxxix</sup>
- Similarly, Lancashire is also behind the national average for the proportion of adults with a Level 4 or above qualification (29.5% vs 33.9% in England). <sup>xl</sup>







# 3. OUR AMBITIONS

Our vision is for the 1.53 million people in Lancashire to be able to enjoy greater health, prosperity, and wellbeing through the opportunities available to them within an inclusive and confident Lancashire.

## Objectives

The objectives for the Proposal reflect regional and national strategy and are designed to ensure a positive future of our county and its people. Together they offer a bold and strategic framework so that:

- Lancashire competes better for its share of national resources and investment
- Lancashire's public, private and voluntary sectors collaborate better to maximise the best use of our resources
- Lancashire has a strong and clear voice that responds innovatively to new opportunities and challenges
- Lancashire has a rich, meaningful and strategic dialogue with central government about the future of our county.
- Lancashire is better positioned to respond to Government's Levelling Up objectives which are;
  - Boosting productivity, pay, skills, jobs and living standards
  - Spreading opportunities and improving public services
  - Restoring a sense of community, local pride and belonging
  - Empowering local leaders and communities.

## Outcomes

Through delivering on these objectives, we aim to achieve the following outcomes for our residents and the LCCA Area:

- A stronger voice in the North West that is currently dominated by Manchester and Liverpool
- Encourage innovation led growth through long term investment in major opportunities
- Match skills to economic need to increase productivity and wellbeing of people who live and work in the area
- Reduce inequality and promote social mobility to allow people to achieve their potential

- Improve transport links to offer greater choice and facilitate better and more sustainable access to our economic hubs, including improving east – west connectivity
- Greater access to Government funding that is exclusively targeted at devolved areas
- Greater say on where to spend investment
- Decision making brought closer to communities, increasing the visibility of those decisions
- Lancashire authorities will gain powers from Whitehall.

## The Lancashire evidence base

Our devolution ambitions have been informed by substantial Lancashire level analysis over recent years and are based upon a series of major reviews and consultations.

### **Lancashire Independent Economic Review | 2021**

This major review showed how the county can build on its world-beating strengths, tackle its economic challenges, and deliver environmentally responsible and inclusive growth while shaping public sector reform and local government reorganisation. The exercise was informed by a call for evidence that was open to individuals, communities, businesses, or representative organisations from within Lancashire and beyond who had an interest in the economic future of Lancashire and who could deepen partners' understanding of the Lancashire economy. One of the central recommendations was for 'strengthened combined governance across Lancashire' to take advantage of the opportunities offered through devolution.

The main report covered 'Productivity, Innovation and Work', 'Skills, Education and Health', 'Housing and Resilience', 'Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity' and 'Place Governance Capacity' and was enhanced by a series of deep dive reports:

- Internationalisation Strategy for Lancashire
- Economic Geography and the future of towns
- Infrastructure Strategy for Lancashire
- Health, Wealth and Wellbeing
- Stronger and Greener: The future of manufacturing in Lancashire
- Lancashire Net Zero Pathways Options
- Climate Resilience Study
- Lancashire State of the Environment
- State of the Environment: Renewable Technology.

### **Lancashire 2050 Strategic Framework, launched in 2022**

Initiated by Lancashire's 15 councils and involving a wide range of stakeholders, Lancashire 2050 sets out a long-term vision, ambition and plans for the Area.

**Vision:** a place where every single person can live their best life.

**Ambition:** to be seen across the world as the best place to make a home, raise a family, develop a career, do business, and grow old. A place made up of communities everyone is proud of, that celebrates our sense of place, heritage, and natural environment. A place where we always look to the future.

**Plan:** Our plan for achieving our vision is organised around eight priority areas. The framework for action will help us focus on the things that are most important, as well as respond to changing local and global trends, policy mandates and place needs. It will mean that Lancashire can speak with one voice when championing our needs in government.

Local partners have established working groups across the eight priority areas as described within section 4 of this proposal.

## Responding to the Devolution opportunity

Lancashire partners used the substantial local evidence base and strategic work to assess the devolution framework set out by government in the Levelling Up White Paper. This technical assessment exercise, shared with Government officials in June 2023, considered the following four points across the range of devolution functions set out by Government for a Level 2 Deal:

- What Lancashire is/has already done under each devolution theme
- Identification of specific Lancashire options and proposals under each devolution theme
- Why these proposals are a priority/key issue for Lancashire
- How the Lancashire proposals aligns with Government policy. <sup>4</sup>

Crucially, this approach has allowed partners to understand which priorities can be supported through the Proposal and which could be taken forward over time.

## Our Priorities

We propose to use devolution to build upon Lancashire's substantial strengths in delivering benefits for its residents. This initial Proposal will focus on the following priorities and will also establish our case for potential enhanced future deals.

Within this section, we set out what we would intend the LCCA would deliver across our key priority areas if this Proposal is approved.

<sup>4</sup> The LCCA Priorities also directly support a number of Labour's 5 Missions announced in February 2023; Securing the "highest sustained growth" in the G7 group, Making Britain a "clean energy superpower", removing fossil fuels from all of Britain's electricity generation by 2030 and Raising education standards.

## Innovation, Trade, and Investment

**We will work with local and national stakeholders to become a globally recognised and sustainable economy, distinguished by its quality of life, connectivity, and access to opportunities.**

We will use the devolution process to refresh our strategic plans for economic prosperity. The policy framework for the proposed LCCA includes the Duty to prepare an economic assessment of the LCCA Area. These plans will build upon our competitive advantages, exploit opportunities, and develop new sectors capable of delivering economic growth and high-value job creation over the long term. The proposed LCCA will enable Lancashire to produce better strategic cases for investment and gain a greater share of national resources.

Devolution for Lancashire can support us to overcome a historical imbalance of economic performance, low productivity, low investment, and employment at a local level and ensure that Lancashire gets the necessary boost in funding to address longstanding inequalities and support levelling up our communities. Lancashire has opportunities aplenty in all parts of the county, and devolution will put Lancashire in a better position to realise the benefits of these opportunities to improve the lives of residents.

This Proposal can further stimulate business diversification through building upon the existing sectoral strengths of the LCCA Area, and catalysing growth in future industries, such as Energy and Low Carbon and Cyber. This activity will ensure no area of Lancashire is left behind, and the future of Lancashire is one which is equitable for residents in all corners of Lancashire. Devolution will allow Lancashire to build on its proud history of international trade, supported by a county wide internationalisation strategy, and boost investment across all areas of Lancashire.

Subject to funding, policy and delivery considerations at the next Spending Review, Government's expectation is that delivery responsibility for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), a flexible funding pot, will be aligned with devolution deal responsibilities. This would mean that the proposed LCCA could have such responsibilities from 2025/26. In carrying out this role, the proposed LCCA and the constituent councils will work closely with the Lancashire District Leaders Forum in an advisory capacity. Delivery of these functions will build on existing district-led delivery arrangements for UKSPF and align with the Lancashire 2050 strategy, as agreed by all Local Authorities in Lancashire, to ensure that the needs of residents can be effectively addressed. Priorities for UKSPF will be evidence-based and funds will be directed towards areas of need.

The Proposal will provide £6m capital investment<sup>5</sup> to create an Innovation Hub of international excellence at Samlesbury Enterprise Zone. The new centre will help stimulate the growth of new clusters to maximise the transformational benefits of the £5bn National Cyber Force in Lancashire.

The Proposal will provide £6m for the Blackburn Technology Innovation Quarter<sup>6</sup>. The project will provide new business space to support the growth of Lancashire's digital, creative, and cyber sectors.

Through the Proposal, Government departments will consider the potential for future relocations of Government roles to Lancashire as part of the Levelling Up agenda.

To support the proposed LCCA in its initial stages of this deal, the Government will provide £1m of capacity funding.

## Skills and Adult Education

**We will work collaboratively with employers, skills and training providers, local authorities, and other stakeholders to support people to develop their skills throughout their lives and attract business to Lancashire because of our highly skilled workforce.**

In Lancashire's labour market, the estimated employment rate is below the national rate and has worsened since the pandemic. Lancashire's labour force is also characterised by a lower proportion of residents with higher level qualifications.

The Proposed deal includes new powers to better shape local skills provisions to ensure these meet the needs of the local economy. This will include devolution of adult education, the core Adult Education Budget, and the opportunity to further refine the Local Skills Improvement Plan. Funding for Free Courses for Jobs will also be devolved and will be ring-fenced. The policy framework for proposed LCCA includes the Duty to prepare a skills and employment strategy for the LCCA Area.

A strong, resilient, and inclusive economy brings health benefits to its residents, just as good population health is essential to economic prosperity, health and wealth are effectively 'two sides of the same coin'. As a LCCA Area, Lancashire will be better placed to bid to become a pilot on national economic inactivity programmes that support individuals with health conditions to be retained or re-engaged through early intervention in the workplace.

Whilst Early Years and Education is out of the scope of a Level 2 deal, the Department for Education has committed to further funds to the Lancashire Careers Hub, which supports schools and colleges to deliver careers programmes in partnership with local businesses - to boost the aspirations of local people of all ages and help them make informed career decisions.

<sup>5</sup> Subject to Business Case approval.

<sup>6</sup> Subject to Business Case approval.

## Transport

**We will work with transport providers inside and outside Lancashire to create better connected infrastructure that links opportunity to need and delivers travel choices that are safe, inclusive, affordable, and low carbon.**

Partners will build on a successful track record of major transport investment, and Lancashire's fourth Local Transport Plan will set its direction and priorities for highways and transport investment. This plan will work across the county to secure the benefits of connectivity in support of widening transport choices and supporting low carbon travel opportunities. Lancashire has a significant infrastructure pipeline of road transport, bus and rail schemes, and active travel projects that it is seeking to fund through devolution.

The Proposal includes new powers to improve and better integrate local transport, including the ability to develop the bus service improvement plan (BSIP), through the Enhanced Partnership and strengthen co-ordination of local transport functions.

The Proposal includes plans to improve public electric vehicle charging infrastructure to increase the uptake of electric vehicles and reduce carbon emissions.

As such devolution will help Lancashire deliver improved productivity, health and wellbeing, air quality and net zero carbon policies - and support objectives for maintaining a safe and reliable transport network.

As set out in the recent Network North announcement:

- The three constituent authorities of the proposed LCCA have received significant individual allocations, that when combined total £732 million of the Local Transport Fund covering the period 2025/26 to 2031/32, as part of the £2.5 billion announced as part of Network North to transform local transport in areas in the North outside of the big city regions.
- The proposed LCCA will receive a proportion of the £770 million of funding for Bus Service Improvement Plans in the North.
- The proposed LCCA will receive a proportion of the £3.3 billion funding to fix potholes in the North.

Note: Under the terms of this Proposal, ownership and operation of Blackpool Transport Services Limited (BTS) and all associated assets, including the Bus and Tram fleet, will remain with BTS. BTS will remain as an arm's length company owned by Blackpool Council.

Blackpool Transport Service also provides vital bus services to Blackpool and the surrounding area. BTS will continue to deliver bus services locally.

## Net Zero and Climate Change

**We will work across Lancashire to meet our low carbon ambitions, promote clean energy, and enhance our natural environment. Our ambition is that Lancashire becomes internationally recognised as a leader in the creation of ‘green jobs’, building upon our world class engineering and manufacturing capabilities.**

Lancashire’s Energy and Low Carbon sector is particularly important due to its existing ecosystem and capabilities in designing and manufacturing low carbon technologies. The area is forecast to have the highest number of jobs per capita in the Energy and Low Carbon sector in England between 2030 – 2050. Government will work with the proposed LCCA to enable the continued growth of this sector by supporting the delivery of Lancashire’s Energy and Low Carbon sector plans.

Lancashire partners have been successful in securing funding for natural carbon capture and storage projects including for woodland creation, peatland restoration and pioneering soil management techniques. The county’s Biological Heritage Site system of managing locally important wildlife sites has been strengthened to support the development and delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Lancashire.

The Proposal will provide £2m<sup>7</sup> additional capital investment for the Cosy Homes in Lancashire domestic retrofit scheme to extend eligibility criteria and complement the current Home Upgrade Grant scheme. This investment will support a reduction in carbon emissions, better quality housing and improved health outcomes.

## Digital and Cyber

**We will work across Lancashire to continue to transform our digital infrastructure and knowledge-based sectors to balance and modernise our industrial base.**

Lancashire has continued the development of a Lancashire Infrastructure Plan and supported rollout of Openreach and Gigabit programmes, including establishing Superfast Atlantic connection with the North Atlantic Loop at Blackpool Enterprise Zone. This increased digital connectivity provides competitive advantages to attract more cutting-edge, tech-based industries.

Locating the National Cyber Force in Lancashire will attract significant investment and create over 2,000 new jobs. The LCCA will work with the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, to fully capture the investment, business, research, and skills benefits of this new location.

<sup>7</sup> Subject to Business Case approval.

These activities will create opportunities and new careers for residents, develop markets and technologies of local businesses and help to establish a North West Cyber Corridor.

The Proposal will provide £6m capital investment for a Low Carbon Data Demonstrator Centre at Blackpool Enterprise Zone . The project will provide new business space to support Lancashire's low carbon and digital innovation ambitions.

## Culture and Tourism

**We recognise the fundamental importance of our culture and tourism assets and will work with stakeholders across Lancashire to strengthen these. This work includes the creation a Local Visitor Economy Partnership for the region to help further develop the region's visitor economy.**

Lancashire's rich cultural and heritage offer has an important role in the proposed LCCA's plans to attract and retain skilled workers, and in contributing to 'pride in place' in the region. Tourism and the visitor economy are crucial industries for Lancashire, with the area amongst the UK's most prolific visitor destinations every year. Blackpool, including the Pleasure Beach Resort, is the nation's Number 1 seaside resort, with some 20 million visits per year, and represents a £1.5bn visitor economy.

The proposed LCCA will work with Government to hold a series of exploratory conversations to test the region's appetite and capacity for partnership working across culture, heritage, sport, communities, and the visitor economy.

VisitEngland and the proposed LCCA will work with the accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnership for the region to help further develop the region's visitor economy. This collaborative work, across those areas set out in the Government's Tourism Recovery Plan, could include harnessing the region's potential to grow domestic and international visitor spend, and encouraging visits throughout the year rather than just during the traditional tourist season.



## Housing and Land

**We will support the delivery of decent, affordable, and low carbon housing for every community. High quality housing will benefit existing residents, as well as attract and retain the people required to drive the economy over the long term.**

Housing is a crucial issue for Lancashire. We need more and better housing to help support a return to growth in our working-age population and economic growth more widely. We also need concerted action to tackle poor-quality housing across the county as this stock drives many of our worst socio-economic outcomes.

As a collaborative, Lancashire authorities have successfully delivered £22m Local Authority Green Home Grant providing home energy improvements to over 2,000 households through the Cosy Homes in Lancashire scheme. £41m has been secured from the Home Upgrade Grant to provide energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures over the next two years.

Blackpool Council have been a Levelling Up partner with Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) since March 2022 and is now trialling policy changes in decent homes standards for the private rented sector and supported housing, and Blackburn with Darwen is also confirmed as one of 20 national Levelling Up Partnership areas.

Lancashire has a major development and infrastructure pipeline in excess of £22bn and a consistent understanding with regard to brownfield land opportunities and outputs including economic development, infrastructure, and housing. Lancashire has clear evidence of the blockages to development, infrastructure, and housing especially on brownfield land where issues such as ownership and contamination and/or buildings from previous uses can present a barrier to achieving outcomes.

The proposal would give Lancashire the ability to exercise compulsory purchase powers (subject to the agreement of the Local Authority where the relevant land is located), to help drive regeneration and build more affordable homes, boosting supply and bringing down the cost of newly built dwellings.

The Proposal supports our ambition to deliver a pipeline of strategic development sites and infrastructure opportunities faster and more strategically than would otherwise be the case. The Lancashire Strategic Employment Site Report by Stantec consultants (2024) would inform the work of the proposed LCCA to develop a portfolio of sites to meet long-term demand.

## Delivery

**We will implement streamlined governance and decision-making arrangements with a strong business voice to address the big opportunities and challenges for Lancashire.**

This priority will allow the creation of a powerful LCCA to drive growth in the North, empowered through strong leadership and effective governance.

To achieve this, our Proposal includes the integration of the Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership with wider structures and the formation of a new Business Board. This change will help ensure there continues to be a strong and independent local business voice which informs local decision making and strategic economic planning. The model places a strengthened private sector voice at the heart of growth strategy development.

The governance model proposed (see section 5) builds upon existing structures and recognises the significant role of District Councils. The Proposal includes new arrangements for Transport and Skills and Adult Education and will enable partners to collaborate more effectively and focus on the big opportunities and challenges for Lancashire.

The proposal will see the integration of the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership investment team, Marketing Lancashire - the destination management organisation and the Growth Lancashire company, and existing powers to assemble land to unlock sites of significance to stimulate investment in Lancashire. The integration of the LEP and Business Board helps Lancashire choose its own economic path.

The plans proposed respond to national policy on levelling up and devolution including integration of LEP functions and roles into local democratic institutions to ensure a strong business voice at the heart of local decision making.

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We propose to use devolution to build upon Lancashire's substantial strengths in delivering benefits for its residents.

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## Our Principles

Our Proposal is based upon the four principles for levelling up set out in the Levelling Up White Paper:

Principle one: **Effective leadership** with a revised governance model across the LCCA Area.

Principle two: **Sensible geography** - the LCCA Area covered by this Proposal has a clear functional economic geography as identified in the Lancashire Independent Economic Review (2021).

Principle three: **Flexibility** - the Proposal recognises the unique needs and ambitions of the LCCA Area in its governance and programme.

Principle four: **Appropriate accountability** – the Constituent Councils have committed to developing a Constitution and Assurance Framework that will confirm, clarify, and formalise the intention of institutions and local leaders to continue to be transparent and accountable, work closely with local businesses, seek the best value for taxpayers' money and maintain strong ethical standards.

Our principles also include the local commitments established through the Lancashire 2050 Strategic Framework:

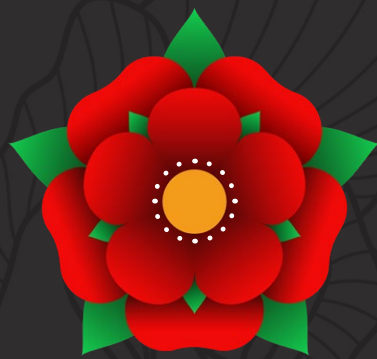
Principle five: **Work collaboratively** – we will work collaboratively on our collective priorities sharing ideas, assets, skills, and knowledge.

Principle six: **Cross-cutting themes** – we will ensure our commitments to diversity and inclusion, reducing inequalities, children and families, climate and improving quality of life are addressed through the LCCA priorities, referred to above.

Principle seven: **Listening to residents** – we will be active listeners in building our plans for Lancashire. Everyone will be able to contribute to shaping our shared future.

Principle eight: **Being open and transparent** – we will ensure decisions are made democratically and transparently, so residents can easily understand progress against our priorities.

A major advantage of the LCCA model is its capacity for joint governance arrangements across key growth levers such as transport, skills, economic development and regeneration, which allows for more integrated policy development and better strategic prioritisation.



# 4. DELIVERING OUR AMBITIONS

Work is currently underway to define the intended operating and delivery arrangements for the proposed LCCA. The proposed LCCA would build upon existing structures and expertise to deliver the ambitions set out above.

Lancashire local authorities have a long history of joint working to deliver projects and services for the whole county. This joint work has included extensive engagement with public, private, and voluntary sectors and communities. Since its launch in 2022, this joint working has been enhanced through the Lancashire 2050 Strategic Framework (L2050) and the formation of eight theme groups (shown below).



Figure 4 - Diagram of Lancashire 2050 Priority Theme Groups established in 2022

Once established, the proposed LCCA would build upon the L2050 theme groups to develop a pipeline of key priorities and projects. The projects are intended to be underpinned by the priorities of the proposed LCCA and actioned through the powers and functions sought as part of the Proposal.

We recognise that Lancashire is a diverse place and the proposed LCCA will deliver our shared vision and outcomes via targeted investment and support that acknowledges our geographic differences and similarities. The needs of Lancashire and the projects to address these needs are not all area-wide. Some priorities may be focussed on our urban and suburban areas and/or our market towns, and/or our rural areas, recognising that new investment should be able to deliver regional wide benefits.

The work of the proposed LCCA would be informed by a Lancashire Data Observatory that is an emerging alliance of local authorities, industry experts and academic researchers delivering sub-regional research and analysis. The Data Observatory will build upon best practice from other established Combined Authorities and inform the decision-making of the LCCA. In the first phase, this work would build on analysis of the key indicators identified through the Lancashire 2050 Strategic Framework.

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Lancashire local authorities have a long history of joint working to deliver projects and services for the whole county.

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## Social Value

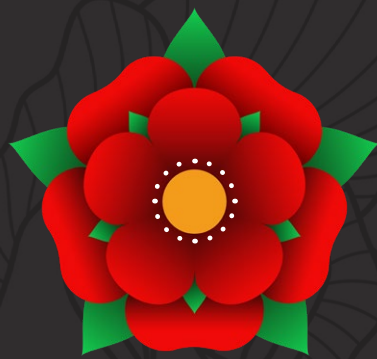
The Proposal provides an opportunity for Lancashire to expand its leading work around generating social value. The proposed LCCA would support the development of a Lancashire wide Social Value Framework in delivering devolution building upon existing expertise across councils in the LCCA Area.

The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership has been a leading area of the country in realising social value<sup>9</sup> through its investment spend. Lancashire Enterprise Partnership successfully embedded social value within their key infrastructure investment programmes through the adoption of a LEP wide Social Value Framework. The framework utilises the National Themes Outcomes and Measures to embed social value within the procurement, monitoring and evaluation of projects across the LEP's project and programme portfolio including the Growth Deal, City Deal, and Boost business support programmes.

The impact of this approach can be seen at programme and project level. The £320m Lancashire Growth Deal programme generated a total of £56.9m of added benefits from social value, including for example, 638 Apprenticeships and 338 work placement weeks for unemployed residents.

<sup>9</sup> Social Value is the additional economic, social and environmental benefits that can be created when an organisation purchases a service from an outside organisation above and beyond the value of the goods or services.







# 5. GOVERNANCE

The Constituent Councils have proposed a governance structure for the proposed LCCA which is true to the principles of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, and which would secure effective and convenient local government for the proposed LCCA Area.

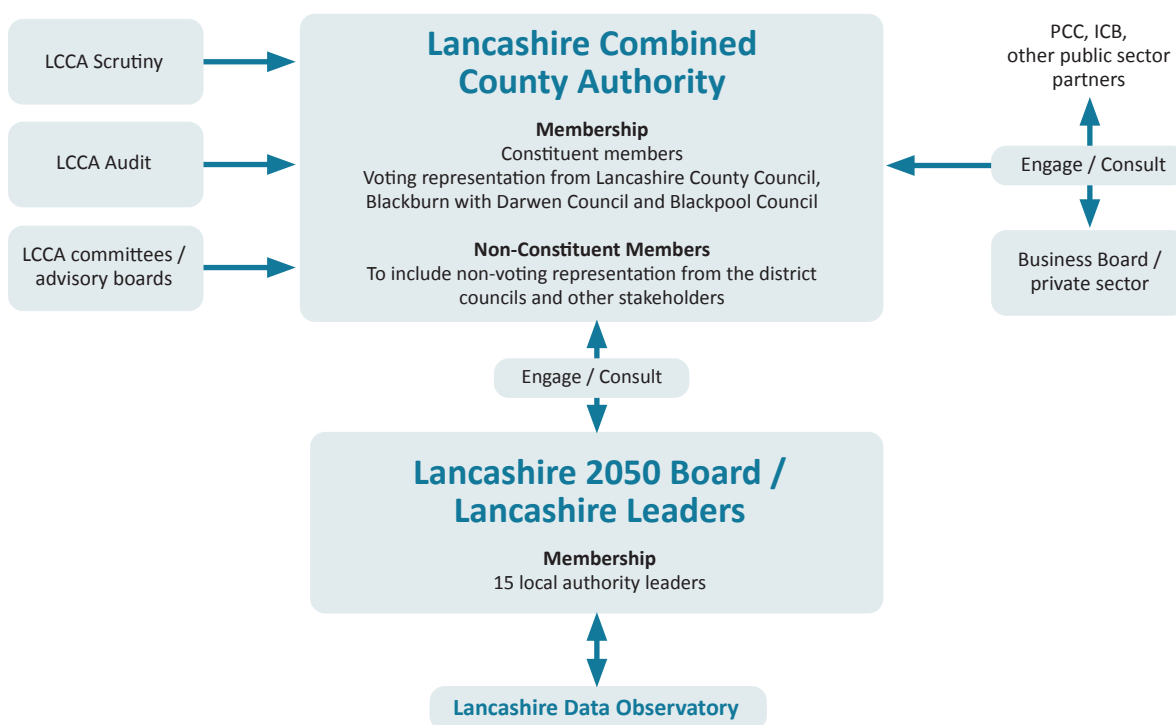


Figure 5 - Diagram of proposed LCCA governance model

## Name and Area

The proposed LCCA would be formally known as the Lancashire Combined County Authority. It would cover the geographical areas of the Lancashire County, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool Councils, which together would form the Constituent Councils of the proposed LCCA.

## Membership of the LCCA

The proposed LCCA would have up to eight Members in total, comprising:

- Four Constituent Members (Members appointed by the Constituent Councils, with Lancashire County Council appointing two members and Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool Councils appointing one each)
- Two Non-Constituent Members nominated by the District Councils within the area
- Up to two further Non-Constituent or Associate Members, to be appointed by the LCCA.

The four constituent members would have full voting rights. In accordance with the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023), the proposed LCCA would have the power to grant voting rights to the non-constituent members. The responsibility for agreeing any such rights would rest with the constituent members of the LCCA and would be set out in the LCCA's constitution. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 does not allow associate members to vote.

