

# Equalities Impact Assessment

## Lancashire Devolution Proposal

### November 2023

This Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA), examines the possible impacts arising from the Devolution Proposal. It is a living document and will be reviewed and updated by the Constituent Councils as necessary, including after public consultation on the Draft Proposal (described in this EIA) has been carried out and before the Proposal is finalised.

#### **Question 1 - What is the nature of and are the key components of the proposal being presented?**

The Government and the upper tier Councils in Lancashire (Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council and Blackpool Council) ("the Constituent Councils") have negotiated a proposed Devolution Deal ("The Deal"). A copy of the Devolution Deal can be found here <http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lancashire-devolution-deal>

In response to the Deal, the Constituent Councils have developed a proposal ("the Proposal") which sets out how they will collectively deliver the Deal by establishing a Combined County Authority (CCA) for Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool ("the Area"). If the proposals are accepted, Government would give additional powers and funding to the Lancashire CCA and more control over the decision-making that affects Lancashire's residents and businesses.

The creation of the CCA will not result in the merger or take-over of councils in the Area nor will it require individual councils to give up their powers, except in the specific area of transportation, where some powers will be transferred from the Constituent Councils to the CCA. Cooperation in transport matters between the CCA and the councils will also continue into the longer term with certain powers to be held concurrently moving forward to enable the parties to work together effectively in the years ahead. The CCA will work as one democratically accountable body on key priorities such as economic development, skills, regeneration and transport, enhancing the investment capability of the CCA Area and individual authorities to support growth.

#### **Objectives**

The objectives for the Proposal reflect regional and national strategy and are designed to ensure a positive future of our county and its people. Together they offer a bold and strategic framework so that:

- Lancashire competes better for its share of national resources and investment
- Lancashire's public, private and voluntary sectors collaborate better to maximise the best use of our resources
- Lancashire has a strong and clear voice that responds innovatively to new opportunities and challenges
- Lancashire has a rich, meaningful and strategic dialogue with central government about the future of our county.
- Lancashire is better positioned to respond to Government's Levelling Up objectives which are;
  - Boosting productivity, pay, skills, jobs and living standards
  - Spreading opportunities and improving public services
  - Restoring a sense of community, local pride and belonging

- Empowering local leaders and communities.

### **Outcomes**

Through delivering on these objectives, we aim to achieve the following outcomes for our residents and the CCA Area:

- A stronger voice in the North West that is currently dominated by Manchester and Liverpool
- Encourage innovation led growth through long term investment in major opportunities
- Match skills to economic need to increase productivity and wellbeing of people who live and work in the area
- Reduce inequality and promote social mobility to allow people to achieve their potential
- Improve transport links to offer greater choice and facilitate better and more sustainable access to our economic hubs, including improving east – west connectivity
- Greater access to Government funding that is exclusively targeted at devolved areas
- Greater say on where to spend investment
- Decision making brought closer to communities, increasing the visibility of those decisions
- Lancashire authorities will gain powers from Whitehall.

### **Our Priorities**

We propose to use devolution to build upon Lancashire's substantial strengths in delivering benefits for its residents. The initial proposal will focus on the following priorities and will also establish our case for enhanced future deals.

### **Innovation, Trade and Investment**

**We will work with local and national stakeholders to become a globally recognised and sustainable economy, distinguished by its quality of life, connectivity, and access to opportunities.**

We will use the devolution process to refresh our strategic plans for economic prosperity. These plans will build upon our competitive advantages, exploit opportunities, and develop new sectors capable of delivering economic growth and high-value job creation over the long term. The proposed CCA will enable Lancashire to produce better strategic cases for investment and gain a greater share of national resources.

Devolution for Lancashire can support us to overcome a historical imbalance of economic performance, low productivity, low investment, and employment at a local level and ensure that Lancashire gets the necessary boost in funding to address longstanding inequalities and support levelling up our communities. Lancashire has opportunities aplenty in all parts of the county, and devolution will put Lancashire in a better position to realise the benefits of these opportunities to improve the lives of residents.

This Proposal can further stimulate business diversification through building upon the existing sectoral strengths of the CCA Area, and catalysing growth in future industries, such as Energy and Low Carbon and Cyber. This activity will ensure no area of Lancashire is left behind, and the future of Lancashire is one which is equitable for residents in all corners of Lancashire. Devolution will allow Lancashire to build on its proud

history of international trade, supported by a county wide internationalisation strategy, and boost investment across all areas of Lancashire.

