

Meeting of the Full Council
Meeting to be held on Thursday, 12 December 2024

Report submitted by: Director of Law and Governance

Part A

Electoral Division affected:
None;

Corporate Priorities:
N/A;

Lancashire Combined County Authority - Appointments

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Brief Summary

The Lancashire Combined County Authority Regulations 2024 were laid before Parliament on 26 November 2024. Arrangements are well underway for the establishment of the new Lancashire Combined County Authority, subject to parliamentary approval, in the new year.

As part of those arrangements, Full Council is required to make formal appointments to the Lancashire Combined County Authority and its committees.

Recommendation

Full Council is asked to, subject to approval by Parliament of the Lancashire Combined County Authority Regulations 2024:

- (i) Approve the appointment of County Councillors Phillippa Williamson and Alan Vincent as the county council's representatives on the Lancashire Combined County Authority until the Full Council AGM in 2025.
- (ii) Authorise the Director of Law and Governance, in consultation with the relevant political groups, to approve the county council's representatives on the Lancashire Combined County Authority Scrutiny and Audit Committees.

Detail

In March 2024, Full Council approved the submission of a proposal to the Government to create a Combined County Authority for Lancashire, alongside Blackpool Council and Blackburn with Darwen Council. This submission was subsequently approved by Government, and, on 18 November 2024, formal consent to the laying of the necessary Statutory Instrument was given by the Secretary of State.

The Statutory Instrument, known as the Lancashire Combined County Authority Regulations 2024, was laid before parliament on 26 November 2024. The parliamentary process for such Regulations usually takes around 6-8 weeks of parliamentary sitting time, which means the final approval would likely come in February. This is subject to the parliamentary timetable and of course to Parliament's formal decision on whether to approve the Regulations. All of the arrangements set out below are subject to that final approval.

Planning and preparation for the new Lancashire Combined County Authority has continued at pace over the autumn. On 26 November 2024, the first meeting of the Shadow Lancashire Combined County Authority was held, with representatives of the three constituent authorities (Lancashire, Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen), plus two district council representatives and a representative from the Business Board all present.

At that meeting, it was agreed that, in preparation for the formal establishment of the Lancashire Combined County Authority, the constituent members and non-constituent bodies, make the necessary appointments.

1. Lancashire Combined County Authority

The membership is set out in the Regulations, and is as follows:

- 2 representatives from Lancashire County Council
- 1 representative from Blackburn with Darwen Council
- 1 representative from Blackpool Council

The Regulations will also allow for up to four non-constituent or associate members. It has been decided locally that these will be:

- 2 representatives nominated by district councils in Lancashire to be non-constituent members.
- 1 representative for the Lancashire Business Board to be an associate member.

The fourth potential available post will not be filled at the present time. The Lancashire Combined County Authority has the power to determine whether, when and how to fill that remaining position.

The Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner will also be invited to attend meetings as an Observer.



It is proposed that the Lancashire County Council representatives be County Councillor Phillippa Williamson and County Councillor Alan Vincent, to serve until the Full Council AGM in 2025.

2. Scrutiny and Audit Committees

The Lancashire Combined County Authority is required to have a Scrutiny Committee and an Audit Committee. These will have largely the same functions as Scrutiny and Audit Committees in any other local authority.

The constituent authorities will need to appoint to these two committees in line with "political balance" rules. Note that, in addition to the rules applying to each constituent member in relation to political balance when making appointments, the rules relating to Combined County Authority Scrutiny and Audit committees also require that "the members of the committee taken as a whole reflect so far as reasonably practicable the balance of political parties for the time being prevailing among members of the constituent councils when taken together".

To ensure this is the case, both committees will have the following membership:

- 6 representatives from Lancashire County Council
- 3 representatives from Blackburn with Darwen Council
- 3 representatives from Blackpool Council
- 2 representatives from district councils
- 1 independent chair

Political balance rules require Lancashire County Council to nominate 4 Conservative group members and 2 Labour group members. It is proposed that the Director of Law and Governance be authorised to agree these appointments, following consultation with the leaders of the political groups concerned.

A process to appoint the Independent Chairs of the Scrutiny and Audit Committees will commence shortly.

3. Advisory Boards

In addition to the statutory bodies listed above, it is proposed that the Lancashire Combined County Authority creates three "Advisory Boards" to support its work. The three Advisory Boards will focus on Economy, Skills and Transport. These will be informal bodies, acting in an advisory capacity, with no decision making powers. The membership of each will be as follows:

- 2 representatives from Lancashire County Council
- 1 representative from Blackburn with Darwen Council
- 1 representative from Blackpool Council
- 2 representatives nominated by district councils in Lancashire
- 1 representative from the Lancashire Business Board
- 1 sector specialist or technical advisor representative

The appointments will be made by the Lancashire Combined County Authority. Each will be chaired by one of the members of the Combined County Authority.



District representation

The constituent members of the Lancashire Combined County Authority have consistently sought to ensure that the district councils in Lancashire were fully engaged and involved with the new authority's decision making structures. To support that aim, there are 12 positions within the bodies listed above set aside for districts to fill, meaning there is a place for each district council. Engagement has taken place with the districts to invite the District Leaders Forum to make those appointments and ensure that all districts which wish to be involved have the opportunity to do so. The expectation is that every district council will be represented by its Leader (or their nominee) within the governance structures of the Combined County Authority. The Government has emphasised the importance of strong engagement with the district councils, and it has welcomed the commitment of the constituent authorities to this.

Consultations

The proposals around membership of the Lancashire Combined County Authority were included in the draft Proposal that was subject to the full public consultation in 2023/24 and considered by Full Council in March. Details of the specific proposals around Scrutiny, Audit and the Advisory Boards have been considered by the Shadow Combined Authority.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Legal

The arrangements for the creation of a Combined County Authority are governed by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, and the specific governance arrangements for Lancashire will be set out in the Lancashire Combined County Authority Regulations 2024, currently going through parliament.

Political balance rules are set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The proposals set out are in accordance with these statutory obligations.

Financial

Consideration will need to be given by the Lancashire Combined County Authority on a remuneration policy for members. Members of the Lancashire Combined County Authority itself are not entitled to receive an allowance, although one may be paid to, for example, the Independent Chairs of Audit and Scrutiny. Any such allowance would have to be considered by an Independent Remuneration Committee, and would be expected to be similar to recent proposals around remuneration of the independent member of the county council's own Audit, Risk and Governance Committee, which the county council's Independent Remuneration Panel have recommended to be set at £1,500.



There are no other significant financial implications of the recommendations in this report.

Risk management

In order that the Lancashire Combined County Authority is able to operate effectively as soon as possible, it is necessary to make these appointments. Failure to do so would risk the ability of the Lancashire Combined County Authority to undertake its roles and functions.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

