

## Supporting Statement – Jo Turton

I am currently Chief Executive of Lancashire County Council [LCC] the fourth largest local authority in the country with responsibility for over 13,000 staff and an annual revenue budget of £1billion delivering frontline services to 1.3 million people. My role demands high profile, visible leadership within LCC and in partnership situations with a range of public and private sector stakeholders. Successful delivery is dependent upon my employing a mix of skills and abilities in challenging situations, a willingness to take difficult decisions and having the determination and personal tenacity to implement agreed solutions.

My time at LCC has been characterised by leading and driving transformation. My first role at LCC was as Executive Director for the Environment with responsibility for most of the high profile, politically important services that the public experience on a daily basis. As a woman, coming in to a predominantly male, professional engineering culture from a non-technical background, I understood that I would encounter resistance and be required to establish my credibility and competence. I was also clear that delivering sustainable, cultural transformation cannot be forced but has to be the result of building support by changing hearts and minds. Coming from a different background and perspective from many of the staff allowed me to view the Directorate clearly and objectively. I could see that whilst it enjoyed a proud tradition and a reasonable reputation, operational practices were inwardly focussed and technically driven with minimal consideration of corporate objectives or customer need.

Beginning with a reshaped Management Team, I developed and gained commitment to a vision that in order to survive and thrive the Directorate needed to transform quickly into one that was externally and customer focussed where service to the community was paramount. This involved: recognising that our customers were the public and the 84 county councillors who had been elected to represent their communities; adopting a default response to service requests of 'what can we do?' rather than a technically orientated 'policy says no'; and, implementing structures and processes that prioritise service provision to customers.

After a process of high level engagement to secure political agreement, the following building blocks for sustainable change were put in place: **clear vision and compelling narrative** – why the Directorate had to change, what the changes were and specifically what they would mean for staff; **hope for the future** – the Directorate would be different but there was a positive future for staff; **shared values** – embedding values of honesty, openness, fairness, respect and trust in people to design, develop and deliver the transformation.

I began my tenure as Chief Executive with a clear vision of how Lancashire County Council [LCC] needed to transform to make it future proof, sustainable and fit for purpose. I also recognised that many of the principles, approaches and processes employed within the Environment Directorate with regard to developing a shared vision, agreeing on organisational values and prioritising the customer were transferable to the corporate body. Working with the Leader, Cabinet and a restructured Management Team, I have successfully implemented that vision of LCC so we now operate corporately as 'one Council' with a commissioning, delivery and resources structure replacing the traditional service based one. We deliver joined up lifelong services that prioritise the needs of residents and customers, are rooted within the wider Lancashire public service system and underpinned by corporate values that place the people of Lancashire first. This transformation has enabled LCC to deliver against our significant challenges e.g. reduced the staff headcount by 1,200 without a single grievance and we are currently delivering 98% of a £200m savings programme.

As Chief Executive it is my responsibility to recruit, lead, develop and motivate the senior Management Team. My approach has been to appoint individuals with the expertise and experience to deliver in their specialist areas and a commitment to prioritise and contribute to corporate goals. This ensures that we behave as a cohesive team, committed and responsible for all of the Council's services, staff and budgets with an aversion to protecting or promoting individual domains. Within the senior management team, problems and issues are openly shared, options are discussed and solutions are agreed. The focus is always and entirely on the corporate good and the absence of a blame culture means that while discussion is always encouraged and frequently lively, successes and achievements are jointly savoured and enjoyed.

Throughout my career I have prioritised full, open communication and meaningful staff engagement as a critical step in securing staff support and commitment. This includes being a visible and accessible leader and I prioritise fronting staff meetings and briefings that are structured to encourage staff to fully engage and contribute with comments and questions. From my first day in the Environment Directorate at LCC I focussed on communicating and engaging with staff ensuring that when it came to consultation about transformation, the workforce was used to, and expecting, full briefings and detail. Communication was core to our way of working, not just used when there was something for me to say or negative messages to convey. This undoubtedly played a major part in transforming the Directorate from one that was resistant to change to one where staff were professionally resilient and comfortable with the change that was part of their working lives. This approach helped make the Directorate into the workplace of choice within LCC. Staff across the organisation recognised that Environment employees enjoyed high levels of corporate awareness and job satisfaction, lobbied for a similar approach within their Directorate and actively pursued jobs within the Environment Directorate.

