

Minutes of	Council
Meeting date	Wednesday, 17 January 2024
Committee members present:	Councillors Chris Lomax (Mayor), Peter Mullineaux (Deputy Mayor), Jacky Alty, Deborah Ashton, Hilary Bedford, Damian Bretherton, Julie Buttery, Aniela Bylinski Gelder, Matt Campbell, Colin Coulton, Matthew Farnworth, Mathew Forshaw, Paul Foster, Peter Gabbott, Jasmine Gleave, James Gleeson, Mary Green, Michael Green, Harry Hancock, Jo Hindle-Taylor, David Howarth, Clare Hunter, Lou Jackson, Will King, James Lillis, Keith Martin, Nicky Peet, Pete Pillinger, Lesley Pritchard, John Rainsbury, Wesley Roberts, Colin Sharples, David Shaw, Margaret Smith, Phil Smith, Emma Stevens, Elaine Stringfellow, Matthew Tomlinson, Angela Turner, Karen Walton, Connor Watson, Kath Unsworth, Paul Wharton-Hardman and Haydn Williams
Committee members attended virtually (non-voting):	Councillors Jane Bell and Caleb Tomlinson
Officers present:	Sarah Bullock (Deputy Chief Executive), Chris Moister (Director of Governance) and Coral Astbury (Democratic and Member Services Officer)
Public:	0

A video recording of the public session of this meeting is available to view on [YouTube here](#)

69 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Will Adams, Jane Bell, James Flannery, George Rear, Caleb Tomlinson and Ian Watkinson.

Councillors Jane Bell and Caleb Tomlinson did attend virtually on Microsoft Teams.

70 Declarations of Interest

The following declarations were received:

Councillor Michael Green declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest as a member of Lancashire County Council (LCC) Executive.

Councillor Matthew Campbell declared a personal interest as an LCC employee.

Councillor Matthew Tomlinson declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest as an elected member of LCC.

Councillor David Howarth declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest as an elected member of LCC.

Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman sought clarification from the Monitoring Officer on Councillor Michael Green's eligibility to take part in the debate and vote on the agenda item. In response, the Monitoring Officer explained he had given Councillor Green advice and was satisfied that Councillor Green had explained his thought process and would be making a decision with an open mind.

71 Lancashire Devolution Deal

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster presented a report that presented a summary of the proposals to create a combined county authority (CCA) and a devolution deal for Lancashire, and to agree the principles of a response to the consultation.

The Leader thanked officers for a detailed and clear paper and outlined some of the background to the devolution deal.

Members were advised that should the deal go ahead, the authority would lose funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) which would put projects such as the Penwortham Masterplan, Worden Hall and Park Improvements, community engagement and activities and business support at risk.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor Karen Walton on behalf of the Conservative Group and seconded by Councillor Margaret Smith that sought to remove paragraph 25 and replace it with the following,

"We support the Combined County Authority and ask that when they get to negotiating the final deal, request that:

- 1. There is a formal mechanism for consulting with the 12 District Councils and that the 2 representatives appointed to the Board are mandated to implement the stated objectives.*
- 2. The future United Kingdom Shared Prosperity fund is left to the District Councils to distribute."*

The following members debated the amendment, Councillors Karen Walton, Margaret Smith, David Howarth, Mary Green, Paul Foster, Phil Smith and Matthew Tomlinson.

A number of points were raised including the lack of involvement in the devolution deal for district council's, the parliamentary time frame for adoption and the desire that UKSPF funding should remain with the district councils.

A recorded vote was undertaken on the proposed amendment and subsequently,

Resolved: (For: 15, Against: 29) that the amendment be lost.

For: Councillors Bretherton, Buttery, Campbell, Coulton, Forshaw, Gleave, Mary Green, Michael Green, King, Mullineaux, Rainsbury, M Smith, P Smith, Walton and Watson)

Against: Councillors Alty, Ashton, Bedford, Bylinski Gelder, Farnworth, Foster, Gabbott, Gleeson, Hancock, Hindle-Taylor, Howarth, Hunter, Jackson, Lillis, Lomax, Martin, Peet, Pillinger, Pritchard, Roberts, Sharples, Shaw, Stevens, Stringfellow, M Tomlinson, Turner, Unsworth, Wharton-Hardman and Williams)

The debate resumed to the substantive motion and the following member spoke: Councillors David Howarth, Jacky Alty, Keith Martin, Matthew Farnworth, Paul Wharton-Hardman, Connor Watson and Paul Foster.

