



Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Limited

Private and Confidential: NO

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Combined Authority / Devolution Deal Update

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to update the LEP Board on progress of the Lancashire Combined Authority proposals.

Recommendations

The LEP Board is asked to:

1. Note the contents of this report;
2. Agree to confirm a funding contribution of up to £50K from the LEP's core budget to develop the case-making in support of Lancashire's devolution deal;
3. Request further reports to the LEP Board on Lancashire Combined Authority and Devolution Deal developments, including the development of underpinning business cases;
4. Provide updates on the LEP work programme to each Lancashire Leaders meeting

Rationale/Background

Over the last 18 months, local authority Leaders have been exploring a range of options to progress collaborative working across Lancashire. A Governance Review concluded that a Combined Authority for Lancashire offers the strongest governance model and provides the best opportunity for Lancashire to achieve its potential.

Throughout November and December the Leaders sought the approval, in principle, of their respective councils to agree to take part in a Combined Authority and undertake a public consultation exercise on the proposals.

At this stage, 14 of the 15 Lancashire Councils have agreed to continue developing Combined Authority proposals. Wyre have chosen to take no further part in Combined Authority discussions.



Consultation

The public consultation exercise on the Combined Authority proposals was launched on 11th January and will close on 19th February 2016. This is an on-line consultation (<http://www.infusion.org.uk/lancsca/>) open to all.

Partners, residents, businesses, community and faith groups, have all been invited to respond to the consultation. A media campaign to raise awareness of the consultation is on-going across Lancashire. The results will be available in early March.

Devolution

Alongside the Combined Authority discussions, Leaders have also been considering proposals for devolution to Lancashire.

A workshop was held on 5th January with representatives from BIS, NHS, LEP Skills Board, DfT also attending. Graham Cowley attended on behalf of the LEP Board.

Leaders considered a range of proposals including devolved skills funding, influence over the Work Programme, devolved strategic transport allocation, devolved funding for a Growth and Productivity fund. It was recognised that some elements of the proposals would benefit from external specialist support.

The LEP Board in December, in considering feedback from the LEP Chair's initial meeting with Leaders and Baroness Williams, on developing Lancashire's devolution deal, agreed in principle to offer a level of financial support to help develop the underpinning business case. Since then, local authority partners have refined their thinking and would welcome the LEP's financial support in developing the emerging evidence-base. Briefs for this case-making are being developed.

A funding contribution of up to £50K from the LEP would enable case making work to progress more quickly by enabling local authority partners to commission additional independent expertise.

Next Steps

Subject to continued positive progress, Leaders have agreed to take a further report to their Councils in March/April for agreement to become a constituent member of a Lancashire Combined Authority. Having given consideration to the outcome of the public consultation, and subject to agreement for their members, those authorities who wish to form a Combined Authority will submit a proposal to the Secretary of State for consideration which may include devolution proposals for freedoms, flexibilities and powers to help the Combined Authority drive forward Lancashire's ambitions alongside demonstrating the robust governance structures to be put in place outlined in the draft scheme.