



Committee: CABINET

Date: THURSDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2020

Venue:
THIS WILL BE A VIRTUAL MEETING

Time: 11.00 A.M.

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

To receive declarations by Councillors of interests in respect of items on this Agenda.

Councillors are reminded that, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, they are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which have not already been declared in the Council's Register of Interests. (It is a criminal offence not to declare a disclosable pecuniary interest either in the Register or at the meeting).

Whilst not a legal requirement, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 and in the interests of clarity and transparency, Councillors should declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which they have already declared in the Register, at this point in the meeting.

In accordance with Part B Section 2 of the Code Of Conduct, Councillors are required to declare the existence and nature of any other interests as defined in paragraphs 8(1) or 9(2) of the Code of Conduct.

3. **Public Speaking**

To consider any such requests received in accordance with the approved procedure.

4. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM DEVELOPMENTS** (Pages 3 - 16)

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Lewis)

Report of the Chief Executive

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

(i) **Membership**

Councillors Erica Lewis (Chair), Kevin Frea (Vice-Chair), Dave Brookes, Tim Hamilton-Cox, Janice Hanson, Caroline Jackson, Jean Parr, Alistair Sinclair, and Anne Whitehead

(ii) Queries regarding this Agenda

Please contact Liz Bateson, Democratic Services - email ebateson@lancaster.gov.uk.

KIERAN KEANE,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
TOWN HALL,
DALTON SQUARE,
LANCASTER, LA1 1PJ

Published on Wednesday 28 October, 2020.

Lancaster City Council | Report Cover Sheet

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|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---|
| Meeting | Cabinet | Date | 5 November 2020 | | |
| Title | Local Government Reform Developments | | | | |
| Report of | Chief Executive | | | | |
| Purpose of the Report | | | | | |
| To request Cabinet's endorsement of the outline case for a unitary authority for The Bay area and that Cabinet recommends this to council, noting that the Government has now requested unitary proposals from Cumbria be submitted on or before 9 November. | | | | | |
| Key Decision | Y | Date of Notice | 26.10.20 | Exempt (Y/N) | N |

Report Summary

Council recently agreed to explore local government reform and devolution and to develop a high level case for a new unitary council for the area comprising the three districts around Morecambe Bay, "The Bay". This report brings back a further developed proposal that provides the outline case for a Bay unitary authority. Since the previous Council meeting, the Government has requested unitary proposals for three areas including Cumbria, with a deadline of 9 November for outline proposals and 9 December for a full business case proposition.

If approved, the outline case now provided for members' consideration enables the three Councils Barrow, South Lakeland and Lancaster, to describe the benefits of a cross county boundary proposal, based squarely on the functioning economic geography and health footprint of the Morecambe Bay area.

Recommendations

1. **Cabinet agrees the outline proposal as attached at Appendix 1 and recommends to Council for approval and submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by 9 November 2020;**
2. **Recommends to Council that the Chief Executive and Leader are delegated to approve any minor amendments that may arise following consideration by South Lakeland and Barrow Councils prior to submission and to continue with the work on the final proposal; and**
3. **Agrees that a final proposal can be submitted to a future meeting of Cabinet and Council prior to the requested deadline from Government of 9 December 2020, noting that a date of 8 December has been scheduled for this purpose.**

