

**COUNCIL**

**Morecambe Bay Collaborative Agreement  
19 July 2017**

**Report of the Chief Executive**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is to provide further information on potential collaborative arrangements with South Lakeland District Council and Barrow Borough Council and to present a Joint Statement of Intent for Council's consideration.

**This report is public.**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that

- (1) The Council explores collaborative opportunities with South Lakeland District Council and Barrow Borough Council in order to take a strategic approach to delivering economic and other benefits for the Morecambe Bay area and the Lancashire and Cumbria sub regions.**
- (2) The Joint Statement of Intent between the three Councils is agreed.**

**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Discussions over the last year between Lancaster City Council, South Lakeland District Council and Barrow Borough Council have highlighted a shared geography, economic interests and a common objective to exploit opportunities to boost the economic performance of Morecambe Bay, in the context of the wider sub regions. A Joint Statement of Intent is now provided to provide the basis of a developing collaborative relationship between the three councils.
- 1.2 District and county administrative boundaries serve a purpose in terms of public administration but do not necessarily define the economy, which develops around key sectors, supply chains and markets, as well as people and skills. Important economic drivers such as universities and major employers also have an impact that is far wider than the district in which they are based. Communities can function naturally around key service, housing and employment centres but also with a sense of connection, which is built upon how people move around rather than necessarily administrative boundaries.

- 1.3 County wide arrangements, including Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP's), are established on a spatial, sub regional footprint but there are potential strategic advantages in seeing beyond the administrative boundaries to achieve a greater impact across a wider area. In some cases, this strategic approach could create the platform for quite ambitious developments or to prioritise key projects that deliver benefits beyond an individual sub region.
- 1.4 Lancashire LEP recognises the potential connections for Lancashire in all directions. Lancaster has strong links within Lancashire but also has interests in common with South Cumbria. Separately, East Lancashire connects closely with Manchester on many issues and West Lancashire often looks towards Merseyside. The Lancashire LEP is exploring how the potential to increase economic impact across sub regions can be achieved, taking a strategic and ambitious approach to growth.
- 1.5 Lancaster is well situated and recognised within Lancashire as an area for growth. Major funding has been allocated to key initiatives with LEP support including, for example, the Innovation Campus at Lancaster University, and Bailrigg Gardens. Funding for major developments in the district, such as these, need to demonstrate economic impact and, in the case of strategic investments, this will be beyond district boundaries. Lancashire wide arrangements underpin sub regional impact for Lancashire and there is now the opportunity to drive benefits across the wider Morecambe Bay area.
- 1.6 Recent discussions have covered a range of opportunities for potential collaboration between the Morecambe Bay authorities that can be explored and the Joint Statement of Intent suggests some possibilities. This list is not intended to be conclusive in any way and may develop over time, for example, as growth opportunities develop in nationally significant sectors such as energy, marine engineering, health and higher education.
- 1.7 Whilst collaboration around Morecambe Bay is being driven by the three district councils, the engagement and involvement of Lancashire and Cumbria County Councils and LEP's will be required as arrangements move forwards. In order to ensure that wider sub regional opportunities and impact are fully considered and major investment support is gained.

## **2.0 Proposal Details**

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Council agrees the Joint Statement of Intent and begins to explore collaborative opportunities with South Lakeland District Council and Barrow Borough Council, focusing on achieving clear economic and other benefits for the district and beyond.
- 2.2 In terms of progress, first steps will be small and will explore what potential opportunities mean in practice, what benefits can be delivered and, in particular, how the strategic advantage of this joint working relationship can add value. Work is ongoing to examine evidence and better understand the economy and other shared interests around Morecambe Bay. Early exploratory work and relationship building within existing resources can proceed informally, although any key decisions or resource implications will need to be considered by each of the Councils as part of their decision making processes.
- 2.3 The Statement of Intent suggests governance arrangements to provide a framework for further discussions and development and to ensure an opportunity for regular meetings between the three councils.

### 3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 Early consultation has been undertaken with some key partners but further engagement will need to be ongoing in order to involve and include strategic partners and delivery organisations, as well as consider the impact for stakeholders. Key developments will no doubt require the commitment and potentially the resources of a range of partners, as appropriate.

### 4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	<b>Option 1:</b> Agree the Joint Statement and begin to explore collaborative opportunities	<b>Option 2:</b> Do not agree the Joint Statement
Advantages	<p>Potential strategic advantages for the Morecambe Bay area and the Lancashire/ Cumbria sub regions.</p> <p>Potential additional impact from key developments around the Bay.</p> <p>Potential improvement in sub regional and national positioning for Lancaster and the Bay.</p>	<p>No practical or resource implications as a result of collaborative working.</p>
Disadvantages	<p>Short term resources required to develop this approach - can be managed as part of priority setting within services</p>	<p>Lost opportunity to achieve a strategic advantage for the Morecambe Bay area and the Lancashire/ Cumbria sub regions.</p> <p>Lost opportunity to achieve additional impact from key developments around the Bay.</p> <p>Lost opportunity to develop the sub regional and national position of Lancaster and Morecambe Bay.</p>
Risks	<p>Any loss of support from sub regional partners, including LEP's, would be damaging. <i>Mitigation: Strategic involvement of County Councils and LEP's in the developing approach can be facilitated.</i></p> <p>No track record of joint working or strong relationships in place. <i>Mitigation: The exploratory phase will establish stronger relationships and understanding and assist in identifying strong options for development.</i></p>	<p>Opportunity loss as above. <i>Mitigation: Project specific joint working could mitigate these risks to some extent but are less likely to create strategic advantages and longer term benefits.</i></p>

## 5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Informal discussions between the City Council, Barrow Borough Council and South Lakeland District Council suggest that stronger collaboration around Morecambe Bay provides potential strategic advantages for the three councils and the Lancashire and Cumbria sub regions. It is recognised that this is the beginning of new approach and, to provide the basis of a working relationship moving forwards, a Joint Statement of Intent has been drafted for Council's consideration.

### **CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing):**

The proposals in this report may lead to actions that will create positive impacts for the district in a number of ways and which will be identified as work progresses.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct legal implications arising as a result of this report.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications arising as a result of this report. Any short term resource requirements will be met from within existing resources with any specific proposals / developments being appraised and reported back to Members for final agreement prior to entering into any financial / contractual commitment.

### **OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces:**

At this stage, the primary resource implication relates to that required to progress the proposed collaborative arrangements. What this involves in practice will become clearer as work progresses.

### **SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Deputy Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

### **MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

**Contact Officer:** Anne Marie Harrison  
**Telephone:** 01524 582308  
**E-mail:** amharrison@lancaster.gov.uk