

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 7

meeting date: 27 JUNE 2017
 title: LANCASHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY
 submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
 principal author: MARSHAL SCOTT

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider our future involvement with the Lancashire Combined Authority.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council agreed in principle to become a member of the Lancashire Combined Authority at the Full Council meeting in April 2016.

Proposals to form the Combined Authority were subsequently sent to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in June 2016.

In the interim it was agreed to form a Shadow Combined Authority for Lancashire with the Leaders of Blackpool and Chorley elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively.

- 2.2 This Shadow Combined Authority has met on a number of occasions and Leaders are pleased with the results, particularly what can be achieved through working more closely together.

A number of meetings have also taken place with Ministers and Civil Servants to create the Combined Authority, but progress has been slow.

- 2.3 It was made clear by Government, however, that any significant devolution deal would require agreement to an elected Mayor for Lancashire.

3 LATEST BRITAIN

- 3.1 Of the Council's in Lancashire, Wyre was the only Council who didn't support joining the Combined Authority, more recently Fylde has also indicated they will not be joining.

No feedback has been received from Government for several months and it is unclear at this stage whether political changes in Local Government and indeed in Central Government, will result in increased devolution or the slowing down in what is already a very long-winded and torturous process.

On a positive note there certainly seems a willingness to work together across Lancashire to improve the Economic well-being of the County and there is a growing recognition that this might not be through a legally constituted Combined Authority.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:-

- Resources – Officer resources have been made available by some authorities including Ribble Valley, in supporting the Combined Authority development on an 'in kind' basis. At this stage there are no financial implications if it went ahead.

As per the Scheme of Governance for the Combined Authority, if it went ahead, approval of the annual budget including decisions on any levies or other

demands for financial contribution from constituent authorities would be subject to unanimous agreements by the constituent members.

- Technical, Environmental and Legal – The powers to establish a Combined Authority are contained within the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (“the Act”) and The Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016.

A constitution for the Combined Authority was also in the process of being developed. The Council’s own constitution would also need to be reviewed and any necessary amendments made if we became a member.

A Parliamentary Order is needed to establish a Combined Authority. There is no indication of when this would be.

- Political – None arising directly from this report.
- Reputation – None arising directly from this report.
- Equality & Diversity – None arising directly from this report.

5 RECOMMENDED THAT:-

5.1 The contents of this report are noted.

5.2 Consider our future involvement with the Lancashire Combined Authority.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE