



**AGENDA ITEM: 24**

**COUNCIL: 24 February 2016**

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**Report of:** Interim Director Planning

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**SUBJECT: LIVERPOOL CITY REGION HOUSING & SPATIAL PLANNING BOARD**

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Wards affected: All Wards

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek Council's authority for West Lancashire Borough Council to join the Liverpool City Region Housing & Spatial Planning Board as an associate (non-voting) member should the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority agree to the change in membership.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL**

- 2.1 That Council agree to West Lancashire Borough Council's associate membership of the Liverpool City Region Housing & Spatial Planning Board, nominating the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Cllr John Hodson, as the Council's representative, with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Landlord Services, Cllr Jenny Patterson, as his reserve.

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**3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 As an Associate Member of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, it is possible for the Council to be considered for non-voting associate membership of various Boards and Committees that sit under the Combined Authority. Such membership would allow the Council to engage in the discussion of items on the agenda of each Board and so communicate the Council's view on those matters, but when the Board is required to make a decision, the Council's representative would not be able to vote.

- 3.2 Due to officer involvement in the Liverpool City Region District Planning Officers Group and Planning Policy Managers Group, and the close engagement had with Liverpool City Region authorities on planning matters over a number of years, the Council has been invited to join the Housing & Spatial Planning Board as an associate member and its officer level Co-ordinating Group. The Board and Co-ordinating Group meet every two months, with representation on the Board restricted to one elected Member with one officer in support.
- 3.3 If the Council were to choose to take up the invitation of associate membership, the Combined Authority itself would need to vote on the change of membership and so a report would be taken to the next suitable meeting of the Combined Authority.
- 3.4 The remit of the Housing & Spatial Planning Board covers all areas of housing, including matters related to local authority owned housing stock and matters of wider housing strategy and its contribution to the economy. In terms of spatial planning, the Board would lead on the proposed Statutory Plan for the Liverpool City Region, which was a power granted to the Combined Authority in the recent Devolution Deal for the Liverpool City Region.
- 3.5 In relation to spatial planning matters, Council officers already liaise very closely with colleagues in the Liverpool City Region authorities, and it is readily apparent that West Lancashire associates most closely with the Liverpool City Region in planning terms, primarily due to the close economic and housing market links that West Lancashire has with parts of the Liverpool City Region. As such, the Council will need to continue to liaise closely on these matters, especially as the City Region prepares its own Statutory Plan, and so input via associate membership of the Housing & Spatial Planning Board and its associated Co-ordinating Group would seem to be the next natural step in that cross-boundary working. It is also inevitable that the City Region's Statutory Plan will have cross-boundary implications for West Lancashire, and so it is appropriate that the Council consider carefully the offer of associate membership to be party to high-level discussions on the Statutory Plan.
- 3.6 In relation to housing matters, it may be useful to input on, and co-ordinate with, the Liverpool City Region Housing Strategy, which is the responsibility of the Board, as well as engage on all devolution-related housing matters that come before the Board.
- 3.7 In addition, associate membership of this Board is the next natural step, following the Council's associate membership of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and continued engagement with the Liverpool City Region LEP as a Corporate Member.

#### **4.0 PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 Having considered the above background, it is recommended that the Council should accept the invitation to be represented on the Housing & Spatial Planning Board should the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority agree the change in

membership, most particularly to have elected Member input on the Liverpool City Region Statutory Plan. This would also have the benefit of helping the Council to fulfil the Duty to Co-operate.

- 4.2 Given that the remit of the Board extends across two Portfolios at West Lancashire, there is a choice to be made as to which Cabinet Member is proposed as West Lancashire's representative on the Board, but at this stage, given that West Lancashire's involvement in the Liverpool City Region is currently more spatial planning based than housing based, it is recommended that the Portfolio Holder for Planning is nominated as West Lancashire's representative, with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Landlord Services as a substitute if the Portfolio Holder for Planning is unable to attend.
- 4.3 In relation to the Co-ordinating Group, Council officers recently started to attend the Group, with the Interim Director Planning attending on behalf of West Lancashire, and the Interim Director Housing & Regeneration also able to attend if the housing items on the agenda are of particular relevance to West Lancashire. As substitute, respectively the Strategic Planning & Implementation Manager and Deputy Assistant Director Housing & Regeneration would also be able to attend. Going forward, were the Council to become associate members of the Board, the officer representative on the Co-ordinating Group would also support the Member representative at the Board itself.

## **5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 5.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder. The report has no significant links with the Sustainable Community Strategy.

## **6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no significant financial or resource implications arising from this report, other than minimal officer and member involvement in attendance at meetings, which can be met from existing budget provision.

## **7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 Not participating in the Liverpool City Region Housing & Spatial Planning Board and Co-ordinating Group may restrict the Council's ability to influence decisions being made in the Liverpool City Region on matters of housing and spatial planning. Engaging with the Board would also help demonstrate the Council's fulfilment of the Duty to Co-operate at Member level, and so not taking up this opportunity would weaken the Council's case for the Duty to Co-operate.
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### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.