## District Councils

There are 12 District Councils within the proposed LCCA Area. The Districts would be invited to nominate two individuals to represent their interests on the proposed LCCA as non-constituent members

The Constituent Councils will continue to work with the District Councils to agree a system of nominations, to ensure that the nominating body will operate with the unanimous support of the District Councils in Lancashire. This arrangement would be regularly reviewed to ensure that all District Councils, as well as the proposed LCCA, remain content that the district voice is properly reflected in the proposed LCCA.

The same appointment arrangements would also be used for the District Councils to nominate additional individuals as substitutes and representatives on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and Audit Committee, who may come from different Councils than the nominated Non-Constituent Members.

The inclusion of a mechanism by which the District Councils can have a key role on the proposed LCCA ensures that the identities and interests of all our local communities would be fully represented on the proposed LCCA.

## Business Interests

The voice of business will be a critical component in the future proposed LCCA, given that a key area of focus would be economy, industry, and business. The proposed LCCA will appoint an Associate Member who can represent the views of business on the proposed LCCA.

This function of the Lancashire LEP will be integrated into the proposed LCCA, through the creation of a Business Board.

The Business Board would not be a formal committee of the proposed LCCA, but it would be part of the formal governance arrangements and would exist to provide advice to the proposed LCCA on all issues of business and economy relevant to the proposed LCCA. The proposed LCCA would then appoint the Chair of the Business Board to the proposed LCCA as an Associate Member representing the views of business on the proposed LCCA.

## **Resilience and Public Safety**

The proposed LCCA, in partnership with Government, will ensure that the Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is invited to attend and participate in LCCA meetings as an observer, or as a non-constituent member. This will ensure close collaboration and productive joint working between the LCCA and PCC.

## **Other Memberships**

There would be one remaining potential space for a further member, either as a “non-constituent” or “associate” member. This would be determined by the proposed LCCA itself.

## **LCCA Functions**

The functions of the proposed LCCA will be exercisable by the proposed LCCA. On day one these will include:

- The duty to set a budget for the proposed LCCA
- Duty to prepare an economic assessment of the proposed LCCA Area
- Compulsory purchase, land acquisition and disposal and development of land powers (the exercise of compulsory purchase functions is subject to the consent of all the local planning authorities affected)
- Consideration of whether to seek the power to borrow and to explore the extent of those powers
- Housing supply and regeneration functions, and,
- Incidental powers in relation to its functions (the power to do anything which is incidental to the exercise of its functions).

In addition, the LCCA will have functions relating to transport.

More detail is given in the table of powers at Appendix A.

## LCCA decision making

The Members of the proposed LCCA would be the main decision-making group of the proposed LCCA. The proposed LCCA will have the power to establish sub-committees to exercise LCCA functions.

## LCCA voting

The proposed LCCA would prescribe voting requirements in its Constitution, but the following principles are intended to be applied:

Proposals for decisions by the proposed LCCA may be put forward by any constituent member. All constituent members would have one vote. Constituent members would work towards the principle of unanimity of all key decisions. Other questions that are to be decided by the proposed LCCA are to be decided by a simple majority of the members present and voting, unless otherwise provided for in legislation. Decisions requiring unanimity amongst the constituent members would include:

- Approval of the proposed LCCA's budget, including significant financial decisions
- Approval of the policy framework, which will include:
  - Corporate Strategy
  - Economic Growth Strategy
  - Skills and Employment Strategic Framework
  - The Local Transport Plan, Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
  - Appointment of the Chief Executive
  - Approval of and significant amendments to the Constitution.

The following decisions would require the consent of the Lead/Executive member of the relevant Constituent Council, or substitute members acting in their place, in whose area the decision will apply:

- Compulsory purchase of land or buildings by the proposed LCCA
- The exercise of compulsory purchase power will also require the consent of the relevant planning authority
- Any decision by the proposed LCCA that could lead to a financial liability falling directly upon that constituent council, or significant material impact on Blackpool Transport Services Ltd
- Such other matters as may be contained within the proposed LCCA's constitution.

The constituent councils recognise the importance of local consensus in relation to matters that could impact companies wholly owned by those councils, and they have resolved to require Blackpool Council's consent for any decision which may have a significant, material and direct impact on Blackpool Transport Services Ltd.

## Advisory Boards

The proposed LCCA may choose to establish advisory boards. Advisory boards are formally constituted boards which would form part of the operation of the proposed LCCA, but which have no decision-making power.

Advisory Boards may be formed if required to support the business of the proposed LCCA. Membership of Advisory Boards would reflect the role and purpose of the Board, including members from outside the Constituent Councils as required to ensure the relevant expertise is available.

The role of any Advisory Boards established would be to advise the proposed LCCA on the exercise of functions in their areas of expertise.

## Members Allowances

The statutory instrument (SI) which may create the proposed LCCA will set out the position on members allowances. DLUHC have indicated that the SI will provide that allowances will be payable as follows:

- No remuneration is to be payable by the Combined County Authority to its Members other than allowances for travel and subsistence.
- The LCCA may only pay allowances to independent persons, members of an overview and scrutiny committee or members of the audit committee if:
  - the LCCA has considered a report published by an independent remuneration panel which contains recommendations for such an allowance
  - the voting Constituent Council Members of the LCCA have approved a scheme for allowances, and
  - the allowance to be paid by the LCCA does not exceed the amount specified in the recommendation made by the independent remuneration panel.

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The proposed LCCA would be required to have at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to monitor the decision making of the LCCA to ensure that the decision making is appropriately focussed on community needs, and that high quality delivery is taking place for the benefit of the proposed LCCA Area.

In accordance with the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 and given the role of the Committee, its membership must involve different individuals than those who are Members of the proposed LCCA. However, the proposed LCCA

would intend to ensure that the District Councils would be represented on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and would consider how and whether to represent any additional Non-Constituent and Associate Members on the Committee.

Practically this means that at least one member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be nominated from each Constituent Council of the proposed LCCA. At least two members are intended to be nominated by the District Councils. Any members of the Committee not drawn from the Constituent Councils would not automatically have voting rights on the Committee.

There is intended to be a requirement for political balance on the Committee which would reflect the political balance of the LCCA Area (which in this context means to reflect the voting in respect of the Constituent Councils but taken across the whole LCCA Area).

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be an independent person – i.e. not a member of the Constituent Councils or District Councils in Lancashire. The Independent Chair of Overview and Scrutiny would be appointed by the proposed LCCA through an open recruitment process.

## **Audit Committee**

The proposed LCCA would be required to have an Audit Committee. The role of the Audit Committee is to support and monitor the authority in the areas of governance, risk management, external audit, internal audit, financial reporting, and other related areas to ensure that the financial and governance decision making position of the proposed LCCA is sound.

As with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, this means that at least one member of the Audit Committee would be nominated from each Constituent Council of the proposed LCCA. At least two members would be nominated by the District Councils. Any members of the Committee not drawn from the Constituent Councils would not automatically have voting rights on the Committee.

There would be a requirement for political balance on the Committee which will reflect the political balance of the proposed LCCA Area (which in this context means to reflect the voting in respect of the Constituent Councils but taken across the whole LCCA Area).

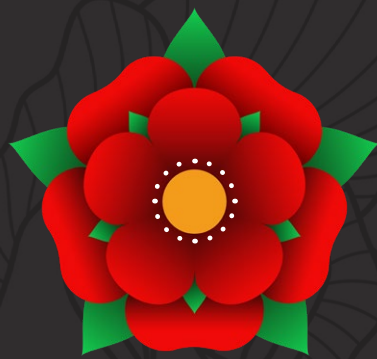
There is a requirement for the Chair of the Audit Committee to be an independent person, who is not otherwise involved in the proposed LCCA. Again, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 requires that members of the Audit Committee must not be the same individuals as those representatives who are members of the proposed LCCA.

The proposed LCCA will ensure that the Audit Committee has the right people to ensure effective oversight of the adequacy of the proposed LCCA's overall assurance arrangements, and scrutiny of financial decision making by the proposed LCCA.

## **Funding of the LCCA**

If the decision is taken by the Secretary of State to establish the proposed LCCA then the Establishment Order will indicate that the proposed LCCA will be funded by the three Constituent Councils. Funding has been secured as part of the deal from central Government to cover the financial years 2023/4 and 2024/5. In addition, the proposed LCCA would consider whether to seek the power to borrow and explore the extent of these powers. In practice it is expected that the running costs of the proposed LCCA will be met by either continued central Government support or with funding from the Constituent Councils. The proposed LCCA will not have the power to raise a precept. That means it will not be able to raise money through increasing Council Tax.

The general powers the proposed LCCA is intended to have around finance and funding are expected to be substantially the same as local authorities enjoy generally.





# 6. CONSULTATION

To gain feedback on the Proposal and to inform the decision as to whether to proceed to advance the Proposal (with any potential amendments) to the Secretary of State, an eight-week consultation took place between 1 December 2023 and 26 January 2024.

The consultation methods used included:

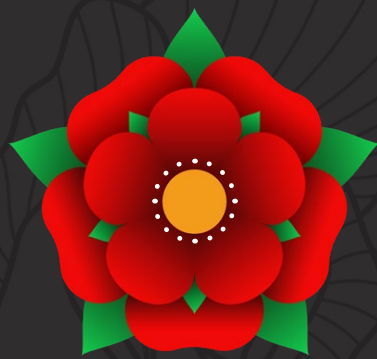
- an online survey with alternative options provided on request to meet the needs of participants (translations, paper copies and easy-read versions)
- stakeholder engagement with businesses, the voluntary sector, and other stakeholders identified
- events to engage residents and stakeholders of the proposed LCCA Area.

Active steps were taken to encourage participation and to ensure that the consultation was accessible to all (including, for example, the digitally disadvantaged, those with protected characteristics and high intensity users of affected services). An equality impact assessment has been completed to inform engagement undertaken by Constituent Councils.

A detailed plan of communications was created with support from each Constituent Council to identify the best method of promoting the consultation in their local areas, including a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs).

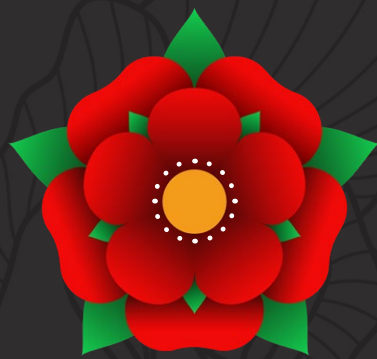
A Data Protection Impact Assessment was undertaken to assist the Constituent Councils in ensuring that data shared and collected through the consultation process was held, processed and stored correctly, and for no longer than is necessary.

Findings from the consultation have been analysed and published. These findings have supported the consideration of the Proposal by each Constituent Council.



# 7. THE DEAL

The Lancashire Devolution Deal can be viewed here:  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/lancashire-devolution-deal](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lancashire-devolution-deal)



# 8. NEXT STEPS (TRANSITION)

The transition to a formal LCCA in Autumn 2024 is planned to be in three stages:

- **Stage 1: Establishing transition arrangements – by Summer 2024**
- **Stage 2: Working as a shadow organisation – Summer 2024 to Autumn 2024**
- **Stage 3: Formal establishment of the LCCA – Autumn 2024 onwards**

It is important to note that transition to the proposed LCCA is dependent on a number of factors: this Proposal being accepted by Government; and the approval by Parliament of the necessary secondary legislation implementing the Proposal.

## **Stage 1: Establishing transition arrangements – by Summer 2024**

In this stage, the main focus is collaborative working across Constituent Councils to determine the key roles required for the shadow authority and how it will plan for the establishment of LCCA functions. This will involve:

- ensuring collaborative leadership from Leaders of Constituent Councils to enable decisions to be made
- consolidating a programme team to operate as the ‘engine’ of the shadow LCCA – drawing on staff from Constituent Councils, other stakeholders, and professional advisors
- defining a resource plan so that individual authorities can take decisions about their financial and time commitments
- planning the integration of the functions of the LEP into the LCCA, ensuring it is ready for delivering functional responsibilities if the formal LCCA is established.
- developing an engagement plan to ensure that key partners, including District Councils and the business community are involved in the development activity
- putting in place the necessary arrangements to begin developing plans for priority areas such as transport, skills, and employment
- starting to consider the practical arrangements for shadow and combined authority working and decision making, including the role of districts and the Lancashire Leaders forum.

In this and subsequent stages, the relationship between the future LCCA and existing local authorities (and other stakeholders) will be developed to ensure effective and constructive governance.

## **Stage 2: Working as a shadow organisation - Summer 2024 to Autumn 2024**

In this stage, the focus will be on working as a shadow organisation and making preparations for the formal LCCA. It is important to note that this shadow organisation will not be a new legal entity and therefore any activities (such as employing people or financial accountability) will be done by the existing local authorities. Functions at this stage will involve:

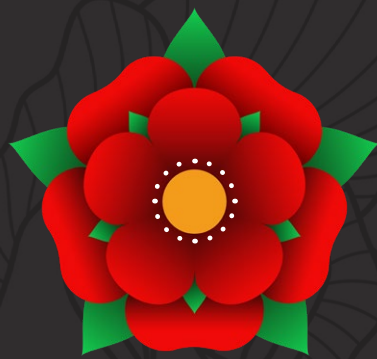
- preparing functional plans ready for the formal LCCA to pick up if it is established
- designing and confirming important aspects of the formal LCCA, such as the future management structure and resources to enable delivery of the objectives
- developing and designing a constitution for the LCCA to ensure effective governance arrangements.

## **Stage 3: Formal establishment of the LCCA – Autumn 2024 onwards**

In this stage, which would follow the laying of the necessary Statutory Instrument, the constituent councils will begin to formally meet as a LCCA, informed by the preparation and planning undertaken in the previous two stages. It will begin to deliver on the objectives and ambitions of this proposal:

- begin the process of appointment to Statutory Roles to manage the LCCA's operations
- delivering on functional plans to begin delivering LCCA responsibilities and achieving outcomes for the region
- scaling up the enabling competencies in order to allow the organisation to operate as required
- implementing the governance model for the LCCA, including establishing the various committees
- continuing to enable the LCCA to operationally evolve as is required.







# 9. LEGISLATION

Set out in the Appendix is a table of the powers which the Constituent Councils are proposing are available to the proposed LCCA. The powers are those which the Constituent Councils believe are needed to enable the proposed LCCA to deliver the purposes outlined in this Proposal.

In considering our Proposal, the Government, and in particular, specialist legislative counsel, will review the table below and some of the detail set out may be required to change as a consequence of the drafting of establishment orders, and other consequential amendments to existing powers for combined authorities.

The scope of powers to be available, and the broad terms of the exercise of those powers are unlikely to change, and, in any event, the powers will not go beyond the scope set out in the governance section of this Proposal.

# REFERENCES

- <sup>i</sup> Regional Gross Value Added (Balanced) by Industry: City and Enterprise Regions, 2021, Office for National Statistics (ONS) © Crown Copyright
- <sup>ii</sup> Regional Gross Value Added (Balanced) by Industry: City and Enterprise Regions, 2021, Office for National Statistics (ONS) © Crown Copyright
- <sup>iii</sup> ONS: 2011 Census: Origin-destination (flow) data
- <sup>iv</sup> Road lengths in Great Britain: 2022, Department for Transport
- <sup>v</sup> Office of Rail and Road: Estimates of Station Usage 2021-2022
- <sup>vi</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>vii</sup> Lancashire Economic Strategy 2023 – 2025, Lancashire County Council, <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/media/940760/economic-strategy.pdf>
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- <sup>ix</sup> UK Business Counts, 2022, ONS (Nomis), © Crown Copyright
- <sup>x</sup> Regional Gross Value Added (Balanced) by Industry: City and Enterprise Regions, 2021, Office for National Statistics (ONS) © Crown Copyright
- <sup>xi</sup> Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub: Food and Agriculture Study, July 2022: <https://www.lancshireskillshub.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Lancashire-Food-Agriculture-LMI-study-Final-Report-2022.pdf>
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- <sup>xvi</sup> Lancashire LEP Analysis of 2018/19 - 2020/21 Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA) Graduate Outcomes Survey
- <sup>xvii</sup> ONS: Annual Population Survey, 2023
- <sup>xviii</sup> Housing need sourced from the Planning Authorities or their current Local Plans, Lancashire LIER Infrastructure in Lancashire 2021, and <https://lichfields.uk/grow-renew-protect-planning-for-the-future/how-many-homes-the-new-standard-met>
- <sup>xix</sup> Table 253: permanent dwellings started and completed, by tenure and district, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, © Crown Copyright
- <sup>xx</sup> ONS: House price (existing dwellings) to workplace-based earnings ratio, 2023
- <sup>xxi</sup> House price (newly built dwellings) to workplace-based earnings ratio, ONS, 2023
- <sup>xxii</sup> ONS: Experimental regional gross fixed capital formation (GFCF) estimates by asset type, 2022
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Subregional productivity: labour productivity indices by UK ITL2 and ITL3 subregions, Current Price (Smoothed) Gross Value Added (Balanced) Per Hour Worked, Indices 2004-2021. ONS, 2023 © Crown Copyright
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry: city and enterprise regions, 2021, ONS © Crown Copyright

<sup>xxv</sup> Tracking Local Employment in the Green Economy: The Place-based Climate Action Network Just Transition Jobs Tracker, PCAN

<sup>xxvi</sup> Lancashire Independent Economic Review: Infrastructure in Lancashire, 2021. Link: [https://www.lancashireier.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/LIER\\_Infrastructure\\_In\\_Lancashire\\_2021\\_v1.pdf](https://www.lancashireier.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/LIER_Infrastructure_In_Lancashire_2021_v1.pdf)

<sup>xxvii</sup> Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2022, ONS (Nomis) © Crown Copyright

<sup>xxviii</sup> Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2022, ONS (Nomis) © Crown Copyright

<sup>xxix</sup> Annual Population Survey, Jul 2022-Jun 2023, ONS (Nomis) © Crown Copyright

<sup>xxx</sup> Subregional productivity, Current Price (smoothed) GVA per hour worked, 2004-2021, ONS © Crown Copyright

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<sup>xxxii</sup> Annual Population Survey, Jul 2022-Jun 2023, ONS (Nomis) © Crown Copyright

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<sup>xxxiv</sup> PHE Fingertips Dashboard, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, Life Expectancy at Birth 2018-2020, © Crown Copyright

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<sup>xxxvii</sup> Department for Education, Average Attainment 8 Score of all pupils. Key stage 4 performance: Local authority district and region of school location data by FSM and disadvantage status, 2022/23

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Early Years Foundation Stage Profile results, 2021-22, Department for Education © Crown Copyright

<sup>xxxix</sup> TS067 - Highest level of qualification, Census 2021, ONS (Nomis) © Crown Copyright

<sup>xi</sup> TS067 - Highest level of qualification, Census 2021, ONS (Nomis) © Crown Copyright

## DEFINED TERMS

**LCCA** - Lancashire Combined County Authority.

**Constituent Councils** - Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council and Blackpool Council.

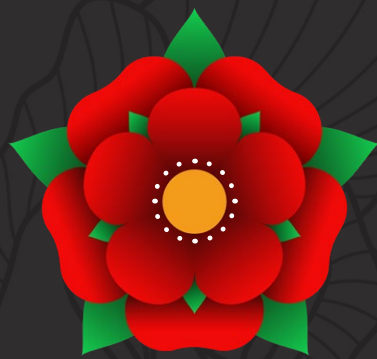
**Functional Economic Area** - FEA - areas that share several similar economic factors with boundaries that ideally reflect the drivers of the local economy.

**GVA** - Gross Value Added – this is the measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry, or sector of an economy.

**Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)** - Partnerships between local authorities and businesses to help determine local economic priorities and undertake activities to drive economic growth and create local jobs.

**The Area** - The Area covered by the proposed Lancashire Combined County Authority.

**Statutory Instrument (SI)** - Statutory instruments are the most common form of secondary (or delegated) legislation.



# APPENDIX A: TABLE OF POWERS/ FUNCTIONS

Set out below is a table of the powers which the Constituent Councils are proposing are available to the LCCA. The powers are those which the Constituent Councils believe are needed to enable the LCCA to deliver the purposes outlined in this proposal.

In considering our proposal the Government, and in particular, specialist legislative counsel, will review the table below and some of the detail set out may be required to change as a consequence of enactment of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act, the drafting of establishment orders, and other consequential amendments to existing powers for combined authorities. The scope of powers to be available, and the broad terms of the exercise of those powers are unlikely to change; and in any event, the powers will not go beyond the scope set out in the governance section of this proposal, and the Devolution Deal.

## Finance, Investment, Innovation and Trade

| Legislative Provisions  | From                | Concurrent exercise?            | Consent  | Voting          |
|---|---------------------|---------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009<br><br>Section 69 | Upper tier councils | Yes                             | No, but requirement to consult and seek the participation of the district/ boroughs. | Unanimous vote  |
| Crime and Disorder Act 1998<br><br>Section 17A                                    | Upper tier councils | Yes                             | No   | Simple majority |
| Local Government Act 1972<br><br>Sections 113, 142(2), 144, 145 and 222           | All LAs             | No (but LAs do not lose powers) | No   | Simple majority |
| Local Government Act 1985<br><br>Section 88(1)(a) and s88(1)(b)                   | All LAs             | No                              | No   | Simple majority |

## Finance, Investment, Innovation and Trade (cont.)

| Legislative Provisions                              | From  | Concurrent exercise?   | Consent   | Voting          |
|---|---|--|---|-----------------|
| Local Government and Housing Act 1989<br>Section 13 | Applies to all powers conferred on any relevant authority by s102(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 | N/a – this relates to voting rights rather than exercise of powers | No  | N/a – no voting |
| Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013    | N/a – provision for pension arrangements  | No – administering authority is Lancashire County Council          | No  | N/a – no voting |
| Local Government Act 2003<br>Section 31             | Minister  | Yes  | Where exercise of power will result in financial liability of a constituent council, that constituent council must consent.<br><br>Where exercise of power will result in financial liability for Blackpool Transport Services Limited, Blackpool Borough Council must consent.<br><br>Where exercise of a power may have a significant, material, and direct impact on Blackpool Transport Services Ltd, Blackpool Borough Council must consent. | Simple majority |

## Skills and Education

| Legislative Provisions   | From                         | Concurrent exercise?   | Consent        | Voting          |
|--|------------------------------|--|----------------|-----------------|
| Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009<br>Sections 86 and 87, 88, 90 and 100(1) | Secretary of State functions | Section 86, 87 and 88 are transferred<br><br>Sections 90 and 100(1) are exercised concurrently with Secretary of State | None specified | Simple majority |

## Housing and Planning

| Legislative Provisions   | From                                      | Concurrent exercise? | Consent   | Voting          |
|--|---|----------------------|---|-----------------|
| <p>Town and Country Planning Act 1990</p> <p>Sections 226, 227, 229, 230(1)(a), 232, 233, 235, 236, 238, 239, 241</p>  | LPA (Local Planning Authority) powers     | Yes                  | Section 226 requires consent of lead member of LCCA designated under paragraph 1(3) of schedule 1 whose area contains land subject to the acquisition, and of district councils in whose area the land subject to the acquisition is located.   | Simple majority |
| <p>Housing and Regeneration Act 2008</p> <p>Sections 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, paragraphs 19 and 20 of Schedule 3 and paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 10 and 20 of Schedule 4</p> | Homes England powers                      | Yes                  | <p>Section 9(2) requires consent of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead member of LCCA designated by constituent council whose local government area contains any part of the relevant land;</li> <li>• Each district council whose area contains any part of the relevant land.</li> </ul> <p>Where exercise results in financial liability falling on a constituent council, the consent of the lead member of that council is required.</p>    | Simple majority |
| <p>Housing Act 1985</p> <p>Sections 8, 11, 12, 17 and 18</p>   | City Council and District/ Borough powers | Yes                  | <p>Section 17(3) requires consent of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead member of LCCA designated by constituent council whose local government area containing the relevant land;</li> <li>• Each district council whose area contains any part of the relevant area</li> <li>• Where exercise of 17(3) results in financial liability falling on a constituent council, the consent of the lead member of that council is required</li> </ul> | Simple majority |

## Transport

Discussions are ongoing between the Constituent Councils and the Department for Transport in relation to the necessity for the concurrent exercise of those functions and/or powers marked with a [\*]

| Legislative Provisions   | From  | Concurrent exercise?  | Consent required before exercise   | Voting   | When?                                      |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Part 2 Transport Act 2000</b>   |   |   |  |  |  |
| Local transport plans and bus strategies (sections 108, 109 and 112) (sections 110 to 111 repealed)        | A local transport authority or local transport authorities or a district council or a Passenger Transport Executive (as applicable) | The following are concurrent during the transition period:<br>• 113C-123<br>• 123A-123X<br>• 124-134B<br>• 138A-143B<br>• 151-162<br><br>The remainder are not concurrent | In respect of all powers:<br><br>• Where exercise of power will result in financial liability of a constituent council, that constituent council must consent<br><br>• Where exercise of power will result in financial liability for Blackpool Transport Services Limited, Blackpool Borough Council must consent<br><br>• Where exercise of a power may have a significant, material and direct impact on Blackpool Transport Services Ltd, Blackpool Borough Council must consent<br><br>In addition, s123A-123X are only exercisable with the consent of the affected constituent council. | Unanimous for s108-113<br>Otherwise, simple Majority | From Establishment and on an ongoing basis |
| Bus services: advanced quality partnership schemes (sections 113C to 113O)                                 |   |   |  |  |  |
| Bus services: quality partnership schemes (sections 114 to 123)  |   |   |  |  |  |
| Bus services: franchising schemes (sections 123A to 123X)  |   |   |  |  |  |
| * Bus services: advanced ticketing schemes (sections 134C to 134G)   |   |   |  |  |  |
| * Bus services: ticketing schemes (sections 135 to 138)  |   |   |  |  |  |
| Bus services: enhanced partnership plans and schemes (sections 138A to 138S)                               |   |   |  |  |  |
| Bus services: provision of information (section 139 to 141A)   |   |   |  |  |  |
| Bus services: miscellaneous (sections 142 to 143B)   |   |   |  |  |  |
| * Mandatory travel concessions for journeys not beginning on the London bus network (sections 145A to 150) |   |   |  |  |  |
| Travel concessions in Greater London (Section 151)   |   |   |  |  |  |
| Financial and competition provisions (sections 152 to 159 (156 and 158 repealed))                          |   |   |  |  |  |
| Supplementary (Section 160 to 162)   |   |   |  |  |  |



## Transport (cont.)

| Legislative Provisions   | From   | Concurrent exercise? | Consent required before exercise  | Voting          | When?                                       |
|--|--|----------------------|---|-----------------|---|
| <b>Part 2 Transport Act 2000</b>   |  |                      |   |                 |   |
| Chapters 2 and 3 of Part 3 (Workplace parking levy, General and supplementary) and Workplace Parking Levy (England Regulations 2009) | Local Authority (charging authority which is the traffic authority (charging schemes can be made by a non-metropolitan local traffic authority (or jointly by more than one non-metropolitan local traffic authority), by an Integrated Transport Authority or combined authority and one or more eligible local traffic authorities, or the Secretary of State [or a strategic highways company]; a licencing authority or licencing authorities) | No                   | <p>Only exercisable with consent of the affected constituent council.</p> <p>Where exercise of power will result in financial liability of a constituent council, that constituent council must consent</p> <p>Where exercise of power will result in financial liability for Blackpool Transport Services Limited, Blackpool Borough Council must consent</p> <p>Where exercise of a power may have a significant, material, and direct impact on Blackpool Transport Services Ltd, Blackpool Borough Council must consent</p> | Simple majority | From Establishment and on an ongoing basis. |

## Transport (cont.)

| Legislative Provisions  | From   | Concurrent exercise?      | Consent required before exercise   | Voting  | When?                                       |
|---|--|---------------------------|--|---|---|
| <b>Highways Act 1980</b>  |  |                           |  |   |   |
| Section 6 Highways Act 1980 (Delegation etc. of functions with respect to trunk roads etc)  | Public Authority<br><br>Minister of Crown [or a strategic highway company]         | With Constituent Councils | Only exercisable with the consent of the affected Constituent Council.<br><br>Where exercise of power will result in financial liability of a constituent council, that Constituent Council must consent<br><br>Where exercise of power will result in financial liability for Blackpool Transport Services Limited, Blackpool Borough Council must consent<br><br>Where exercise of a power may have a significant, material, and direct impact on Blackpool Transport Services Ltd, Blackpool Borough Council must consent | Simple majority voting but the agreement of the Constituent Council would be needed before vote | From Establishment and on an ongoing basis. |
| Sections 8 of the Highways Act 1980 (Agreements between local highway authorities [and strategic highways companies] for certain works) | Local Authority<br><br>Local highway authorities [and strategic highway companies] | With Constituent Councils | Only exercisable with the consent of the affected Constituent Council.<br><br>Where exercise of power will result in financial liability of a Constituent Council, that constituent council must consent<br><br>Where exercise of power will result in financial liability for Blackpool Transport Services Limited, Blackpool Borough Council must consent<br><br>Where exercise of a power may have a significant, material, and direct impact on Blackpool Transport Services Ltd, Blackpool Borough Council must consent | Simple majority voting but the agreement of the Constituent Council would be needed before vote | From Establishment and on an ongoing basis. |

## Transport (cont.)

| Legislative Provisions   | From   | Concurrent exercise?                              | Consent required before exercise   | Voting                 | When?   |
|--|--|---|--|------------------------|---|
| <b>Part 4 Transport Act 1985</b>   |  |   |  |                        |   |
| <p>Passenger Transport Areas (section 57 to 62)</p> <p>[* - in relation to sections 65 to 71 only]</p> <p>Passenger Transport in other areas (sections 63 to 71)</p> <p>Further Provisions (sections 72 to 79)</p> <p>Miscellaneous (section 80 to 87)</p> | <p>In a non-metropolitan county in England and Wales, the county council, a non-metropolitan district council in England, Passenger Transport Executive for any integrated transport area, council operating a bus undertaking, public transport company or its controlling authority, a Passenger Transport Executive or a council or local authority</p> | <p>All sections are concurrent and continuing</p> | <p>In respect of all powers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where exercise of power will result in financial liability of a constituent council, that constituent council must consent</li> <li>• Where exercise of power will result in financial liability for Blackpool Transport Services Limited, Blackpool Borough Council must consent</li> <li>• Where exercise of a power may have a significant, material, and direct impact on Blackpool Transport Services Ltd, Blackpool Borough Council must consent</li> </ul> <p>In addition, s63-64 and 72-79 only exercisable with consent of affected constituent council</p> | <p>Simple majority</p> | <p>From Establishment and on an ongoing basis</p> |

## Transport (cont.)

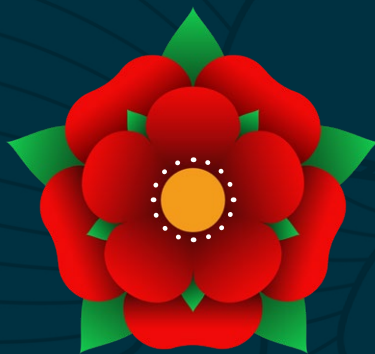
| Legislative Provisions   | From  | Concurrent exercise?  | Consent required before exercise   | Voting          | When?                                      |
|--|---|---|--|-----------------|--|
| <b>Part 5 Transport Act 1985</b>   |   |   |  |                 |  |
| [* - in relation to section 88 only]<br><br>Expenditure on public passenger transport services (sections 88 to 92) | Any authority responsible for expenditure on public local transport, any local authority or any two or more local authorities acting jointly, Passenger Transport Executive, a county or district council operating any public passenger transport service, a parish council or community council, the Secretary of State | The following are concurrent and continuing<br>• s88 to 92<br>• s106 and 106A | In respect of all powers:<br><br>• Where exercise of power will result in financial liability of a constituent council, that constituent council must consent<br><br>• Where exercise of power will result in financial liability for Blackpool Transport Services Limited, Blackpool Borough Council must consent<br><br>• Where exercise of a power may have a significant, material, and direct impact on Blackpool Transport Services Ltd, Blackpool Borough Council must consent<br><br>In addition:<br><br>• s93-101 only exercisable with consent of constituent councils | Simple majority | From Establishment and on an ongoing basis |
| * Travel Concession Schemes (sections 93 to 101 (102 repealed))  |   |   |  |                 |  |
| *Travel concessions apart from schemes (sections 103 to 105)   |   |   |  |                 |  |
| Grants for transport facilities and services (sections 106 and 106A)   |   |   |  |                 |  |
| Grants for services in rural areas (sections 108 to 109)   |   |   |  |                 |  |
| Miscellaneous (sections 110 (111 repealed) and 112)  |   |   |  |                 |  |

## Transport (cont.)

| Legislative Provisions  | From                      | Concurrent exercise?      | Consent required before exercise   | Voting          | When?                                      |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|--|-----------------|--|
| <b>Traffic Management Act 2004</b>  |                           |                           |  |                 |  |
| Part 3 Permit Schemes<br>Section 33<br>Section 33A<br>Section 36  | Local Highway Authorities | Concurrent and continuing | <p>Only exercisable with the consent of the affected Constituent Council(s).</p> <p>Where exercise of power will result in financial liability of a constituent council, that constituent council must consent</p> <p>Where exercise of power will result in financial liability for Blackpool Transport Services Limited, Blackpool Borough Council must consent</p> <p>Where exercise of a power may have a significant, material, and direct impact on Blackpool Transport Services Ltd, Blackpool Borough Council must consent</p> | Simple majority | From Establishment and on an ongoing basis |
| Part 6 (Civil Enforcement of Traffic Contraventions) and paragraph 10 (designation of civil enforcement areas for moving traffic contraventions) of Schedule 8 (civil enforcement areas and enforcement authorities outside Greater London) | Enforcement Authority     | Concurrent and continuing | <p>Only exercisable with the consent of the affected Constituent Council(s).</p> <p>Where exercise of power will result in financial liability of a constituent council, that constituent council must consent</p> <p>Where exercise of power will result in financial liability for Blackpool Transport Services Limited, Blackpool Borough Council must consent</p> <p>Where exercise of a power may have a significant, material, and direct impact on Blackpool Transport Services Ltd, Blackpool Borough Council must consent</p> | Simple majority | From Establishment and on an ongoing basis |









# Lancashire Combined County Authority

**Devolution Deal Consultation  
Summary Report – Executive Summary**

**March 2024**



**LANCASHIRE**  
THE TIME IS NOW



# 1 Executive Summary

The full version of this report can be accessed at [www.lancashiredevolution.co.uk](http://www.lancashiredevolution.co.uk)

## 1.1 Background

On 22 November 2023, the government announced the potential for a devolution deal for Lancashire. The three upper tier councils in Lancashire, (Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Council and Blackburn with Darwen Council) produced a draft proposal (the 'Proposal') and agreed to consult on plans to create a new entity called the Lancashire Combined County Authority (LCCA).

If the proposal is implemented, existing funding and powers would move from central government to Lancashire, with further powers also being available to the LCCA. It is intended that this would enable local voices to play a greater role in decision-making in the area to secure more investment and deliver better outcomes for local communities. The proposal would not mean removing or merging local councils. Each council would continue to exist and would still be responsible for public services in their area.

The proposal focuses on eight priorities: Innovation, Trade and Investment, Skills, Transport, Net Zero and Climate Change, Digital and Cyber, Culture and Tourism, Housing and Land, and Delivering Our Ambitions. The three upper tier councils in Lancashire are proposing devolution due to what they believe would have a number of benefits. However, before a final decision is reached, the councils have a statutory duty to consult with individuals and organisations both within Lancashire and beyond.

## 1.2 The public consultation

A public consultation was launched on 1 December 2023 to obtain feedback on the proposal. The consultation ran for eight weeks, closing on 26 January 2024.

Anyone could provide a response to the consultation. Consultees could provide their views via an online or paper questionnaire, by email and post. An online consultation website<sup>1</sup> was established by Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Council and Blackburn with Darwen Council. It included a summary of the devolution deal, a copy of the proposal, and what it would mean if it were adopted, the likely benefits and an explanation about how the proposed deal has built on the believed pre-existing strengths of the proposed LCCA area. The independent research agency Ipsos was commissioned to receive responses, and to provide an independent report of the feedback received.

## 1.3 Responses received

Overall, there were 1,881 responses received within the consultation period. This included responses from 1,695 individuals and 186 organisations and representative groups. Most of those who took part in

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<sup>1</sup> <https://lancashiredevolution.co.uk/>

the consultation used the online response form/questionnaire (1,796). There were also 34 responses received on a paper response form/questionnaire, and 51 responses by email.

## 1.4 Headline findings

Those who participated in the consultation via the online or paper response form were asked to indicate if agreed or disagreed with each of the eight priority areas being consulted on. The following table provides a summary breakdown of responses to the closed or tick-box questions on the response form. As is shown, more consultees agreed than disagreed with each of the eight proposals.

| <b>Q. To what extent to you agree or disagree with the proposal on (PRIORITY) for the Lancashire Combined County Authority?</b> |                              |              |                 |                                   |                   |
|---|------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Priority</b>   | <b>Number of consultees*</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Neither agree nor disagree</b> | <b>Don't know</b> |
| <b>Innovation, Trade and Investment</b>   | 1,814                        | 59%          | 29%             | 11%                               | 1%                |
| <b>Skills</b>   | 1,815                        | 64%          | 25%             | 10%                               | 1%                |
| <b>Transport</b>  | 1,816                        | 62%          | 27%             | 10%                               | 1%                |
| <b>Net Zero and Climate Change</b>  | 1,816                        | 56%          | 28%             | 15%                               | 1%                |
| <b>Digital and Cyber</b>  | 1,819                        | 59%          | 25%             | 14%                               | 1%                |
| <b>Culture and Tourism</b>  | 1,816                        | 59%          | 25%             | 14%                               | 1%                |
| <b>Housing and Land</b>   | 1,817                        | 50%          | 35%             | 13%                               | 2%                |
| <b>Delivering Our Ambitions</b>   | 1,819                        | 51%          | 32%             | 15%                               | 2%                |

*\*This is the number of consultees who answered each of the eight closed questions on the response form. Consultees could choose to skip a question if they wished to and so the number answering each question differs slightly.*

## 1.5 Qualitative feedback received on the overall proposal

Those who completed a response form were given the opportunity to provide their comments, including reasons for their agreement or disagreement with the overall proposal and eight priority areas. They could also make suggestions or provide other comments about the proposal. Additionally, those who responded by email were able to provide their feedback to be taken into consideration before a decision is taken on the next steps by the three upper tier authorities in Lancashire.

### Reasons to agree or support the proposal

Many different reasons were put forward in support of, or agreement with, the proposed LCCA and its potential to stimulate local economic growth and provide new opportunities. For some consultees, the stated benefits of devolution for Lancashire were too significant to be missed, while for others, it was a

positive first step on what was anticipated as an ambitious devolution journey for Lancashire. It was suggested that the newly formed LCCA could address current and important issues, including austerity, lack of lobbying power with central government, and the decline of post-industrial towns in the county. The proposal was also viewed as a pragmatic approach, putting residents' interests first, and attracting investment. Some of those who were supportive expressed excitement over the potential impact on, for example, the local visitor economy and the possibility of partnership working across culture, heritage, sport, and communities. It was also believed that the LCCA could bring decision-making closer to local communities, improve accountability, and the better targeting of resources. For some consultees, there was also potential for growth in Lancashire's manufacturing sector. It was considered that a combined authority would be better positioned to take advantage of such opportunities.

### **Concerns and issues raised**

However, not all of those who provided feedback were supportive of the proposal, with a number of concerns raised. One key concern was about how the proposed LCCA could create an additional layer of local government, with high running and administration costs. For some of those who provided their comments, the proposed LCCA was felt unnecessary. Other key concerns raised included a view that the proposed LCCA had potential to disadvantage some districts and rural areas in Lancashire. A number of consultees had reservations, including about insignificant investment, and that for example, the removal of control over the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) from district councils could lead to what was believed to be a potentially unfair allocation of funds. Other concerns included that the proposal could lead to more centralised decision-making, and thereby weakening the influence of district councils. To this effect it was felt that district councils were more effective in understanding and representing their local communities. Some of those who provided their feedback also believed that the LCCA could result in poor or reduced service provision in some areas, as well as reduced opportunities and weakened democratic accountability. In particular, there was a concern about the proposed governance and delivery arrangements, with some areas potentially having less of a voice and less of a say over important local issues. District councils and parish councils in Lancashire were particularly concerned about governance, and the proposed delivery arrangements.

### **Suggestions and other comments**

Many of those who provided their comments and feedback made suggestions about the proposal. A wide range of suggestions were made including that small businesses and SMEs should be prioritised, that certain sectors including the voluntary and community sector needed to have more consideration, that the councils advocating for the LCCA should ensure they bring in and involve expertise to include, for example, a strong business voice. It was also suggested that there should be more emphasis and focus on children's education, social care, and increased investment in public transport and transport infrastructure more generally. Others still suggested more focus on affordable housing, as well as the creation of more and higher paying job opportunities for young people, to upskill local people, and to prevent a *skills drain* to other parts of the country.

Some of those who provided their feedback requested more information, detail and clarity on what was proposed. It was felt by some that not enough information was provided, while for others what was proposed was too theoretical, and that more substance was needed about how the new LCCA would operate and deliver on its priorities.

## **Conclusion**

Analysis of the responses received to the consultation both through the completed response form and from emailed responses demonstrates a broad support for the proposed devolution. Analysis of the responses also showed support for the proposal from businesses in Lancashire. This is reflected in each of the eight thematic areas set out in the consultation, as well as in the comments received. The consultation responses have also highlighted a number of areas that will require consideration if the proposed devolution proposal were to proceed.

As evidence that more consultees agree than disagree with the proposal, net agreement from those who completed a response form is positive for each of the priority areas consulted on. A net score is the percentage of those who agree minus the percentage of those who disagree. For the eight priority areas this is as follows:

- Innovation, Trade and Investment: 59% agreed with the proposals for Innovation, Trade and Investment, compared to 29% disagreeing (+30).
- Skills: 64% agreed with the proposals for Skills, compared to 25% disagreeing (+39).
- Transport: 62% agreed with the proposals for Transport, compared to 27% disagreeing (+35).
- Net Zero and Climate Change: 56% agreed with the proposals for Net zero and climate change, compared to 28% disagreeing (+28).
- Digital and Cyber: 59% agreed with the proposals for Digital and cyber, compared to 25% disagreeing (+34).
- Culture and Tourism: 59% agreed with the proposals for Culture and tourism, compared to 25% disagreeing (+34).
- Housing and Land: 50% agreed with the proposals for Housing and land, compared to 35% disagreeing (+15).
- Delivering Our Ambitions: 51% agreed with the proposals for Delivering our ambitions, compared to 32% disagreeing (+19)

The public consultation has therefore provided an opportunity for individuals and organisations to express their opinions on the proposal for a level 2 devolution in Lancashire. Participants were able to indicate their agreement or disagreement and provide justifications for their views. This report contains both supportive and opposing feedback on different aspects of the proposal.

The next steps will be decided after the county and two unitary authorities in Lancashire have reviewed and considered the responses to the consultation.



## Appendix 4 - Summary of Communications and Engagement Activity

The communication and engagement activities focused on a robust communications strategy over an 8-week period, emphasising both digital and in-person engagement to ensure broad participation.

A dedicated consultation and communications working group was established with representation from all three of the Upper Tier Local Authorities. The working group's purpose was to deliver a successful consultation over December and January, and maximise the participation rate through a range of communications and engagement activity.

The overarching objective of the initiative was to inform businesses and the public, fostering active involvement in shaping the future of Lancashire. This was achieved through encouraging participation in the consultation process, whether through paper or digital forms, aiming to ensure a comprehensive understanding of diverse perspectives. The primary goal was to enable all those with an interest in the Proposal to engage and have their voices heard. To achieve this, the primary focus was on driving traffic to the dedicated consultation website, utilising various channels and networks for effective communication and engagement to gather valuable insights and feedback.

Steps were also taken to cater for those who had difficulty accessing the online questionnaire and content. Paper copies of the questionnaire and draft proposal were available in all Lancashire libraries. The dedicated website informed that alternative language versions, braille versions and large print versions were all available on request. The libraries and customer access centres were also briefed that these alternative versions were available.

Events and drop-in sessions were strategically organised across all districts, emphasising inclusivity and accessibility. The geographical reach ensured that at least one physical event occurred in each district, fostering a widespread presence.

Diverse engagement methods were employed to cater to different preferences and schedules (detailed below). These methods were chosen to accommodate various communication styles and facilitate broad community participation. This included taking steps to make the consultation accessible to groups with protected characteristics. For example, a BSL interpretation of the explainer video was commissioned.

The rationale behind this approach was to showcase the availability of the consultation process in multiple accessible forms, underlining the commitment to inclusivity. By incorporating a range of engagement methods and ensuring a diverse geographic presence, the communication strategy aimed to gather a rich tapestry of opinions and feedback, promoting a well-informed and representative consultation process for the Lancashire Devolution proposal.

### Channels Utilised:

- **Dedicated website:** A standalone website ([www.lancashiredevolution.co.uk](http://www.lancashiredevolution.co.uk)) was created to house the proposal, consultation, devolution explanation, Q&As, latest news, newsletter subscription.
- **Video:** An explainer video with subtitles was created to give an overview of the devolution proposal. A BSL interpretation of this video was commissioned.
- **Media releases:** Issued to provide updates and key information to the public.
- **Social media activity:** Active presence across a range of social platforms, including Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram and LinkedIn. Social media posts included video content and reminders on the consultation deadline.



- **Newsletters:** Periodic newsletters distributed to a targeted audience for comprehensive updates and to encourage uptake in the consultation. The newsletter is specific to devolution in Lancashire, and will remain in place following the consultation.
- **Dedicated email address:** A central email address ([Devolution@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:Devolution@lancashire.gov.uk)) was created to provide a single point of contact for any queries.
- **Advertising assets:** Adverts were included on digital screens in town centres and on road sides in Blackburn, where Blackburn with Darwen Council-owned digital assets were available.
- **Regional coverage:** Featured on regional television, radio, and other news and media outlets to maximise visibility.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Utilised email communication, in-person meetings, and specific event communications for targeted outreach.
- **Public and private sector networks:** Expanded our message's impact by utilising existing public and private sector communication channels, leveraging newsletters, social media, and other platforms to engage a broader audience. Utilising existing networks, including the LEP network, Marketing Lancashire's network, Boost network, Creative Lancashire, the Chambers of Commerce and the Parish Councils, enabled a larger audience to be reached.
- **Internal communications:** Toolkit developed to ensure that internal teams were well-informed to maintain consistency. The toolkit was shared with key Lancashire organisations / employers, and they were encouraged to share the information within their own staff networks.

#### Events Overview:

- **Engagement reach:** Successfully engaged with over 1,500 individuals.
- **Event quantity:** Participated in a total of 53 events across Lancashire, catering to both business and the public.
- **Geographical inclusivity:** Promoted representation by holding at least one event in each district, reflecting a commitment to inclusivity and providing the groups identified in the EIA as having protected characteristics with an opportunity to have their voices heard.
- **Sectoral coverage:** Some events targeted key sectors impacted by the draft proposal, including Economic Development, Skills, and Transport Geography.

#### Diverse Engagement Methods:

- **Breakfast events:** Early morning sessions to cater to different schedules, and for those who couldn't attend daytime or evening events.
- **Roundtable discussions:** Both in-person and virtual discussions for diverse participation.
- **Presentations:** Informative sessions to convey key details and facilitate understanding. Presenters at the various sessions included Leaders of the three Upper Tier Local Authorities, as well as Senior Officers involved in developing the draft proposal.
- **Q&A sessions:** Provided a platform for direct interaction and clarification of queries.
- **Library drop-ins:** Informal evening sessions for those seeking information in a relaxed environment. Each session was attended by a local councillor and an officer, who were on hand to answer queries and collate feedback from the sessions.
- **Meeting agendas:** Integrated consultation topics into existing meetings for increased visibility.
- **Conferences:** Participated in larger conferences to reach a wider audience.
- **Utilising existing platforms:** Leveraged Business Chamber events and business networks to amplify messaging and encourage the business community to provide their organisational response to the consultation.

#### Highlight Performance Figures:

- **Media Coverage:** Coverage by regional television, radio and other news outlets resulted in more than 100 related media reports.
- **Event Engagement:** Engaged with 1,500+ individuals through 53 events across Lancashire, encompassing both in-person and online formats, catering to both business and the general public.
- **Website Views:** 16,825 unique visits to the devolution consultation website.
- **Social Media:** Our best performing social media channels were Facebook, reaching over 167,000 views and 3,627 clicks to the website, and LinkedIn with over 134,000 views and 3,625 clicks to the website.

The detailed engagement methods sought to ensure that the consultation process was inclusive and accessible to various preferences and needs. The broad spectrum of events facilitated meaningful discussions, and the geographical inclusivity promoted representation from all districts, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the communication and engagement strategy. The impressive engagement numbers underscore the success of the approach in fostering a comprehensive and inclusive consultation process.

## **APPENDIX 5**

# **Equalities Impact Assessment** **Lancashire Devolution Proposal** **March 2024**

This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) examines the possible impacts arising from the Devolution Proposal.

### **Question 1 - What is the nature of and are the key components of the proposal being presented?**

The Government and the upper tier Councils in Lancashire (Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council and Blackpool Council) ("the Constituent Councils") have negotiated a proposed Devolution Deal ("The Deal"). A copy of the Devolution Deal can be found here <http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lancashire-devolution-deal>

In response to the Deal, the Constituent Councils have developed a proposal ("the Proposal") which sets out how they will collectively deliver the Deal by establishing a Lancashire Combined County Authority (LCCA) for Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool ("the Area"). If the proposals are accepted, Government would give additional powers and funding to the Lancashire LCCA and more control over the decision-making that affects Lancashire's residents and businesses.

The creation of the LCCA will not result in the merger or take-over of councils in the Area nor will it require individual councils to give up their powers, except in the specific area of transportation, where some powers will be transferred from the Constituent Councils to the LCCA. Cooperation in transport matters between the LCCA and the councils will also continue into the longer term with certain powers to be held concurrently moving forward to enable the parties to work together effectively in the years ahead. The LCCA will work as one democratically accountable body on key priorities such as economic development, skills, regeneration and transport, enhancing the investment capability of the LCCA Area and individual authorities to support growth.

#### **Objectives**

The objectives for the Proposal reflect regional and national strategy and are designed to ensure a positive future of our county and its people. Together they offer a bold and strategic framework so that:

- Lancashire competes better for its share of national resources and investment
- Lancashire's public, private and voluntary sectors collaborate better to maximise the best use of our resources
- Lancashire has a strong and clear voice that responds innovatively to new opportunities and challenges
- Lancashire has a rich, meaningful and strategic dialogue with central government about the future of our county.
- Lancashire is better positioned to respond to Government's Levelling Up objectives which are;
  - Boosting productivity, pay, skills, jobs and living standards
  - Spreading opportunities and improving public services
  - Restoring a sense of community, local pride and belonging

- Empowering local leaders and communities.

