

Report of:	To:	Date
Councillor David Henderson, Leader of the Council	Council	8 July 2021

Executive Report: Leader of the Council
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1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To inform Council of progress on key objectives and the current position on a number of issues, as set out below.

2. Lancashire District Leaders

- 2.1 On 10 March and 9 June I attended virtual meetings of the Lancashire District Leaders.
- 2.2 At Lancashire District Leaders meeting in March we discussed the following:
- 2.3 The COVID vaccination programme for Lancashire and South Cumbria is ahead of target and Lancashire has an ambitious expectation to vaccinate all adults by mid-May. Updates from the Government Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) regarding business support grants were also discussed.
- 2.4 It was agreed that District Leaders would request a plan for economic regeneration and recovery and that it should be considered by the Ministerial Task Force and Economic Development Theme Group chaired by Cllr Matthew Brown (Leader Preston Council). For Members' information our Chief Executive Garry Payne chairs the Lancashire Economic Development Directors Group and he attends and reports into the Economic Development Theme Group.
- 2.5 In addition in March we discussed the Contain Outbreak Management Fund, the Greater Lancashire Plan and the Lancashire City of Culture Bid.
- 2.6 At the meeting in June the first item of business was appointments to various bodies/partnerships and Cllr Alice Collinson was appointed to the Lancashire Best Kept Village Competition and Cllr Roger Berry to the Lancashire Partnership Against Crime.
- 2.7 Following our meeting in March we continued to discuss the importance of economic recovery for our businesses and residents in Lancashire. Economic recovery is the main focus of the Ministerial Task Force/Economic Development Theme Group and such matters are

interlinked with the development of the Greater Lancashire Plan which is now at an advanced stage and once finalised I will bring a separate report to full Council.

3. Lancashire Leaders

3.1 Owing to the pandemic and the holding of the Lancashire County Council (LCC) elections, Lancashire Leaders have not met for some time but I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate those candidates who were successful in the recent County Elections. I have met with the new Leader of LCC, Cllr Phillippa Williamson, and I am looking forward to building a strong and successful working relationship with both the Leader and Deputy Leader of LCC, Cllr Alan Vincent.

4. Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board

4.1 The Board met on 10 June and I was elected chair for the forthcoming year. The main purpose of the Economic Prosperity Board is that the three Authorities on the Fylde Coast work in a formal Partnership to deliver sustained economic growth. The Board has existed for three years and during that time a strong working relationship has evolved for the better benefit for businesses and communities in Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre.

4.2 At the meeting in June we had presentations on Business Investment Marketing by WhistleJacket, the creative agency heading up Blackpool Makes it Work - Blackpool's inward investment marketing campaign.

4.3 In addition to progress updates on the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone and Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zone (Cllr Collinson in her Executive Report provides a detailed update on the Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zone) we received a paper on the issues of flooding and surface water management faced by the Fylde Coastal Authorities owing to climate change.

4.4 Blackpool, Fylde, and Wyre Councils have, over a number of years, worked in partnership to successfully deliver coastal defences and improve bathing water quality through the Fylde Peninsular Water Management Partnership.

4.5 The Board agreed that Heads of Service from the three Authorities work with Lancashire County Council Officers to explore the potential for establishing a specialist drainage team, pooling existing capacity and securing additional resources to allow greater integration of water management across the peninsular. This action would be delivered through the Fylde Peninsula Water Management Partnership and the outcome will be reported back to the Board in due course.

5. COVID-19 Pandemic

5.1 As I have referenced in paragraph 2.3 of my report the vaccination programme in Lancashire is ahead of schedule but Members should be aware that here in Wyre our vaccination delivery was reported by the BBC at the end of June as being the highest in the Country. Prior to the start of the vaccination programme Senior Officers met with

representatives from the Primary Care Network to devise a vaccination delivery plan utilising both our buildings and staff. As a result our residents were vaccinated early in the programme and you will be well aware that the best protection against the virus is vaccination. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those Officers who have assisted and continue to assist in the vaccination programme but once again partnership working and a 'can do' attitude is benefiting our residents.

6. Overview and Scrutiny Committee Review

6.1 Members may be aware that the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny have undertaken a review of our Overview and Scrutiny Committee and on 17 June my fellow Cabinet Members, Overview and Scrutiny Committee members and Corporate Management Team and I took part in a Workshop run by Ian Parry from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. I found the workshop interesting and useful and I am confident that the review will provide the necessary tools to further strengthen our Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7. Fleetwood to Poulton-le-Fylde Rail Reinstatement

7.1 The Fleetwood Railway Line Reopening Feasibility Study has just been completed by Lancashire County Council and partners, including ourselves. The Strategic Outline Business Case study has considered three rail related options; a heavy rail route, a light rail route and a hybrid tram-train option.

7.2 In summary, the conclusion reached is that all of these options are technically deliverable and all options would provide a transformative step change in connectivity for Fleetwood and the wider area. However, the three options contain some significant delivery risks and uncertainties and these must be fully considered in the next stage.

7.3 The current study has been submitted to the Department for Transport by Lancashire County Council for their consideration and agreement on the next steps, which is expected to be an Outline Business Case where delivery risks and uncertainties along with the comparative strengths of the options can be better considered. I will keep Members updated as this matter progresses.

8. Comments and Questions

8.1 In accordance with procedure rule 11.3 any member of Council will be able to ask me a question or make a comment on the contents of my report or on any issue, which falls within my area of responsibility. I will respond to any such questions or comments in accordance with Procedure Rule 11.5.