



## **Leader's Report**

**28 February 2018**

### **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 7 February 2018 and 13 February 2018 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 31 January 2018.

##### **3.0 Leader's Comments**

On Wednesday 17 January, members of the Museums Cabinet Liaison Group visited the Maritime Museum. This was the first time that most members had been behind the scenes in the Museum. The aim was to view the spaces that the Council stores its artefacts. It is a magnificent building but it is very cramped and we have some fantastic exhibits that will never be seen by the public. Cabinet has received a report on 'Beyond the Castle' and this building's usage could be entirely different if the archaeological findings come to fruition. The report on the Museums Service and on archaeological opportunities are both very interesting. The Archaeology report is fascinating, both in its historical context and the possibility of significant findings for Lancaster.

On 24 January I attended a lecture by Archbishop John Sentamu at the University of Cumbria. He was opening the new building named after him. It is a lecture theatre with all the latest technology. He spoke well about education and how it changes, and his

strength is his ability to be self-deprecating and to introduce humour into his speeches. He and his wife spoke to the Mayor and Mayoress and myself at the reception afterwards and they are both very friendly, very natural people to engage with.

The University Court took place on Saturday 26 January. This will be the last of its kind as the University Council has decided to change the format. They are intending to bring the Court into the public arena with various changes and to improve the links to the City. They will hold public meetings and allow questions to be asked. It was a very good debate at which the Mayor and myself spoke. The speakers were sorry to lose the existing contact, many coming from long distances to attend. We will watch with interest how the new arrangements engage with the public.

The Rt Hon Alan Milburn, Chancellor of Lancaster University, talked about the success of the University's African expansion into Ghana and into Malaysia and China. He said the University is based on the principles of equity and excellence together with diversity. The Times 'University of the Year' needs to have a mission for the future in a time of rapid change.

Roger Liddle, Pro-Chancellor and Chair of the University Council, said that the University needs to widen and modernise their engagement strategy and to have even closer links to Lancaster City Council. Professor Mark Smith, the Vice-Chancellor, spoke of the links being very close and the two bodies working together on projects and having regular meetings. He spoke of 'fruitful ongoing cooperation'. The Health Innovation Campus is to go ahead in December with a September 2019 opening scheduled. He said that 10 years ago there were 4194 students and today 5228. There were 764 staff then and now 985 so the staff / student ratio has fallen. All speakers congratulated students and staff on gaining the University of the Year award and that Lancaster University was a clear winner.

I recently visited University House to give evidence of cooperation and good relations between the City and the University, which contributed to a Certificate of Customer Service excellence.

On 8 February Councillor Hanson and myself spoke to Dr Roger Mitchell from the Morecambe Bay Poverty Truth Commission, which is the local branch of a national organisation. They cover the Morecambe Bay area from Fleetwood to Barrow conducting research on poverty. His post is honorary as he is a volunteer who has retired from Lancaster University. They work with small groups and encourage people to tell their stories. Some third-year undergraduates and post-graduates are also taking part. He came to invite us to the launch at Lancaster Town Hall on 6 July. The NHS is very heavily involved and Dr Andrew Knox from the Clinical Commissioning Group is also part of the team. He gave evidence that there are 31 cases of rickets in Morecambe. They are keen to keep the groups cross-party. Their funding is an issue as unfortunately the County Council have withdrawn the proposed £30,000 grant from the Health and Wellbeing Partnership.

A meeting with the Chamber and the two Business Improvement Districts took place on 6 February. Items for discussion included: Visitor Information Centres, Car Parking, Markets, Digital Lancaster, Commercial Property and Frontierland. Community Gardens and Back Alleys were also discussed. We discussed business need for lettable spaces in the Local Plan and our Property Reviews. They also want the Chief Executive and myself

to appeal to the County Council to withdraw their proposed cuts to the two Visitor Information Centres. We met County Council representatives on Friday 16 February when we put the case forward for this, as the City Council is again unable to fund the full amount.

## **Other Matters**

Cabinet minutes for 7 February 2018 and 13 February 2018 are attached at the end of this agenda.

## **4.0 Key Decisions**

The following Key Decisions were taken by Cabinet on 13 February 2018:

- (1) Beyond the Castle Archaeological Site
- (2) Reshaping the Council's Museum Service
- (3) Fees and Charges Review – 2018/19
- (4) Budget and Policy Framework Update 2018-2022
- (5) Treasury Management Strategy 2018/19

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

- (1) Appointment of Constructor Team for Lancaster Lower Lune (Phase 3) Flood Risk Management Scheme (decision called-in)
- (2) Renewal of SVP (Soil & Vent Pipe) and RWP (Rain Water Pipe) to High Rise Flat Blocks
- (3) Condition Survey Project
- (4) Flood Damage Repairs, Halton
- (5) Occupational Health Provision

## **Background Papers**

Cabinet agenda and minutes of the meetings held on 7 February 2018 and 13 February 2018.