

# COUNCIL

## Leader's Report

12 April 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 21 March 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 March 2017.

##### 3.0 Leader's Comments

Now that the Budget Meeting is over, the Council will have time to re-assess and refresh our vision for the future. We will be looking at the Corporate Plan in some detail so that it aligns with the decisions in the budget and in looking forward for the next two years. We need to agree our priorities while collating an evidence base and engage with all parties so that we can agree a sense of direction.

A strategy for economic growth must be a priority alongside the reviews that were moved forward to be looked at for the next year. We need to sell our district in every way possible. Our partners and stakeholders are enthusiastic about the district and they will be keen to join us in better marketing to encourage businesses and jobs into the area and we must join with them to showcase the district's aspirations and opportunities.

One of the ways to do this is to extend our reach and to work with the Council's around Morecambe Bay. On the 16 March the Deputy Leader, Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Planning and Regeneration) and myself went to Kendal to meet with representatives from South Lakeland and Barrow. We have been talking about the need for the three districts to commission a study to examine the extent to which Morecambe Bay area represents a cohesive sub-region and whether working on a collaborative basis across County and LEP boundaries offers the best option for all three districts to derive the maximum benefit from and how it might work. Consultants were appointed to interrogate a wide range of evidence bases and a specific brief based on our questions. They are ready to produce the first draft by the end of March 2017. We will then consider them and refine them to produce the final draft to be considered by each Council's politicians in due course. The initial findings are interesting, though not unexpected. We look forward to seeing the first draft in the belief that combining together in a single narrative, the Morecambe Bay area hosts economic activity of national importance which will be better to market and articulate in a joint manner rather than separately. The other links are very positive and we can address economic development and strategic planning activities through co-operation and that we will carry more weight together and reduce costs. All three Councils agreed to go ahead and I will keep the Council informed when the report is produced and try to involve all groups.

The Official Launch of the Heysham Gateway road was well attended on the 02 March. It is always useful to meet a wide variety of people with interests in the area.

On the 07 March the Cabinet met with Morecambe Town Council representatives. The Neighbourhood Plan, weeds, flower bed planting and fly tipping were discussed, as well as tackling anti-social behaviour and car parking charges and parking in general.

On the 08 March the Chief Executive and I visited Chorley to talk about their successful commercialisation, which was very enlightening. We intend to learn from other successful district as much as we can. They asked to visit us to talk about tourism.

At the Dukes Board meeting on the 09 March, it was the last occasion that County Board Members would be there as funding has been withdrawn. They were sorry to go and the theatre will have a huge task to make up for the lost funding. Fortunately, the Arts Council are not withdrawing their part of the match funding.

Some members attended the funeral of ex-Councillor Pat Quinton on the 15 March. It was very well attended and sincere tributes were paid to her as a family member and as a very competent and effective Councillor.

The Lancashire Combined Authority meeting on the 21 March received reports on the five themes. It was decided that we would continue to meet together and to invite Wyre to join us in the future. The feeling is that contact with the Government has stalled and therefore we have chosen to continue our meetings after the County Elections. Lancashire councils have built a very strong relationship, recognising that administrative boundaries and political differences must be put aside to support development and investments across the county to the benefit of all of Lancashire's residents and businesses.

#### **4.0 Other Matters**

Cabinet minutes for 21 March 2017 are attached at the end of this agenda.

#### **5.0 Key Decisions**

The following Key Decisions were taken by Cabinet on 21 March 2017:

- (1) Property Level Resilience Grants, Lune Square and the Millrace

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

- (1) Dukes Theatre – Re-roofing
- (2) Planning Application Fee Increases
- (3) Enterprise ICT Storage

#### **Background Papers**

Cabinet agenda and minutes of the meetings held on 21 March 2017.