



<b>Report of:</b>	<b>To:</b>	<b>Date</b>
Councillor Michael Vincent, Leader of the Council	Council	30 November 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** In recent weeks Jacob Young MP, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and civil servants who have been working with the upper tier authorities in Lancashire on the devolution deal have met with MPs and separately with district Leaders across Lancashire to update them on and answer questions regarding the Lancashire Devolution Deal.
- 2.2** In the briefing which I attended, Mr Young said that the deal which will see Lancashire taking on powers from Government is an important moment for Lancashire. He outlined key principles of the deal which are that the core adult education budgets, transport and Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) functions will be undertaken by the County Combined Authority (CCA), that the CCA will have Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers and he said that the deal included £20m capital funding to boost growth in and around Lancashire.
- 2.3** He also made it clear that in future, should there be further rounds of funding the CCA will take on responsibility for administering the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, but also made it clear that districts would not be giving up any powers or responsibilities under the deal.
- 2.4** He also provided some information about the governance arrangements which are being proposed. In this he explained that there would be two district council representatives on the CCA. They would be non-constituent members but would have voting rights in relation to matters that pertain them. Businesses would also have two representatives, but they would be associate members with no voting rights.

- 2.5 I asked Mr Young about district involvement on CCA sub committees, and he said that there would need to be local decisions made on this and that this level of governance arrangements will not be specified in secondary legislation.
- 2.6 At the time of the meeting none of the district leaders had seen a copy of the Lancashire devolution deal submission. However Mr Young did agree to share a copy with the District Leaders' Chair and Vice Chair but asked that it not be circulated further at this time. An announcement from Government on the deal is expected later this month.

### **3. Theatres Review and Fleetwood Waterfront Regeneration Plans**

- 3.1 The soft market testing exercise for TLT closed on 31 October. The exercise has generated some good interest and an evaluation report is now being prepared which will set out the next steps.
- 3.2 GJG consulting have been working closely with the council to review the operations of the Marine Hall. They have conducted workshops with staff and spoken to key stakeholders and reviewed key documents and financial information. As part of this work, I met with GJG consulting at the end of October to provide them with information on the wider context of the review. I emphasised the value of Marine Hall to our local communities, and we discussed a range of potential options which I hope will enable us to secure a successful future for Marine Hall. Their report and recommendations will be presented to Members for consideration and next steps in the new year.
- 3.3 The public consultation for the seafront received a total of 716 responses. Of these 94% were in the FY postcode and nearly 80% of respondents visited the seafront frequently (either daily or weekly). Most people visited for an activity e.g. dog walking, for the views or for a show at Marine Hall. In relation to Marine Hall, 61% agreed that an alternative provider should be found to safeguard the future of the venue. The top three suggestions for re-designing the space related to the food offering e.g. restaurant, the formal gardens seating areas and the music/theatre/performance event spaces.
- 3.4 For the TLT consultation there were 320 responses, 83% were in the FY postcode. 73% visited in the last 12 months. The main reason for visiting was to attend a stage play or musical theatre or to attend a community event.

### **4. Wyre Business Awards**

- 4.1 I was pleased to attend the Wyre Business Awards on 7 November at Marine Hall and present the award for Business Person of the year. After successfully restoring this important local celebration of Wyre businesses' achievements and success last year, the awards have been more

popular than ever. The standard of applications has increased once again, and this year saw a record number of applications with 148 entries from 74 different businesses and organisations. The event was hosted by local comedian Steve Royle who did a fantastic job. The full breakdown of winners is listed in the Planning Policy and Economic Development Portfolio Holder report.

## **5. Fleetwood Market**

- 5.1** The £3.9 million improvement works are nearing completion. There is no doubt the works have been disruptive for all involved, especially the traders, and the council has been doing all it can to support them. This has included a 30% rent reduction and support to cover the cost of VAT. Unfortunately, with rising energy prices and other costs going up this has had an impact on the service charge which has meant that the total bill for traders has gone up around 30%. Many traders have highlighted that this has become unaffordable. Action is being taken which includes a rent appraisal to compare our rents to other markets. We want to ensure that we retain traders so that they benefit from the market improvement project and to safeguard this key council asset for the vitality of Fleetwood.

## **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.