| Conclusion of Impact Assessment(s), where applicable | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Climate ✓ | Wellbeing & Social Value ✓ |
| Digital ✓ | Health & Safety ✓ |
| Equality ✓ | Community Safety ✓ |
| <p>Exploring the case for reorganisation and reform will consider the benefits a change to local government could deliver for economic prosperity and resilience within the highly valued environment of Morecambe Bay, with opportunity to improve and maximise the wellbeing of residents. This accords with the Council's priorities of working across boundaries to deliver economic prosperity, strong and involved communities, community wealth, health and well-being, social value and meeting the climate emergency.</p> <p>A key requirement of the proposal is that it demonstrates improvement to local government and service delivery and provide stronger strategic and local leadership across the area of the proposal. The draft Outline Proposal indicates the benefits it seeks to realise for the health, social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the area. The Full Proposal when developed will provide a clear assessment of impact to inform the Council's decision on the Full Proposal.</p> | |
| Details of Consultation | |
| <p>The outline case has been undertaken by the three councils working closely together and consulting on each stage of development. Strategic partners are currently being consulted and early soundings taken in terms of community consultation but the next stages of work would involve detailed public engagement and community consultation.</p> <p>A communications and engagement plan has been developed which seeks to inform, consult and listen to the views of residents, businesses, stakeholder organisations, councillors and employees about the development of a proposal and engage their views in the proposal's development. Communications are being coordinated across the three councils.</p> <p>A series of stakeholder meetings are being undertaken, including Health, Police, Fire and Rescue, economy and business, Parish and Town Councils and the third sector. Residents and business surveys will be made available on line by each Council and an independent opinion poll will be carried out. Councillor and employee briefings will take place.</p> <p>The outcome is intended to provide information, engage, consult and listen to the views of stakeholders from which an assessment can be made regarding the level of local support for the proposal.</p> | |
| Legal Implications | |
| <p>Legislative powers are available to enable local government reorganisation. Proposals for a unitary authority may be submitted under Part I of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.</p> <p>The process under s2 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 is as follows:</p> <p>The Secretary of State may invite any principal authority in England to make one of the following types of proposal:</p> <p>a) a proposal that there should be a single tier of local government for the area which is the county concerned (a Type A proposal);</p> | |

- b) a proposal that there should be a single tier of local government for the area which is currently a district, or two or more districts, in the county concerned; and is specified in the proposal (a Type B proposal);
- c) a proposal that there should be a single tier of local government for the area specified in the proposal which currently consists of the county concerned or one or more districts in the county concerned and one or more relevant adjoining areas (a Type C proposal);
- d) a combination of two or more Type B or C proposals or one or more Type B proposals with one or more Type C proposals, where those proposals are not expressed to be in the alternative (a combined proposal).

By letter of 9 October the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, in exercise of his powers under Part 1 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 has invited the principal authorities in Cumbria to make a proposal in accordance with the attached letter (Appendix 2).

Section 3(5) of the 2007 Act requires authorities to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State as to: "what a proposal should seek to achieve"; and "matters that should be taken into account in formulating a proposal".

The "Invitation to local councils" issued in October 2006 contained guidance which became the statutory guidance. Guidance for this invitation has been attached to the invitation to submit a proposal and is attached as Appendix 2.

Once the Secretary of State has received a proposal in response to an invitation, he may seek advice from the LGBCE, which may recommend that:

- a) he implements the proposal;
- b) he does not implement it; or
- c) it may make an alternative proposal.

If the proposal is agreed by the Secretary of State, it is then implemented by a Structural Changes Order which is laid before Parliament. The Order is likely to create new shadow authorities, provide for elections, a shadow executive to take decisions, appoint staff, transfer assets and secure implementation and then dissolve the old authorities and effect the transfer of functions to the new authorities on 1st April probably 2 years hence.

If the proposal submitted by 9 November 2020 is an outline proposal it should indicate what further material is expected to be provided and when this would be submitted which should be no later than 9 December 2020

Financial Implications

There are many potential financial implications of changing the structure of local government. These were last experienced in this area in 1974 when Lancaster City Council was created and some parts of north Lancashire, at that time, became part of the South Lakeland and Barrow administrative areas.

It is expected that any reorganisation would result in additional one-off costs to implement the changes and then recurring variations in costs and income following the change. How these changes will balance out will depend on the individual circumstances of each local authority and the options adopted: without carrying out the analysis it is not possible to accurately assume the impacts modelled and delivered elsewhere would be replicated within the district.

Particular issues to be considered include existing base budgets, the relative income base of each authority, existing levels of council tax and government grants, capital expenditure, assets owned, levels of borrowing, pensions, potential redundancy costs, relative salary and staffing levels, potential costs of aligning IT systems and the speed and ability to realign service delivery to realise efficiency savings while providing strong strategic and local leadership.

It will be necessary to set a single level of Council Tax for the new authority: the levels will be determined by existing Council Tax levels.

Each authority has been asked to submit details of expenditure, income, staffing, balance sheet assets and liabilities, key funding streams, five year financial plans and expected demographic and non-demographic growth. This detail will be used to prepare the details of these potential changes in funding and costs and will be identified in the Full Proposal to be considered by Cabinet and Council in December 2020.

In terms of the work that is required over the next few weeks, this will be intensive and the council will need to pay its share of the costs of expert advice for the Full Proposal and business case, along with the other two councils. The council's costs, estimated at £58k, can be covered by existing budgets.

Other Resource or Risk Implications

Potential risks are covered in the Options section. There are limited resource implications as a result of this report but officer time will be required to support and advise on development of the proposals over the next few weeks.

Section 151 Officer's Comments

The s151 Officer has no comments to make at this time.

Monitoring Officer's Comments

The Monitoring Officer has been involved in the drafting of the report.

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| Contact Officer | Kieran Keane, Chief Executive |
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| Tel | 01524 582501 |
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| Email | chiefexecutive@lancaster.gov.uk |
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Links to Background Papers

1.0 Background

- 1.1 At the meeting on 30 September 2020 Council authorised the Leader and Chief Executive to work with South Lakeland and Barrow Councils to explore local government reform and devolution, including the development of a high level case for a new unitary council for the Bay area. It was also noted that the Secretary of State may then invite the Council to put forward a formal proposal which would be subject to future agreement.
- 1.2 Since that time, development of the high-level case has been undertaken and illustrates the fit with the government's criteria. Confirmation has also been provided that cross border proposals can be considered.
- 1.3 Although this work was already underway, timescales for submission were anticipated to be sometime early in the New Year when the Recovery and Devolution White Paper is expected. However, in early October, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, in exercise of his powers under Part 1 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, invited any principal authority in the area of the county of Cumbria to submit a proposal for a single tier of local government, in accordance with the following criteria:
 - By 9 November 2020 authorities must at least submit an outline proposal, and if a full proposal has not been submitted by that date, the full proposal must be submitted as soon as practicable thereafter and by no later than 9 December 2020.
 - Authorities must have regard to the guidance from the Secretary of State.
 - An authority may either make its own proposal or make a proposal jointly
- 1.4 Whilst the invitation to submit has been driven by the Government, rather than the three councils, the imminent deadlines have added urgency to the work in hand and clarified the need for a full detailed business case to be developed if the Council wishes the Bay option to remain on the table. Whilst it may be argued that this is not the time the time for dealing with such matters we are left with little choice given the timescales imposed by the Government.
- 1.5 Members should note that, at this time, Lancashire has not been invited to submit unitary proposals and there is no business case proposal for the North Lancashire/ Blackpool unitary that, it is understood, would be the Lancashire proposed option that would include Lancaster district.
- 1.6 As the case for a North Lancashire /Greater Blackpool unitary option has not been developed, it is difficult to assess any potential benefits for Lancaster district and its residents. On the face of it, there are few links in terms of Travel to Work Areas (TTWA's), economy and community, shared strategies, governance and joint working other than at the pan Lancashire level. However, as members will be aware, a North Lancashire/ Blackpool unitary is likely to be the default position if The Bay option is no longer on the table.

2.0 Proposal

- 2.1 Following Council's approval in September, the case for a unitary proposal for The Bay, Lancaster, Barrow and South Lakeland Councils have now developed

the initial work to prepare an outline proposal to meet the guidance set out by the Secretary of State in responding to an invitation on the Bay footprint.

- 2.2 The draft Outline Proposal forms Appendix 1 to this report and sets out the rationale for developing a new unitary council. (*Appendix 1 will be published after the main Agenda and is 'to follow.'*) The proposal highlights the opportunities, strengths and strategic needs of the area's communities and economy and how they may best be addressed through the leadership and resources of local government based on the geography of the functioning economic area and health services footprint.
- 2.3 In addition to structural change, the proposal indicates the benefits which can be realised through public service reform within local government and collaboratively with other service providers. With a population of c 320,000 this is within the threshold requirements set by the Government's for unitary submissions.
- 2.4 The proposal acknowledges the historic and current associations between places and communities across the Morecambe Bay area. This strengthens the rationale for the organisation of local government at a scale and footprint readily identified by residents and businesses. This enables locally based, accessible and engaged local government.
- 2.5 Further information, proposal and detail will be identified and set out in an action plan to establish the Full Proposal. This will include further assessment of:
 - The degree of local support for the proposal
 - Functions currently performed by the County Councils and modelling their delivery in the unitary arrangement
 - Proposals regarding Police, Fire and Rescue services
 - Opportunities for service reform with regards to health and care services
 - Options for complementary arrangement of Combined Authorities and powers and resources which may be devolved to them
 - Financial modelling
 - of the operational costs of the new council, including comparison with alternative proposals and implications for costs to Council Tax payers
 - The costs and funding of transition from the existing to future arrangements
 - Proposals regarding the structure of local government in the remainder of Cumbria, should the proposal be implemented
- 2.6 Members are asked to consider and agree the outline proposal at Appendix 1 for submission to government by the 9 November 2020.
- 2.7 Subject to Council approval, work will continue on the full proposal with a report to be presented back to Cabinet and Council prior to the deadline date of 9 December 2020

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

Option 1:

Submit a proposal for a unitary council for The Bay

Advantages:

This would mean that the opportunity and benefits of a unitary council, based on the footprint of the three councils around The Bay, would remain on the table and be considered by Government.

Delivery of The Bay Prosperity and Resilience Strategy would be enhanced by unitary status with further influence over budgets and delivery of services on The Bay footprint.

The district, representing the interests of its residents and businesses, will have a direct role in influencing development of unitary proposals building on between the strong relationships between the three councils, existing joint working arrangements and a shared health services footprint.

The draft Outline Proposal at Appendix A highlights in more detail the economic, social and environmental benefits and opportunities which could be realised for residents and businesses.

Disadvantages:

The benefits and opportunities highlighted in the draft Outline Proposal would be foregone if a proposal were not submitted as The Bay option will no longer be on the table.

By not submitting a proposal, the Council would significantly reduce its influence in the reorganisation of local government and the ability to achieve reform rather than simply structural change.

If The Bay option is no longer on the table, the default option for Lancaster district will be, if matters proceed further, to become part of a North Lancashire/ Blackpool unitary, for which no case has been made but which appears to offer few benefits for the district, in terms of building on shared services, TTWAs, economic and community links, shared purpose and strategy, other than at the pan Lancashire level.

Risks:

The high-level case does not meet government requirements. This will be mitigated by ensuring compliance with criteria is clear and a compelling case is made based on evidence and public opinion. The three councils have secured strong external advice to ensure criteria can be met.

Proposal does not gain support of local bodies and the public. Early communications suggest strong support for the proposal but further detailed engagement will highlight the views of partners and public. The councils would not wish to submit a proposal without strong local support

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|---|
| <p>Local government reform distracts from other priorities. Although this is not an ideal time, the government has set the timetable for these developments and the Council can prioritise work to ensure the right arrangements that secure the best benefits for residents, for the short, medium and long term future, are agreed for the district.</p> |
| <p>Option 2: Do not submit a proposal for a unitary council for The Bay</p> |
| <p>Advantages:</p> <p>None</p> |
| <p>Disadvantages:</p> <p>Not submitting a proposal would mean that the opportunity and benefits of a unitary council, based on the footprint of the three councils around The Bay, would not be considered by Government alongside other proposals submitted.</p> <p>The benefits and opportunities identified in the draft outline proposal will not be realised for residents and businesses, if a proposal were not submitted.</p> <p>By not submitting a proposal, the Council would significantly reduce its influence in the reorganisation of local government.</p> <p>Loss of potential benefits to residents and businesses. If a proposal for The Bay is not submitted, it is understood that the Council will become part of a North Lancashire/ Blackpool unitary proposal, for which there does not appear to be any evidence that string economic, social and environmental benefits, equivalent to those identified for The Bay proposal, can be delivered.</p> |
| <p>Risks:</p> <p>The option of a North Lancashire / Blackpool unitary has not been developed and Lancashire has not been invited to submit at this early stage. However, if The Bay option does not remain on the table, this would be the only option available. There is no meaningful way to assess the impact of this on the district.</p> <p>Loss of local determination. If The Bay proposal is not submitted, local residents are likely to have no choice in terms of future unitary arrangements.</p> |

4. Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

4.1 The officer preferred option is Option One as this allows The Bay to remain on the table as a unitary option that would include Lancaster district, allowing district leaders and communities a say in what happens in the future, building on the strong relationship and joint working around The Bay and enabling the delivery of identified economic, social and environmental benefits for the area.



THE BAY

OUTLINE PROPOSAL FOR A NEW MORECAMBE BAY UNITARY AUTHORITY

PREPARED BY **BARROW BOROUGH
COUNCIL, LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL AND
SOUTH LAKELAND DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Morecambe Bay is a unique area with shared opportunities and challenges. We are home to advanced manufacturing of strategic UK importance, and a hub for clean energy generation, with two universities and a world heritage site.

We have a strong, closely-linked community and excellent joint working across the three councils covering The Bay. 96% of the workforce live as well as work in the area. The Bay area is well served by the NHS, sharing a footprint with the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust and have established partnerships with Morecambe Bay CCG and the Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Trust. The Bay is in the same postal and broadcast area and the three councils work together through the Lancaster and South Cumbria Joint Committee.

This outline document has been prepared in response to the Secretary of State's invitation to submit proposals for future local government in Cumbria. We want to seize the opportunity to cement our cooperation and we are mindful of the risks to that cooperation which may be posed by unsuitable reorganisation. This document is an outline proposal only and a full business case is in development. We would welcome engagement with central government over the coming weeks as that proposal takes shape.



A new council for Morecambe Bay

This is an outline proposal to create a single tier of local government for The Bay, prepared in response to the Secretary of State's invitation. The new authority will comprise Barrow Borough Council, Lancaster City Council and South Lakeland District Council and consolidate responsibilities from Cumbria and Lancashire County Councils.

“Now in receipt of the Secretary of State’s invitation, we strongly believe that this proposal provides the best local government arrangements for The Bay, meets all of the relevant criteria, best serves local people, and is compatible with locally-driven proposals for the rest of Cumbria and Lancashire.”



CLLR ANN THOMSON
Leader of the Council
Barrow Borough Council



CLLR DR ERICA LEWIS
Leader of the Council
Lancaster City Council



CLLR GILES ARCHIBALD
Leader of the Council
South Lakeland District Council



SAM PLUM
Chief Executive
Barrow Borough Council



KIERAN KEANE
Chief Executive
Lancaster City Council



LAWRENCE CONWAY
Chief Executive
South Lakeland District Council

Benefits of The Bay

Our proposal will deliver:



Better outcomes for residents

A new unitary would be able to act more strategically in response to the new opportunities in the area. Compared to other unitary proposals. The Bay would deliver improved decision making, innovation and service delivery. It also offers alignment with NHS services, which already operate on this geography.



Exceptional environmental outcomes

The Bay is linked by its unique geography, including a number of internationally significant natural assets. The Bay also shares a commitment to tackle environmental challenges, particularly coastal erosion, protecting biodiversity and preventing flooding, as well as addressing climate change.



Improved democratic accountability

Unitary authorities are easier to understand for electors, with joined-up decision making and clearer accountability. This would also bring important services that are currently delivered from Carlisle or Preston into The Bay and make engagement with the community and voluntary sector (CVS), town and parish councils and delivery partners more effective. It would also form a viable building block for a combined authority and a compelling part of a future devolution deal.



Jobs and economic growth

The Bay is a functional economic area hosting a range of 'tier one' employers as well as thriving SMEs. However, The Bay does not yet speak with a single voice. A new unitary will be in a stronger position to secure supply-chain investment by demonstrating the critical mass to support new business operations.



Efficiency

A unitary Bay authority offers the efficiency savings targeted by central government, whilst retaining essential local engagement capacity, improving both democracy and local service provision. It means that local people are closely connected to the services that form part of their daily lives, and that these are delivered by, and within, our community.



A solution that works for all of Cumbria and Lancashire

The boundaries imposed by the 1972 Act divided Barrow-in-Furness and parts of South Lakeland, historically both part of Lancashire, from Lancaster, although the area has retained its common identity. The Bay puts this right, sitting alongside a new unitary for the four northern and western districts of Cumbria and viable arrangements for the rest of Lancashire to the South.

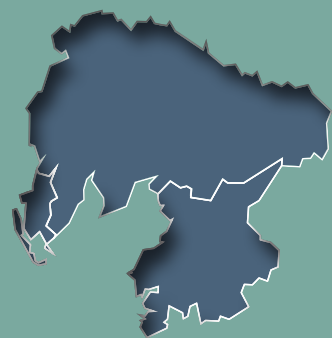
MHCLG reform criteria

This proposal will:

- ✓ improve local government and service delivery, including giving greater value for money, generating savings, providing stronger strategic and local leadership, and more sustainable structures;
- ✓ command significant public support;
- ✓ serve a credible geography with an aggregate population in the target range.

Initial options

Option A



THE BAY

- ✓ Improves local government and service delivery:
 - builds on existing close links between the three authorities
 - shares priorities with a Functional Economic Area, a Travel to Work Area and key sector links for energy, education and tourism.
- ✓ Commands significant public support based on strong community and historic links that have survived the artificial disruption of the 1972 Act, which split our community. Early indications show significant public support based on strong community and historic links.
- ✓ Credible geography and appropriate population size as part of a two unitary solution for Cumbria with Allerdale, Carlisle, Copeland and Eden forming a second unitary of optimum size in the north of the county.

