

# CHORLEY PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM EXECUTIVE

## PARTNERSHIP OVERSIGHT

### Update on Proposals for a Lancashire Combined Authority

#### Background

The group of Lancashire Leaders has discussed the potential creation of a combined authority for the county a number of times since last December. At their meeting on 1 September, the Leaders considered a governance review and options paper that recommended the creation of a combined authority for Lancashire that would include the 12 district councils, two unitaries and county council.

#### Aims in creating a combined authority

Lancashire has identified five priority areas that drive the need for a combined authority:

- Prosperous Lancashire: making Lancashire a destination of choice for business, visiting and living
- Connected Lancashire: better digital and transport connectivity
- Skilled Lancashire: a skilled workforce that meets the needs of employers and future growth
- Better Homes for Lancashire: good quality homes and a wide housing offer
- Public Services Working Together: integrated public services giving everyone the opportunity for a healthier life

#### Governance and decision making arrangements

The following have been agreed in principle for the combined authority (although they will need to be finalised and finally agreed in the coming months):

- Each council will be represented by their respective Leader with a named substitute
- A Chair and Vice Chair would be appointed from the Leaders annually
- The Chair of the combined authority would be a member of the LEP Board
- Each local authority would have one vote and issues would be decided on a simple majority other than:
  - The adoption or amendment to any strategies or plans
  - The agreement of the annual budget
  - Changes to the constitution of the combined authority
  - Adoption of additional freedoms from government
  - Using the general power of competence
  - Extending membership
  - The adoption or amendment of the Transport Plan or funding related would be reserved for the Transport Authorities. This element is subject to final agreement once devolution arrangements are clearer.
- Quorum would be 10
- The combined authority would be the accountable body for financial arrangements

#### Next steps

Each local authority will have taken a decision on its involvement and membership of the combined authority by mid-December.

Public consultation on the proposals will be undertaken in January/February. However, mindful of the Bill currently passing through parliament relating to combined authorities, we will take Ministers advice as to



whether a delay in the timescales for our own consultation would then negate the need for an additional government consultation exercise, therefore speeding up the process to establish a Lancashire combined authority.

Subject to council decisions by December and the consultation exercise a firm proposal to establish a combined authority could be submitted to Government from March 2016.

Whilst Lancashire did not submit a devolution proposal to the 4 September deadline, a small group of chief executives have opened dialogue with civil servants to outline progress and are starting to develop a credible 'deal' for Lancashire in more detail which can be underpinned by robust governance arrangements. It's anticipated that a first phase 'deal' could be agreed to coincide with establishing the combined authority.

