

## **Conclusion**

Lancaster City Council has an enviable record for implementing positive change.

We build on a strong foundation of excellence across key services. Our performance is above average, with many of our BVPIs in the upper quartile. We are on track to improve our CPA rating and are performing well, delivering value for money. Consistent prudent financial management has delivered annual efficiencies, healthy balances and reserves and our ongoing success, in ensuring money is spent economically, is endorsed in the annual Use of Resources Judgment.

Satisfaction is rising. 69% of the population think we are making the area a better place to live. Our staff are consistently praised by the Audit Commission and we know the County Council has excellent staff too.

This is why we are confident we have the capacity to implement the measures described in this document and bring a unitary Lancaster District to fruition.

The creation of a Unitary authority for Lancaster, Morecambe and the surrounding countryside would be a quantum leap forward for Local Government in the Lancashire Sub-Region. The increase in unitaries would be a balance for the remaining two-tier area. In one stroke, it would improve community leadership, neighbourhood engagement and delivery of central and local government initiatives through Local Area Agreements. The new Council would be integrated joined-up, efficient and proactive. It would remove duplication, vastly enhance partnership working and fill gaps. It would also be open minded, forward-looking and constantly seeking to improve.

Most importantly, it would bring the power to shape places directly to the people. It would put communities at the heart of decision-making and be able to direct resources where they are needed most. Members of the new authority would reclaim their role as champions of the communities they serve, be clearly embedded within the decision making process and able to initiate change and hold decision makers to account.

The new authority would deliver innovative value for money services across all areas and bring new models of provision to services such as health and education. It would be able to make significant efficiency savings on staff, systems and information technology, by removing duplication and we are confident that it would deliver more for the same level of Council Tax.

Finally, as well as being close to its community, the new authority would be outward looking. It would be pivotal within the new sub-regional agenda and build new relationships with partner authorities in both Cumbria and Lancashire. It would be the central focal point for the spatial and economic development of the North Lancashire area, which would balance the Central Lancashire City Region.

We believe in communities creating their own visions, that in turn are sustainably and transparently delivered through public, private, voluntary organisations and individuals working together. That's what our internet Performance Management system is all about...accountability connecting communities.

We know, from working with Lancaster City Council, they share our belief.

We also know they have the experience and confidence to deliver real improvements at a neighbourhood level. We passionately believe a new unitary authority would have the potential to deliver ever more real lasting opportunities for the people of this District. **Escendency is proud to work with Lancaster City Council now and would relish the opportunity to work with any future unitary authority.**

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