Option B



THE STATUS QUO

- ✗ County services can appear to be remote for our residents.
- ✗ Current arrangements do not best enable service transformation through partnership working aligned with the Functional Economic Area and health services footprint.
- ✗ Given government announcements, is unlikely to enable optimal devolution of powers and resources.

Option C



COUNTY UNITARIES

- ✗ Would not improve local government and service delivery:
 - artificially divide The Bay community, concentrating power in remote and less flexible county halls;
 - move decision-making and service delivery further from local people;
 - would create a democratic deficit and destroy existing arrangements for local community engagement.
- ✗ Do not command significant public support and are opposed by local representatives.
- ✗ Unprecedented in population size and geographic extent.

Our main assets



Ports

- 1 Barrow Port
- 2 Heysham Port
- 3 Glasson Port



Offshore energy assets



Natural assets

- 4 Lake District UNESCO World Heritage site
- 5 North Walney National Nature Reserve
- 6 Morecambe Bay SSSI
- 7 Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB
- 8 Yorkshire Dales National Park
- 9 South Walney Nature Reserve
- 10 Nationally-recognised coastline



Higher education

- 11 University of Cumbria
- 12 Lancaster University



Health facilities

- 13 Furness General Hospital
- 14 Royal Lancaster Infirmary
- 15 Ulverston Community Health Centre
- 16 Queen Victoria Hospital
- 17 Westmorland General Hospital



Advanced manufacturing/ key employers

- 18 Kimberley Clark
- 19 BAE Systems
- 20 Spirit Energy
- 21 GSK
- 22 GVS Filters
- 23 EDF Energy
- 24 GAIST Solutions
- 25 Gilkes
- 26 James Cropper
- 27 Ørsted
- 28 Oxleys Developments
- 29 Forge Europa



Broadband/digital

- 30 B4RN Connectivity

THE BAY



Source: ONS 2018. © Crown copyright and database right (2018)

The facts

320 000

total population

13 000

businesses

18 000

jobs in advanced manufacturing and engineering (including half of the country's ship and submarine manufacturing jobs)

4 300

jobs in agriculture in our thriving rural communities

30 million

annual visitors to Lancaster and South Cumbria, contributing £2 billion to the economy

Three

international gateway ports

25 000

jobs in tourism

Five

major windfarms, oil and gas operations and two nuclear power stations

Two

universities, both already cooperating across The Bay

A real community



We are a functional economic geography

96% of the resident labour force work in the area



We are a fully integrated housing market area

75% of all home moves take place within The Bay area



We share a LA postcode unlike the rest of Cumbria which has a CA postcode, and the rest of Lancashire which uses PR or BB



We are in the same broadcast area

The Bay is served by BBC North West and mostly ITV Granada, with a few areas served by ITV Border. Remainder of Cumbria is served by BBC North East and Cumbria and ITV Border



We are well connected

The Bay is served by direct public transport links and a good road network



We are focused on The Bay

76% of business and 90% of population live and work in The Bay area

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Working together



ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

MORECAMBE BAY PARTNERSHIP



MORECAMBE BAY

The three councils already cooperate through the **Lancaster and South Cumbria Joint Committee**

Our cultural assets are recognised by government through a new **Cultural Compact**

The **Morecambe Bay Partnership** deals with environmental and heritage issues

We work together to **promote tourism**

The Bay healthcare provision

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust

NHS Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning Group

NHS Lancashire & South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust

The Bay area is well served by the NHS, sharing a footprint with the **University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust** and have established partnerships with **Morecambe Bay CCG** and the **Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Trust**. **Health Trusts** are working very closely with the three councils through the challenges of COVID-19.

Our future priorities

As The Bay unitary authority, there is an opportunity to address these challenges together, aligning our priorities. Any unitary arrangement not based on The Bay will be a retrograde step in delivering local government.

Unitary council arrangements are a step forwards to strengthening local government in The Bay. It will prepare us for the next step - devolving resources and responsibilities to enable growth.