Subject to funding, policy and delivery considerations at the next Spending Review, Government's expectation is that delivery responsibility for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), a flexible funding pot, will be aligned with devolution deal responsibilities. This would mean that the proposed CCA could have such responsibilities from 2025/26. In carrying out this role, the proposed CCA and the constituent councils will work closely with the Lancashire District Leaders Forum in an advisory capacity. Delivery of these functions will build on existing district-led delivery arrangements for UKSPF and align with the Lancashire 2050 strategy, as agreed by all Local Authorities in Lancashire, to ensure that the needs of residents can be effectively addressed.

The Proposal will provide £6m capital investment<sup>1</sup> to create an Innovation Hub of international excellence at Samlesbury Enterprise Zone. The new centre will help stimulate the growth of new clusters to maximise the transformational benefits of the £5bn National Cyber Force in Lancashire.

The Proposal will provide £6m for the Blackburn Technology Innovation Quarter<sup>2</sup>. The project will provide new business space to support the growth of Lancashire's digital, creative, and cyber sectors.

Through the Proposal, Government departments will consider the potential for future relocations of Government roles to Lancashire as part of the Levelling Up agenda.

To support the proposed CCA in its initial stages of this deal, the Government will provide £1m of capacity funding.

### **Skills**

**We will work collaboratively with employers, skills and training providers, local authorities, and other stakeholders to support people to develop their skills throughout their lives and attract business to Lancashire because of our highly skilled workforce.**

In Lancashire's labour market, the estimated employment rate is below the national rate and has worsened since the COVID 19 pandemic. Lancashire's labour force is also characterised by a lower proportion of residents with higher level qualifications.

The Proposed Deal includes new powers to better shape local skills provisions to ensure these meet the needs of the local economy. This will include devolution of adult education, the core Adult Education Budget, and the opportunity to further refine the Local Skills Improvement Plan. Funding for Free Courses for Jobs will also be devolved and will be ring-fenced.

A strong, resilient, and inclusive economy brings health benefits to its residents, just as good population health is essential to economic prosperity, health and wealth are effectively 'two sides of the same coin'. As a CCA Area, Lancashire will be better placed to bid to become a pilot on national economic inactivity programmes that support individuals with health conditions to be retained or re-engaged through early intervention in the workplace.

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<sup>1</sup> Subject to Business Case approval.

<sup>2</sup> Subject to Business Case approval.

## Transport

**We will work with transport providers inside and outside Lancashire to create better connected infrastructure that links opportunity to need and delivers travel choices that are safe, inclusive, affordable, and low carbon.**

Partners will build on a successful track record of major transport investment, and Lancashire's fourth Local Transport Plan will set its direction and priorities for highways and transport investment. This plan will work across the county to secure the benefits of connectivity in support of widening transport choices and supporting low carbon travel opportunities. Lancashire has a significant infrastructure pipeline of road transport, bus and rail schemes, and active travel projects that it is seeking to fund through devolution.

The Proposal includes new powers to improve and better integrate local transport, including the ability to develop the bus service improvement plan (BSIP) partnership and strengthen co-ordination of local transport functions.

The Proposal includes plans to improve public electric vehicle charging infrastructure to increase the uptake of electric vehicles and reduce carbon emissions.

As such devolution will help Lancashire deliver improved productivity, health and wellbeing, air quality and net zero carbon policies - and support objectives for maintaining a safe and reliable transport network.

As set out in the recent Network North announcement:

- The proposed CCA will receive a proportion of the £2.5 billion announced as part of Network North to transform local transport in areas in the North outside of the big city regions.
- The proposed CCA will receive a proportion of the £770 million of funding for Bus Service Improvement Plans in the North.
- The proposed CCA will receive a proportion of the £3.3 billion funding to fix potholes in the North.

Note: Blackpool Transport Services (BTS) will continue to operate tram services in Blackpool and the surrounding area and Blackpool Council will retain the relevant powers to manage BTS. Maintenance of tram infrastructure and assets will continue to be the responsibility of Blackpool Council in partnership with Lancashire County Council.

Blackpool Transport Service also provides vital bus services to Blackpool and the surrounding area. BTS will continue to deliver bus services locally.

## Net Zero and Climate Change

**We will work across Lancashire to meet our low carbon ambitions, promote clean energy, and enhance our natural environment. Our ambition is that Lancashire becomes internationally recognised as a leader in the creation of 'green jobs', building upon our world class engineering and manufacturing capabilities.**

Lancashire's Energy and Low Carbon sector is particularly important due to its existing ecosystem and capabilities in designing and manufacturing low carbon technologies. The area is forecast to have the highest number of jobs per capita in the Energy and Low Carbon sector in England between 2030 – 2050. Government will work with the proposed CCA to enable the continued growth of this sector by supporting the delivery of

Lancashire's Energy and Low Carbon sector plans.

