

COUNCIL

Leader's Report

1 March 2017

Report of the Leader of the Council

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present the Leader's report to Council.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To receive the report of the Leader of Council.

REPORT

1.0 Cabinet

Information on Cabinet matters is provided in the minutes from the Cabinet meeting held on 14 February 2017 later in this agenda.

2.0 Decisions required to be taken urgently

There are no decisions to report since the last Leader's Report on 1 February 2017.

3.0 Leader's Comments

At this time of year work on the Budget takes precedence. At the Budget and Performance Panel meeting on 24 January, all the authorities presented their budgets, but it is always disappointing that they are in written form with no one presenting them so that questions cannot be asked. Only the District Council Member was there in person and she gave an excellent presentation. This was the first opportunity for Members to raise questions and enables her to address them. Unfortunately, it was not well attended by the public.

On the 11 January, representatives of the Confucius Institute from Lancaster University came to meet us. They are keen to improve relationships with the Council and especially with the town. They are situated at The Round House on Campus. Their aim is to engage with people to help improve the understanding of

China. They run courses on Campus which are Credit Level and Non-Credit Level and are open to all. Language, Tai Chi and Martial Arts are taught at The Storey and people can drop in and out. Proposals for a Business Dinner with the Chamber and City were discussed and an idea to renew an invitation to new international students in the Autumn in the Town Hall.

On the 12 January, members of the Local Government Association (LGA) attended a workshop on Lancashire's Combined Authority proposals. They advised that establishing the Combined Authority (CA) is just the start. There will be a need to deal with scrutiny and accountability, cross party working, communications and engagement and how to develop devolution deals. We need to shift the focus onto outcomes. The LGA have developed a CA leadership programme and advice on leadership support. Councillor Sir Steve Houghton (Leader of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council) also came to talk on outcomes/actions. He talked about learning lessons from others.

The meeting that followed gave updates from the Working Groups, including a Housing update and a Skills and Employment Progress Report.

Lancashire's Growth Deal 3 allocation of nearly £70M is only significantly bettered by London and Manchester which represents a really strong performance. Over three competitive Growth Deal funding rounds, the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and local authority partners have secured £320M in new public investment for Lancashire, which is supporting the delivery of 45 major initiatives across the county.

The Cabinet met with The Chamber and BIDs (Business Improvement Districts) on the 24 January. Items for discussion included: International Trade – China, Flooding, and Bay Gateway official opening. Morecambe BID members raised anti-social behaviour in Morecambe over Christmas, quick reporting for fly tipping on mobiles or twitter, taxis using bus lanes and CCTV. Lancaster BID talked about future retailing in the City and an open meeting to take place. Street pedlars were also mentioned. The Council talked about the Local Plan, the City Centre Master Plan, Canal Corridor and the Garden Village.

Group Leaders were invited to a meeting on the 25 January. This was to update them on the Canal Corridor Scheme as well as other matters so that they could speak to their own groups.

Saturday 28 January was the Lancaster University Court Annual Meeting. The Pro Chancellor, Roger Liddle, spoke about the new Education Bill in the Lords, about the University's teaching excellence and about their offer of bursaries which need to be extended. He also mentioned the new Chemistry Department and building.

The Vice Chancellor spoke about the effect of the University on Lancaster. He said it was supporting 1200 jobs, supporting Lancaster Arts by £350K direct subsidy and a partnership with The Dukes of £80K per annum. He mentioned the Innovation Campus, the Garden Village and Forest Hills. He said that registration in 2016 is up and that research funding is the second highest of any University in the country.

Lancaster also gets the largest amount of money from the European Union of any university in the country so there is some uncertainty about that.

On the 29 January, I attended the Chinese New Year event at Moorside School. As always this was a very pleasant event that brings people together and offers music and a Chinese buffet.

On the 30 January, Lancaster MP, Cat Smith, came to meet officers and myself. We discussed a range of matters including Canal Corridor, the Local Plan, South Lancaster Growth Deal, the River Lune Flood Defence Scheme, the Innovation Campus. Also, the Museums Review, Salt Ayre Leisure Centre progress and success, and support for tenants through early intervention, Council Tax proposals and the continuation of the Localised Council Tax support, as well as the Business Rates revaluation, were also discussed.

The Housing Needs Study Methodology on the 02 February gave members an insight into how these are assessed and they agreed to keep Members who are interested involved.

4.0 Other Matters

Cabinet minutes for 14 February 2017 are attached at the end of this agenda.

5.0 Key Decisions

The following Key Decisions were taken by Cabinet on 14 February 2017:

- (1) Platform Review
- (2) Bailrigg Garden Village – Capacity Funding
- (3) Empty Homes Strategy
- (4) Lancaster Flood Management Scheme – River Lune Phase 3
- (5) Budget and Policy Framework Update 2017 to 2021 – General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme
- (6) Treasury Management Strategy 2017/18
- (7) Fees and Charges Review – 2017/18
- (8) Office of the Chief Executive – Senior Leadership Team

The following Officer Delegated Key Decisions were taken during this period:

- (1) Installation of Disabled Access Ramp at Lancaster Town Hall
- (2) Lancaster City Museum Roof Covering Renewals
- (3) Installation of New Kitchens to 19 Properties at Parkside Court Morecambe
- (4) Provision of Repairs to Void Council Housing Stock

Background Papers

Cabinet agenda and minutes of the meetings held on 14 February 2017.