

Report of:	To:	Date
Councillor David Henderson, Leader of the Council	Council	3 October 2019

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 Leaders Meetings (1 August 2019 and 9 September) and Lancashire District Leaders Meeting (9 September 2019)

Lancashire Leaders (1 August 2019 and 9 September)

- 2.1** In my Executive report presented in July I stated that I would keep Members up to date on any development related to Combined Authorities. The matter was raised at the August and September meeting of Lancashire Leaders and there were a number of Leaders who stated they were in favour of a Combined Authority for Lancashire. On 3 December 2015 this Authority discussed, in depth, the proposal to form a Combined Authority for Lancashire. At that time we concluded that taking into account the lack of information on the benefits and costs we should not be party to the consultation exercise nor should we take any further part or play a role in the development of a Combined Authority for Lancashire unless there were clear and defined benefits for Wyre.
- 2.2** Since 2015 and whilst I have been Leader I have seen no evidence of the costs or benefits associated with a Combined Authority for Lancashire. If and when such information is available and or presented to me I will bring before full Council a formal report for debate and decision.
- 2.3** At Lancashire Leaders we continued to discuss the development of a Greater Lancashire Plan (GLP). The GLP provides Lancashire local government and all its partners with an opportunity to provide a foundation and narrative to demonstrate to all its communities and to national government that it is committed and serious about finding a future for all who live, work and visit Lancashire now and for generations to come.
- 2.4** The GLP will be developed alongside the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and the GLP will provide a strategic framework for Lancashire within which the LIS will sit. This framework will include the economic agenda, but will also include strategies for the future of housing, health,

education, community safety and transport for example, and cover the quality of the environment and public reform. The GLP will not only bring this much needed collaboration at the sub national level, but it will also bring the local context as a whole into play so the industrial strategy is not operating in isolation but in the context of drawing on the key issues facing areas as a whole, whether that be existing housing stock issues, social care, education or connectivity.

- 2.5** The initial cost of the GLP is estimated to be £400k (by March 2020) and is proposed to be funded from the Economic Growth and Financial Sustainability Fund (top sliced funding from the Lancashire Business Rate Pool). As a Pool member the release of funding will require formal approval by full Council and the proposed amount is in proportion to our anticipated contribution to the fund based on Business rates forecasting which in our case amounts to £21,853 and this matter is the subject of a separate report on this agenda. However, at Lancashire Leaders it was unanimously agreed that when the GLP is finalised each Council should formally consider the GLP and thus in due course I will bring before full Council the finalised GLP for Members to debate.
- 2.6** Steve Fogg recently appointed Chair of the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) addressed Leaders and I thank him for his honesty because he informed Leaders that the LEP was scored nationally by Government and as a result rated 'Requiring Improvement' on Strategy. The LEP have an Improvement Plan in place and Steve made it clear that he is keen to deliver the objectives in the action plan.
- 2.7** The LEP are charged with 'co-producing' a Local Industrial Strategy with Government, which is planned to be submitted in December and published in March 2020. He also talked about the GLP and how the LEP will work with Partners to deliver economic growth for Lancashire.
- 2.8** The inability of the Police and Crime Panel to agree their membership for 2019/20 was discussed at the Lancashire Leaders meeting in August. At the Panel meeting all councils were asked to nominate a representative for the core membership of the Panel (i.e.15 seats – 1 per council). This resulted in a core membership of 9 Labour, 4 Conservative, 1 Liberal Democrat and 1 Independent or Other (9:4:1:1). The Panel was required to try and achieve the Politically Balanced Objective, meaning "wherever practicable" the membership be reflective of the council seats held by respective parties/groups across Lancashire but the Panel could not reach agreement. Previously achieving a politically balanced Panel has not been an issue and I was bitterly disappointed that neither the Panel nor Lancashire Leaders could reach agreement on the simple matter of the composition of the Panel and as such the matter must be referred to the Home Secretary who has reserve powers to confirm or otherwise the composition of the Panel.

Lancashire District Leaders (9 September 2019)

- 2.9** The main topic of discussion was the proposal by East Lancashire Authorities to continue their pursuit for Unitary status. In the past 12 or so months whilst new Unitary Authorities have and will be established, for example from 1 April 2020, a new single, county-wide unitary council will be created in Buckinghamshire, that is as a result of a County

Council and all District Councils reaching agreement to move from a two tier system to a single Unitary. In Lancashire we have a hybrid structure made up of a County, two Unitaries and 12 District Councils. Any structural change to Lancashire, would in my opinion, require unanimous support from all Lancashire Authorities and I cannot, at this present time, see what benefits would arise for the residents of Wyre from structural change.

3. Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board (EPB) 10 September 2019

- 3.1** At the meeting updates were presented on the progress of both the Blackpool and Hillhouse Enterprise Zones (EZ).
- 3.2** Whilst it is unfortunate that on the 31 August, Vinnolit (chemicals company located at Hillhouse) ceased trading, other companies within the Hillhouse EZ are expanding and there is interest from other companies as referenced in Cllr Michael Vincent's executive report.
- 3.3** Members will be aware that we were successful in round one of the Future High Streets Fund and via the CHEST e-tendering system we have requested expressions of interest for the supply of a Masterplan for Fleetwood Town Centre. However, a second round of Future High Streets Fund was recently announced with Blackpool and Fylde being successful. It was agreed at the EPB that in order to maximise the chances of success, officer's from the three Fylde Coast Authorities should work together to ensure all three bids for the Fylde Coast are both innovative and complimentary.

4. Other Business and Activities

- 4.1** Following the declaration of a Climate Change Emergency made at the July Full Council meeting as climate change affects the whole of the Borough it is only right and proper that I lead on this with the support of Mark Billington, Service Director People and Places and I can update members on a number of initiatives that are currently in progress.
- 4.2** At the Cabinet meeting on 4 September 2019 to encourage the use of electric vehicles we agreed the following:
 - 1. To enter into a five year agreement with BP Chargemaster Ltd (BPCM) to install up to 16 electric vehicle fast charging points on council owned car parks throughout the borough.
 - 2. To procure a supplier to install Rapid Electric Charging Points on four car parks within the borough for a ten year period.
 - 3. To enter into an agreement with Highways England (HE) for a single Rapid Electric Charging Point on Rough Lea Road car park Cleveleys as part of the HE Strategic Road Network scheme for a period of seven years.
- 4.3** Within the council's vehicle fleet there are a number of small diesel vans and we are currently testing electric vans and when the diesel vans are due to be replaced if electric vans are proven to be fit for purpose we will purchase electric vans.

- 4.4** Officers have set up a working group to look at reducing the council's dependence on single use plastics I am pleased that a policy is before members for consideration at this meeting.
- 4.5** In addition later on in the agenda we will discuss the proposal to form a Climate Change Policy Group.
- 4.6** This winter we will be implementing plans to plant more trees across the borough, which will also help to improve carbon capture, and in addition we will develop additional wildflower areas to improve biodiversity on our parks and open spaces.
- 4.7** At a National level BREXIT and a possible General Election continue to take centre stage and I wanted to take this opportunity to reassure Members that we are well prepared for what may result from BREXIT. The Lancashire Resilience Forum Executive Group have taken a strategic lead on BREXIT and our Chief Executive, Garry Payne, takes part in weekly teleconferences. In addition our Service Director Performance and Innovation, Marianne Hesketh is our Lead Officer for BREXIT and our Head of Governance, Joanne Billington has pulled together a BREXIT Risk Register and Action Plan and Marianne is responsible for providing progress updates to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

5. Comments and Questions

- 5.1** 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.