Lancashire partners have been successful in securing funding for natural carbon capture and storage projects including for woodland creation, peatland restoration and pioneering soil management techniques. The County's Biological Heritage Site system of managing locally important wildlife sites has been strengthened to support the development and delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Lancashire.

The Proposal will provide £2m<sup>3</sup> additional capital investment for the Cosy Homes in Lancashire domestic retrofit scheme to extend eligibility criteria and complement the current Home Upgrade Grant scheme. This investment will support a reduction in carbon emissions, better quality housing and improved health outcomes.

### **Digital and Cyber**

**We will work across Lancashire to continue to transform our digital infrastructure and knowledge-based sectors to balance and modernise our industrial base.**

Lancashire has continued the development of a Lancashire Infrastructure Plan and supported rollout of Openreach and Gigabit programmes, including establishing Superfast Atlantic connection with the North Atlantic Loop at Blackpool Enterprise Zone. This increased digital connectivity provides competitive advantages to attract more cutting-edge, tech-based industries.

Locating the National Cyber Force in Lancashire will attract significant investment and create over 2,000 new jobs. Lancashire CCA will work with the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, to fully capture the investment, business, research, and skills benefits of this new location. These activities will create opportunities and new careers for residents, develop markets and technologies of local businesses and help to establish a North West Cyber Corridor.

The Proposal will provide £6m capital investment for a Low Carbon Data Demonstrator Centre at Blackpool Enterprise Zone<sup>4</sup>. The project will provide new business space to support Lancashire's low carbon and digital innovation ambitions.

### **Culture and Tourism**

**We recognise the fundamental importance of our culture and tourism assets and will work with stakeholders across Lancashire to strengthen these. This work includes the creation a Local Visitor Economy Partnership for the region to help further develop the region's visitor economy.**

Lancashire's rich cultural and heritage offer has an important role in the proposed CCA's plans to attract and retain skilled workers, and in contributing to 'pride in place' in the region. Tourism and the visitor economy are crucial industries for Lancashire, with the area amongst the UK's most prolific visitor destinations every year. Blackpool is the nation's No1 seaside resort, with some 20m visits per year, and represents a £1.5bn visitor economy.

The proposed CCA will work with Government to hold a series of exploratory conversations to test the region's appetite and capacity for partnership working across culture, heritage, sport, communities, and the visitor economy.

<sup>3</sup> Subject to Business Case approval.

<sup>4</sup> Subject to Business Case approval.

VisitEngland and the proposed CCA will work with the accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnership for the region to help further develop the region's visitor economy. This collaborative work, across those areas set out in the Government's Tourism Recovery Plan, could include harnessing the region's potential to grow domestic and international visitor spend, and encouraging visits throughout the year rather than just during the traditional tourist season.

### **Housing and Land**

**We will support the delivery of decent, affordable, and low carbon housing for every community. High quality housing will benefit existing residents, as well as attract and retain the people required to drive the economy over the long term.**

Housing is a crucial issue for Lancashire. We need more and better housing to help support a return to growth in our working-age population and economic growth more widely. We also need concerted action to tackle poor-quality housing across the county as this stock drives many of our worst socioeconomic outcomes.

As a collaborative, Lancashire authorities have successfully delivered £22m Local Authority Green Home Grant providing home energy improvements to over 2000 households through the Cosy Homes in Lancashire scheme. £41m has been secured from the Home Upgrade Grant to provide energy efficiency and low-carbon heating measures over the next two years.

Blackpool Council have been a Levelling Up partner with DHLUC since March 2022 and is now trialling policy changes in decent homes standards for the private rented sector and supported housing, and Blackburn with Darwen is also confirmed as one of 20 national Levelling Up Partnership areas.

Lancashire has a major development and infrastructure pipeline in excess of £22bn and a consistent understanding with regard to brownfield land opportunities and outputs including economic development, infrastructure, and housing. Lancashire has clear evidence of the blockages to development, infrastructure, and housing especially on brownfield land where issues such as ownership and contamination and/or buildings from previous uses can present a barrier to achieving outcomes.

The proposal would give Lancashire the ability to exercise compulsory purchase powers, to help drive regeneration and build more affordable homes, boosting supply and bringing down the cost of newly built dwellings.

The Proposal supports our ambition to deliver a pipeline of strategic development sites and infrastructure opportunities faster and more strategically than would otherwise be the case.

### **Delivery**

**We will implement streamlined governance and decision-making arrangements with a strong business voice to address the big opportunities and challenges for Lancashire.**

This priority will allow the creation of a powerful CCA to drive growth in the North, empowered through strong leadership and effective governance.

