

Report of:	To:	Date	Item No.
Cllr. Peter Gibson, Leader of the Council	Council	23 January 2014	8(a)

EXECUTIVE REPORT: LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Council of progress on key objectives and the current position on a number of issues, as set out below.

2. Looking Back at 2013 and forward to 2014

- 2.1 Firstly I would like to thank Members, Officers and all our Partners for what we have achieved and delivered in 2013. Perhaps our greatest achievement was securing £63 million for the sea defence improvements at Rossall. The allocation was the biggest in England and when you consider we were in a competitive process with some large Unitary and Metropolitan Councils I trust that you would agree with me that Members and Officers should be commended for securing such a high level of funding. During 2013 Members and Officers worked together to deliver savings to ensure we achieved a balanced budget, with no impact upon front line services. Members and Officers continued to work together for the better benefit of our residents, businesses and visitors and the result was increased satisfaction levels. In the year ahead we will have further challenges to meet but also 2014 will bring opportunities and by working together I am confident that we will meet those challenges and maximise opportunities and as Leader I am looking forward to working with all Members this coming year.

3. Health and Wellbeing

- 3.1 In December the Chief Executive, the two Corporate Directors and Head of Housing Services met with representatives of both Public Health England (Lancashire) and the Fylde and Wyre Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). In addition to discussions about our revised draft 2014-15 Business Plan (to be considered by Overview & Scrutiny on the 27th January and then full Council on the 6th March) Officers explored the opportunities for joint funding bids. As a result of that meeting the CCG has submitted an application to support capital bids for the potential relocation of Health Services to the Civic Centre, backlog Disabled Facilities Grant funding and contribution towards the proposed Regenda Extra Care Facility in Fleetwood. We anticipate the outcome of that bid to be known in the next two to three months and I will provide Members with an update in March.

3.2 Ageing Better Partnership Development Funding

Members will be aware that we submitted an expression of interest to the Big Lottery for the Ageing Better Partnership Development Funding, which is a three stage process. I reported previously that we were one of only 32 Authorities to make it through stage one and we were invited to develop our bid which involved identifying a third sector delivery Partner. Following a competitive process Community Foundations for Lancashire was selected as our lead organisation and we submitted a second stage application in November and I am delighted to inform Members that our second stage bid was successful. We have been awarded £20,000 to develop our bid for final submission in April and I will keep Members updated on the progress of this bid.

4. Assisted Area Status

- 4.1** Members will recall that at full Council on the 13th October 2013 I reported that the Government (Department for Business Innovation & Skills - BIS) launched a two stage consultation for the development of the new Assisted Areas 2014-20 map that will involve a consultation on the principles for the development of a new map and the draft map itself. I reported that Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) had been given the responsibility for co-ordinating local responses to the consultation, including proposing areas for inclusion in the new Assisted Areas map. Assisted Areas form part of Regional Aid, an aspect of State Aid which aims to support economic development and employment in disadvantaged areas. State Aid refers to publicly-funded assistance to businesses, which has the potential to distort competition and affect trade between member states of the European Union. Based on the criteria set out by the Government, and the LEP's agreed priorities, retaining and potentially extending coverage in east Lancashire along the M65 corridor represents the most significant opportunity for Assisted Area coverage in Lancashire given the concentration of investment sites and manufacturing SMEs, along with the concentration of eligible population. It was agreed that this area provides the central focus of the LEP response for its allocated population coverage.
- 4.2** As part of the process the Lancashire LEP submitted a list of other areas that contain key economic opportunities outside of the allocated population Assisted Area coverage and the Board agreed that Fleetwood Port/Hillhouse Corridor offers significant opportunities in this area arising from the nationally and internationally significant chemicals and polymer businesses on the Hillhouse Site and the ability of Fleetwood to service the growing off shore power industry.
- 4.3** I am delighted to inform Members that not only has the area of Fleetwood/Thornton been acknowledged by BIS as being an area for economic growth the area along with Carleton, Staina and parts of Blackpool and Fylde have been put forward for consideration for Assisted Area Status. I will keep Members updated with the progress on this matter.

5. Comments and Questions

- 5.1** In accordance with procedure rule 11.3 any member of Council will be able to ask me a question or make a comment on the contents of my report or on any issue, which falls within my area of responsibility. I will respond to any such questions or comments in accordance with Procedure Rule 11.5.

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