### **Outcomes**

Through delivering on these objectives, we aim to achieve the following outcomes for our residents and the LCCA area:

- A stronger voice in the North West that is currently dominated by Manchester and Liverpool
- Encourage innovation led growth through long term investment in major opportunities
- Match skills to economic need to increase productivity and wellbeing of people who live and work in the area
- Reduce inequality and promote social mobility to allow people to achieve their potential
- Improve transport links to offer greater choice and facilitate better and more sustainable access to our economic hubs, including improving east – west connectivity
- Greater access to Government funding that is exclusively targeted at devolved areas
- Greater say on where to spend investment
- Decision making brought closer to communities, increasing the visibility of those decisions
- Lancashire authorities will gain powers from Whitehall.

### **Our Priorities**

We propose to use devolution to build upon Lancashire's substantial strengths in delivering benefits for its residents. The initial proposal will focus on the following priorities and will also establish our case for enhanced future deals.

### **Innovation, Trade and Investment**

**We will work with local and national stakeholders to become a globally recognised and sustainable economy, distinguished by its quality of life, connectivity, and access to opportunities.**

We will use the devolution process to refresh our strategic plans for economic prosperity. The policy framework for the proposed LCCA includes the Duty to prepare an economic assessment of the LCCA area. These plans will build upon our competitive advantages, exploit opportunities, and develop new sectors capable of delivering economic growth and high-value job creation over the long term. The proposed LCCA will enable Lancashire to produce better strategic cases for investment and gain a greater share of national resources.

Devolution for Lancashire can support us to overcome a historical imbalance of economic performance, low productivity, low investment, and employment at a local level and ensure that Lancashire gets the necessary boost in funding to address longstanding inequalities and support levelling up our communities. Lancashire has opportunities aplenty in all parts of the county, and devolution will put Lancashire in a better position to realise the benefits of these opportunities to improve the lives of residents.

This Proposal can further stimulate business diversification through building upon the existing sectoral strengths of the LCCA Area, and catalysing growth in future industries, such as Energy and Low Carbon and Cyber. This activity will ensure no area of

Lancashire is left behind, and the future of Lancashire is one which is equitable for residents in all corners of Lancashire. Devolution will allow Lancashire to build on its proud history of international trade, supported by a county wide internationalisation strategy, and boost investment across all areas of Lancashire.

Subject to funding, policy and delivery considerations at the next Spending Review, Government's expectation is that delivery responsibility for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), a flexible funding pot, will be aligned with devolution deal responsibilities. This would mean that the proposed LCCA could have such responsibilities from 2025/26. In carrying out this role, the proposed LCCA and the constituent councils will work closely with the Lancashire District Leaders Forum in an advisory capacity. Delivery of these functions will build on existing district-led delivery arrangements for UKSPF and align with the Lancashire 2050 strategy, as agreed by all Local Authorities in Lancashire, to ensure that the needs of residents can be effectively addressed. Priorities for UKSPF will be evidence based and funds will be directed towards areas of need.

The Proposal will provide £6m capital investment<sup>1</sup> to create an Innovation Hub of international excellence at Samlesbury Enterprise Zone. The new centre will help stimulate the growth of new clusters to maximise the transformational benefits of the £5bn National Cyber Force in Lancashire.

The Proposal will provide £6m for the Blackburn Technology Innovation Quarter<sup>2</sup>. The project will provide new business space to support the growth of Lancashire's digital, creative, and cyber sectors.

Through the Proposal, Government departments will consider the potential for future relocations of Government roles to Lancashire as part of the Levelling Up agenda.

To support the proposed LCCA in its initial stages of this deal, the Government will provide £1m of capacity funding.

### **Skills**

**We will work collaboratively with employers, skills and training providers, local authorities, and other stakeholders to support people to develop their skills throughout their lives and attract business to Lancashire because of our highly skilled workforce.**

In Lancashire's labour market, the estimated employment rate is below the national rate and has worsened since the COVID 19 pandemic. Lancashire's labour force is also characterised by a lower proportion of residents with higher level qualifications.

The Proposed Deal includes new powers to better shape local skills provisions to ensure these meet the needs of the local economy. This will include devolution of adult education, the core Adult Education Budget, and the opportunity to further refine the Local Skills Improvement Plan. Funding for Free Courses for Jobs will also be devolved and will be ring-fenced. The policy framework for the proposed LCCA includes the Duty to prepare a skills and employment strategy for the LCCA Area.

A strong, resilient, and inclusive economy brings health benefits to its residents, just as good population health is essential to economic prosperity, health and wealth are effectively 'two sides of the same coin'. As a LCCA Area, Lancashire will be better placed

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<sup>1</sup> Subject to Business Case approval.

<sup>2</sup> Subject to Business Case approval.

to bid to become a pilot on national economic inactivity programmes that support individuals with health conditions to be retained or re-engaged through early intervention in the workplace.

Whilst Early Years and Education is out of scope of a Level 2 deal, the Department for Education have committed to further funds to the Lancashire Careers Hub, which supports schools and colleges to deliver careers programmes in partnership with local businesses – to boost the aspirations of local people and help them make informed career decisions.

### **Transport**

**We will work with transport providers inside and outside Lancashire to create better connected infrastructure that links opportunity to need and delivers travel choices that are safe, inclusive, affordable, and low carbon.**

Partners will build on a successful track record of major transport investment, and Lancashire's fourth Local Transport Plan will set its direction and priorities for highways and transport investment. This plan will work across the county to secure the benefits of connectivity in support of widening transport choices and supporting low carbon travel opportunities. Lancashire has a significant infrastructure pipeline of road transport, bus and rail schemes, and active travel projects that it is seeking to fund through devolution.

The Proposal includes new powers to improve and better integrate local transport, including the ability to develop the bus service improvement plan (BSIP) partnership and strengthen co-ordination of local transport functions.

The Proposal includes plans to improve public electric vehicle charging infrastructure to increase the uptake of electric vehicles and reduce carbon emissions.

As such devolution will help Lancashire deliver improved productivity, health and wellbeing, air quality and net zero carbon policies - and support objectives for maintaining a safe and reliable transport network.

As set out in the recent Network North announcement:

- The proposed LCCA will receive a proportion of the £2.5 billion announced as part of Network North to transform local transport in areas in the North outside of the big city regions.
- The proposed LCCA will receive a proportion of the £770 million of funding for Bus Service Improvement Plans in the North.
- The proposed LCCA will receive a proportion of the £3.3 billion funding to fix potholes in the North.

Note: Blackpool Transport Services (BTS) will continue to operate tram services in Blackpool and the surrounding area and Blackpool Council will retain the relevant powers to manage BTS. Maintenance of tram infrastructure and assets will continue to be the responsibility of Blackpool Council in partnership with Lancashire County Council.

Blackpool Transport Service also provides vital bus services to Blackpool and the surrounding area. BTS will continue to deliver bus services locally.

### **Net Zero and Climate Change**

**We will work across Lancashire to meet our low carbon ambitions, promote clean energy, and enhance our natural environment. Our ambition is that Lancashire becomes internationally recognised as a leader in the creation of 'green jobs', building upon our world class engineering and manufacturing capabilities.**

Lancashire's Energy and Low Carbon sector is particularly important due to its existing ecosystem and capabilities in designing and manufacturing low carbon technologies. The area is forecast to have the highest number of jobs per capita in the Energy and Low Carbon sector in England between 2030 – 2050. Government will work with the proposed LCCA to enable the continued growth of this sector by supporting the delivery of Lancashire's Energy and Low Carbon sector plans. The proposed LCCA will have a Duty to review air quality plans and propose and undertake steps to support the delivery of those plans by Districts Councils in the proposed LCCA Area.

Lancashire partners have been successful in securing funding for natural carbon capture and storage projects including for woodland creation, peatland restoration and pioneering soil management techniques. The County's Biological Heritage Site system of managing locally important wildlife sites has been strengthened to support the development and delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Lancashire.

The Proposal will provide £2m<sup>3</sup> additional capital investment for the Cosy Homes in Lancashire domestic retrofit scheme to extend eligibility criteria and complement the current Home Upgrade Grant scheme. This investment will support a reduction in carbon emissions, better quality housing and improved health outcomes.

### **Digital and Cyber**

**We will work across Lancashire to continue to transform our digital infrastructure and knowledge-based sectors to balance and modernise our industrial base.**

Lancashire has continued the development of a Lancashire Infrastructure Plan and supported rollout of Openreach and Gigabit programmes, including establishing Superfast Atlantic connection with the North Atlantic Loop at Blackpool Enterprise Zone. This increased digital connectivity provides competitive advantages to attract more cutting-edge, tech-based industries.

Locating the National Cyber Force in Lancashire will attract significant investment and create over 2,000 new jobs. Lancashire LCCA will work with the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, to fully capture the investment, business, research, and skills benefits of this new location. These activities will create opportunities and new careers for residents, develop markets and technologies of local businesses and help to establish a North West Cyber Corridor.

The Proposal will provide £6m capital investment for a Low Carbon Data Demonstrator Centre at Blackpool Enterprise Zone<sup>4</sup>. The project will provide new business space to support Lancashire's low carbon and digital innovation ambitions.

### **Culture and Tourism**

**We recognise the fundamental importance of our culture and tourism assets and will work with stakeholders across Lancashire to strengthen these. This work**

<sup>3</sup> Subject to Business Case approval.

<sup>4</sup> Subject to Business Case approval.

**includes the creation a Local Visitor Economy Partnership for the region to help further develop the region's visitor economy.**

Lancashire's rich cultural and heritage offer has an important role in the proposed LCCA's plans to attract and retain skilled workers, and in contributing to 'pride in place' in the region. Tourism and the visitor economy are crucial industries for Lancashire, with the area amongst the UK's most prolific visitor destinations every year. Blackpool, including the Pleasure Beach Resort, is the nation's No1 seaside resort, with some 20m visits per year, and represents a £1.5bn visitor economy.

The proposed LCCA will work with Government to hold a series of exploratory conversations to test the region's appetite and capacity for partnership working across culture, heritage, sport, communities, and the visitor economy.

VisitEngland and the proposed LCCA will work with the accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnership for the region to help further develop the region's visitor economy. This collaborative work, across those areas set out in the Government's Tourism Recovery Plan, could include harnessing the region's potential to grow domestic and international visitor spend, and encouraging visits throughout the year rather than just during the traditional tourist season.

### **Housing and Land**

**We will support the delivery of decent, affordable, and low carbon housing for every community. High quality housing will benefit existing residents, as well as attract and retain the people required to drive the economy over the long term.**

Housing is a crucial issue for Lancashire. We need more and better housing to help support a return to growth in our working-age population and economic growth more widely. We also need concerted action to tackle poor-quality housing across the county as this stock drives many of our worst socioeconomic outcomes.

As a collaborative, Lancashire authorities have successfully delivered £22m Local Authority Green Home Grant providing home energy improvements to over 2000 households through the Cosy Homes in Lancashire scheme. £41m has been secured from the Home Upgrade Grant to provide energy efficiency and low-carbon heating measures over the next two years.

Blackpool Council have been a Levelling Up partner with DHLUC since March 2022 and is now trialling policy changes in decent homes standards for the private rented sector and supported housing, and Blackburn with Darwen is also confirmed as one of 20 national Levelling Up Partnership areas.

Lancashire has a major development and infrastructure pipeline in excess of £22bn and a consistent understanding with regard to brownfield land opportunities and outputs including economic development, infrastructure, and housing. Lancashire has clear evidence of the blockages to development, infrastructure, and housing especially on brownfield land where issues such as ownership and contamination and/or buildings from previous uses can present a barrier to achieving outcomes.

The proposal would give Lancashire the ability to exercise compulsory purchase powers, to help drive regeneration and build more affordable homes, boosting supply and bringing down the cost of newly built dwellings.



The Proposal supports our ambition to deliver a pipeline of strategic development sites and infrastructure opportunities faster and more strategically than would otherwise be the case. The Lancashire Strategic Employment Site Report by Stantec consultants (2024) would inform the work of the proposed LLCCA to develop a portfolio of sites to meet long-term demand.

### **Delivery**

#### **We will implement streamlined governance and decision-making arrangements with a strong business voice to address the big opportunities and challenges for Lancashire.**

This priority will allow the creation of a powerful LCCA to drive growth in the North, empowered through strong leadership and effective governance.

To achieve this, our Proposal includes the integration of the Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership with wider structures and the formation of a new Business Board. This change will help ensure there continues to be a strong and independent local business voice which informs local decision making and strategic economic planning. The model places a strengthened private sector voice at the heart of growth strategy development.

The governance model proposed (see section 5) builds upon existing structures and recognises the significant role of District Councils. The Proposal includes new arrangements for Transport and Skills and Adult Education, and will enable partners to collaborate more effectively and focus on the big opportunities and challenges for Lancashire.

The Proposal will see the integration of the Local Enterprise Partnership investment team, the Growth Lancashire company, destination management organisation, and compulsory purchase orders to unlock sites of significance to stimulate investment in Lancashire. The integration of the LEP and a Business Board helps Lancashire choose its own economic path.

The plans proposed respond to national policy on levelling up and devolution including integration of LEP functions and roles into local democratic institutions to ensure a strong business voice at the heart of local decision making.

## **Question 2 - Scope of the Proposal**

In broad terms, the Proposal is likely to affect people across the county in a similar way, as the LCCA would cover the whole county of Lancashire, including Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen and the 12 districts, which are:

- Burnley
- Chorley
- Fylde
- Hyndburn
- Lancaster
- Pendle
- Preston
- Ribble Valley
- Rossendale
- South Ribble
- West Lancashire
- Wyre

However, some of the specific arrangements which flow from decisions made by the proposed LCCA, may have a different impact across various areas and communities. The proposed LCCA will need to establish appropriate mechanisms for considering and ensuring an appropriate distribution of benefits, i.e. investment, training opportunities, transport improvements etc, for example by drawing on sound intelligence and a clear evidence base.

### **Question 3 – Protected Characteristics Potentially Affected**

It is not anticipated at this stage that there will be an adverse impact on any groups with protected characteristics within Lancashire, Blackpool or Blackburn with Darwen. To assess how the proposed consultation reflects the communities covered, we have provided the following demographic information<sup>5</sup>.

#### **Age**

For Lancashire the age profiles are 21% of the population is aged 0-18, 59% are aged 19-65 and 20% are aged 66 plus, with some variations within the districts. In Blackburn with Darwen 27.5% of the population are aged 0-18, 59.4% are aged 19-65 and 13.5% are aged 66+ whilst in Blackpool 20.7% of residents are aged 0-18, 59.8% are aged 19-65 and 19.5% are aged 66+.

#### **Disability**

For Lancashire those where activities were limited a little or a lot, combined is 20% of the population. For Blackburn with Darwen it is 20.8% and for Blackpool it is 24.7%.

#### **Gender Identity**

Information for people who identified that their gender was different from the sex registered at birth or who identified as trans women, trans men or other identities varied across the Districts in the 2021 Census from 891 people when all responses were combined in Preston to 93 people in Ribble Valley.

#### **Sexual Orientation**

For Lancashire Gay or Lesbian is 1.4% of the population and Bi sexual is 1.2% of the population. For Blackburn with Darwen, Gay or Lesbian is 1.1% of the population and Bisexual is 0.8%. For Blackpool, residents who are Gay or Lesbian represent 3.3% of the population and Bi Sexual is 1.4% of the population.

#### **Sex**

For Lancashire 50.9% of the population is female and 49.1% is male. Blackburn with Darwen has 50.4% are female and 49.6% male and Blackpool has 50.6% of the population who are female and 49.4% male.

#### **Ethnicity**

For Lancashire 88.9% of the population is white and 11% come from Black, Asian or mixed/multiple ethnicities. For Blackburn with Darwen 61.5% are white and 38.1% are from Black, Asian or mixed/multiple ethnicities. In Blackpool 95% of the population are White and 5% are from Black, Asian or mixed/multiple ethnicities.

Within Lancashire's districts there is a significant variation in the populations of Black, Asian and mixed multiple ethnicities ranging from 29.5% in Pendle and 27.5% in Preston to 2.5% in Wyre and 3% in West Lancashire.

<sup>5</sup> Sourced from: <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/>

Ethnicity by deprivation – Ethnicity by deprivation – within Lancashire Census 2021 data identified that 15.4% of the population lived in the most deprived area 1 of English Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019. For White British residents this was 11.6% and those of Indian ethnicity it was 16.2% whilst for those of White Other ethnicities the percentage was 34.3% and for those of Pakistani ethnicity 64.2%.

### **Gypsy, Roma, Irish**

At the 2021 Census 956 people in Lancashire identified as Gypsy and 889 people identified as Irish Travellers. For Blackburn with Darwen 101 people identified as Gypsy and 143 as Irish Travellers whilst in Blackpool 236 people identified as Gypsy and 207 as Irish Travellers.

### **Religion or Belief**

A number of Religions or Beliefs are represented within the county. The leading representations are 1) No Religion for Lancashire is 32% of the population. For Blackburn it is 21.1% and for Blackpool it is 41%.

2) Christianity for Lancashire its 55% of the population, 38% for Blackburn with Darwen and 51% for Blackpool.

In Lancashire 7% of the population is Muslim, 35% of the Blackburn with Darwen population is Muslim and 1.4% of the population in Blackpool is Muslim. There are smaller population of Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist, Sikh and other religions amongst the County's population.

### **Other Factors Potentially Affected - Car Ownership**

In Lancashire 20% of households have no car or van but this varies across different districts and in parts of districts so in some parts of Burnley and Pendle between 50% and 80% of households don't have access to a car. In Blackburn with Darwen 26.9% of households don't have access to a car or van and in Blackpool the figure is 34% of households.

## **Question 4 – Engagement/Consultation**

### **LCCA**

An 8 week open public consultation to help shape the final devolution Proposal prior to submission to Government took place between 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023 and 26<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

The communication and engagement activities focused on a robust communications strategy over the 8-week period, emphasising both digital and in-person engagement to ensure broad participation.

A dedicated consultation and communications working group was established with representation from all three of the Upper Tier Local Authorities. The working group's purpose was to deliver a successful consultation over December and January and maximise the participation rate through a range of communications and engagement activity.

The overarching objective of the initiative was to inform businesses and the public, fostering active involvement in shaping the future of Lancashire. This was achieved through encouraging participation in the consultation process, whether through paper or digital forms, aiming to ensure a comprehensive understanding of diverse perspectives. The primary goal was to enable all those with an interest in the Proposal to engage and have their voices heard. To achieve this, the main focus was on driving traffic to the

dedicated consultation website, utilising various channels and networks for effective communication and engagement to gather valuable insights and feedback.

Steps were also taken to cater for those who had difficulty accessing the online questionnaire and content. Paper copies of the questionnaire and draft proposal were available in all Lancashire libraries. The dedicated website informed that alternative language versions, braille versions and large print versions were all available on request. The libraries and customer access centres were also briefed that these alternative versions were available.

Events and drop-in sessions were strategically organised across all districts, emphasising inclusivity and accessibility. The geographical reach ensured that at least one physical event occurred in each district, fostering a widespread presence.

Diverse engagement methods were employed to cater to different preferences and schedules (detailed below). These methods were chosen to accommodate various communication styles and facilitate broad community participation. This included taking steps to make the consultation accessible to groups with protected characteristics. For example, a BSL interpretation of the explainer video was commissioned. The explainer video also included captions/subtitles so it was accessible to some people who are hard of hearing or deafened.

The rationale behind this approach was to showcase the availability of the consultation process in multiple accessible forms, underlining the commitment to inclusivity. By incorporating a range of engagement methods and ensuring a diverse geographic presence, the communication strategy aimed to gather a rich tapestry of opinions and feedback, promoting a well-informed and representative consultation process for the Proposal.

#### **Channels Utilised:**

- **Dedicated website:** A standalone website ([www.lancashiredevolution.co.uk](http://www.lancashiredevolution.co.uk)) was created to house the Proposal, consultation, devolution explanation, Q&As, latest news, newsletter subscription.
- **Video:** An explainer video with subtitles was created to give an overview of the Proposal. A BSL interpretation of this video was commissioned.
- **Media releases:** Issued to provide updates and key information to the public.
- **Social media activity:** Active presence across a range of social platforms, including Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram and LinkedIn. Social media posts included video content and reminders on the consultation deadline.
- **Newsletters:** Periodic newsletters distributed to a targeted audience for comprehensive updates and to encourage uptake in the consultation. The newsletter is specific to devolution in Lancashire, and will remain in place following the consultation.
- **Dedicated email address:** A central email address ([Devolution@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:Devolution@lancashire.gov.uk)) was created to provide a single point of contact for any queries.
- **Advertising assets:** Adverts were included on digital screens in town centres and on road sides in Blackburn, where Blackburn with Darwen Council-owned digital assets were available.
- **Regional coverage:** Featured on regional television, radio, and other news and media outlets to maximise visibility.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Utilised email communication, in-person meetings, and specific event communications for targeted outreach.

- **Public and private sector networks:** Expanded our message's impact by utilising existing public and private sector communication channels, leveraging newsletters, social media, and other platforms to engage a broader audience. Utilising existing networks, including the LEP network, Marketing Lancashire's network, Boost network, Creative Lancashire, the Chambers of Commerce and the Parish Councils, enabled a larger audience to be reached.
- **Internal communications:** Toolkit developed to ensure that internal teams were well-informed to maintain consistency. The toolkit was shared with key Lancashire organisations / employers, and they were encouraged to share the information within their own staff networks.

Full details of the devolution Proposal Consultation and Stakeholder engagement activities can be found within the appendices attached to the Council Report.

### Consultation Participants profile and key equality, diversity and inclusion findings

Overall, consultation findings outlined in the Consultation Report produced by Ipsos UK are largely positive, indicating broad support for the proposal. A total of 1881 responses to the consultation were received, including 1649 respondents to the on-line questionnaire who provided some level of demographic information. The following section sets out the participant profile against the demographic information provided by participants and shows the percentage point difference against the overall population breakdown for the LCCA area. This is followed by a breakdown of significant differences by protected characteristic to the closed questions. The final part sets out the key equality, diversity and inclusion issues identified by respondents in open ended comments and email responses.

#### Participation

Comparison of consultation responses and Census 2021 population by sex

| Sex                   | Consultation responses |      | Lancashire LCCA population by sex (Census 2021, ONS) |      | Percentage point difference (% responses - % population) |   |
|-----------------------|------------------------|------|--|------|--|---|
|                       | Number                 | %    | Number   | %    |  |   |
| Female                | 687                    | 45%  | 777,834  | 51%  | -6   | ↓ |
| Male                  | 832                    | 54%  | 753,295  | 49%  | 5  | ↑ |
| Gender non-conforming | 11                     | 1%   |  |      |  |   |
| Other                 | 5                      | 0%   |  |      |  |   |
| Total                 | 1,535                  | 100% | 1,531,129  | 100% |  |   |

Comparison of consultation responses and Census 2021 population by age band

| Age band | Consultation responses |    | Lancashire LCCA population by age band (Census 2021, ONS) |     | Percentage point difference (% responses - % population) |   |
|----------|------------------------|----|---|-----|--|---|
|          | Number                 | %  | Number  | %   |  |   |
| Under 18 | 2                      | 0% | 318,448   | 21% | -21  | ↓ |
| 18-24    | 53                     | 3% | 127,345   | 8%  | -5   | ↓ |

|       |       |      |           |      |    |   |
|-------|-------|------|-----------|------|----|---|
| 25-34 | 117   | 8%   | 186,763   | 12%  | -5 | ↓ |
| 35-44 | 229   | 15%  | 182,662   | 12%  | 3  | ↑ |
| 45-54 | 390   | 26%  | 203,056   | 13%  | 12 | ↑ |
| 55-64 | 419   | 28%  | 204,943   | 13%  | 14 | ↑ |
| 65-74 | 224   | 15%  | 166,975   | 11%  | 4  | ↑ |
| 75+   | 87    | 6%   | 140,932   | 9%   | -3 | ↓ |
| Total | 1,521 | 100% | 1,531,124 | 100% |    |   |

Comparison of consultation responses and Census 2021 population by ethnic group

| Ethnic group  | Consultation responses |     | Lancashire LCCA population by ethnic group (Census 2021, ONS) |     | Percentage point difference (% responses - % population) |   |
|---|------------------------|-----|---|-----|--|---|
|   | Number                 | %   | Number  | %   |  |   |
| English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British             | 1,403                  | 94% | 1,267,741   | 83% | 11   | ↑ |
| Irish   | 10                     | 1%  | 8,074   | 1%  | 0  |   |
| Gypsy or Irish Traveller  | 2                      | 0%  | 1,293   | 0%  | 0  |   |
| Roma  | 0                      | 0%  | 1,262   | 0%  | 0  |   |
| Any other White background                                      | 20                     | 1%  | 47,167  | 3%  | -2   | ↓ |
| White and Black Caribbean                                       | 3                      | 0%  | 6,532   | 0%  | 0  |   |
| White and Black African   | 0                      | 0%  | 3,299   | 0%  | 0  |   |
| White and Asian   | 2                      | 0%  | 9,573   | 1%  | 0  |   |
| Any other Mixed or Multiple backgrounds                         | 7                      | 0%  | 5,349   | 0%  | 0  |   |
| Indian  | 21                     | 1%  | 50,513  | 3%  | -2   | ↓ |
| Pakistani   | 17                     | 1%  | 85,491  | 6%  | -4   | ↓ |
| Bangladeshi   | 0                      | 0%  | 8,465   | 1%  | -1   | ↓ |
| Chinese   | 0                      | 0%  | 5,523   | 0%  | 0  |   |
| Any other Asian background                                      | 2                      | 0%  | 8,893   | 1%  | 0  |   |
| Caribbean   | 2                      | 0%  | 2,266   | 0%  | 0  |   |
| African   | 3                      | 0%  | 6,739   | 0%  | 0  |   |
| Any other Black, Black British, Caribbean or African background | 2                      | 0%  | 1,091   | 0%  | 0  |   |
| Arab  | 0                      | 0%  | 4,059   | 0%  | 0  |   |
| Any other ethnic group  | 5                      | 0%  | 7,801   | 1%  | 0  |   |
| White   | 1,435                  | 96% | 1,325,537   | 87% | 9  | ↑ |
| Ethnic minority community                                       | 64                     | 4%  | 205,594   | 13% | -9   | ↓ |

|       |       |      |           |      |  |  |
|-------|-------|------|-----------|------|--|--|
| Total | 1,499 | 100% | 1,531,131 | 100% |  |  |
|-------|-------|------|-----------|------|--|--|

Comparison of consultation responses and Census 2021 population by religion

| Religion  | Consultation responses |      | Lancashire LCCA population by religion (Census 2021, ONS) |      | Percentage point difference (% responses - % population) |   |
|---|------------------------|------|---|------|--|---|
|   | Number                 | %    | Number  | %    |  |   |
| Buddhist  | 8                      | 1%   | 4,066   | 0%   | 0  |   |
| Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations) | 762                    | 55%  | 806,012   | 56%  | 0  |   |
| Hindu   | 5                      | 0%   | 8,378   | 1%   | 0  |   |
| Jewish  | 8                      | 1%   | 1,234   | 0%   | 0  |   |
| Muslim  | 35                     | 3%   | 141,326   | 10%  | -7   | ↓ |
| Sikh  | 1                      | 0%   | 2,019   | 0%   | 0  |   |
| Any other religious belief  | 19                     | 1%   | 6,190   | 0%   | 1  | ↑ |
| Any other spiritual belief  | 51                     | 4%   |   |      |  |   |
| No religion or belief   | 489                    | 35%  | 479,906   | 33%  | 2  | ↑ |
| Total   | 1,378                  | 100% | 1,449,131   | 100% |  |   |

Comparison of consultation responses and Census 2021 population by sexual orientation

| Sexual orientation    | Consultation responses |      | Lancashire LCCA population aged 16+ by sexual orientation (Census 2021, ONS) |      | Percentage point difference (% responses - % population) |   |
|-----------------------|------------------------|------|--|------|--|---|
|                       | Number                 | %    | Number   | %    |  |   |
| Bisexual              | 44                     | 3%   | 14,403   | 1%   | 2  | ↑ |
| Gay or Lesbian        | 66                     | 5%   | 18,789   | 2%   | 3  | ↑ |
| Heterosexual/straight | 1,211                  | 90%  | 1,125,733  | 97%  | -7   | ↓ |
| Other                 | 22                     | 2%   | 3,424  | 0%   | 1  | ↑ |
| Total                 | 1,343                  | 100% | 1,162,349  | 100% |  |   |

**Findings**

**Q1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal on innovation, trade and investment for the Lancashire Combined County Authority?**

Overall, more individual respondents agreed (57%) than disagreed (31%) with this proposal. The following protected groups were more likely to agree with the proposal on innovation, trade and investment

- Respondents aged
    - 24 and under (69%)
    - 25-34 years (72%)
    - 35-44 years (63%)
    - 45-54 years (61%)
    - 75+ (60%)
  - White respondents (61%) and ethnic minority community respondents (59%)
  - Female respondents (62%)
- Respondents who were Deaf or had a disability (33%) and respondents aged 65-74 (36%) were more likely to disagree with the proposal.