Members compared the deal to those of Liverpool Combined Authority and Greater Manchester Combined Authority and there was some disappointment at the level of proposed devolved powers and funding.

Some members felt that there should have been more consultation by LCC with the district authorities and it would be difficult for elected representatives of Blackburn with Darwen or Blackpool to understand issues affecting residents in South Ribble.

A recorded vote was undertaken on the proposed recommendations and subsequently,

Resolved: (For: 30, Against: 14)

Resolved:

1. That Council agrees the response below should form the basis of South Ribble Borough Council's response to the consultation:

"South Ribble Borough Council recognises that devolution has the potential to secure significant benefits for Lancashire, bringing decision making and accountability closer to residents. Other areas of the north west, most notably Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region, have already benefited from their devolution deals.

Effective devolution should encourage strong economic growth and increased productivity, alongside better health and wellbeing and strengthened public services.

Unfortunately, the proposals currently being consulted on are unlikely to lead to those benefits and so South Ribble Borough Council cannot support them. The council has some specific concerns about the proposals. These are set out below, referencing the relevant section of the consultation being referred to:

- a) The proposals for management of future rounds of the UKSPF in **section one** fail to recognise the success of the current round that is currently managed by district councils. Changing it to a more remote body with limited infrastructure to manage successful community schemes will make future success less likely. South Ribble Borough Council believes that responsibility for future

rounds of UKSPF should remain with district councils.

- b) The provision of £6 million of capital investment to Samlesbury Enterprise Zone and £6 million to the Blackburn Technology Innovation Quarter (**section one**) is welcome investment in the county but are small scale and limited in geographic impact. The council believes that the upper tier authorities proposing the creation of the CCA need to more clearly explain how future investment will be secured and prioritised, identifying how investment will benefit the whole of the county area.
- c) The devolution of adult education and the core Adult Education Budget at **section two** is welcome, but the proposals beyond that are currently vague and undeveloped. The partners involved in the CCA need to more clearly explain how skills of a large and diverse county area will be served by programmes that are developed.
- d) The proposals at **section three** demonstrate the importance for partners who are constituent members in recognising the nuances and needs of local areas, as it makes special arrangements for Blackpool Transport Services. This is important in a county the size of Lancashire but fails to recognise the particular needs of other areas such as South Ribble where the borough as a distinct area is not represented. The proposal includes reference to Network North funding. The announcement from government on Network North included the A582 improvement scheme and the council would like clarity on how this scheme will be supported by the CCA.
- e) Expanding eligibility criteria for Cosy Homes in Lancashire through an additional £2 million of funding at **section four** is supported, but it must be recognised that the scale of funding is extremely small across the whole county.
- f) The proposals across **sections five, six and seven** do not appear to add anything that is not already in place across the council. While opening the potential for further discussions with the government and its agencies may be positive, it is not possible to support something with no detail. As with the other sections of the proposals, South Ribble Borough Council would welcome devolution in these areas, but the current proposals need to be stronger and more ambitious to realise Lancashire's potential.
- g) **Section eight** sets out the governance arrangements for the CCA and devolution deal. South Ribble Borough Council does not support the governance arrangements proposed. They fail to recognise the important role of district councils in understanding and representing local communities. While the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act sets out the rules for membership, the constituent members could provide full voting rights within the CCA constitution to encourage district engagement. In addition, the CCA partners should clearly set out a more comprehensive plan for ensuring that the new arrangements will not just make local government in Lancashire even more complex and confusing for residents, businesses and communities.

2. That the Chief Executive be asked to share the council's response to the consultation with local MPs representing the borough.

For: Councillors Alty, Ashton, Bedford, Bylinski Gelder, Farnworth, Forshaw, Foster, Gabbott, Gleeson, Hancock, Hindle-Taylor, Howarth, Hunter, Jackson, Lillis, Lomax, Martin, Peet, Pillinger, Pritchard, Roberts, Sharples, Shaw, Stevens, Stringfellow, M Tomlinson, Turner, Unsworth, Wharton-Hardman and Williams.

Against: Councillors Bretherton, Buttery, Campbell, Coulton, Gleave, Mary Green, Michael Green, King, Mullineaux, Rainsbury, M Smith, P Smith, Walton and Watson.

Chair

Date