Environment

- Climate emergency
- Transition to a green economy
- Conserving natural assets



Skills

- Declining workforce
- Low attainment and aspiration
- Skills shortages



Productivity

- Income inequality
- Retaining resources locally
- Sustaining future jobs



Connectivity

- Poor digital connectivity
- Physical connectivity east to west
- Local transport systems



Places and houses

- Housing affordability and suitability
- Housing viability
- Left behind towns



Health and wellbeing

- Growing dependency and long term conditions
- Health inequalities
- Inactive lifestyles



Recovery

Maintaining and improving quality of life through recovery



Source: ONS 2018. © Crown copyright and database right (2018)

The facts

17%

decline in working age population 20-39; with recruitment a critical challenge for the NHS locally

65%

of The Bay's businesses say skills and recruitment are their biggest concerns

Imbalance

in age structures in rural coastal communities

60%

of UK naval shipbuilding design located in Barrow

>5km

distance to work making active travel less popular

4th

most at risk area for jobs lost due to the pandemic was South Lakeland according to the RSA (ONS furlough data)

Creating opportunity

Sustainable

Leading a clean and green economy that does more good, not just less harm

Future talent

Preparing our people for the jobs and opportunities in tomorrow's industries

Circular economy

Creating value from sustainable jobs and industries that support the local economy

Connected

Fully integrated digital and physical systems enabling accessibility and connections within, across as well as beyond The Bay

Building communities

Revitalising towns and places through a stronger Bay identity with an accessible and desirable quality of life

Active communities

Taking activity further upstream allowing early intervention and prevention that maintain independence for longer

Growing forward

Using recovery to address challenges through real reform not simply resuming what we do today

Working together regionally and loud enough to be heard

- Working together to simplify local council arrangements
- Creating a critical mass enabling the needs of The Bay to substantiate change and further investment
- Retaining an outward perspective to support a coherent North West role in the regional powerhouse

Unleashing our potential

Renewables and green technology

Few places rival our array of clean energy assets, including the world's largest operational offshore windfarm and a key part of the nuclear supply, linked by a unique combination of private sector expertise and academic excellence.

One unified Bay council will help to attract jobs and investment to The Bay, contributing to meeting the UK's energy needs, in a clean, sustainable way.



Arts and culture

Our Cultural Compact, across the three authorities of The Bay, has been recognised by central government and the Arts Council. We are home to the UK's largest tourist destination outside London, with a rich cultural heritage.

Eden of the North will be a major new tourist destination which will create jobs across the entire Bay, including reimagining the resort of Morecambe.



Across The Bay we work collaboratively, focused on our shared assets and opportunities. We are delivering for our residents across eight themes. A new unitary would give us the strategic scope and focus to deliver even more strongly.

Agri-tech and innovation

We combine an important agricultural economy with specialised HE and FE institutions, including Lancaster University's international expertise in plant science, and an engineering and tech sector. We are uniquely well-placed to deliver against the government's ambition to put the UK at the forefront of the move to high-efficiency agriculture.

The three councils are already working together on a bespoke hub to ensure The Bay is recognised as a leading agri-tech location.



Digital connectivity

Digital connectivity is vital to future economic development and to individuals' socio-economic opportunities. We face two challenges, with some of our rural communities experiencing connectivity challenges and a proportion of our residents still not using the internet.

We will focus our excellent local assets such as Broadband for the Rural North (B4RN) on creating a connected Bay with inclusive economic growth.



Our ports

Our ports and their hinterlands, serving the offshore energy industry, and at the heart of the Irish Sea RoRo hub, are an important part of our national infrastructure. The port facilities and their industrial land have huge growth potential needing complementary strategic growth strategies.

A new unitary authority for The Bay will champion the ports and maximise their potential for local people and the whole country.



Attracting and retaining talent

Whilst The Bay boasts many high-quality employment opportunities we know that employers can struggle to fill certain vacancies.

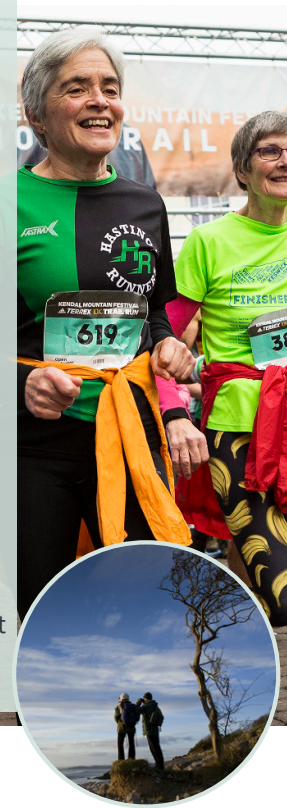
We will work with the education and training sector to make the most of The Bay's exceptional assets and connectivity to make us a lifestyle location of choice. We are proud to work closely with Lancaster University, a top ten UK institution, with strong international links, and also with the University of Cumbria, which has a growing reputation.



