

Online Q&A 24 March

Key Updates

1. Combined County Authority (CCA)

- The CCA is now operational and met formally for the first time earlier this month.
- Focus areas include economy, transport, and skills.
- The CCA endorsed the draft growth plan, which is currently out for consultation.

2. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

- The government is seeking proposals for reorganising two-tier areas like Lancashire.
- A joint submission was made Friday 21 March, with further work required and feedback expected from the government.
- Clarification on the difference between devolution (transfer of powers and funding from national to local government) and LGR (organisation of services at a local level).

3. Election Period

- Pre-election period started 21 March, with guidance available on the intranet.
- Election will be held 1 May.

4. SEND Inspections

- An action plan has been authorised and submitted following national challenges.
- Awaiting results from a recent CQC visit.

5. Staff Engagement

- Second Q&A session as part of ongoing staff engagement.
- Recent long service event celebrated staff with over 40 years of service.
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion survey launched, closing 11 April.

Questions and Answers

1. CCA Timeline and Staff Support

- Transition year for CCA, with current roles remaining within upper-tier local authorities.
- Recruitment for a Chief Operating Officer on a 12-month contract.

2. Devolution and Pay Scales

- Too early to determine changes in pay scales; consultation and engagement will follow once new organisations are established.

3. Unitary Authorities and shared services

- Too early to say how shared services like libraries will be organised.
- Commitment to keep staff updated throughout the process.

4. Impact on local identity and jobs

- LGR aims to create new organisations, not take over existing ones.
- Majority of staff will be needed to deliver services, with changes likely at senior levels.

5. Executive Director of Resources

- Plans to appoint an Executive Director of Resources, with recruitment starting soon.

6. Political impact on LGR

- No overall control following elections will lead to negotiations between political parties.

7. Financial savings and efficiencies

- Key savings in adults and children's services, income generation, and service redesign.
- Future focus on waste collection and recycling and holding the mirror up to improve efficiency.

8. Net zero priorities

- Net zero is a cross-cutting component in the growth plan.
- Ongoing plans for decarbonisation and better communication of achievements.

9. Impact of LGR on budget

- LGR funded by local authorities, with savings expected to cover upfront investment.

10. Likelihood of a Mayor for Lancashire

- No current proposal for a mayor, but deepening devolution may lead to this in the future.