### **Q2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal on skills for the Lancashire Combined County Authority?**

Overall, more individual respondents agreed (62%) than disagreed (26%) with this proposal. The following protected groups were more likely to agree with the proposal on skills

- Respondents aged
  - 24 and under (75%)
  - 25-34 years (76%)
  - 35-44 years (69%)
  - 45-54 years (66%)
  - 55-64 years (64%)
  - 75+ (67%)
- White respondents (66%)
- Female respondents (68%)

Respondents who were Deaf or had a disability (28%), respondents from ethnic minority communities (28%) and respondents aged 65-74 (32%) were more likely to disagree with the proposal.

### **Q3 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal on transport for the Lancashire Combined County Authority?**

Overall, more individual respondents agreed (59%) than disagreed (29%) with this proposal. The following protected groups were more likely to agree with the proposal on transport

- Respondents aged
  - 24 and under (80%)
  - 25-34 years (70%)
  - 35-44 years (64%)
  - 45-54 years (67%)
  - 75+ (62%)
- White respondents (64%)
- Female respondents (67%)

Respondents who were aged 65-74 (35%) and male respondents (31%) were more likely to disagree with the proposal.



**Q4 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal on net zero and climate change for the Lancashire Combined County Authority?**

Overall, more individual respondents agreed (54%) than disagreed (30%) with this proposal. The following protected groups were more likely to agree with the proposal on net zero and climate change

- Respondents aged
  - 24 and under (69%)
  - 25-34 years (69%)
  - 35-44 years (61%)
  - 45-54 years (57%)
  - 75+ (56%)
- White respondents (57%) and ethnic minority community respondents (56%)
- Female respondents (62%)

Respondents who were Deaf or had a disability (32%), older respondents aged 65-74 (39%) and male respondents (33%) were more likely to disagree with the proposal.

**Q5 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal on digital and cyber for the Lancashire Combined County Authority?**

Overall, more individual respondents agreed (58%) than disagreed (27%) with this proposal. The following protected groups were more likely to agree with the proposal on digital and cyber

- Respondents aged 54 and younger, including those aged
  - 24 and under (69%)
  - 25-34 years (74%)
  - 35-44 years (63%)
  - 45-54 years (62%)
- White respondents (61%) and ethnic minority community respondents (60%)
- Female respondents (63%)

Respondents who were Deaf or had a disability (29%) and older respondents aged 65-74 (30%) were more likely to disagree with the proposal.

**Q6 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal on culture and tourism for the Lancashire Combined County Authority?**

Overall, more individual respondents agreed (57%) than disagreed (27%) with this proposal. The following protected groups were more likely to agree with the proposal on culture and tourism

- Respondents aged 54 and younger, including those aged
  - 24 and under (75%)
  - 25-34 years (74%)
  - 35-44 years (67%)
  - 45-54 years (63%)
- White respondents (61%)
- Female respondents (64%)

Respondents aged 65-74 (34%), respondents from ethnic minority communities (31%) and male respondents (29%) were more likely to disagree with the proposal.

**Q7 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal on housing and land for the Lancashire Combined County Authority?**

Overall, more individual respondents agreed (48%) than disagreed (38%) with this proposal. The following protected groups were more likely to agree with the proposal on housing and land

- Respondents aged 54 and younger, including those aged
  - 24 and under (65%)
  - 25-34 years (65%)
  - 35-44 years (55%)
  - 45-54 years (51%)
- White respondents (51%) and ethnic minority community respondents (56%)
- Female respondents (51%)
- Respondents who were not Deaf or did not have a disability (51%)

Respondents aged 65-74 (41%) were more likely to disagree with the proposal.

#### **Q8 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed delivery arrangements for the Lancashire Combined County Authority?**

Overall, more individual respondents agreed (48%) than disagreed (34%) with this proposal. The following protected groups were more likely to agree with the proposed delivery arrangements

- Respondents aged 54 and younger, including those aged
  - 24 and under (65%)
  - 25-34 years (58%)
  - 35-44 years (54%)
  - 45-54 years (56%)
- White respondents (52%) and ethnic minority community respondents (53%)
- Female respondents (55%)

Respondents who were Deaf or had a disability (38%), respondents aged 65-74 (43%) and male respondents (36%) were more likely to disagree with the proposal.

Respondents were able to provide any additional comments via a free text option at the end of the questionnaire. Overall, there was little direct feedback on equality, diversity, and inclusion issues. There were no specific comments which identified concerns or adverse impacts directly linked to the proposal itself – comments were linked to whether the aspirations of the proposal might be achieved or issues which respondents aspired to see the proposal deliver, or doubts about whether it could deliver on those aspirations. Examples are set out below and should be noted for the purposes of this assessment

**Innovation Trade and Investment Priority** – a suggestion that this could be used to support the night time economy and regenerate town and city centres so boosting jobs for young people (age protected characteristic).

**Skills Priority** – positive comments from stakeholders included "benefits children's education" and "a reduction in inequalities" although a negative comment doubted the proposal would improve the education of children and young people. Suggestions included to invest in schools and education and more focus on adult education, apprenticeships and on people with disabilities. Comments included having tailored approaches due to different needs across areas and providing more training for young people. A comment said the proposal lacked detail on future funding on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Public concerns/comments included that schools and children's wellbeing, SEND education and universities and higher education would not benefit from the proposal. Priorities and invest in the education of children and

young people; upskilling young people; and adopting a tailored approach to meet different needs in different areas across Lancashire.

**Transport** – A positive stakeholder comment was made that local bus services may become both more reliable and safer. Active travel with cycling, walking and wheeling should receive investment and be improved which could improve mental health (stakeholder comment). Another comment opposed this view saying that local people would not be encouraged to cycle or cycle more. Members of the public comments on active travel included suggesting the need for safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists and a greater focus on pedestrianisation of town centres (which could have a mixed impact on disabled people).

**Net Zero and Climate Change** – comment from the public on disapproval of the potential pedestrianisation of town centres. This could have a potential impact upon disabled people in particular.

**Digital and Cyber** – no equalities related themes/impacts referenced.

**Culture and Tourism** – comments from stakeholders included investment in culture and tourism to retain creative young talent; a need for flexible approaches due to the various needs of different Lancashire areas and creating opportunities for young people.

**Housing and Land** – no specific equalities themes or impacts referenced but concerns re affordability of homes for those on low incomes was referenced.

**Delivering Our Ambitions** – positive comments suggested fairness and reducing regional inequalities although other respondents mentioned ensuring monies are allocated fairly across the county to address the specific needs of each District (Stakeholder comments). Public comments included a concern about regional inequalities (7 responses).

**Other Comments** – whilst not in scope of the Proposal, stakeholders raised concerns about the potential impact on children's social care, children's mental health and the general impact on health and wellbeing. 33 people commented that devolution should promote fairness whilst 18 said it should deliver fairness and reduce regional inequalities. A comment asked whether it would "deliver on dealing with the barriers of existing deprivation areas, poor housing and poor health and unequal educational attainment"

## Question 5 – Analysing Impact

### All Protected Characteristic Groups

#### *Positive Impacts*

The Proposal has the potential to positively impact the lives of people, living, working and visiting the Area, including those with protected characteristics.

The devolution of new powers to the LCCA, particularly in relation to Transport and Skills, and the integration of LEP functions into the LCCA, will combine to provide improved opportunities for all, including those with protected characteristics and from protected groups.

Additional investment into the area which would flow from the establishment of the LCCA, as well as the potential to commission and deliver services at a larger scale is expected to

result in improved services for all people in the Area, both with protected characteristics and others.

### *Negative Impacts*

The establishment of the LCCA could potentially result in decisions being taken further from individuals or groups who are most reliant upon services provided in the Area. This risk is considered to be mitigated though by the direct membership of the Constituent Councils in the LCCA, proposed involvement of district councils through representation as non-constituent members on the LCCA, the putting in place of proposed governance and voting arrangements, and the concurrent exercise of a number of functions as set out in the Proposal.

It is recognised that no specific decisions are being taken at this time as to the exercise of functions that may be afforded to the LCCA pursuant to the Proposal. The LCCA if established will need to ensure that it has in place appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the public sector equality duty in the exercise of any functions that are afforded to it if it is established.

### **Age**

It is anticipated that the Proposal would lead to positive rather than negative impact upon people of all ages across the Area.

### *Positive Impacts*

In relation to the proposed new powers to shape skills provision for example, younger people as well as older workers and those seeking to access employment for the first time, or return to work following a period of inactivity will benefit from the investment in upskilling which will enhance qualification levels and in turn strengthen access to and suitability for employment.

There are also wide variations in educational attainment in the Lancashire area and for working age people the percentage achieving NVQ Level 4 qualifications at 29.5% whilst the national average is 33.9%<sup>6</sup>, being able to plan and deliver to boost adult education and skills training locally should advance equality of opportunity in this area.

In relation to transport, the opportunity to develop a single local transport plan for the Area will ensure a better connected and accessible public transport system, with infrastructure that links opportunities to need and travel choices that are safe, inclusive, affordable and low carbon. The Proposal will assist in balancing network issues as unlike more urban city regions, counties have a greater proportion and length of B roads and rural roads. This has the potential to provide greater opportunities for people to travel where, when and how they choose in a way that meets their needs. Specific details are to be developed but the principles of inclusivity and affordability will be key to determining future transport interventions. The potential to improve transport and connectivity is beneficial to people of all ages. It is extremely important to those of working age in order to enable them to better access employment, but also beneficial to those in education and higher education as well as people who need to access public services. This can include both younger and older people.

It is anticipated that, should the proposal be approved, activities associated with the Proposal could help to improve healthy life expectancy within the Lancashire area which for all three areas is lower than the national average, and particularly so in Blackpool. This in turn will require associated developments in services, and the anticipated positive impacts of the Proposal as referred to above then become more acute and of greater significance.

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<sup>6</sup> TS067 - Highest level of qualification, Census 2021, ONS (Nomis) © Crown Copyright

Consultation respondents included comments about the potential benefits of Innovation, Trade and Investment Proposal to boost the night time economy in towns and cities to support jobs for young people; Skills Proposal to benefit children's education, the potential to prioritise and invest in children and young people, upskilling young people and in the Culture and Tourism Proposal could support retaining creative young talent and creating opportunities for young people. One of the general themes identified by the consultation responses was a suggested focus on higher paying job opportunities for young people and to upskill local people. The Proposal is intended to bring such opportunities and can benefit people in the Area of all ages.

#### *Negative Impacts*

As recognised above, no specific decisions have been or are being taken at this time in relation to the exercise of the functions that are Proposed to be afforded to the LCCA if established. This will take place in due course and require careful consideration as to where investment across the Area is required. The establishment of the LCCA as set out in the Proposal would however better provide for such considerations over the whole Area, better enabling functions to be exercised and investment to be distributed across the Area so as to benefit people of all ages.

At this stage it is not considered that the Proposal itself would result in negative impacts to any particular age group. A negative consultation comment did doubt whether the proposal on Skills would improve the education of children and young people whilst another suggested that schools and children's education and universities and higher education would not benefit from the Skills proposal. There is therefore a mixed range of views as to the outcome of the proposals, but this will depend upon specific decisions taken if the proposed LCCA is established.

#### **Disability**

##### *Positive Impacts*

The potential for disabled people to be subject to greater discrimination when seeking to access employment or training is recognised. The Proposal may lead to improvements if powers that are proposed to be afforded to the LCCA are exercised in a way that focusses on removing barriers to employment and training for disabled people. The Proposal would enable such exercise over the whole Area, thereby providing the potential for making improvements here across the whole Area.

Improvements in transport across the Area is anticipated to benefit disabled people across the Area, providing the potential for greater accessibility to education, employment and other services to this group of people who traditional might face greater challenges in this regard. This can lead to a reduction in isolation or exclusion of disabled people, as well as opening up new opportunities for them.

Responses to the consultation suggested that the Skills Proposals could result on more focus in adult education in people with disabilities. Within the Transport Priority a comment suggested there could be positive impact if there was a focus on safer routes for cyclists and pedestrians and another suggested the positive impact of pedestrianizing town centres. There was also a view from a stakeholder that Active Travel could encourage people to cycle or to cycle more which would be positive for people's mental health. General themes identified by responses to the consultation related to increased focus on public transport and transport infrastructure generally, each of which would be likely to benefit those with disabilities in relation to their ability to travel across the Area.

### *Negative Impacts*

It is not considered that the Proposal would lead to negative impacts for disabled people. For the reasons set out above, the establishment of the LCCA is anticipated only to provide the potential for positive impacts. It is recognised that specific decisions as to the exercise of functions afforded to the LCCA would be made in due course and so no positive or negative impacts will in fact be felt by the establishment of the LCCA alone. However, the establishment of the LCCA will enable decisions to be taken across the Area, with the benefit of additional investment and commissioning at scale as referred to above.

In the Skills section concerns were raised that there would not be enough focus on the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and that this group would not benefit from the Skills Priority. In terms of disability the view that people may cycle or cycle more was doubted by some consultation respondents in the Transport Priority section. Within the Net Zero and Climate Change Priority there were concerns raised in a comment which disapproved of the potential pedestrianisation of town centres. Pedestrianisation can be a divisive issue for people with different disabilities. These responses do not identify negative impacts from the Proposal itself but highlight the need for such matters to be considered as part of policy formulation and implementation should the proposed LCCA be established.

### **Gender Re-assignment**

#### *Positive Impacts*

Trans people can experience discrimination to a greater extent than individuals or groups who do not share this protected characteristic. This can result in additional barriers to securing employment, as well as potential abuse experiences when accessing services, such as public transport but also other public services.

It is anticipated that the Proposal would have positive impacts for trans people. It will enable certain key functions to be exercised at an Area wide level, whereby the exercise of functions in such a way as to encourage and secure diversity and inclusion in employment, education, housing and transport will impact positively the experience of such groups or individuals when accessing any of these services. Whilst the exercise of these functions currently at a more local level should be being done in such a way as to achieve such diversity and inclusion, the establishment of the LCCA better provides for a consistent approach which ensures that those who share this characteristic across the whole Area experience the positive impacts in a more consistent manner.

#### *Negative Impacts*

It is not anticipated that negative impacts will arise as a result of the Proposal. Similar considerations apply as in relation to other protected characteristics here. It is recognised however that it will be very important to ensure that the exercise of functions and application of investment is done in such a way that takes account of the impact on groups and people with this protected characteristic across the Area. As above, the negative impact experienced by trans people across all areas to which it is proposed that the LCCA would be afforded functions, and the LCCA would need to have due regard to this in its own decision making once established.

No negative impacts to groups or individuals as a result of this protected characteristic were identified within responses to the consultation.

### **Marriage and Civil Partnership**

#### *Positive Impacts*

It is anticipated that the Proposal would have positive impacts for people across the Area regardless of their marital or civil partnership status.

#### *Negative Impacts*

Whilst it is anticipated that the Proposal would have positive impacts for groups or individuals with these protected characteristics, it is acknowledged that individuals in civil partnerships can experience discrimination as a result. Careful consideration will be given to any responses during the consultation process in relation to this protected characteristic to ensure that any particular negative impacts are considered.

As with all other protected characteristics it is recognised that no specific decisions as to the exercise of functions that may be afforded to the LCCA pursuant to the Proposal or application of any additional investment is being made at this time.

No negative impacts to groups or individuals as a result of this protected characteristic were identified within responses to the consultation.

### **Pregnancy and Maternity**

#### *Positive Impacts*

The Proposal is expected to benefit pregnant women and those returning to work as well as others who do not share this protected characteristic. Improvements in the areas of education and employment are expected to be beneficial to those seeking to return to work or gain employment following a period of maternity leave. Improvements in transport across the Area will also benefit individuals with this protected characteristic by better enabling access to employment, to benefit from childcare arrangements, and to access other services.

#### *Negative Impacts*

It is not envisaged that the Proposal would have negative impacts for individuals with this protected characteristic. However as elsewhere it is recognised that that no specific decisions are being taken at this stage, and the exercise of functions should have regard for the positive and negative impacts of individuals who share this protected characteristic.

No negative impacts to groups or individuals as a result of this protected characteristic were identified within responses to the consultation.

### **Race and Ethnic Origin**

#### *Positive Impacts*

Many people suffer discrimination, disadvantage, or additional barriers in accessing education, employment and other services as a result of their race or ethnic origin. Different communities can experience different levels of such discrimination, disadvantage or additional barriers. In addition, the geographical location of such communities can result in a greater or lesser impact on such groups or individuals.

It is anticipated that the Proposal has the potential to make improvements in this area by considering impacts at an Area wide level, with a view to offering better opportunities to people from all communities across the Area and levelling up the position of those that may currently experience disadvantage. The potential to exercise functions relating to skills and education has the potential to improve employment prospects of individuals from disadvantaged ethnic communities. Improvements in transport across the Area can assist in enabling those from disadvantaged communities to overcome impacts arising due to their geographical location. The potential for greater investment into the Area will also

provide the opportunity for investing in a way that improves the prospects of individuals from disadvantaged communities, whether by encouraging the location or relocation of operations to appropriate areas by employers or otherwise better enabling individuals to access employers where currently located.

#### *Negative Impacts*

It is not envisaged that the Proposal would have negative impacts for individuals with this protected characteristic. However as elsewhere it is recognised that that no specific decisions are being taken at this stage, and the exercise of functions should have regard for the positive and negative impacts of individuals who share this protected characteristic.

No negative impacts to groups or individuals as a result of this protected characteristic were identified within responses to the consultation.

### **Religion or Belief**

#### *Positive Impacts*

It is not envisaged that the Proposal would have negative impacts upon groups or individuals as a result of their religion or belief. Instead it is considered that all groups and individuals would benefit in the same way regardless of religion or belief.

#### *Negative Impacts*

It is not envisaged that the Proposal would have negative impacts for individuals with this protected characteristic. However as elsewhere it is recognised that that no specific decisions are being taken at this stage, and the exercise of functions should have regard for the positive and negative impacts of individuals who share this protected characteristic.

No negative impacts to groups or individuals as a result of this protected characteristic were identified within responses to the consultation.

### **Sex or Gender**

#### *Positive Impacts*

It is recognised that there can be greater impacts felt by women rather than men in relation to the areas of higher education and employment as a result of childcare arrangements, for example, resulting in women holding more part time roles than men, or not working due to caring responsibilities - 76.5% of Males in Lancashire (proposed LCCA footprint) are in employment compared to 68.6% of females, and 35.1% of females who are employed work part time, compared to 13.5% of males<sup>7</sup>. This contributes to a gender pay gap, with median weekly wages for Females in Lancashire 28.6% below their male counterparts in 2022<sup>8</sup>. Lower income households are also more likely to either have a single or no car and therefore be more reliant on public transport.

The functions that would be afforded to the LCCA as part of the Proposal would enable matters such as employment, education and transport to be considered on an Area wide basis with a view to potentially supporting different genders to access employment in areas that they traditional may not have done, or for better access to a range of employment opportunities on a wider footprint as a result of better transport connections across the Area.

<sup>7</sup> ONS, NOMIS, Annual Population Survey, June 2022-July 2023

<sup>8</sup> ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (AHSE), 2022, Median Gross Weekly Pay



### *Negative Impacts*

It is not envisaged that the Proposal would have negative impacts for individuals with this protected characteristic. However as elsewhere it is recognised that that no specific decisions are being taken at this stage, and the exercise of functions should have regard for the positive and negative impacts of individuals who share this protected characteristic.

No negative impacts to groups or individuals as a result of this protected characteristic were identified within responses to the consultation.

### **Sexual Orientation**

#### *Positive Impacts*

It is anticipated that the proposal could have a positive impact on people from the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and other communities. Although there are people from all age groups within this protected characteristics group, the profile is disproportionately of younger people. The potential of the proposal to positively impact economic growth and the availability of education and skills training may therefore be of particular benefit. Lesbian, gay and bisexual employees or those looking for work, often face discrimination or barriers to employment currently which may be reduced if new opportunities are with more inclusive employers. This may also assist those who are students who may feel more positive about seeking graduate employment opportunities within Lancashire as universities – e.g. UCLAN – are very supportive of both staff and student lgbtq+ staff and student networks. Should the proposal also result in better quality environments this may also be beneficial to lgbtq+ people who are more likely to experience underlying health conditions including mental health issues, than the population as a whole. Should the proposal result in improvements to transport facilities this may also be beneficial as the community does face additional concerns about personal safety and experience hate incidents or hate crimes including when travelling on public transport.

#### *Negative Impacts*

It is not envisaged that the Proposal would have negative impacts for individuals with this protected characteristic. However as elsewhere it is recognised that that no specific decisions are being taken at this stage, and the exercise of functions should have regard for the positive and negative impacts of individuals who share this protected characteristic.

No negative impacts to groups or individuals as a result of this protected characteristic were identified within responses to the consultation.

### **Question 6 –Combined/Cumulative Effect**

The Proposal responds to the Government's Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and the 12 levelling up missions, to improve the quality of people's lives across Lancashire, Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen. It will, if approved by the Secretary of State, help to ensure that the Area can compete for its share of Government resources and brings decision making closer to the locality. The operation of the LCCA will combine local authority, business and wider public sector interests and through its governance structures will draw on the advice and expertise available to minimise negative impacts and maximise opportunities.

Whilst the Proposal will initially focus on the acceleration of activity to achieve our identified priorities, the ambition set out in the Proposal for the Area, and the people and communities it serves, is significantly greater.

The current Proposal is intended to be used as a platform to broaden and deepen its scope in the future, ensuring that we continue to address identified and emerging challenges, maximising available opportunities that come our way, maintaining and building momentum.

We will therefore be working with Government and our partners across the Area over coming months and years to strengthen ties and collaboration, deliver against the twelve levelling up missions, improving outcomes for our people and our places whilst acting as a trailblazer for other LCCAs that follow in our path.

This Proposal is intended to be the start of our devolution journey, and the ambition is to secure additional powers and funding as the LCCA evolves to help achieve our aims and the Government's Levelling Up agenda.

### **Question 7 – Identifying Initial Results of Your Analysis**

As a result of the analysis has the original proposal been changed/amended, if so please describe.

The Proposal (Appendix 2 to the Council Report) has been reviewed and updated following the Consultation process. The Summary of Consultation and the Constituent Councils' Response ('You Said, We Did' Paper) attached at Appendix 1 to the Council report provides a comprehensive record of the main themes arising out of the consultation feedback and whether the Proposal has been amended as a result. Amendments to the Proposal include responses to concerns about UKSPF delivery and how the LCCA can ensure that it delivers benefits across the whole of the LCCA area. Further information on the Lancashire Data Observatory has been included in the Proposal, setting out how this service will provide the LCCA with evidence to inform its decision making.