To achieve this, our Proposal includes the integration of the Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership with wider structures and the formation of a new Business Board. This change will help ensure there continues to be a strong and independent local business voice which informs local decision making and strategic economic planning. The model places a strengthened private sector voice at the heart of growth strategy development.

The governance model proposed (see section 5) builds upon existing structures and recognises the significant role of District Councils. The Proposal includes new arrangements for Transport and Skills and will enable partners to collaborate more effectively and focus on the big opportunities and challenges for Lancashire.

The Proposal will see the integration of the Local Enterprise Partnership investment team, the Growth Lancashire company, destination management organisation, and compulsory purchase orders to unlock sites of significance to stimulate investment in Lancashire. The integration of the LEP and a Business Board helps Lancashire choose its own economic path.

The plans proposed respond to national policy on levelling up and devolution including integration of LEP functions and roles into local democratic institutions to ensure a strong business voice at the heart of local decision making.

## **Question 2 - Scope of the Proposal**

In broad terms, the Proposal is likely to affect people across the county in a similar way, as the CCA would cover the whole county of Lancashire, including Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen and the 12 districts, which are:

- Burnley
- Chorley
- Fylde
- Hyndburn
- Lancaster
- Pendle
- Preston
- Ribble Valley
- Rossendale
- South Ribble
- West Lancashire
- Wyre

However, some of the specific arrangements which flow from decisions made by the proposed CCA, may have a different impact across various areas and communities. The proposed CCA will need to establish appropriate mechanisms for considering and ensuring an appropriate distribution of benefits, i.e. investment, training opportunities, transport improvements etc, for example by drawing on sound intelligence and a clear evidence base.

## **Question 3 – Protected Characteristics Potentially Affected**

It is not anticipated at this stage that there will be an adverse impact on any groups with protected characteristics within Lancashire, Blackpool or Blackburn with Darwen. To assess how the proposed consultation reflects the communities covered, we have provided the following demographic information<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Sourced from: <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/>

**Age**

For Lancashire the Age profiles are 21% of the population is aged 0-18, 59% are aged 19-65 and 20% are aged 66 plus, with some variations within the districts. In Blackburn with Darwen 27.5% of the population are aged 0-18, 59.4% are aged 19-65 and 13.5% are aged 66+ whilst in Blackpool 20.7% of residents are aged 0-18, 59.8% are aged 19-65 and 19.5% are aged 66+.

**Disability**

For Lancashire those where activities were limited a little or a lot, combined is 20% of the population. For Blackburn with Darwen it is 20.8% and for Blackpool it is 24.7%.

**Gender Identity**

Information for people who identified that their gender was different from the sex registered at birth or who identified as trans women, trans men or other identities varied across the Districts in the 2021 Census from 891 people when all responses were combined in Preston to 93 people in Ribble Valley.

**Sexual Orientation**

For Lancashire Gay or Lesbian is 1.4% of the population and Bi sexual is 1.2% of the population. For Blackburn with Darwen, Gay or Lesbian is 1.1% of the population and Bisexual is 0.8%. For Blackpool, residents who are Gay or Lesbian represent 3.3% of the population and Bi Sexual is 1.4% of the population.

**Sex**

For Lancashire 50.9% of the population is female and 49.1% is male. Blackburn with Darwen has 50.4% are female and 49.6% male and Blackpool has 50.6% of the population who are female and 49.4% male.

**Ethnicity**

For Lancashire 88.9% of the population is white and 11% come from Black, Asian or mixed/multiple ethnicities. For Blackburn with Darwen 61.5% are white and 38.1% are from Black, Asian or mixed/multiple ethnicities. In Blackpool 95% of the population are White and 5% are from Black, Asian or mixed/multiple ethnicities.

Within Lancashire's districts there is a significant variation in the populations of Black, Asian and mixed multiple ethnicities ranging from 29.5% in Pendle and 27.5% in Preston to 2.5% in Wyre and 3% in West Lancashire.

Ethnicity by deprivation – Ethnicity by deprivation – within Lancashire Census 2021 data identified that 15.4% of the population lived in the most deprived area 1 of English Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019. For White British residents this was 11.6% and those of Indian ethnicity it was 16.2% whilst for those of White Other ethnicities the percentage was 34.3% and for those of Pakistani ethnicity 64.2%.

**Gypsy, Roma, Irish**

At the 2021 Census 956 people in Lancashire identified as Gypsy and 889 people identified as Irish Travellers. For Blackburn with Darwen 101 people identified as Gypsy and 143 as Irish Travellers whilst in Blackpool 236 people identified as Gypsy and 207 as Irish Travellers.

