

Report of:	To:	Date	Item No.
Cllr Alan Vincent, Leader of the Council	Council	7 December 2017	11(a)

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. Combined Authority update

- 2.1** On the 23 November the Shadow Combined Authority met to discuss a response from the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to a letter sent from Simon Blackburn the Leader of Blackpool Council.

The Secretary of State makes it clear that “*the Government’s position on establishing non-mayoral combined authorities, I can confirm that the Government will consider any proposal from local areas for combined authorities. Indeed, we have said in our manifesto that ‘we will support those authorities that wish to combine to serve their communities better’.* As legislation requires, in assessing a proposal, I will need to consider whether the proposal meets the statutory tests, namely whether the consultation on the governance review and scheme is sufficient and that no further consultation is necessary, and whether the proposals are likely to improve the exercise of statutory functions in the proposed combined authority area. Before I am able to seek the any legislation to establish a combined authority, all councils in the area concerned must give their formal consent.

In answer to your second question on devolution of budgets, powers, and functions to non-mayoral combined authorities, we are open to discussion with any area on its proposals to drive local growth and productivity. To date, however, the most ambitious devolution deals, involving substantial budgets and new powers, have been agreed on the basis of the directly-elected, strategic and accountable leadership that can be exercised by a mayor working with a combined authority.

You further note that, subject to the above responses, the leaders of the 15 councils will consider a combined authority based on the proposal submitted last year. In terms of the sufficiency of that proposal, I understand that your previous consultation was on the basis of Wyre’s not being part of the combined authority area. Given that the proposal is now to include Wyre, this would suggest that further consultation is

necessary if all are to be confident that there has been full consultation on the proposal that you are now making.”

On the 3 December 2015 full Council took the decision not to be part of a Lancashire Combined Authority and our stance has not changed and we have made that clear to the Shadow Combined Authority and the Secretary of States reference to Wyre being part of a Combined Authority is because that has been inferred by others. In addition in July 2017 Ribble Valley passed a resolution not to be part of a Combined Authority and if their stance were to change they too would need to formally reconsider the matter.

We have consistently stated that we will work collaboratively when there is mutual benefit as evidenced by a report later on this agenda which confirms the dissolution of the Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Development Company and formation of a Fylde Coast Economic Prosperity Board.

3. Lancashire Business Rates Pool

- 3.1** On the 17 October I attended a meeting of Lancashire District Leaders where the main discussion was about the Lancashire Business Rates Pool. The details of this discussion are set out in my Resources update.

4. Hillhouse Enterprise Zone – signing of collaboration agreement

- 4.1** On the 24 October I, along with Cllr Peter Murphy and the Chief Executive, Garry Payne, witnessed the signing at the House of Commons of a Collaboration Agreement between Wyre Power Ltd (part of the NPL Group) and the China Machinery Engineering Corporation (CMEC).
- 4.2** The event was hosted by Paul Maynard, MP for Blackpool North and Cleveleys and the UK Department for International Trade and representatives from the UK Chinese Embassy were also present.
- 4.3** The agreement paves the way for Wyre Power to push forward plans for a new gas-fired power station on the Hillhouse Enterprise Zone. The 900 MW plant will provide numerous construction and training opportunities and high end operational jobs and the power plant will be sufficient to power one million homes. Works have commenced on the Development Consent Order and the plant is expected to be operational by 2022.

5. Remembrance Services

- 5.1** On the 8 November I had the pleasure of attending The Northern Festival of Remembrance at Marine Hall and on Sunday the 12 November I laid the wreath at the Remembrance Service at Thornton and it was heart-warming to see so many people at the service.

6. Staffing Matters

- 6.1** A number of questions have been raised at recent full Council meetings regarding staffing matters. Members are reminded that staffing matters are the responsibility of officers and if they have any concerns about staffing levels then those concerns should be raised directly with the Chief Executive.

7. Comments and questions

- 7.1** 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.

Arm/ex/cou/cr/17/0712 item 11(a) Leader