In addition to the above, some minor changes have been made to the Proposal document to reflect updated advice from government and legal clarifications. This includes some small changes to references to sections of Acts of Parliament in the Powers Table, and some changes to wording on remuneration. These changes are technical in nature and do not affect the aims and objectives of the Proposal.

Based on the analysis in the sections of the document above, as updated following the outcome of the consultation, we do not propose any further changes to the Proposal.

### **Question 8 - Mitigation**

Will any steps be taken to mitigate/reduce any potential adverse effects of the proposal?

Following the Consultation, no specific mitigation has been identified as being required as no adverse impacts have been identified from the Proposal as currently set out.

However, should the Proposal be approved, and the Lancashire Combined County Authority be established, consideration will need to be given to the organisation having its own responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty and how these will be discharged. This may include establishing arrangements to engage with and involve groups and individuals with protected characteristics to help inform this work.

### **Question 9 – Balancing the Proposal/Countervailing Factors**

Overall it is anticipated that the Proposal would provide positive impacts for all groups and individuals across the Area, including those with any protected characteristics. Arising from

the Consultation, no specific adverse impacts were identified in relation to protected characteristics groups about these specific Proposals but both positive and negative views were made about aspirations of what the proposed LCCA might achieve and could mean for groups across the Area.

The exact impacts experienced by any groups or individuals will depend upon how the functions that it is proposed are afforded to the LCCA pursuant to the Proposal are ultimately exercised. The LCCA would need to ensure that it puts in place appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the public sector equality duty in the exercise of such functions, and seek to address inequalities as appropriate. The LCCA will also be subject to requirements to set equality objectives and to publish certain information annually relating to equalities.

One key issue relates to the potential for functions currently exercised at a more localised level, to be exercised on a wider footprint by the proposed LCCA. This could have both positive effects as referred to in the analysis above, but also potential negative impacts resulting from the exercise of functions being considered on a wider basis. Such risk is considered to be mitigated by the involvement of the Constituent Councils and representatives of the district councils as non-constituent members of the LCCA.

### **Question 10 – Proposal**

In summary, what is the proposal and which groups may be affected and how?

The Proposal is attached at Appendix 2 to the Council Report. It is considered that no individual protected characteristic group would be adversely affected as a consequence of establishing the proposed LCCA.

The exact impacts experienced by any groups or individuals will depend upon how the functions that it is proposed are afforded to the LCCA pursuant to the Proposal are ultimately exercised. The LCCA would need to ensure that it puts in place appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the public sector equality duty in the exercise of such functions, and seek to address inequalities as appropriate. The proposed LCCA would also be subject to requirements under the Public Sector Equality Duty to set equality objectives and to annually publish certain information relating to equalities.

### **Question 11 – Review and Monitoring Arrangements**

What arrangements will be put in place to review and monitor the effects of this proposal?

The EIA will be taken into account by the Proposed LCCA (if established) as part of its responsibilities under the PSED.

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Reference Documents Used in the development of this EIA:-

1. [Equality Objectives 2023-27 | Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council](#)
2. [Equality watch | Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council](#)
3. The Census Statistics for the Borough can be found here - [Census Maps - Census 2021 data interactive, ONS](#)
4. Lancashire Insight [www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/)
5. TS067 - Highest level of qualification, Census 2021, ONS (Nomis) © Crown Copyright
6. Lancashire Combined County Authority Draft Proposal
7. <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/strategies-policies-plans/equality-diversity-and-community-cohesion/>
8. <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Your-Council/Documents/Council-Plan-2019-2024-Update.pdf>

9. <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Your-Council/Documents/Council-Plan-2019-2024-Update.pdf>

EIA Version Final 5.3.24



**REPORT TO: COUNCIL FORUM**  
**FROM: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**  
**DATE: 14th March 2024**

**PORTFOLIOS AFFECTED: All**

**WARDS AFFECTED: All**

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|                        |                              |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>TITLE OF REPORT</b> | <b>THE MAYORALTY 2024/25</b> |
|------------------------|------------------------------|

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## **1. PURPOSE**

To consider arrangements for the nominations to office of Mayor and Deputy Mayor for 2024/25.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Council Forum:

1. Notes that Councillor Sylvia Liddle will be formally nominated as Mayor for 2024/25 at Annual Council.
2. Confirms that in accordance with the rotation arrangements agreed at Council Forum on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2022 that the Conservative Group nominates the Deputy Mayor for 2024/25, who will be formally nominated at Annual Council.

## **3. BACKGROUND**

Annual Council formally appoints Members of the Council to the office of Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the forthcoming Municipal year. The Member appointed to the position of Deputy Mayor is normally appointed to the office of Mayor in the following year.

At previous meetings of the Council it has been agreed that the rotation of the nomination to the Office of Mayor between the political groups be based on proportionality of the Council, and an agreed rotation would be set for the next five years.

As Members will recall, at the Council Forum Meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2022, the Council agreed the next 5 year rotation, which helps to facilitate this year's nominations.

It was agreed then that, based on the proportionality that the rotation of Mayoral nomination for the five year period would be as follows:

2023/24 Labour  
2024/25 Labour  
2025/26 Conservative  
2026/27 Labour  
2027/28 Labour

A report on the appointment of the Mayor is submitted to the Annual Council each year, and in the event that the proportionality of the Council changes going forward in a way that would affect the nomination of Mayor for a particular year, a report on this matter would be submitted for Council's consideration.

In accordance with the above, it would be for the Labour Group to nominate the Mayor for 2024/2025, who in line with usual practice would be the serving Deputy Mayor, which in this case is Councillor Sylvia Liddle.

As referred to above, it is the turn of the Conservative Group to nominate the Deputy Mayor for 2024/25.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Office of Mayor is funded from the Council's annual budget.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Mayor is also the Chair of Council meetings. This is a legal provision of the Local Government Act 1972, enabling Council business to be carried out in an orderly and proper manner, having regard to statutory obligations and the Constitution of the Council for the conduct of meetings. In the Mayor's absence the Deputy Mayor would undertake the role to chair council meetings.

#### **6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

None

#### **7. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

None

#### **8. CONSULTATIONS**

None

Contact Officers: Asad Laher (01254 585495)  
Phil Llewellyn, (01254 585369).

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Background Papers: None



|                   |                             |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>TO:</b>        | Council Forum               |
| <b>REPORT OF:</b> | Chief Executive             |
| <b>DATE:</b>      | 14 <sup>th</sup> March 2024 |

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## Review of Overview & Scrutiny

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### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide an update on the Overview & Scrutiny (O&S) arrangements and highlight recommendations for improvement.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Council:

- a) Requests the Chair of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in consultation with Committee members in the new municipal year, to consider and make recommendations whether Independent Members should be invited to sit on each O&S Committee.
- b) Notes that the structure of the 4 existing Overview and Scrutiny Committees will be maintained with the Policy & Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee as the lead committee.
- c) Agrees to introduce mandatory training for all Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs, as well as specific scrutiny training for all O&S committee members and relevant Council Officers as outlined in the report.
- d) Notes the updates to overview and scrutiny processes as outlined in the report.

### 3. BACKGROUND

Scrutiny is a process whereby Councillors who are not members of the Council's Executive can play an influential role in the shaping of policy and decisions that will be of real benefit to the communities they represent.

The process involves overview and scrutiny committees monitoring performance, reviewing, and evaluating services, querying decisions and plans made by the council's executive, listening to the concerns of local people, and, where appropriate, making recommendations for action and change.

There are four Overview and Scrutiny Committees at Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, who support the work of the Executive and the full Council. They allow citizens to have a greater say in Council matters by holding inquiries into matters of local concern. These lead to reports and recommendations which advise the Executive and the full Council on its policies, budget, and service delivery. The Scrutiny Committees also monitor the decisions of the Executive and members can 'call-in' a decision which has been made by the Executive, but not yet implemented. This enables the 'call-in' Scrutiny committee to consider whether the decision is appropriate.

The roles of overview and scrutiny are set out in the Constitution and include to:

1. examine and/or scrutinise decisions made, or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions including Executive functions;
2. make reports and/or recommendations to Executive Members, the Executive Board and to full Council in connection with the discharge of any functions;
3. consider matters affecting the area or its inhabitants; and
4. following a call in, review decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive.
5. undertake pre-decision scrutiny
6. examine and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas
7. question members of the Executive Board and/or committees and officers about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects.

Members will recall that following the LGA's Corporate Peer Challenge in July 2023, one of the recommendations of the peer team was that the Council should:

*Engage councillors and officers in work to enhance and embed a culture of effective overview and scrutiny across the council. Consideration should also be given to the officer resources required to support effective overview and scrutiny at the council.*

The Council's response to the recommendation was that:

- *A revision of scrutiny support has taken place this year and a senior officer supports each O&S committee. This pilot will be reviewed regularly with recommendations for further development of the scrutiny support function. Each overview and scrutiny committee has agreed areas for focus and a work plan is in place for each of them for 23/24.*
- *The Council will continue to enhance and embed the culture of effective scrutiny with appropriate support.*
- *This will include creating a Corporate Parenting Partnership, the launch of a new induction programme and improving the wider training and support plan for chairs and all members of the O&S Committees.*

## **4. KEY INFORMATION**

### **4.1 Purpose of Overview & Scrutiny Committees**

O&S committees were established in English and Welsh local authorities by the Local Government Act 2000. They were intended as a counterweight to the new executive structures created by that Act (elected mayors or leaders and cabinets). Their role was to review and support the development of policy and make recommendations to the council.

Today, the legislative provisions for overview and scrutiny committees for England can be found in the Localism Act 2011. The Council's Constitution includes information on the role and functions of O&S Committees in Article 6. The powers and functions include:



- The power to 'call in' decisions made by their executives. They may then review a decision and recommend that the council reconsider it. This power is normally regarding 'key decisions,' which are defined in law. The Government guidance implies that call-in would be expected to be used as a last resort when other methods of engagement have failed. Councils will normally specify a window of time after a decision during which this power can be exercised, and a minimum number of councillors to exercise it; Committees may require executive members and officers of the authority to appear before them. Individuals from outside the council can be invited, but not compelled, to attend.
- Overview and scrutiny reports and/or recommendations must receive a response from the council executive within two months.
- Committees cannot require either the executive, the council or external bodies to act upon their findings.
- Each authority must appoint at least one designated 'scrutiny officer.'

## 4.2 Committee Structure

There are currently four Scrutiny Committees who support the work of the Executive and the full Council. The structure is detailed in Appendix A.

**Resourcing:** Four Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings take place over the municipal year, per Committee. The meetings have one main focus topic taken from each Committee's Work Programme, which is usually agreed at the initial meeting each year. This meeting should include an update from the relevant Executive Member(s) and Chief Officer(s) on the portfolio key performance measures, delivery priorities and key risks for the year ahead to inform and influence a meaningful work programme for scrutiny.

Some Councils have a team of Officers who deal with scrutiny, with varying numbers of Supporting Officers. It should also be noted that some neighbouring authorities also have a dedicated panel, i.e., Board, which oversees the work of their Scrutiny Committees. The frequency of the panel meetings ranges from once a month to quarterly. However, in the context of BwD, Article 6 of the Constitution sets out that the Policy and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee will co-ordinate the scrutiny function, which can therefore be considered as the 'Board' that oversees Scrutiny Committees.

Some other Local Authorities use the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees to deal with the Call-in process, whereas this Council has a separate call-in committee which will meet to hear a call-in.

Currently, the council has one dedicated scrutiny support officer, the Democratic & Scrutiny Lead, and from this year a Head of Service who supports each individual Scrutiny Committee, advising the Chair and Members. Officers ensure key actions are communicated and actioned by relevant department and appropriate reports come to Committee. They also hold agenda-setting meetings/briefings with the Chair and Vice Chair.

**Resourcing review:** to ensure scrutiny is carried out as it should be, policy support and research resources will be reviewed going forward within the Council's budget constraints.

### **4.3 Training**

Current scrutiny members and chairs have suggested that additional training would be useful for more in-depth understanding of overview and scrutiny. Therefore, it is recommended that Officers assess and commission training for Committee Chairs and all Members of the O&S committees. In addition, it is also recommended that general overview and scrutiny training is offered to all Elected Members.

### **4.4 Culture of effective scrutiny**

The recommendation of the LGA Peer Team is to enhance and embed the culture of effective overview and scrutiny across the Council.

To achieve a balance, the views of all members should be considered. This can be achieved by developing a robust work programme at the first meeting of the Municipal year, whereby the relevant Executive Member(s) supported by the Lead Chief Officer should be invited to update on their key priorities and developments for the year ahead. It should be acknowledged that if there is a request for additional items to the scrutiny meeting agenda, this should be in discussion with the Chair for inclusion at a subsequent meeting.

Further consideration is to be given to allow for current O&S Committee Members to continue into the new municipal year, to allow for consistency in progressing the priorities, improved outcomes and to fully embed the culture of effective overview and scrutiny across the Council.

### **4.5 Local Authority Health Scrutiny**

Government have updated current guidance in relation to Local Authority health scrutiny stating that Local Authorities should ensure that regardless of any arrangements adopted for carrying out health scrutiny functions:

- The functions are discharged in a transparent manner that will boost the confidence of local people in health scrutiny.
- Health scrutiny should be held in an open forum and local people should be allowed to attend and use any communication methods such as filming and sharing on social media to report the proceedings. It is to be noted that this is in line with the transparency measures in the [Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014](#) allowing local people, particularly those who are not present at scrutiny hearing meetings, to have the opportunity to see or hear the proceedings.

It should also be noted that this guidance has been updated to reflect amendments to the local authority scrutiny function following the introduction of the [Health and Care Act 2022](#) ('the 2022 Act'), which inserted schedule 10A into the [National Health Service Act 2006](#) ('the NHS Act 2006').

### **4.6 Progress Update**

Training is offered to Scrutiny Members throughout the year, with further training planned for the coming year along with a recommendation to consider mandatory training via an

external training provider as specified in the recommendations. There is also scope for introducing general LGA Overview and Scrutiny training for all Elected Members.

#### **4.6 Governance**

The governance arrangements will remain as is and there are no immediate requirements to update these.

#### **5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no additional policy implications arising directly from this report.

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Any financial implications such as additional training will be contained within overall existing budgets.

#### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from the contents of this report.

#### **8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The potential resource implications are detailed in the report.

#### **9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no equality and health implications arising from the contents of this report.

#### **10. CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

#### **11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE**

11.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

#### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Overview & Scrutiny Committee Council Appointments

#### **Chief Officer/Member**

Contact Officer: Corinne McMillan (Director Chief Executive's)

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024

#### **Background Papers:**

- 1) Localism Act 2011
- 2) Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014
- 3) Health Care Act 2022
- 4) Schedule 10A NHS Act 2006 [Local authority health scrutiny - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- 5) Council Constitution

## Appendix A

### Overview & Scrutiny Committee Council Appointments

| Name of Committee   | Labour  | Conservative                    | 4BwD                       |
|---|---|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Policy &amp; Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny</b><br><br><b>Chair:</b> Tony Humphrys<br><b>Vice-Chair:</b> Kevin Connor           | Tony Humphrys<br>Sylvia Liddle<br>Brian Taylor<br>Shaukat Hussain<br>Tasleem Fazal<br>Katrina Fielding  | Kevin Connor<br>Neil Slater     | Salim Sidat                |
| <b>Place - Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b><br><br><b>Chair:</b> Brian Taylor<br><b>Vice Chair:</b> Paul Marrow                            | Zamir Khan<br>Brian Taylor<br>Katrina Fielding<br>Sonia Khan<br>Stephanie Brookfield<br>Shaukat Hussain | Paul Marrow<br>Mark Russell     | Suleman Khonat             |
| <b>Children &amp; Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b><br><br><b>Chair:</b> Sylvia Liddle<br><b>Vice-Chair:</b> Martin McCaughran | Sylvia Liddle<br>Martin McCaughran<br>Ehsan Raja<br>Matt Gibson<br>Matthew Jackson                      | Julie Slater<br>Denise Gee      | Abdul Patel<br>Salma Patel |
| <b>Health &amp; Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b><br><br><b>Chair:</b> Jacquie Slater<br><b>Vice Chair:</b> Elaine Whittingham  | Elaine Whittingham<br>Dave Harling<br>Dave Smith<br>Tony Humphrys<br>Anthony Shaw                       | Jacquie Slater<br>Derek Hardman | Saj Ali<br>Mustafa Desai   |
| <b>Call In Committee</b><br><br><b>Chair:</b> Kevin Connor  |   |                                 |                            |
| <b>Standards Committee</b><br><br><b>Chair:</b> Ehsan Raja<br><b>Vice Chair:</b> Kevin Connor   | Jim Casey<br>Elaine Whittingham<br>Ehsan Raja<br>Anthony Shaw<br>Iftakhar Hussain                       | Kevin Connor<br>Neil Slater     | Mustafa Desai              |

## **Council Forum, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

### **Overview and Scrutiny Committees Update**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

To update the Council Forum on the latest meetings of the Policy and Corporate Resources, Health and Social Care, Children and Young People and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

#### **Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

At the meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024, a report was submitted that provided feedback from the visits of the Task and Finish Group to three care homes in the Borough. The care homes selected provided a good overview of the diverse range of care home provision and quality status within the Borough. The feedback from the Task and Finish Group was detailed in the report, with a response from Quality, Commissioning and Finance provided to each issue raised. Mark Warren also provided updates on the work of his staff in following up areas of concern with the Care Homes themselves, with satisfactory evidence and processes in place.

Also at the meeting, Claire Richardson, Director of Health and Social Care Integration (Blackburn with Darwen) at NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) provided an update on progress since the last update at the August meeting. In terms of Darwen Health Centre, an ICB led health centre utilisation review was underway. Darwen Primary Care Network commenced their review in November. The review would identify current and future predicted demand, key clinical priorities and estimated estate requirements. Updates were also shared on the BwD Place-based Partnership and the ICB.

Members of the Committee made a number of observations and comments, relating to access and future demands for Darwen Health Centre, Barbara Castle Way, and planning for the future demands arising from new home building, recruitment and retention issues relating to NHS Dentists. Members also commented on support for Mental Health Groups, and the funding and support available for them from various sources. Additionally, concerns were raised about housing conditions in Blackburn South East, and it was noted that a Housing Strategy was required for the Borough, and a Housing Survey was needed, and work was ongoing in this regard, with outcomes being considered. Members also noted that no Borough Councillors sat on the Together Housing Board, which was now covering several regions.

#### **Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

At the meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024, the Committee received an update from the Youth MP and Youth Forum on their recent events and activities.

The Committee considered a report and received a supporting presentation from Michelle Holt, Deputy Director for Education on the School Effectiveness Strategy

2023-26. The Council commissioned an independent review of the School Improvement Strategy. This took place around 18 months ago, included key stakeholders and was conducted by Steve Munby (CBE and former CEO of Education Trust). Following the review, there was a further period of consultation on the recommendations made. In September 2023 the Council launched the co-produced revised School Effectiveness Strategy for 2023-2026.

Five missions were contained in the Strategy, along with six public commitments, as well as agreed joint priorities that all schools across the Borough would collectively work on. Safeguarding was reflected across all priorities. School Improvement Groups (SIGs) would be working on the 6 key priorities over the next 3 years, with School Effectiveness Board (SEB) supporting the progress of the SIGs towards identified priorities. The presentation gave detailed data on the performance of the Borough for Primary and Secondary age pupils in comparison to others in the North West, and nationally.

Also at the meeting, Michelle Holt presented two reports containing information on Education Data and the Speech, Language and Communication Initiative, along with a supporting presentation. Information was provided on Early Years Foundation Data, Phonics data, and Key Stages data. The report highlighted the significant progress over 2022-23, in respect of improvements relating to improved outcomes for children with a low level of Speech, Language and Communication, English as an Additional Language, and in Children's Centres.

### **Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

At the meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March, the Committee will receive a report containing responses from the Highways Team to the issues raised relating to Highways Infrastructure, and the main agenda item will be scrutiny of the Council's fleet management plans around use of alternative fuels.

### **Policy and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

At the meeting held to be held on 11<sup>th</sup> March, the Committee will receive an update on Digital Management at the Council, particularly focussing on help for residents who are digitally excluded and lessons learnt from procurement of IT systems over recent years.

**Councillor Tony Humphrys**, Chair of the Policy and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**Councillor Jacqueline Slater**, Chair of the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**Councillor Sylvia Liddle**, Chair of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**Councillor Brian Taylor**, Chair of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**1<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

## REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR PHIL RILEY

PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
CHIEF OFFICER: Chief  
Executive

Thursday, 14 March 2024

**A more prosperous borough where no-one is left behind.**

### Strategic growth

At the start of March we were delighted to announce that our bid for £20m of new Levelling Up Partnership funding has been agreed by Government. The announcement comes after months of hard work between Council and Government officials. Together, a strong investment package to support town centre growth priorities has been developed. At the heart of the bid is an impressive £8m to renovate the ever-popular King George's Hall - the jewel in the crown of our new £50m Cultural Quarter. There'll also be new investment for the likes of Tony's Ballroom, Imperial Mill and the Exchange. Our planning committee recently granted permission for the £9m refurbishment of the Grade II listed Exchange building. It is a key part of our cultural offer and plan to grow our local economy. To see it being brought back into use more permanently as a hub for the whole community and a cultural events space is a real boost to our growth plans. Creating new jobs and supporting businesses is high on the agenda of the Levelling Up Partnership too, with money secured for Blackburn College to deliver new cyber and digital skills opportunities, a pioneering AMRC development in Darwen, and a cash injection to support the re-purposing of local business support networks.

We have a proud and proven track record of delivering here in Blackburn with Darwen and the amount of funding we are securing is testament to that. The Government has real confidence in us as a Council and in our ability to make sure every single penny counts. They know we'll spend the money wisely and on projects that will make a real difference, projects that are important to our residents and to our businesses.

In a busy period we've also been able to say hello to the fast-growing Indian restaurant chain Akbar's, which opened in our Cultural Quarter in Blackburn in early March. Akbar's already has successful Indian cuisine restaurants in major cities, including Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham and has now taken its place in the former Blakey's Bar at the side of King George's Hall. I wish them all the best for the new venture.

I was delighted to see an item brought to February's Executive Board outlining the appointment of a masterplanner to bring forward plans for a new strategic housing site expected to deliver around 1,500 high quality homes in the north-east of Blackburn. The site has been allocated in the new Local Plan (2021-2037). One of the most transformative things we can do for our residents' quality of life is to keep improving the quality of our housing stock. The link between good quality housing and improved health and wellbeing is proven and I am keen to stress we are fully focussed on working with developers to keep growing our borough in this way. We also received the great news that our partners at Barnfield Construction have completed work at Millbank Business Park. All units have been let or sold at the site between Greenbank Terrace and Milking Lane in Lower Darwen, just off M65 junction 4.

In October, the Prime Minister included Blackburn with Darwen Council on a list of local authorities offered funding for 55 towns across the country via its Long-Term Plans for Towns scheme. Darwen was included on this list and we are keen to ensure we can secure

as much of this further £20m funding as possible and put it to the very best use for the town – just like we’ve successfully done with the Darwen Town Deal. A business case for that is set to be submitted this summer.

### **Place promotion**

The Shuttle extra magazine, now in its fifth year, is being delivered across the borough during March. It retains its heavy focus on place promotion following positive feedback from residents and businesses. The magazine celebrates the very best of Blackburn with Darwen and encourages community pride through telling the stories of inspirational people from our two towns. It also features information on how to access Council services and information, updates on major projects, initiatives and investment across our borough, plus important Council budget information. The 2023 edition inspired an impressive collection of works by artist Alexandra Gallagher, celebrating key landmarks across Blackburn with Darwen. Given the interest in the works, and to link with the publication of the new magazine, prints of the limited-edition artwork are on sale to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery.

I was delighted to attend the 1V Awards Dinner at King George’s Hall in February. This annual event, supported by Blackburn with Darwen Council, celebrates the achievements of individuals and groups in the borough who are an inspiration to those around them. This year’s group of finalists was one of the strongest yet and it was inspiring to see all the ways local people are serving their communities while celebrating the positive impact One Voice Blackburn has made on people’s lives. Congratulations to all the winners. I was especially delighted to award the One Voice Leader’s Award to Debra Cartlidge, Chief Executive of the Deaf Village, a community for the deaf and hard of hearing set against a stunning woodland backdrop just off Preston Old Road, near Pleasington. It provides a shared learning environment in which deaf people can thrive; learning life skills and growing their independence. Debra’s own story of growing up with a hearing problem and then turning it into such a huge positive for others is very inspiring. Debra is a very worthy winner of this award and I congratulate her on her success.

### **Being an innovative and forward-thinking Council**

I was pleased to lead our latest Partnership conference event, which took place at Ewood Park last week. The event was an opportunity to reflect on progress since our last conference in March 2023 and brought together over 100 partners from a range of different sectors across Blackburn with Darwen. The conference aimed to determine how we ensure ‘no-one is left behind’ in Blackburn with Darwen and joined the dots together on the ways the we are looking to achieve that by touching on current major agendas including devolution, the linkages between good health and wellbeing and the economy and cyber. Updates were provided from keynote speakers from the wider public sector and beyond with breakout sessions around growth, skills, employment, cyber education and Health and care. The conference also provided an opportunity for general networking.

On Tuesday, March 26th we welcome back a team of officer and political peers from the Local Government Association (LGA) for the day to conduct a progress review following the Corporate Peer Challenge we undertook in July 2023. The progress review is an important part of the Corporate Peer Challenge process. It is an opportunity for us to update the peers on progress around the action plan we developed in response to their recommendations. A series of meetings and focus groups with a range of people from across the Council - elected members, senior officers, managers, supervisors and staff will again take place to provide a rounded picture. I’m sure everyone will make the peers very welcome.



## REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION

**COUNCILLOR JULIE GUNN**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
CHIEF OFFICERS: Strategic Director  
of Children & Education (DCS)  
Thursday, 14 March 2024**

### **Every child and young person to have opportunities to fulfil their potential.**

#### **External Scrutiny**

Over the last two months Childrens Services and Education (CS and Ed) have received external Scrutiny of their work from The Northwest Association of Directors of Children's Services and Ofsted.

In January members of the Senior leadership team in CS and Ed joined the DCS in Manchester for scrutiny from three other councils of our Self Evaluation document. This was a really positive process with feedback showing we know ourselves and our areas of strength and further improvement work. In February once again the team met with OFSTED at Piccadilly gate as part of OFSTEDs process of Annual Conversations with Councils. Again, our Self Evaluation was scrutinised with the wider team. It is always positive to receive scrutiny on our work and to celebrate progress made. We look forward to our letter from OFSTED summarising our Annual Conversation.

#### **Young People's Services**

##### **Further YIF Success**

Young Peoples Services (YPS) has been successful in securing £140k of redevelopment funds that will create bespoke youth engagement spaces over 2 floors at Wensley Fold Children's Centre. The renovation will include high quality music spaces, game cave, teaching kitchen, multi-function rooms, bushcraft as well as a large space to deliver open access traditional youth club type activities and support. YPS and a range of local partners will deliver activities from the space including open access and more targeted specialist services for children and young people from the local neighbourhood and beyond. This builds further on the YIF grant of £8 million raised between the council and local partners that will rebuild Darwen Youth Centre, create a bespoke Youth Centre in Audley & Queens Park Childrens Centre, in partnership with IMO, develop the Fuse Box at Blackburn Youth Zone and a new build in Shadsworth led by Newground Together. The developments at Wensley Fold and Audley & Queens Park also support the Start for Life programme where the council is bringing services that support families into one neighbourhood building.

##### **Youth MP Elections**

YPS are in the final stages of preparation for this year's Youth MP elections. As we stand, we have 9 candidates that have been supported by schools or local youth organisations. Candidates are currently putting their final touches to their campaigns and their election videos. Voting will be open between 26<sup>th</sup> February until March 8<sup>th</sup> with the results announced in the council chambers on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March. At the same time Young People across the Borough will be asked to vote on the national Make Your Mark Campaign. Led by the British Youth Council 'Make Your Mark' is a national consultation where young people vote on a range of issues with the top 3 becoming national campaign issues for the British Youth Council.

##### **Youth Justice Service (YJS)**

The YJS are collaborating with the Community Safety Team and Police on several fronts to enhance its service delivery. Firstly, a Youth Referral Panel is being developed that will enable front line Police Officers to refer children and young people who are coming to their attention for repeated incidents of anti-social behaviour. It is planned that the YJS will look to support those children, where appropriate, through their Prevention or 'Turnaround' offer in the hope of intervening to avoid ongoing incidents or their escalation into criminality. Work is also ongoing across the agencies to reinvigorate the Stay Safe events, ensuring they are fit for purpose for safeguarding and supporting children and young people at night-time. Finally, the 'In Your Corner' programme delivered in schools will hopefully incorporate a new feature of virtual reality headsets in the near future. The YJS are in the process of sourcing an educational programme of work that uses the technology as an engaging and interactive means of achieving key messages around topics such as knife crime, peer influences and gangs.

## **Children's Social Care**

### **Children in our Care and the Corporate Parenting Strategy**

The corporate parenting and care experienced strategy are being updated- a multi-agency session took place in January 2024, fully informed by the views and experiences of our children and young people. The updated strategy will be shared at our corporate parenting partnership, and we will forward plan how we understand the impact of this on outcomes for our children and young people.

### **Early Help**

We continue to lead our strategic partner work on our Family strategy' approach. This is looking at how we can develop further our approach to supporting families, ensuring the right support at the right time. Our third partnership workshop is taking place in February 2024. We are working with our partners and strategic leads on a collective response to the new updated Working Together to Safeguard Children guidelines.

### **Engage**

In partnership with the ADHD Foundation Neurodiversity Charity, on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024 Engage are hosting Neurodiversity in Children and Young People training for 100 attendees across the Blackburn with Darwen multi-agency footprint. This follows one of our Engage Deputy Team Managers, receiving funding through completion of a research project with University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN), which identified neurodiversity as being a significant risk factor of vulnerability for children and young people experiencing exploitation. Currently, 1 in 5 people live with ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia, DCD, Dyscalculia and other types of neurodiversity and the training will aim to equip us all as professionals to be advocates for our children and young people living with and impacted by this, reflecting Engage's strength based and trauma informed approach in supporting children and young people at risk of harm through exploitation.

### **Fostering**

We are moving forward with the Implementation Plan for the Regional Fostering Recruitment Hub that Blackburn with Darwen are leading on. We are in discussions with leads in Children's services to look at options of the team being based in one of the Family Hubs which will be a positive community base. Recruitment is picking up momentum with the Service Lead taking up post in April and shortlisting commencing for the various roles. We have had a great response to the adverts for each of the roles from Business Support, Marketing and Comms lead and all the recruitment Coordinators and will be interviewing week commencing the 26<sup>th</sup> of February 2024. Our HR colleagues have worked wonders in the organisation of the recruitment activity, we are fortunate to have great working relationships with them. Our aim is to launch the Hub in May 2024.

Meanwhile our fostering recruitment activity has surged since December with our continued activity ranging from full page articles in various magazines, at arenas and events, foster information evenings, the 1voice awards to continued google and Facebook ads. We currently have four strong Register of Interests that we are following up, six prospective foster carer households in assessment and two moving into assessment from their initial visit and one household being presented for full approval in March 2024. Despite this being a very positive picture for us, the conversion rate from enquiry to approval has been a challenge over the last number of years, this is not localised to BwD or the northwest, but is the picture nationally. Due to this consistent issue, the DfE prioritised the trailblazer recruitment hubs and we are hopeful, with the launch of our Fostering Hub, we will see a positive impact going forward.

To add to this, we are significantly moving forward in collaboration with Fostering Network coaches, our Implementation Plan to launch Mockingbird in our fostering service. Mockingbird, a global award winning and pioneering programme led by The Fostering Network in the UK, aims to deliver sustainable foster care. It is an evidence-based model structured around the support and relationships an extended family provides. The model nurtures the relationships between children, young people, and foster families, supporting them to build a resilient and caring community. It is led by a hub home foster carer and liaison worker, with the support of their fostering service, the constellation community offers vital peer support and guidance alongside social activities and sleepovers to strengthen relationships and permanence. We think this, alongside our new hub, will enhance our sustainability of local, stable, loving homes for children who need to be cared for. We aim to launch this in October 2024.

### **SEND and Vulnerable Learners**

#### **Co-production Charter**

Over the last couple of months BWD SEND partnership have been working on developing engagement and co-production. We are now pleased to have a 'Co-Production Charter' that outlines and highlights how we will work together to make a positive difference for our Children, Young People with SEND and their families. This is available to view on the Local Offer.

BWD Annual Disability Information Day was held on the 27th of February 2024 at King Georges Hall. The event provided an opportunity to families to visit stands from a variety of local providers, the NHS and voluntary services to ask questions, share information and find out what support services are available for them. The event also provided an opportunity to find out about how our schools, settings and services in BWD are working together to support children and young people for transitions including their next steps in preparing for adulthood.

### **Education**

There are 6 key priorities for 2023-2026 identified by BWD School Effectiveness Partnership Strategy. Priority 1 is around developing and improving children's speech, language, and communication through a joint framework delivered across all early year's settings. Therefore, last September (2022), a borough wide initiative was launched to improve Children's Speech, Language and Communication outcomes as we know that this is the biggest barrier to securing strong children's development and academic outcomes.

#### The initiative included:

- An Early Years Speech and Language Audit Tool – this was developed to support Quality First Teaching within schools and settings. The LA and Speech and Language Therapy teams paired up to support ten schools and settings with completing this audit, as part of a pilot. Feedback from this pilot has been excellent and the decision was made to continue this joint approach into the academic year 2023-2024, where another ten schools and settings will be supported.
- WellComm Toolkit: A Speech and Language screening toolkit was provided universally to all Primary Schools and Early Years settings within the borough. External training was commissioned by the Local Authority via 'Communicate SLT' and data was collected from the Local Authority via the WellComm wizard throughout the academic year.

This initiative has proved successful and there was a big improvement in the number of children across the borough achieving age-appropriate language levels, rising from 33% to 58% by the end of the academic year 2023. In addition, settings have used the resources to target support for children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) resulting in 20% more EAL children achieving age-appropriate language levels between October 2022 and May 2023.

### **Family Hubs**

Blackburn with Darwen Family Hubs are built around ensuring help doesn't end when a child starts school. Our Family Hubs work in conjunction with our Children's Centres and bring together the different kinds of support parents need at different times. Our Family Hubs serve families 0-19 (up to 25 years of age for young people with special educational needs or disabilities) from birth right through to the primary and secondary school years. They use a strength-based approach doing things 'with' families rather than 'to' them, building relationships that will last across many years.

Our four Family Hubs based geographically at Livesey, Darwen, Little Harwood and Shadsworth have been founded on positive engagement and co-produced with our families. Parents have designed the Family Hub branding and have been involved in the design of the 'Start for Life' website which will detail the full offer for families (ready at the end of February 2024).

The list of core services that the family hubs are delivering are:

- Reducing parental conflict
- Dispute resolution - support for out of court options (private law children's cases)
- Debt and welfare support
- Mental health services (beyond Start for Life parent-infant mental health)
- Oral health improvement/tooth brushing
- Substance misuse support
- Wider family health services (e.g. healthy weight and nutrition, contraception, and sexual health, stop smoking support)
- Supporting Families programme
- Housing support
- Youth services
- SEND support services.
- Early childhood education and care and financial support for childcare – via telephone
- Early language skills (HLE) -whole borough approach including all Private provider nurseries, childminders, nursery schools and classes.
- Parenting programmes
- Domestic abuse support
- Start for Life Universal Services (midwifery, health visiting, parent-infant mental health, breastfeeding, safeguarding, SEND)

The 0-19 Health visiting teams are also based in the family hubs as well as other co located partner organisations for example, Education Psychologists, physiotherapists.

## REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

**COUNCILLOR QUESIR MAHMOOD**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR & DEPUTY  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE: MARTIN KELLY  
DATE: 14 MARCH 2024**

### **ALL PRIORITIES:**

#### **Local Plan (2021-2037)**

The new Local Plan was formally adopted on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024. As the adopted development plan for the Borough, it is now applied in all planning decision making (delegated decisions and by the planning and highways committee). A variety of training sessions and awareness raising has taken place since adoption, to help ensure that the transition to the new planning policies is made as smoothly as possible. Adoption documents are available to view on the new [Local Plan webpage](#) and hard copies are available to view at the usual deposit points around the Borough (Town Halls, Libraries, and the Barlow Institute).

The Council will report on the outcomes of the new Local Plan through its quarterly monitoring (focused on a small number of key performance indicators) and its annual Authority Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR is published in the summer of each year and will report on the full range of indicators set out in the monitoring framework section of the plan. Previous reports are available to view on the [AMR webpage](#).

The Council's Executive Board approved adoption of the first of the new Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to support the new Local Plan on the 8<sup>th</sup> February, the Climate Impacts Framework (CIF) SPD. Therefore, since the 15<sup>th</sup> February, a CIF Assessment is now a validation requirement for all major commercial and residential developments in the Borough. The CIF will be considered and included in officer reports in line with Local Plan Policy CP5. Its purpose is to ensure that the climate emergency is embedded within the decision-making process. Further details are available on the Council's [CIF SPD webpage](#).

A second SPD that brings together all relevant guidance on matters relating to planning obligations and affordable housing in the new Local Plan is still in preparation. An initial consultation period on a draft SPD concluded on the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024. The Council is undertaking a further consultation on a revised version of the SPD in March following some significant amendments. A final version of the SPD will be brought to a future Executive Board meeting, along with a Consultation Statement, recommending its adoption. Further details are available within the [Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing SPD](#).

Further SPDs that the Council has committed to preparing through 2024 and 2025 to support the new Local Plan are set out in the [Local Development Scheme](#) (adopted in September 2023).

A new national requirement for major developments to demonstrate at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) has come into effect from the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024. This will extend to small sites from the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2024. The definitions of 'major

developments' and 'small sites' are set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and BNG regulations respectively, however for both there are confirmed exemptions that may apply. The Council has prepared a Planning Advice Note (PAN) to provide further guidance to applicants and developers to help navigate how BNG will be implemented and managed at the local level, which was also approved by Executive Board in March 2024.

## **Highways and Transport**

We have been supporting the Ribble River Trust on two Natural Flood Management (NFM) projects bid to slow the flow and reduce the impact of flooding, the two NFM projects are:

- The peat restoration on Darwen Moor next to Lords Hall estate.
- Formalisation of wetlands at downstream of Blacksnape playing fields.

Lancashire Wildlife Trust will lead the peat restoration and Ribble River Trust will lead the other works such as woodland creation, wetlands and leaky dams. The Council as land owner and the Lead Local Flood Authority will be working closely with both organisations on the delivery of these two projects. The total grant funding which has been allocated for these two projects by the Environment Agency is just less than £500k.

## **Bus Service Improvement Plan**

In October 2021 our bus service improvement plan was approved securing circa £3.7million of funding for capital and revenue improvements to bus service provision across the Borough.

Improvements to bus services have been made across the Borough with additional services operational during the evenings and weekends. The capital funding allocations are being spent on infrastructure improvements that facilitate bus movements across the network.

As part of the Government's commitment to it's National Bus Strategy further BSIP funding has been secured in a further 2 rounds of awards –

BSIP+ - £370,171 allocation for both 23/24 and 24/25  
Phase 3 BSIP - £880,000 for 24/25.

Both of these funding allocations are revenue and therefore are to be spent on bus service improvements. All schemes and initiatives have to be approved by the DfT and are monitored quarterly by them. Proposals have been drafted in partnership with the DfT and conversations are ongoing with bus operators through the Enhanced Partnership regarding the delivery of these service improvements.

We are exploring the opportunity to reintroduce a bus service linking sheltered accommodation with Blackburn Town Centre. In addition to this, consideration is being given to reintroducing an orbital service linking into the current network and the retail/business park at Whitebirk, the hospital, Ewood Park and high schools, St Bede's, Pleckgate, Witton Park and Tauheedul Girls High School. The service will

run Monday to Friday 5am to 9.45am and 2pm to 7pm plus an evening provision; Saturday 6.15am – 7pm; and Sunday 7.30am to 4.45pm.

All schemes/initiatives on the BSIP programme have to be approved by the DfT and we are therefore working in partnership with them on the development of these proposals, which means that it maybe subject to change.

### Highways Capital Programme

We receive funding from the Department for Transport annually to maintain our roads. This year we have £1,782,000 available for the planned maintenance of our roads. This allowance varies each year dependent upon funding received and works carried forward from previous years.

This year we have received an additional £612,000 for road maintenance as part of the Network North Funding Plan from the Department for Transport. This amount is included in the above overall figure.

Network North Plan funding is to be used for local highways maintenance, particularly for the resurfacing of carriageways, cycleways and footways to prevent potholes and other road defects occurring, as well as tackling other asset management priorities, such as keeping local bridges and other highway structures open and safe.

### **2024-2025 Schemes**

Our aim for the 2024-2025 period is to deliver the planned road maintenance works, post approval from executive board on 7th March 2024.

The proposed schemes are currently in the planning and design phase and represent a list of works we aim to deliver at this stage during the 2024-2025 period. As such, the schemes listed, their extents, treatment types and dates for delivery are potentially subject to changes or alterations dependent upon suitability following design and any currently unforeseen circumstances that may arise and alter the viability of the scheme.

### **PLACE, PRIORITY 4: CONNECTED COMMUNITIES**

#### **Venues:**

King George's Hall has recently hosted a number of gala award evenings, including the Lancashire Tourism Awards. In early 2024, KGH has had sell-out shows with comedians Sarah Millican, Guz Khan, and Dave Spikey. Darwen Library Theatre's comedy club continues to sell out on a monthly basis. The programme for the rest of 2024 is posting strong sales for the likes of Squeeze, Rhod Gilbert and Alan Carr. For all Venues information check out the website [Home Page - BwD Venues](#)

**Write Up North** – Aimed at adults with little or no writing experience this free, 6 week writing course, started on 26<sup>th</sup> January at Blackburn Library. Write Up North is an Arts Council England funded project in association with Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Council and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council.

## **Museums**

**National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) Update:** Arts Council England recently announced that all NPOs would have their 3 years funding arrangements extended for an additional year. This is excellent news and takes the current NPO award for Blackburn Museum through to the end of March 2027.

The 150<sup>th</sup> celebratory year has started well with over 160 pieces by local artists of all ages being submitted for the Art Open exhibition. The opening saw 200 people turn up to celebrate and it has been great to know that some of the artists have been successful in selling their work.

A new activity supported by NPO funding is the National Saturday Club. There are currently 18 members with sessions running through until July, culminating in an exhibition and trip to London.

Another NPO development is Hobby Cave – this commission is a partnership locally with National Festival of Making and nationally with ArtAngel and a wide range other museum and gallery partners. The artist Heitan Patel has made an initial visit to meet hobbyists across the borough and there will be a film and exhibition in London in 2024 leading to a local exhibition in 2025.

The MEND roof project has been completed and the scaffolding removed from around the building; despite the disruption and partial closures towards the end of 2023 visitor figures to the Museum were higher than Q3 the previous year 10,073 v 6,029.

## **PLACE PRIORITY 5: SAFE & CLEAN ENVIRONMENT**

### **Climate Emergency Action Plan**

Since the previous report the Heat Network Development Unit has awarded the Council a grant to assess the feasibility of heat networks in Blackburn and Darwen town centres. Decarbonisation of heat in Council and other buildings is a key objective of the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

A restoration plan for Aushaw Moss in the West Pennine Moors is also being developed, which could lead to the capture of up to 3,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> over the next 50 years.

The first meeting of the Blackburn with Darwen Climate Community was held in late February. Attended by key stakeholders in the public, private and third sectors the group agreed to meet quarterly to share good practice and work collaboratively on matters of mutual benefit, such as communication of climate messages and decarbonisation of the supply chain.

Tree planting continues at various sites around the borough, including a community orchard in Corporation Park. Park supporter groups and school children have been helping to put the trees in the ground.

The People's Jury 'One Degree Challenge' has been launched on the Council's website, bus shelters and key advertising hoardings around the borough. Residents are being asked to take a closer look at their current heating schedules and what they are spending on their energy bills. A reduction of 1°C cuts gas use by 8%, saving a household around £100 a year.

## **PLACE, PRIORITY 6: STRONG, GROWING ECONOMY TO ENABLE SOCIAL MOBILITY**

### **Employment Developments**

The Council's key employment sites, within the agreed Growth Programme for 2023/24, continue to progress. For example:

- Dock St - A new commercial unit has been completed.
- Carl Fogarty Way – New commercial units at Plot 4 are almost complete. A new unit at Plot 1 is also under construction, and works are commencing on a new car centre at Plot 3.
- Wainwright Way – Works have commenced at development Plot 1, to provide 6 new commercial units.
- Commercial units at Millbank Business Park (joint venture with the Barnfield Group) continue to be completed and occupied.

A planning application has also been submitted for a new manufacturing research centre at Chapels. This site that has been brought forward with support from the £100m Darwen Town Deal. Discussions are well advanced with Sheffield University's AMRC to be the anchor tenant – hosting its first-of-its-kind Additive Manufacturing Accelerator.

### **Housing Developments**

Further to the Council's agreed Growth Programme for 2023/24, the following major housing projects involving Council land are continuing to progress:

- Holden Fold Housing Site – sale successfully concluded with Countryside Homes on the 21<sup>st</sup> of December. Countryside Homes have secured planning approval (Planning & Highways Committee November 2023) to build 477 new homes, including 170 affordable homes for rent and home ownership. The proposal also includes new open spaces and car park for the adjacent sports pavilion. The Moor Lane Highways Improvement works have started on site, the works will provide improvements to the existing junction at Moor Lane, new off-street car parking spaces for residents and provide a new access to the housing development. Countryside Homes plan to start their development programme over the next few weeks.
- Haslingden Road Housing Site – The Council exchanged contracts with Keepmoat Homes / Great Places for the sale of the site in January, and a licence has been granted to allow commencement on site. Completion of the site sale is expected in the Spring of 2024, and works are taking place to develop 305 new homes, including 148 family homes for sale and 57 keyworker & affordable homes in the first phase. Supporting highway works started in



early January and will take 16 weeks to complete, including a new entrance and dedicated right turn lane off Haslingden Road. Highway alignment through this section of Haslingden Road will also be improved.

- Whalley Old Road Housing Site – the construction of 165 high quality family homes has commenced; the first site to offer Bovis Homes in Lancashire.
- New affordable homes have recently been completed and occupied at the Ellison Fold Way housing site, along with new homes for open market sale.
- Development of new housing also continues to progress at Fishmoor Drive, Tower View, Roe Lee and Milking Lane.
- Legal conveyance of Land at Borrowdale Avenue is nearing completion. The site will provide 13 much needed two bed bungalows for affordable rent by Together Housing.

### **Empty Properties**

As per the previous update, at the end of Q3, the empty properties team had brought 764 properties back into use, 214 in Q1, 250 in Q2 and 300 in Q3. Properties brought into use included 8 properties that had stood empty for over 10 years and are now refurbished and occupied. 9 had stood empty for over 5 years and 91 had been unoccupied for over 2 years. During this year, 4 successful CPO's have been made on properties blighting their communities.

The next update will be compiled in April.

## **PLACE, PRIORITY 7: SUPPORTING OUR TOWN CENTRES AND BUSINESSES**

### **Townscape Heritage Project - Blakey Moor**

Blakey Moor Terrace is largely watertight with the completion of the roof and installation of 6 large arched windows and new shopfronts. Unfortunately inclement weather over the last few weeks has caused a slight delay pushing completion into April.

Internally, the floors have been poured, first fix and studwork completed and plastering now underway. Work has also started on construction of the feature staircase that will provide access to the first floor mezzanine space. Once installed, viewings with potential tenants will be able to commence.

### **High Street Accelerator – King William Street**

King William Street, Blackburn has been selected by the High Street Task Force as one of the ten High Street Accelerators and awarded £237,000 funding from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

A High Street Accelerator is a pilot project and an opportunity to test and trial new ways of working to revitalise the high street and to tackle vacancies.

Led by the Council, the King William Street Accelerator project had its first meeting with key partners this month, bring together community groups, local businesses, and town centre organisations to start work on a new vision and delivery plan for the high street.

### **Akbars – King of Curry**

The finishing touches are being put to the brand-new Akbar's which will soon open in Blackburn's Cultural Quarter. Akbar's has restaurants in major cities across the UK, including Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham, and so it's a real coup for us to welcome them here. They have invested heavily in transforming the space within King George's Hall with a vibrant décor and will be employing 35 staff. The restaurant, with an extensive menu, will be open seven days a week from 5pm and, due to high demand, will be fully licensed to serve alcohol.

## REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH, PREVENTION & WELLBEING

COUNCILLOR DAMIAN TALBOT

PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
CHIEF OFFICERS: Director of Public  
Health  
Thursday, 14 March 2024

### Build happier, healthier and safer communities

#### Public Health

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024

#### UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative Gold Award Revalidation

The Blackburn with Darwen Infant Feeding services, commissioned and driven by Public Health with our partners at East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust, Blackburn with Darwen 0-19 Service and the Children's Centre & Family Hub Network underwent the revalidation process in January 2024 to retain the prestigious Gold UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative Award. Gold accredited services are required to undergo a formal revalidation every four years.

The Gold Award was retained for Blackburn with Darwen, and the services were highly commended for the quality of the evidence submitted and the thorough way in which the Baby Friendly standards are planned, implemented and embedded.

The UNICEF assessor's report was emphatically positive and includes the following comments:

- **'These services are outstanding and a true reflection of the Baby Friendly vision of 'Gold'.**
- 'It is very clear that the needs of the local population are very much at the forefront of the work and this has been used to great effect to influence progression'.
- 'There is strong evidence of the desire to progress outcomes across the Borough'.

**Return to Work Policy and Breastfeeding Policy:** The benefits of breastfeeding are widely documented and can mitigate against the worst effects of poverty. It supports the health of mother and baby, infers long-term protective factors, enhances maternal bonding, incurs little or no cost and has zero carbon footprint. The council's Return to Work and Breastfeeding policy has been enhanced for a number of reasons:

- 1) As part of Blackburn with Darwen's Unicef Gold Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) Accreditation, there is a need to evidence culture and progression and 'go further' with supporting the breastfeeding agenda.
- 2) The ICB are leading on developing a Lancashire & South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust (LSCFT) Local Maternity and Neonatal Systems Breastfeeding Strategy. One of the recommendations relates to Local Authorities developing model policies for supporting breastfeeding staff returning to work that act as an exemplar to other local employers.
- 3) Providing support with returning to work after maternity can enhance staff satisfaction and retention.

The policy has been enhanced with a range of measures, including signposting to commissioned services that can support parent and baby. Underpinning the policy is the principle ‘If we get it right for our staff, we get it right for our customers’.

**“Be PrEPed”:** **October 2023 – March 2024:** Blackburn with Darwen Public Health Team commissioned Renaissance to conduct a six-month pilot project titled “Be PrEPed” to increase the awareness of pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) within marginalised communities at high risk of acquiring HIV. The project utilises “Patricia” the bus, for impact of awareness and events as well as linking with clinical services to support with a mobile asymptomatic HIV and STI screening service. Outcomes achieved from the pilot include:

| ACTIVITY                                    | OUTCOMES   |
|---|--|
| <b>255</b><br>Contacts made                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 43 significant contacts</li> <li>• 134 brief interventions</li> <li>• 78 people through digital engagement</li> </ul> |
| <b>95</b><br>Staff training on HIV and PreP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 16 teams trained</li> <li>• Workforce training with health and social care staff</li> </ul>                      |
| <b>13</b><br>Visits from PReP bus Patricia  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visited A666, Phoenix Hub, sex workers, Project 180, College &amp; Gyms associated with cruising</li> </ul>           |

The health promotion and prevention work is continuing using the following opportunities:

- World AIDS Day events
- During February 2024 the Public Health team are also preparing for National HIV Testing week, including a health and wellbeing event at Blackburn Rovers community hub and to outreach in pubs and bars.

