



Report of:	To:	Date
Councillor Michael Vincent, Leader of the Council	Council	26 October 2023

Executive Report: Leader of the Council

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 Devolution Deal

2.1 Lancashire County Council, together with Blackburn-with-Darwen and Blackpool Councils continue to work with a small group of senior civil servants to progress a level two devolution deal for Lancashire. The level two deal is seen very much as a starting point from which to build on.

2.2 It means more decisions about key issues affecting our communities can be made in Lancashire rather than at Westminster, and Lancashire will be better placed to tackle key local priorities, improve employment and skills, and boost economic prosperity.

2.3 In the last month further work has been done to identify capital projects to deliver the deal objectives. These capital regeneration projects aim to drive growth and levelling up across Lancashire by:

- Delivering a geographical spread of benefits across Lancashire
- Delivering innovation led growth;
- Exploiting the National Cyber Force opportunity;
- Growing the low carbon technology sector; and
- Improving housing quality.

2.4 The deal is due to be submitted to government this month.

3. Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board

3.1 I attended the Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board in September where updates were given on the Blackpool Enterprise Zone and the Hillhouse Enterprise Zone.

- 3.2** The update on the Hillhouse Enterprise Zone, noted that the Fleetwood /Poulton rail line was still awaiting ministerial decision. However in the meantime Network rail appointed consultants are continuing to develop the proposals for a tram/train option. This includes a study and concept design for a new Northern approach road and bridge over the rail line.
- 3.3** Work continues to market the site, with refreshed signage for the site, work progressing to update the relevant Enterprise Zone websites and plans already underway to attend next years' Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum.
- 3.4** There are a number of current enquiries being progressed which is promising. It was noted that due to the nature of these large-scale enquiries and split of planning responsibilities between Wyre and Lancashire County Council these can take considerable time.

4. Council Plan Development and Organisation Structure Review

- 4.1** Work is underway to refresh the Council's business plan. As usual following the elections this will be a more significant refresh of the plan's priorities, projects and measures.
- 4.2** Overview and Scrutiny will be provided with an overview of the process and asked for their feedback at a meeting on 16 October and the final plan will be presented to the Council meeting in November.
- 4.3** Work is also underway to review the council's organisation structure, specifically focusing on potential changes to the director and head of service level posts and the services they are responsible for. This is to ensure that the senior leadership team is fit for purpose, and we have the right skills and capacity to deliver the council's priorities. Further information about these proposed changes will be provided to future meetings.

5. Update on the future operation of the theatres

- 5.1** Since the Cabinet report approval in September, work has been progressing well on the approved recommendations.
- 5.2** The public consultation exercise finished on 22 October and feedback is now being analysed. The soft market testing exercise for Thornton Little Theatre is underway. It has generated lots of interest and two open days were held mid-October to show interested parties the facilities. The deadline for expressions of interest is the end of this month.
- 5.3** On 2 October, GJG consultancy were appointed to progress a service review of Marine Hall. Their work will include an in depth review of current operations and financial performance and benchmarking against other

similar sized venues. An options appraisal of operating models and governance structures and the feasibility of these models for Marine Hall will be carried out and they will then produce a comprehensive report of all the findings and recommendations for future consideration by Council. This report is due to be completed in November, therefore a report to Council is now expected to be ready in January 2024.

6. Comments and questions.

- 6.1** 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.