Healthy communities

We have an ageing population and The Bay is impacted by health inequalities, with our poorest communities hit hardest by COVID-19. The Morecambe Bay NHS Trust already works closely with the three councils to achieve better health and care outcomes.

Our proposals will align local government, including social care, with the NHS and improve health outcomes for everyone in The Bay and focus on our distinct social care priorities.

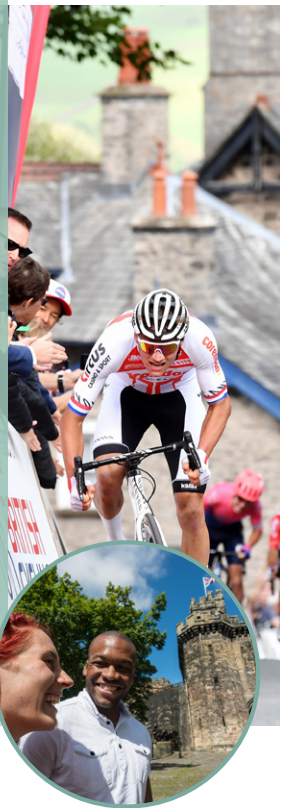


Resilient and vibrant towns

Our network of towns, and the City of Lancaster, are the fundamental building blocks of a strong local economy.

We are committed to a strategic approach to improving our town centres, increasing housing supply and improving local transport schemes.

The Bay needs strategic housing and planning powers to serve our exceptionally well-integrated economy and deliver high quality affordable and sustainable homes for everyone in our area.



The Bay is the solution that best meets the invitation's criteria for local government reform

Alongside this outline proposal for why a Bay Authority is the right solution, we have developed an action plan for the work we are doing over the next month to create a final proposal. We invite you to comment and engage in our development of a proposal that fully meets all your needs.

Please contact
TBC

Improve local government and service delivery



This proposal will catalyse a huge improvement in service delivery. The districts deliver strongly for residents and are in a position to capitalise on the opportunity to operate more efficiently and strategically. In contrast, the services currently delivered at a county level are remote and less flexible, so are unable to meet the needs of our large and diverse area.

Greater value for money

- The workforce will be centred on a coherent area, avoiding the costs and inefficiencies associated with a remote administrative centre.

Generate savings

- Efficiency savings will place council finances on a more secure long-term footing whilst retaining necessary capacity.
- The new council would be financially viable, with a stable balance sheet and a better than unitary average level of usable reserves.
- Council tax harmonisation would be straightforward with a minimal difference in current rates.

Provide stronger strategic and local leadership

- The role of the districts in the response to COVID-19 proves the importance of structures reflecting genuinely coherent communities with decisions taken close to those affected.
- Public sector bodies, including the NHS, already operate across The Bay, aligning local authority boundaries will provide for stronger collaboration and public accountability.
- The Bay shares a broadcast area, enhancing public understanding and awareness of local issues.

More sustainable structures

- The Lancaster and South Cumbria Joint Committee, which is already established, provides a sustainable framework for delivering efficient and effective reorganisation.
- The Bay would be a credible building block for a future devolution deal and we would be open to exploring options such as the creation of Combined Authorities, with an Elected Mayor, to play a strategic role at the right spatial level.
- The Bay will work with key stakeholders to formulate clear, cohesive modelling for: adult social care, children's services, fire and police services.

Commanding local support



- The three authorities are grounded in the communities we serve and we are confident that these proposals will command public support.
- We have launched a formal consultation on these outline proposals as well as commissioning independent public opinion research.
- The results of this activity will be reported in our final business case.

Credible geography and appropriate population size



- The Bay is a credible geography, with shared features, environmental factors and efficient internal communication.
- Within the optimum range for a new authority with an aggregate population of 320 000, The Bay would be the 15th largest unitary by population, in the top quartile in England.
- In contrast, a Cumbria unitary authority would be unprecedented in size, with poor internal connections and no natural focus.
- The Bay presents a unique opportunity for local people, local councils and local services to come together as one Bay community.

