

Last week's Star featured an interesting letter from a resident about the possibility of St Helens returning into Lancashire.

I think we should be very proud of our Lancastrian roots, and I also think most people would agree that what matters most is what will deliver investment, jobs, and a better future for St Helens.

Lancashire County Council – which we'd have to join if we became part of Lancashire – is a centralised council body and the County Hall in Preston is a long way from here. Crucially, it doesn't have any of the powers or growing international significance of the Liverpool City Region, which exists to attract and deliver investment in St Helens and the five other boroughs in Merseyside.

And it is delivering – in the last few years, St Helens has received hundreds of millions for large projects including Glass Futures, new train stations in Newton and (coming soon) Lea Green, new hydrogen buses, brownfield redevelopment, the Ways to Work hubs, skills and training, and massive investment to regenerate the former Parkside colliery – including winning support for it to be a key Freeport site with the potential for advanced manufacturing and thousands of new jobs.

And because of the powers City Regions have, we're able to work towards bringing bus services back into public ownership – this is something Lancashire cannot do.

Maybe most importantly, we're not told what to do by the Liverpool City Region – it was set up to draw powers down from Westminster, not to take them from local councils. And that's exactly how it works. That's far better than us being told what to do by Preston, which would be the case if we joined the county council.

We're also free to work with other towns and boroughs wherever they are for the good of St Helens. And we do - for example, we're working with Andy Burnham and colleagues from Wigan and Warrington on improvements to bus services and transport in our wider region.

Attracting investment and delivering for St Helens is what matters, so that whatever county we're in we can all be proud of our borough – and we've far more chance of doing that as a member of an internationally recognised City Region than we have as part of Lancashire or on our own.

Best wishes to all Star readers.