

REPORT TO	ON
Council	22 July 2020

September 2017



TITLE	REPORT OF
LANCASHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY UPDATE	Chris Sinnott

Is this report confidential?	No
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### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide an update on recent discussions about a Lancashire Combined Authority and to seek council support for South Ribble Borough Council’s continued involvement.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The council confirms its support for South Ribble Borough Council’s involvement in the current discussions to create a combined authority for Lancashire, subject to the final proposals being agreed by full council.

2.2 The council supports in principle the inclusion of a directly elected mayor and local government reorganisation as part of a devolution deal, recognising that there are no set solutions for reorganisation and subject to further agreement by full council as proposals are developed.

### 3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Health, Wellbeing and Safety		Our People and Communities	
Place, Homes and Environment		Excellence, Investment and Financial Sustainability	X

### 4. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

4.1 Discussions about the potential to create a Lancashire combined authority and seek a devolution deal have been ongoing for a number of years. Discussions in the past have failed to lead to the creation of a combined authority because of a lack unanimity across Lancashire.

4.2 A combined authority is a legal entity, created by Parliament. It enables a group of two or more councils to collaborate and take collective decisions across council boundaries. They can take advantage of powers, resources and funding delegated to them by the Government as part of a devolution deal. Partner authorities can also delegate powers to

the combined authority. All councils within the geography of a combined authority must agree to be part of it. The creation of a combined authority cannot be imposed.

- 4.3 There are now 10 Combined Authorities across the country, eight of which have directly Elected Mayors, with Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and Liverpool City Region Combined Authority our nearest neighbours, both with directly Elected Mayors. Of the existing Combined Authorities, there is only one within a two-tier area (Cambridge and Peterborough).
- 4.4 Existing combined authorities have negotiated and agreed with government significant devolution deals. For example, GMCA and Liverpool City Region CA have agreed £900 million investment funds, consolidated transport budgets, responsibility for bus franchising and CPO (Compulsory Purchase Order) powers. GMCA and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CA have also attracted significant grant funding for housing. GMCA already has funding arrangements for integrated health and social care and a number of other combined authorities are progressing this approach.
- 4.5 The Government have said that new funding, as part of post-pandemic economic recovery, will be directed to combined authorities, or business-led Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) for those areas with no combined authorities. For Lancashire, funding would go to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership.
- 4.6 Without a combined authority, Lancashire local authorities are likely to suffer in terms of the ability to access funding and drive economic growth combined to neighbouring areas such as Greater Lancashire and the Liverpool City Region.
- 4.7 Following discussions at the Lancashire Leaders group, councils have been asked to confirm their position and whether they support the creation of a combined authority.

## **5. DIRECTLY ELECTED MAYORS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION**

- 5.1 The government has also indicated that if it is to agree devolution deals and additional funding with significant transfers of powers, there need to be changes to governance arrangements. The first area of change relates to the creation of directly elected mayors. The government believes that this is necessary to provide strong local leadership that is democratically accountable. It does not view that this achieved solely through the constituent authorities.
- 5.2 There are a number of models that have been used in different areas across the country, with Mayors having different powers within the combined authorities. These roles have been negotiated as part of the wider devolution deals and establishment of combined authorities.
- 5.3 The second area of governance arrangements that the government would be expected to ask to be considered as part of the establishment of a combined authority and devolution deal is the creation of unitary local government.
- 5.4 The government has made clear that they plan on introducing a new White Paper on devolution and local recovery in the autumn, and that it expects that it will include the creation of more unitary authorities.

5.5 In his message to the LGA conference this month, the Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government explained that the government’s view is that the creation of more unitary authorities would reduce complexity and reduce costs, linking further devolution to the simplification of local government.

5.6 While it is not clear what form local government reorganisation in Lancashire might take, and there are likely to be different proposals, the government has outlined some requirements for new unitary authorities. They include that proposals should:

- improve the area's local government;
- command a good deal of local support across the area; and
- cover an area that provides a credible geography for the proposed new structures, including that any new unitary council’s population would be expected to be in excess of 300,000
- that proposals should not lead to the creation of more Directors of Adult Social Care or Directors of Children’s Services

5.7 The discussions in Lancashire about how local government should change and the potential for a devolution deal are likely to continue. The council will have the opportunity to consider and approve any final proposals for the creation of a combined authority or devolution deal to which the council is a party.

## 7. WIDER IMPLICATIONS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTATION

### 7.1 Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

No comments

### 7.2 Comments of the Monitoring Officer

No comments

<p><b>Other implications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Risk</li> <li>▶ Equality &amp; Diversity</li> <li>▶ HR &amp; Organisational Development</li> <li>▶ Property &amp; Asset Management</li> <li>▶ ICT / Technology</li> </ul>	<p>None at this stage, as the council is making a decision in principle</p>
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## 8. There are no background papers to this report

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