**Religion or Belief**

A number of Religions or Beliefs are represented within the county. The leading representations are 1) No Religion for Lancashire is 32% of the population. For Blackburn it is 21.1% and for Blackpool it is 41%.

2) Christianity for Lancashire its 55% of the population, 38% for Blackburn with Darwen and 51% for Blackpool.

In Lancashire 7% of the population is Muslim, 35% of the Blackburn with Darwen population is Muslim and 1.4% of the population in Blackpool is Muslim. There are smaller population of Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist, Sikh and other religions amongst the County's population.

#### **Car Ownership**

In Lancashire 20% of households have no car or van but this varies across different districts and in parts of districts so in some parts of Burnley and Pendle between 50% and 80% of households don't have access to a car. In Blackburn with Darwen 26.9% of households don't have access to a car or van and in Blackpool the figure is 34% of households.

### **Question 4 – Engagement/Consultation**

The consultation will be used to explain the Proposal to residents and other interested parties, and to encourage a wide range of stakeholders to respond to the consultation. An eight-week consultation is considered appropriate to enable consultees to consider and digest the material, and to respond to the survey. It will run for eight weeks from 1 December 2023 to 26 January 2024 and the Constituent Councils will take all possible measures to actively promote the consultation and engage with consultees during this period.

Findings from the consultation will be analysed and published in March 2024 to inform the Constituent Councils in making their decision as to whether to submit the Proposal to government and if so then whether to make any amendments to the Proposal prior to doing so.

The consultation methods will include:

- an online survey with alternative options available to meet the needs of participants (for example including translations, paper copies, large print and braille versions)
- engagement with businesses, the voluntary and community sector, and other identified stakeholders
- public events to engage residents in the CCA area

A stakeholder list will be collated to ensure that consistent identification and mapping has been undertaken across the CCA area to include interested businesses, organisations, groups and individuals as part of the consultation. Each Constituent Council holds mailing lists or databases of their own partner organisations/ networks and will share any consultation information through these.

Active steps will be taken to promote the consultation, to encourage participation and to ensure that the consultation is accessible to all (including, for example, the digitally disadvantaged or those with protected characteristics).

As part of the specification, completion of the survey will be tailored to needs (for example, paper, large print, translation provided, braille).

Each council will work with those groups covered by the EIA locally to ensure engagement. We recognise there is a need to target communications locally to ensure we receive a cross section of responses from all areas and therefore a geographic and demographic balance.

The constituent councils will use a variety of measures to promote the consultation in their areas, including resident communication, press releases and social media as well as explainers, and holding meetings and stakeholder engagement sessions.

A detailed communications plan will provide an outline of methods to be used to target residents. Each constituent council will look at the best way to target the consultation through their own networks. Explainers will be devised and shared on any consultation webpages created.

Each constituent council will undertake engagement events with key stakeholder groups. These will be organised locally with content consistent and coordinated across all council areas.

This Equality Impact Assessment will be updated following the consultation.

## Question 5 – Analysing Impact

### **All Protected Characteristic Groups**

#### *Positive Impacts*

The Proposal has the potential to positively impact the lives of people, living, working and visiting the Area, including those with protected characteristics.

The devolution of new powers to the CCA, particularly in relation to Transport and Skills, and the integration of LEP functions into the CCA, will combine to provide improved opportunities for all, including those with protected characteristics and from protected groups.

Additional investment into the area which would flow from the establishment of the CCA, as well as the potential to commission and deliver services at a larger scale is expected to result in improved services for all people in the Area, both with protected characteristics and others.

#### *Negative Impacts*

The establishment of the CCA could potentially result in decisions being taken further from individuals or groups who are most reliant upon services provided in the Area. This risk is considered to be mitigated though by the direct membership of the Constituent Councils in the CCA, proposed involvement of district councils through representation as non-constituent members on the CCA, the putting in place of proposed governance and voting arrangements, and the concurrent exercise of a number of functions as set out in the Proposal.

Further consideration will be given to the impact of the Proposal on people with protected characteristics and from protected groups, throughout the consultation process, particularly as part of the stakeholder engagement activities.

It is recognised that no specific decisions are being taken at this time as to the exercise of functions that may be afforded to the CCA pursuant to the Proposal. The CCA if established will need to ensure that it has in place appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the public sector equality duty in the exercise of any functions that are afforded to it if it is established.

### **Age**

It is anticipated that the Proposal would lead to positive rather than negative impact upon people of all ages across the Area.

#### *Positive Impacts*

In relation to the proposed new powers to shape skills provision for example, younger people as well as older workers and those seeking to access employment for the first time, or return to work following a period of inactivity will benefit from the investment in upskilling which will enhance qualification levels and in turn strengthen access to and suitability for employment.