**Neighbourhoods Wellbeing and Prevention**

**Changing Futures Programme Reference as Best Practice:** Changing Futures Lancashire has been referenced as an example of national best practice within the refreshed statutory guidance from Department of Health and Social Care (updated on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024).

Some of the intentions of the guidance are to provide greater clarity on the opportunity for integrated care strategies to consider the wider determinants of health in setting the overall direction for the system and widespread engagement of voluntary sector organisations, inclusion health groups, seldom heard groups and important life phases, such as transition points from childhood to adults.

**Darwen Asylum and Refugee Enterprise (DARE) Multi-Agency Health Day**

The Integration & Community Engagement Team organised a health day held in Darwen for residents predominantly from an Asylum Seeker and Refugee background and who currently live in Darwen.

The event was a huge success with over 40 residents attending and around 12 local partners in attendance offering support and services from TB nurses, sexual health, vaccinations, and health checks among many others. Vitamin D was given out and over

23 Hep C test were conducted, all with negative results. This was so successful; the nurses are planning to make this a regular drop-in session in Darwen.

Due to the success, another health day is currently being planned with the Asylum and Refugee Community (ARC) for the 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2024.

### **Celebrating Green Social Prescribing.**

On Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2024 Neighbourhoods, Wellbeing and Prevention will be celebrating National Social Prescribing Day in Witton Park with our Health & Wellbeing and Social Prescribing Teams.

A stakeholder engagement event will run from 10am to 1pm where teams will be showcasing the newly renovated Active Outdoors Hub (Previously Witton Park Cycle Centre). The event will focus on collaboration and connectivity through bringing together a vibrant network of health and green provider stakeholders. A short presentation will take place from 10.30am describing Green Social Prescribing, developments and hearing from some of the volunteers. This will be followed by an 'active' tour of Witton Park taking in the amazing assets including The Greenhouses, Creative Football and the Green Gym.

The Active Outdoors Hub is a central space to bring people and providers together to demonstrate the power and impact the Green Social Prescription can have as a preventative & proactive approach to health & wellbeing.

## REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR DIGITAL AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

**COUNCILLOR MAHFOOZ HUSSAIN**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
CHIEF OFFICERS: Director CE  
Thursday, 14 March 2024**

### **Being a forward thinking and innovative Council**

#### **Information and Communications Technology**

During the last year, the Council have implemented a new core network infrastructure, as well as a new Wide Area network infrastructure. As such, the Council's 81 networked sites are now connected through an advanced modern core of switches, which will ensure reliable and secure working for all staff. This implementation was completed without any significant disruption to the business.

An updated Cyber Security recovery system is now fully operational, which will help the Council respond to any ransomware attack. Additional funding was secured from the Government to support this project.

Since January 2024, the Council's state-of-the-art firewalls have prevented over 500 million access requests to our network. In addition, the IT team spotted, intervened, and assisted over 100 staff who were under Cyber-attack.

#### **Civil Contingencies Service (CCS)**

A total of 217 incidents were reported in Q3 2023/2024, 53 of them being information received and 164 being warnings. There was a total of 1 Strategic Officer and 16 Duty Officer Activations. Some of the emergencies responded to include a gas explosion, flooding, fires and protests.

A summary of recent and planned activity:

- Emergency response co-ordination – including facilitation of internal TCG meetings for Israel / Palestine conflict events and significant incidents.
- Supported with Operation BrightSparx (bonfire night); large multi-agency response to the London Road gas explosion in December 2023; and support with 5 storms over this quarter.
- Human Aspects – addressing new/additional Rest Centres; Human Aspects Liaison Officer (HALO) role and full Plan review.
- Town Centre / Emergency Control Centre and Corporate Emergency Response Plans completed.
- A corporate exercise is in development and will take place on 18th April 2024.
- Work will begin on reviewing the BwD Community Risk Register.
- Work continues to support Departments on their Business Continuity planning arrangements. The annual 'BC Call Cascade' test took place in February for reassurance that departmental business continuity plans activation works, and the Corporate BC Plan is in final draft.

#### **Health and Safety**

There were 160 Council accidents, incidents and near misses reported in Q3 of 2023/24, broadly similar to the previous quarter. 100 of these incident reports come from Environment and Operations, where many of our higher risk frontline services are. Leisure and Parking Services teams make up two thirds of this total.

151 incidents were reported from schools in the same period.

There have been 0 Council and School reports in Q3, made to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) under Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrence Regulation (RIDDOR). Additionally, there were 9 near-miss incident reports in Q3, a decline since Q2.

A summary of recent and planned activity:

- Programme of Council Audits is underway.
- Depot support is ongoing with weekly inspections and targeted support as required.
- Corporate Compliance checks have been completed, which has helped inform directing the team's resources.
- Building Safety Task and Finish group are supporting a wider review of the safety of Council buildings.
- Health Surveillance is an ongoing programme, and now includes the Recycling team for noise surveillance.
- Violence & Aggression (V&A) Focus Group is ongoing, key updates include:
  - New Policy issued in November 2023
  - Personal Safety and de-escalation training rollout – numerous sessions delivered to teams and excellent feedback has been received.
  - Closer working established with the Community Safety Team to ensure appropriate follow-up on V&A incidents.

### **Information Governance and Security (inc GDPR)**

There were 22 new information assurance incidents during Q3 2023/24. All incidents are monitored as part of the breach reporting process. None have been of a significant enough nature to warrant referral to the ICO.

We have exceeded the minimum requirement of 90% compliance rate during Q3 2023/24 for the following:

- Requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) - 94.96%
- Requests for information under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) - 99.74%.
- Requests for information under the DPA2018 (subject access requests) - 98.55%

Record Of Processing Activity registers (ROPAs) are a mandatory requirement for all schools under GDPR. During Q3 2023-24, the Schools IG Service completed 30 school visits to SLA schools to audit their ROPA and then worked with the schools to update these documents. All schools have access to the Schools IG Training via Me Learning as part of the SLA, with 2 schools requesting face to face training in the quarter.

### **RIPA (Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act)**

There have been no applications for authorisation for undertaking covert surveillance or to use a covert human intelligence source for a number of years nor have there been any such activities outside the RIPA legislation that merited the use of the NON-RIPA application process. Much of the Council's enforcement processes are done openly. This does not exempt the Council from having to have processes in place and the Council is subject to scrutiny by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) so training is ongoing and RIPA Officer's Group meetings are being held quarterly.

The Council's updated Procedure and Guidance has now been approved and is on the Council's internet and intranet. Training in relation to Internet and Social Media investigations was provided in August 2023 and December 2023 and further development of staff guidance to ensure compliance is being developed. In the longer-term, it is proposed that a web-based training course is developed by HR and the RIPA Co-ordinator.

### **School admission appeals**

During the period Q3 2023/24, the team successfully administered 99 admission appeals for primary schools and high schools. A breakdown of the results of these appeals are set out below:

Unsuccessful - 62

Successful - 12

Withdrawn – 25

During this academic year (2023-24) and up to 31st December 2023, the team have administered 409 school admission appeals, which is a significant increase compared to the last academic year and up to 31st December 2022 (299). The increase in the appeals is due to a number of factors, including new housing developments in Blackburn with Darwen, families moving into the Borough from other parts of the UK and also International New Arrivals.



## REPORT OF THE Executive Member for Adults Social Care & Health

**COUNCILLOR Jackie Floyd**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
CHIEF OFFICERS: Strategic Director  
of Adults and Health  
Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

### **Build happier, healthier and safer communities**

#### **Jobs & Skills Fair 2024**

In 2023, the Adult Learning and Employment Support services planned and delivered two successful recruitment events. They continue to work with DWP, local employers and other education and skills providers following the success of the Jobs & Skills Fair last year.

This year's Jobs & Skills Fair took place on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> February at King George's Hall with over 800 local residents attending. A wide range of employers were present throughout the day, showcasing current vacancies alongside a series of workshops designed to help people understand how to apply for jobs, create a good quality CV, acquire interview skills, and access a range of other employability and employment-related topics. In addition, a business networking session was held to connect local businesses, share valuable insights and receive updates on industry developments.

#### **Dementia Friends and Adult Learning**

Over the past few years, our Adult Learning team has been working hard to help create a dementia-friendly Borough by delivering 'Dementia Friends' training – which aims to change people's perception of dementia and transform the way we think, act, and talk about the condition. Training has been delivered to staff, members of the public, the fire service, The Mall staff, and elected members. The team have recently hit the milestone of training over 1,000 'Dementia Friends' for Blackburn with Darwen.

A new Dementia Strategy, developed in partnership across Lancashire and South Cumbria, has been supported by the BwD Place Based Board and is due for sign off by mid March. Once agreed, the BwD Age Well Partnership, supported by the Health and Wellbeing Board, will lead on the development of a local implementation plan which will assure the practical application of the strategy and subsequent improvements in the experience of our residents and carers.

#### **Integrated Neighbourhood Teams and Specialist Services**

Collaborative working and joined up recruitment has helped enable our Social Care teams to provide a more integrated and holistic offer to our residents who experience care and support needs. This is aligned to our overarching Target Operating Model and includes:

- The Mental Health Team continue to influence and support the Lancashire and South Cumbria Foundation Trust (LSCFT) Mental Health transformation programme.
- An Advanced Practitioner for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) has been appointed to support the transitions pathway from Childrens Services to Adult Services.
- Briefing sessions on the emerging themes from the Neighbourhood Review are ongoing, designed to help us to Refocus, Refresh, Reconnect and Re-energise our neighbourhoods.

- The Independent Living Service are leading the upgrade of all telecare equipment from analogue to digital. This infrastructure upgrade is an opportunity to improve technology enabled care within Blackburn with Darwen (BwD).

To facilitate 'growing our own' Social Work workforce, events such as the Apprentice Evening, 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024, and internal Apprentice information session, 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024 have allowed for information to be shared directly with potential candidates considering beginning their social work career in Blackburn with Darwen Council. These events have been well attended and applications are now being received for the corporate social work apprenticeship. The social work degree apprenticeship offers an excellent opportunity to those wishing to enter the profession and forms part of our departmental workforce planning.

Our Learning Disability teams have also been involved in awareness raising events and training sessions to support their work. This includes:

- The Learning Disability Team supported the Disability Day event at King George's Hall on 27<sup>th</sup> February with the aim of showcasing the teams activities and support available to individuals with a Learning Disability in the borough. This annual event hosted by 'Parents in Partnership' in conjunction with the council included information, advice and a marketplace for individuals, their families and carers. Similarly, the Learning Disability Team continue to attend events at schools to promote understanding of the support available for young people after the age of 18 and in their preparation for adulthood and transition to adults services.
- The Learning Disability Team has visited schools to promote understanding of the support available for young people after the age of 18 and in their preparation for adulthood and transition to adults services.

### **Safeguarding**

Partner agencies are fully engaged in our BwD place based Safeguarding Adults Board, alongside the 4 sub-groups ('Lead'; 'Promote'; 'Workforce; and 'Strategic Safeguarding Adult Review') developed to assure and continuously improve our Safeguarding offer. In addition to the Local Authority, our Partners include the Police, the Community and Acute Hospital Health Trusts, the Mental Health Trust, VCFSE agencies and the Integrated Care Board. The Safeguarding Accountability Panel was held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 and discussed safeguarding activity, the work undertaken by the sub-groups to date and the action plan for the upcoming year.

### **Adult Care Provider Fees**

A full review of all adult care provider fees is undertaken annually to ensure we set sustainable rates for the care we commission. The department has engaged and consulted with providers in respect of the fee setting process. The proposed fees have considered and recognised the cost of inflation on food & utilities, National Living Wage and the Real Living Wage, as well as the wider challenges within our local care market and requirement to move towards a Fair Cost of Care following the completion of Market Sustainability plans. These factors have been considered alongside the issue of affordability and the 2024/25 provider uplifts have been recommended in line with the current Medium Term Financial Plan detailed at Finance Council in Feb 2024.

Client charges have also been reviewed and recommended for the financial year 2024/25.

### **Care Quality Commission (CQC) Assurance Preparations and Business Planning**

The Performance Team continue to lead on our preparations for CQC inspection. This work is currently focused on collating the evidence required for CQC's Information Return which will be requested on notification of their inspection visit. An externally facilitated engagement session was held in January 2024, for both staff and Partners. This generated positive feedback, areas for improvement and several case studies examples showcasing good practice. Additionally, we have reviewed our peer challenge action plan and undertaken a self-assessment evaluation in order to incorporate the above feedback and embed learning within our preparedness activity.

### **Commissioning Plans and Care Sector Quality**

Work has been completed with the support and oversight of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to provide assurance in relation to quality monitoring across the care sector. This work has included site visits by Councillors and officers to care homes across the Borough. Feedback and learning from these visits has been incorporated into the work of the team.

Work to further develop our strategic commissioning plans is well underway and aligned to our Target Operating Model, will ensure that we're able to provide services that help keep people well, provide short term services to aid recovery and provide longer term support for those assessed as having formal care needs. Whilst initial work is focused on Council commissions, inter-dependencies with health commissioned services has been recognised and our plans will be extended to become integrated Health and Social Care commissioning plans as the Integrated Care Board continues to develop. A significant part of this work will enable the Council to commission services which deliver the right outcomes for our population whilst also delivering value for money and efficiencies where possible.

## REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & OPERATIONS

COUNCILLOR JIM SMITH

PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
CHIEF OFFICERS: Strategic Director  
of Environment & Operations  
Thursday, 14 March 2024

### Build happier, healthier and safer communities

#### ENVIRONMENT

##### Food Waste

The Council continues to highlight the need to reduce food waste within the borough, via its social media channels, and particularly the calendars and Christmas recycling leaflets which are delivered to every home in the borough. Unfortunately, food waste continues to account for over 40% of the contents of the burgundy bin. Of that food waste in the burgundy bin, half of it is still edible or in date. As a result, each household in the borough is wasting an average of £700 a year by throwing away food that could still be consumed.

Food waste is also impacting on climate change as according to the UN, food loss and waste generates around 8% of all human-caused greenhouse gas emissions each year.

The government as part of their Simpler Recycling legislation, which was announced in the autumn of last year, requires waste collection authorities in England to arrange a weekly collection of food waste for recycling or composting from most households across England by 2026. Defra wrote to local authorities in England in January 2024, to provide details on the indicative capital funding for the delivery of weekly food waste collections (subject to Ministerial approval). The capital funding is to cover the cost of purchasing food bins (this includes internal kitchen caddies, external kerbside caddies and communal bins) and food waste collection vehicles. The estimated capital cost of purchasing these items is c.15% (£180k) more than the funds allocated by government. The government have not committed any revenue funding to cover the cost of staffing, replacement caddies and the comms required to ensure residents are aware of the roll out of food waste collections and when they will take place.

Plans are under way with the other local authorities in Lancashire to consider a joint procurement exercise to obtain the best prices for bins, caddies and vehicles. The collection methodology that is required by the government is to have small kitchen caddies, up to 7 litres in size in kitchens and a separate small food waste bin up to 25 litres in size, presented for collection each week. The kitchen caddies will have liners provided that can when nearly full, be tied and placed in the food waste bin. The food waste bin would be emptied by the Council's new food waste collection service and the bin returned. The food waste bins have a handle that can be lockable to stop waste spillages and to prevent the food waste from being tampered with by animals.

##### THE WITS PLAY AREA

Witton Country Park is the largest park in the borough, consisting of 480 acres of land, it is a destination park and attracts more visitors than any other park in the borough. People attend the park to play sport, take part in recreational activities, to attend an

event or to enjoy the many outdoor features of the country park including picnic spots, nature trails, riverside walks and woodlands.

'The Wits' adventure play area opened in 2010 and was one of the main attractions for families visiting the Country Park. 'The Wits' play equipment was manufactured primarily from timber and over the years, the condition of the timber had deteriorated to a point where some sections of the play area had to be removed for safety reasons. It was only a matter of time before the whole play area would need to be closed down for safety reasons.

The Council received £350,000 s106 funding as a contribution towards Green Infrastructure / Public Open Space and associated community facilities within the West Blackburn area from the redevelopment of a site at Brokenstone Road for up to 450 residential units. As Witton Country Park is located in the West Blackburn area, the Executive Board agreed that the £350,000 s106 funding should be invested in new play facilities at Witton Country Park to replace 'The Wits'.

The Play design is split into two parts, an adventure area which includes play features with an impressive bespoke 'Weavers' play tower measuring over 6m tall with four story's & three slides, and an inclusive play area consisting of play features, with a range of equipment and a design specification which takes into account children of all ages and abilities this includes standard swings & you & me seat, two together seat, & a swing seat, also a wheelchair accessible Carousel, with a cycleway theme. A new gate linked to the children's cycle path outside of the play area, a picnic area with tables that accommodate wheelchairs.

This is the largest investment in play equipment made by the Council and the funding has enabled the Council to provide the ultimate adventure play area with awe inspiring, innovative and challenging play facilities for children and young people of all ages and abilities to have fun, play independently and safely in a stimulating, exciting and attractive adventure play area. The new adventure play area was officially opened on Friday 1 March 2024.

## **CORPORATION PARK TENNIS COURTS**

After a number of months discussion, agreement has been reached with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) for the redevelopment of 3 tennis courts at Corporation Park. The redeveloped courts will have state of the art surfacing and be secured with keycode access via the LTA booking system. Access to the courts will be managed via a system called 'Clubspark'. This approach has been piloted successfully for the past three years by the LTA, and the evidence from Council sites across the country is that installing gate access technology actually increases participation. Gate access technology allows people to book a court online in advance and have confidence that the court will be available when they arrive to play with friends and family.

The Council is also working with the LTA to find a suitable partner provider to support tennis lessons at the redeveloped courts. Work on the courts is expected, weather permitting, to be concluded by the end of May 2024, which is the usual opening time for the tennis courts.

## **PUBLIC PROTECTION**

### **Litter from vehicles**

Following a pilot which has run for 6 months, the Council has now mainstreamed a litter from vehicles enforcement regime. Legislation which allows a Penalty Charge Notice

(PCN) to be issued to the keeper of a vehicle which is used in a littering offence was introduced in 2018, but it is only recently that software has been available to make enforcement viable for the Council.

The advantage of this process over criminal action is that there is no need to prove who actually did the littering, as the PCN is issued to the registered owner of the vehicle. The PCN is a civil charge (currently at £75) which doubles if not paid within 28 days or appealed. The recipient of the PCN can make representations to the Council, and if they are still unhappy with the outcome, they can appeal to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal.

During the pilot, 47 PCNs were issued, of which 21 were paid and 2 were cancelled. The main sources of evidence was provided by Council Officers and Council CCTV. The function is now being managed by the Envirocrime Team, they will continue to refine the process and maximise use of Council CCTV assets to tackle littering hotspots.

## **PARKING SERVICES**

### **Additional parking enforcement officers**

Since the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024, Parking Services have used the services of NSL to provide 2 full time parking enforcement officers. These officers work on a different rota to the Council's civil enforcement officers, with the majority of their hours being worked during the evenings and at weekends as well as assisting parking services when Blackburn Rovers have a home game. We are already starting to see a change to poor parking practices in some areas which had been identified as hotspots for illegal and dangerous parking.

The two new enforcement officers commenced work in the borough on the 15<sup>th</sup> January and had to complete a week's on the job training. The number of Penalty Charge Notices issued by the 2 additional staff is as follows:

- 15 – 31 January 2024 – 251 PCNs and 520 vehicle drive aways
- 1 – 26 February 2024 – 895 PCNs and 1281 vehicle drive aways

## REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

**COUNCILLOR VICKY MCGURK**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
CHIEF OFFICER: Strategic Director,  
Finance & Resources  
Thursday, 14 March 2024**

### **Tackling the budget challenge**

#### **Revenues**

As we come to the end of the financial year, the focus for the Revenues teams is the collection of unpaid arrears. Despite the cost-of-living challenges for households, the collection rates are comparable with the previous year's outturn.

#### **Benefits**

The team delivering the Supported Housing Improvement Programme continues to monitor, review, and improve standards in HMO (House in Multiple Occupation) properties within the borough. Working closely with DLUHC, it has been agreed that some elements of our work programme will be shared nationally with other Local Authorities as case studies of good practice.

The financial year 2024/25 will be the last year of the programme. It should also see the introduction of the Government's new regulatory bill which will provide further powers for Councils to take action in this area.

Our contracted provider of Debt, Welfare and Housing advice, Shelter, has successfully challenged the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) on Universal Credit legislation. The case relates to a Blackburn resident, who is severely disabled and therefore receives Employment Support Allowance with Severe Disablement Premium. When the lady moved from Supported Accommodation into more mainstream (and cheaper) rented housing, the Universal Credit rules resulted in her losing her transitional protection and with-it, significant income loss.

Shelter successfully challenged the decision at the First tier Tribunal. However, the matter was appealed by the DWP and referred to the Upper Tribunal. Shelter won the appeal, which ruled that the DWP decision was unlawful with clear discrimination against the resident.

This is an excellent outcome for our resident and has exposed how severely disabled claimants can face cliff-edge income loss. There has been no exposure to the Council in respect of the costs, as the Shelter organisation has borne the risk. We expect the decision to be published by the Upper Tribunal imminently, following which, the DWP will need to revise / reverse all previous decisions.

#### **Financial Services**

The Council's budget for 2024-25 and updated Financial Strategy 2022-25 were signed off at Finance Council on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024. The team are now working alongside colleagues in all departments, preparing for year-end closure of the 2023-24 accounts and the resulting budget outturn positions for both revenue and capital budgets, which will then be reported to Executive Board. Once the outturn position is finalised, preparation of the statement of accounts 2023-24 will commence.

## **Audit & Assurance**

Progress in delivering the 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan will be reported at the March Audit & Governance Committee meeting. The report summarises the internal audit outcomes achieved to the end of January. It also includes an update on the latest National Fraud Initiative exercise, which is led by the Cabinet Office.

In addition, the draft 2024/25 annual internal audit and three-year strategic audit plans are being presented for the Committee's approval. The annual audit plan sets out the work that the Audit & Assurance Team will carry out during 2024/25 to support the Section 151 Officer's statutory obligations to maintain an adequate and effective internal audit of the Council's accounting records and systems of internal control, governance, and risk management. The overall outcome of the planned activity will inform the Head of Audit's Annual Audit Opinion and Report for 2024/25 in due course. This is a key report that supports the Annual Governance Statement.

A report is also being presented setting out the results of the assessment of the effectiveness of the Committee against the CIPFA best practice guidance for Audit Committees for the members' consideration.

## **Corporate Procurement and Contracts**

The Procurement team have had a number of successes in the last couple of months, including for Bar Products and for Mobile Phones. For Bar Products the team ran a reverse e-auction in January with four shortlisted suppliers. The cashable savings achieved were 35%, which equates to £32k for the first year of the contract. For mobile phones, the new contract will reduce current costs by £20k per annum generating £88k worth of savings over the life of the contract as well as providing access to the 5G network in the Council.

## **HR Services**

An Apprentice Recruitment event took place at King George's Hall on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February, following the National Apprenticeship Week between 5<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> February. A number of roles from all Directorates are currently being advertised with excellent responses, in particular to the trade posts. This year, there will be in the region of 20 roles appointed at both apprenticeship and graduate level. This event was highly successful, with over 400 potential apprentices in attendance. As a result of previous feedback, we will be offering attendees the opportunity to learn more about various entry level posts that are currently vacant across the Council.

Human Resources remains a priority for the Council, and we have reviewed the development offer to our people with management responsibilities via interactive training sessions focusing on our people and our processes, as we continue supporting staff with various health conditions. Eight sessions have taken place to date with further sessions planned, and there will be a robust evaluation over the next 12 months looking into the impact of training.

## **Organisational & Workforce Development**

Work is ongoing to support the Council's intention of becoming a trauma-informed Borough, in collaboration with the Public Health team. An Equal Pay project is getting underway in collaboration with Trade Unions. The team is also developing Learning Hub resources for staff alongside the procurement of an e-learning system.

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)**

The annual Equality Watch Report 2023-24 and Gender Pay Gap information has been published, as per our statutory duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty. We are



currently collating information for our Service User Data report, which will be published by the statutory deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. Two EDI Sub-groups have been established, with a focus on Workforce and Service Users respectively.

### **Legal**

The Legal Property team have completed a mixed disposal of land and lease to Together Housing to enable them to claim circa £800k to build a new children's hub and equipped/non-equipped play space at Shadsworth Blackburn as part of the spend of the Youth Investment Fund. The team has also completed a s106 to accompany the recently approved disposal of land at Holden Fold. The s106 agreement secured £3.4m in benefits for the borough.

The Legal Adult Social Care team have seen an increase in complex cases but have recently been praised for their work by District Judge Bury who commented on the quality and detail of the evidence provided. This work resulted in the case being concluded in the Council's favour without the need for a court hearing and therefore saving significant cost to the Council.

### **Governance Services**

[The Police and Crime Commissioner Elections \(Designation of Local Authorities and Police Area Returning Officers\) Order 2024](#) came into force on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February, and formally designates BwD for the Lancashire Police Force Area and formally appoints the Returning Officer for the Blackburn Constituency as the Police Area Returning Officer (PARO).

The team is continuing to prepare for the combined elections on 2 May 2024, and assisting the PARO in liaising and coordinating with the other Lancashire Returning Officers and their election teams.