



Report of:	To:	Date
Councillor Michael Vincent, Leader of the Council	Council	18 April 2024

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 November 2023, the Government announced it would be willing to enter into a devolution deal with Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council and Blackpool Council.
- 2.2** Following this, an eight-week public consultation was launched in December to gather feedback on the devolution proposal. The results of the consultation have seen the majority of respondents welcome the proposal and where concerns have been raised, they have been reviewed and used to update the proposal document.
- 2.3** During March each of the upper tier authorities discussed the findings of the consultation at meetings of their Full Council and have approved recommendations to proceed with Lancashire's plans for devolution and to submit a joint devolution proposal to Government. Each council supported the view that a Combined County Authority (CCA) should be set up to allow powers and budgets to be devolved from centre government to Lancashire.
- 2.4** The Secretary of State is now expected to lay an order in Parliament to establish the new combined authority before the summer recess, with the new Lancashire CCA being established by the Autumn.

3. Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board

- 3.1** A meeting of the Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board was held on the 14 March where updates were given on the Blackpool Enterprise Zone and the Hillhouse enterprise zone.

- 3.2** The key updates regarding Hillhouse were to note the ongoing ambitions of NPL regarding delivery of hydrogen on site by 2025. This aims to provide hydrogen to existing companies on site, replacing gas, with the remaining hydrogen being used locally or sent to the grid.
- 3.3** There continues to be a good pipeline of enquiries from potential investors in the site, however it should be noted that the nature of many of these large scales enquires means that negotiations and conversion of interest takes some considerable time.
- 3.4** Outline plans to re-open the Fleetwood/Poulton rail line are still awaiting a ministerial decision, with uncertainty around this meaning that finalisation of a delivery plan which will unlock a large area of the Enterprise Zone continues to be on hold.

4. LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

- 4.1** In June we will be having a Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC). The last peer challenge took place in 2017 and councils are encouraged to have one at least every five years. You will also remember that this was a piece of work which we committed in our Council Plan, approved by Council last November.
- 4.2** In June, we will be visited by member and officer 'peers' from other councils, together with the LGA and they will spend time reviewing our key strategies and policies and talking to members, staff and partners.
- 4.3** The peer challenges cover a number of areas including local priorities and outcomes, organisational and place leadership, governance and culture, financial planning and management and capacity for improvement.
- 4.4** Following the peer challenge, we will get a report which will set out findings and recommendations. I see this as a great opportunity to share and celebrate examples of the great work we do and to receive recommendations on how we can improve.
- 4.5** Prior to the peer challenge officers will be running briefing sessions for staff and members to explain more about the process and answer any questions that you may have.

5. Theatres update

- 5.1** We are delighted to have awarded the lease of Thornton Little Theatre to local organisation CRE8IV Group Ltd from the end of April 2024. CRE8IV's passion for theatre and professional experience will be the driving force behind ensuring the theatre remains an affordable and accessible resource for local entertainment, cultural and community

groups and those who currently use its facilities. Their commercial expertise will bring a more secure footing to the theatre's future, whilst retaining its ethos as a much-loved vibrant community hub. We wish them all the success for the future.

- 5.2** A theatres consultant has now been appointed to work with the Director of Communities to progress a short-term action plan for improving the way the Marine Hall operates. Alongside this work, GJG consultants have been appointed to commence the tender process. I will keep Members updated of this process.

6. Climate Change Strategy Consultation

- 6.1** During January and February, we ran a consultation exercise to seek residents views on the Council's draft Climate Change Strategy.
- 6.2** The consultation involved an online survey via the council's website for approximately three weeks during January and February. This was promoted via a press release and paid adverts on social media.
- 6.3** In addition, officers held seven in-person public engagement events to give residents the opportunity to discuss the strategy in more detail, learn more about climate change and have their say. These were planned using footfall data to reach residents on the busiest days across a range of locations throughout Wyre, which included:
- Knott End Library (Monday 29 January)
 - Garstang Booths (Thursday 1 February)
 - Teanlowe Centre in Poulton (Saturday 3 February)
 - Fleetwood Library (Wednesday 14 February)
 - The Mount, Fleetwood (Thursday 15 February)
 - Cleveleys Library (Friday 16 February)
 - Teanlowe Centre in Poulton (Saturday 17 February)
- 6.4** A range of key stakeholders were invited to two events held at the Civic Centre on Tuesday 6 and Thursday 8 February. This involved a presentation on the strategy followed by an opportunity to read through the action plans in detail and provide comments.
- 6.5** Local schools were also invited to two events held in the Council Chamber on Wednesday 31 January (primary) and Friday 9 February (secondary). Pupils took part in interactive sessions to learn more about climate change, local impacts and to have their say on priorities and actions within the strategy.
- 6.6** Staff and elected members were encouraged to have their say via a specific link to the survey on the staff and councillor hub.
- 6.7** In total, the online survey had 228 responses. Approximately 85 people were reached during the seven public engagement events. The key

stakeholder events had 25 representatives attending from a range of local and wider organisations, children from five primary and secondary schools attended the school events.

- 6.8** A full evaluation of the consultation has been undertaken and was reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Climate Change sub committee meeting on 21 March.
- 6.9** The next stage of the process will be to further update the strategy with the key findings from the public consultation, as well as any recommendations from the Sub-Committee, and continue to explore ways to prioritise the action plans. The final strategy is due to be brought to Full Council this summer.

7. 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.