There are also wide variations in educational attainment in the Lancashire area and for working age people the percentage achieving NVQ Level 4 qualifications at 29.5% whilst the national average is 33.9%<sup>6</sup>, being able to plan and deliver to boost adult education and skills training locally should advance equality of opportunity in this area.

In relation to transport, the opportunity to develop a single local transport plan for the Area will ensure a better connected and accessible public transport system, with infrastructure that links opportunities to need and travel choices that are safe, inclusive, affordable and low carbon. The Proposal will assist in balancing network issues as unlike more urban city regions, counties have a greater proportion and length of B roads and rural roads. This has the potential to provide greater opportunities for people to travel where, when and how they choose in a way that meets their needs. Specific details are to be developed but the principles of inclusivity and affordability will be key to determining future transport interventions. The potential to improve transport and connectivity is beneficial to people of all ages. It is extremely important to those of working age in order to enable them to better access employment, but also beneficial to those in education and higher education as well as people who need to access public services. This can include both younger and older people.

It is anticipated that, should the proposal be approved, activities associated with the Proposal could help to improve healthy life expectancy within the Lancashire area which for all three areas is lower than the national average, and particularly so in Blackpool. This in turn will require associated developments in services, and the anticipated positive impacts of the Proposal as referred to above then become more acute and of greater significance.

#### *Negative Impacts*

As recognised above, no specific decisions have been or are being taken at this time in relation to the exercise of the functions that are Proposed to be afforded to the CCA if established. This will take place in due course and require careful consideration as to where investment across the Area is required. The establishment of the CCA as set out in the Proposal would however better provide for such considerations over the whole Area, better enabling functions to be exercised and investment to be distributed across the Area so as to benefit people of all ages.

At this stage it is not considered that the Proposal itself would result in negative impacts to any particular age group.

#### **Disability**

##### *Positive Impacts*

The potential for disabled people to be subject to greater discrimination when seeking to access employment or training is recognised. The Proposal may lead to improvements if powers that are proposed to be afforded to the CCA are exercised in a way that focusses on removing barriers to employment and training for disabled people. The Proposal would enable such exercise over the whole Area, thereby providing the potential for making improvements here across the whole Area.

Improvements in transport across the Area is anticipated to benefit disabled people across the Area, providing the potential for greater accessibility to education, employment and

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<sup>6</sup> TS067 - Highest level of qualification, Census 2021, ONS (Nomis) © Crown Copyright

other services to this group of people who traditional might face greater challenges in this regard. This can lead to a reduction in isolation or exclusion of disabled people, as well as opening up new opportunities for them.

#### *Negative Impacts*

It is not considered that the Proposal would lead to negative impacts for disabled people. For the reasons set out above, the establishment of the CCA is anticipated only to provide the potential for positive impacts. It is recognised that specific decisions as to the exercise of functions afforded to the CCA would be made in due course and so no positive or negative impacts will in fact be felt by the establishment of the CCA alone. However the establishment of the CCA will enable decisions to be taken across the Area, with the benefit of additional investment and commissioning at scale as referred to above.

### **Gender Re-assignment**

#### *Positive Impacts*

Trans people can experience discrimination to a greater extent than individuals or groups who do not share this protected characteristic. This can result in additional barriers to securing employment, as well as potential abuse experiences when accessing services, such as public transport but also other public services.

It is anticipated that the Proposal would have positive impacts for trans people. It will enable certain key functions to be exercised at an Area wide level, whereby the exercise of functions in such a way as to encourage and secure diversity and inclusion in employment, education, housing and transport will impact positively the experience of such groups or individuals when accessing any of these services. Whilst the exercise of these functions currently at a more local level should be being done in such a way as to achieve such diversity and inclusion, the establishment of the CCA better provides for a consistent approach which ensures that those who share this characteristic across the whole Area experience the positive impacts in a more consistent manner.

#### *Negative Impacts*

It is not anticipated that negative impacts will arise as a result of the Proposal. Similar considerations apply as in relation to other protected characteristics here. It is recognised however that it will be very important to ensure that the exercise of functions and application of investment is done in such a way that takes account of the impact on groups and people with this protected characteristic across the Area. As above, the negative impact experienced by trans people across all areas to which it is proposed that the CCA would be afforded functions, and the CCA would need to have due regard to this in its own decision making once established.

### **Marriage and Civil Partnership**

#### *Positive Impacts*

It is anticipated that the Proposal would have positive impacts for people across the Area regardless of their marital or civil partnership status.