Given the ongoing and increasingly challenging financial forecast, budget management was, and continues to be, a major priority. As a newly appointed Chief Executive, one of my first pieces of work was to radically overhaul how financial information and budgets were presented within the authority to ensure that there was more accuracy, transparency and accountability. This required moving from a formal approach to presenting financial information, with little trend or benchmarking data and few unit cost descriptions, to one that enables politicians to make informed decisions and ensures that operational managers have the information needed to manage. To further our financial understanding and accountability I also established a line by line review of all budgets within the County Council. This work was overseen by a cross party group of members and the resulting information was given to all 84 county councillors. To provide quality assurance of the budget review I commissioned PWC to conduct an independent assessment of both the process and the subsequent analysis. Their conclusion was to confirm the outputs including the key finding that the council's budget gap was not driven by cost but rather by funding. This work led directly to cross party meetings with all the local MPs to raise the profile of LCC's budget position and the methodology we developed has subsequently been used by a number of county and large councils.

The scale of the financial challenges facing public sector organisations means that salami slicing budgets cannot deliver the necessary savings in a sustainable manner. A strategic response is required and at LCC we embraced this reality. With a strong political steer on priorities set out in a new Corporate Strategy and an operating model of reducing spend to the lower quartile benchmark across all services we set out a three-year plan to save £200m. Clear prioritisation of delivery of this savings programme, additional programming resources and robust project management by myself and the management team means we are currently in the position of delivering 98% of the savings

package. This combination of strategic thinking and operational working is important as it enables the management team to be across essential details and have a real grip on key issues. It also creates a platform for developing innovative and creative approaches to service delivery including sharing resources and working with partners and third party organisations. Good leadership is both strategic in being aware of what's on the horizon and operational in moving decisively to act and bring about any necessary change. In this way of getting out in front, of being on the 'front foot' organisations are able to retain some control about what, why and how things happen and it builds confidence in the quality of leadership throughout the organisation.

Within Lancashire there are 15 councils [12 districts, 2 unitaries and 1 county], eight CCGs, five health trusts, Lancashire Police, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, North West Ambulance Service along with hundreds of schools and numerous criminal justice organisations. As Chief Executive of the County Council I work with and manage relationships with these stakeholders on a daily basis along with central Government and a number of local government representative organisations.

The Central Lancashire City Deal is a landmark agreement between LCC, Preston City Council, South Ribble District Council, the private sector and central Government to deliver the long term sustainable regeneration and growth of Preston and South Ribble. As Chair of the Programme Board my role has been to develop and manage good working relationships with the senior officers and politicians from partner Councils. Tangible benefits from the City Deal include total investment of £434m, the creation of 20,000 new jobs and 17,500 new homes built. A project of this size and scale will always face challenges and the City Deal is no exception. However, the robust relationships and trust that has been built up over the last three and a half years enables these challenges to be overcome and is illustrated by a collective willingness to set aside parochial considerations to secure sub-regional benefits. LCC also has an excellent track record of joint working with the Police and Fire and Rescue Services. Over the last three years these partnerships have delivered significant service improvements including: a new Road Safety Strategy with the Fire and Rescue Service taking responsibility for prevention initiatives with local schools; co-location of staff and the joining up of information systems as part of our early help work with the Police; and intelligence and resource sharing on the newly reshaped Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub to improve response times and intervention plans.

A key component of my strategy for management of the workforce is to positively and proactively engage with the range of trade unions active within LCC. This is achieved through regular engagement, open sharing and clarity as to the potential implications of issues and problems, and a willingness to discuss and co-design potential solutions. The approach takes time and effort but has been successful in securing trade union commitment and support in transforming LCC. Working with myself and my management team, over the last three years we have been able to restructure the organisation, redesign models of service delivery, redefine job roles and achieve the necessary downsizing with zero grievances and minimal compulsory redundancies.

During my time as Chief Executive and regardless of their historical militancy, LCC trade unions have recognised the commitment of myself and my management team to work collaboratively to respond to the challenges facing the organisation. This does not mean avoiding difficult conversations or decisions. On the contrary, it ensures that there is a legacy of trust and an acceptance of the rationale and logic for the decisions we have to take that enhances the likelihood of support, reduces the potential for conflict and facilitates positive industrial relations.