#### *Negative Impacts*

Whilst it is anticipated that the Proposal would have positive impacts for groups or individuals with these protected characteristics, it is acknowledged that individuals in civil partnerships can experience discrimination as a result. Careful consideration will be given to any responses during the consultation process in relation to this protected characteristic to ensure that any particular negative impacts are considered.

As with all other protected characteristics it is recognised that no specific decisions as to the exercise of functions that may be afforded to the CCA pursuant to the Proposal or application of any additional investment is being made at this time.

### **Pregnancy and Maternity**

#### *Positive Impacts*

The Proposal is expected to benefit pregnant women and those returning to work as well as others who do not share this protected characteristic. Improvements in the areas of education and employment are expected to be beneficial to those seeking to return to work or gain employment following a period of maternity leave. Improvements in transport across the Area will also benefit individuals with this protected characteristic by better enabling access to employment, to benefit from childcare arrangements, and to access other services.

#### *Negative Impacts*

It is not envisaged that the Proposal would have negative impacts for individuals with this protected characteristic. However as elsewhere it is recognised that that no specific decisions are being taken at this stage, and the exercise of functions should have regard for the positive and negative impacts of individuals who share this protected characteristic.

### **Race and Ethnic Origin**

#### *Positive Impacts*

Many people suffer discrimination, disadvantage, or additional barriers in accessing education, employment and other services as a result of their race or ethnic origin. Different communities can experience different levels of such discrimination, disadvantage or additional barriers. In addition, the geographical location of such communities can result in a greater or lesser impact on such groups or individuals.

It is anticipated that the Proposal has the potential to make improvements in this area by considering impacts at an Area wide level, with a view to offering better opportunities to people from all communities across the Area and levelling up the position of those that may currently experience disadvantage. The potential to exercise functions relating to skills and education has the potential to improve employment prospects of individuals from disadvantaged ethnic communities. Improvements in transport across the Area can assist in enabling those from disadvantaged communities to overcome impacts arising due to their geographical location. The potential for greater investment into the Area will also provide the opportunity for investing in a way that improves the prospects of individuals from disadvantaged communities, whether by encouraging the location or relocation of operations to appropriate areas by employers or otherwise better enabling individuals to access employers where currently located.

#### *Negative Impacts*

It is not envisaged that the Proposal would have negative impacts for individuals with this protected characteristic. However as elsewhere it is recognised that that no specific decisions are being taken at this stage, and the exercise of functions should have regard for the positive and negative impacts of individuals who share this protected characteristic.

### **Religion or Belief**

#### *Positive Impacts*

It is not envisaged that the Proposal would have negative impacts upon groups or individuals as a result of their religion or belief. Instead it is considered that all groups and individuals would benefit in the same way regardless of religion or belief.

#### *Negative Impacts*

It is not envisaged that the Proposal would have negative impacts for individuals with this protected characteristic. However as elsewhere it is recognised that that no specific decisions are being taken at this stage, and the exercise of functions should have regard for the positive and negative impacts of individuals who share this protected characteristic.

### **Sex or Gender**

#### *Positive Impacts*

It is recognised that there can be greater impacts felt by women rather than men in relation to the areas of higher education and employment as a result of childcare arrangements, for example, resulting in women holding more part time roles than men, or not working due to caring responsibilities - 76.5% of Males in Lancashire (proposed CCA footprint) are in employment compared to 68.6% of females, and 35.1% of females who are employed work part time, compared to 13.5% of males<sup>7</sup>. This contributes to a gender pay gap, with median weekly wages for Females in Lancashire 28.6% below their male counterparts in 2022<sup>8</sup>. Lower income households are also more likely to either have a single or no car and therefore be more reliant on public transport.

The functions that would be afforded to the CCA as part of the Proposal would enable matters such as employment, education and transport to be considered on an Area wide basis with a view to potentially supporting different genders to access employment in areas that they traditional may not have done, or for better access to a range of employment opportunities on a wider footprint as a result of better transport connections across the Area.

#### *Negative Impacts*

It is not envisaged that the Proposal would have negative impacts for individuals with this protected characteristic. However as elsewhere it is recognised that that no specific decisions are being taken at this stage, and the exercise of functions should have regard for the positive and negative impacts of individuals who share this protected characteristic.

### **Sexual Orientation**

#### *Positive Impacts*

It is anticipated that the proposal could have a positive impact on people from the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and other communities. Although there are people from all age groups within this protected characteristics group, the profile is disproportionately of younger people. The potential of the proposal to positively impact economic growth and the availability of education and skills training may therefore be of particular benefit. Lesbian, gay and bisexual employees or those looking for work, often face discrimination or barriers to employment currently which may be reduced if new opportunities are with more inclusive employers. This may also assist those who are students who may feel more positive about seeking graduate employment opportunities within Lancashire as universities – e.g. UCLAN – are very supportive of both staff and student lgbtq+ staff and student networks. Should the proposal also result in better quality environments this may also be beneficial to lgbtq+ people who are more likely to experience underlying health conditions including mental health issues, than the population as a whole. Should the proposal result in improvements to transport facilities this may also be beneficial as the community does face additional concerns about personal safety and experience hate incidents or hate crimes including when travelling on public transport.

#### *Negative Impacts*

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<sup>7</sup> ONS, NOMIS, Annual Population Survey, June 2022-July 2023

<sup>8</sup> ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (AHSE), 2022, Median Gross Weekly Pay

It is not envisaged that the Proposal would have negative impacts for individuals with this protected characteristic. However as elsewhere it is recognised that that no specific decisions are being taken at this stage, and the exercise of functions should have regard for the positive and negative impacts of individuals who share this protected characteristic.

### **Question 6 – Combined/Cumulative Effect**

The Proposal responds to the Government's Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and the 12 levelling up missions, to improve the quality of people's lives across Lancashire, Blackpool and Blackpool with Darwen. It will, if approved by the Secretary of State, help to ensure that the Area can compete for its share of Government resources and brings decision making closer to the locality. The operation of the CCA will combine local authority, business and wider public sector interests and through its governance structures will draw on the advice and expertise available to minimise negative impacts and maximise opportunities.

Whilst the Proposal will initially focus on the acceleration of activity to achieve our identified priorities, the ambition set out in the Proposal for the Area, and the people and communities it serves, is significantly greater.

The current Proposal is intended to be used as a platform to broaden and deepen its scope in the future, ensuring that we continue to address identified and emerging challenges, maximising available opportunities that come our way, maintaining and building momentum.

We will therefore be working with Government and our partners across the Area over coming months and years to strengthen ties and collaboration, deliver against the twelve levelling up missions, improving outcomes for our people and our places whilst acting as a trailblazer for other CCAs that follow in our path.

This Proposal is intended to be the start of our devolution journey, and the ambition is to secure additional powers and funding as the CCA evolves to help achieve our aims and the Government's Levelling Up agenda.

### **Question 7 – Identifying Initial Results of Your Analysis**

As a result of the analysis has the original proposal been changed/amended, if so please describe.

No change at this point. The Proposal will be reviewed following the consultation process.

### **Question 8 - Mitigation**

Will any steps be taken to mitigate/reduce any potential adverse effects of the proposal?

[To be reviewed following the consultation.]

### **Question 9 – Balancing the Proposal/Countervailing Factors**

Overall it is anticipated that the Proposal would provide positive impacts for all groups and individuals across the Area, including those with any protected characteristics. Any negative impacts which are identified, we will do what we can to mitigate.

The exact impacts experienced by any groups or individuals will depend upon how the functions that it is proposed are afforded to the CCA pursuant to the Proposal are ultimately

exercised. The CCA would need to ensure that it puts in place appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the public sector equality duty in the exercise of such functions, and seek to address inequalities as appropriate. The CCA will also be subject to requirements to set equality objectives and to publish certain information annually relating to equalities.

One key issue relates to the potential for functions currently exercised at a more localised level, to be exercised on a wider footprint by the proposed CCA. This could have both positive effects as referred to in the analysis above, but also potential negative impacts resulting from the exercise of functions being considered on a wider basis. Such risk is considered to be mitigated by the involvement of the Constituent Councils and representatives of the district councils as non-constituent members of the CCA.

### **Question 10 – Final Proposal**

In summary, what is the final proposal and which groups may be affected and how?

The final Proposal will be developed following the consultation process and therefore this Question will be completed at that stage.

### **Question 11 – Review and Monitoring Arrangements**

What arrangements will be put in place to review and monitor the effects of this proposal?

We will review this EIA following the consultation which ends on 26th January and the EIA will be updated and published mid-March 2024.

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Reference Documents Used in the development of this EIA:-

1. [Equality Objectives 2023-27 | Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council](#)
2. [Equality watch | Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council](#)
3. The Census Statistics for the Borough can be found here - [Census Maps - Census 2021 data interactive, ONS](#)
4. Lancashire Insight [www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/)
5. TS067 - Highest level of qualification, Census 2021, ONS (Nomis) © Crown Copyright
6. Lancashire Combined County Authority Draft Proposal
7. <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/strategies-policies-plans/equality-diversity-and-community-cohesion/>
8. <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Your-Council/Documents/Council-Plan-2019-2024-Update.pdf>

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