



Committee: CABINET

Date: TUESDAY, 11 APRIL 2023

Venue: LANCASTER TOWN HALL

Time: 6.00 P.M.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies

2. Minutes

To receive as a correct record the minutes of Cabinet held on Tuesday, 14 March 2023 (previously circulated).

3. Items of Urgent Business Authorised by the Leader

To consider any such items authorised by the Leader and to consider where in the agenda the item(s) are to be considered.

4. Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations by Councillors of interests in respect of items on this Agenda.

Councillors are reminded that, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, they are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which have not already been declared in the Council's Register of Interests. (It is a criminal offence not to declare a disclosable pecuniary interest either in the Register or at the meeting).

Whilst not a legal requirement, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 and in the interests of clarity and transparency, Councillors should declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which they have already declared in the Register, at this point in the meeting.

In accordance with Part B Section 2 of the Code Of Conduct, Councillors are required to declare the existence and nature of any other interests as defined in paragraphs 8(1) or 9(2) of the Code of Conduct.

5. Public Speaking

To consider any such requests received in accordance with the approved procedure.

Reports

Reports from Overview and Scrutiny

The Chair of Overview & Scrutiny has been invited to present the two task group reports that have been referred from the Committee (Agenda items 6 & 7)

6. Morecambe Future High Street Bid Informal Task Group (Pages 3 - 25)
Report of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee
7. Planning Informal Task Group (Pages 26 - 43)
Report of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee
8. Hackney Carriage Fare Review 2023 (Pages 44 - 50)
(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Brookes)
Report of the Licensing Manager
9. Lancaster City Council's Strategic Vision for Creativity and Culture (Pages 51 - 72)
(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Thornberry)
Report of Head of Property (report published on 3 April 2023)

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

(i) Membership

Councillors Caroline Jackson (Chair), Kevin Frea (Vice-Chair), Dave Brookes, Gina Dowding, Tim Hamilton-Cox, Tricia Heath, Cary Matthews, Sandra Thornberry, Anne Whitehead and Jason Wood

(ii) Queries regarding this Agenda

Please contact Liz Bateson, Democratic Services - email ebateson@lancaster.gov.uk.

(iii) Apologies

Please contact Democratic Support, telephone 582000, or alternatively email democracy@lancaster.gov.uk.

MARK DAVIES,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
TOWN HALL,
DALTON SQUARE,
LANCASTER, LA1 1PJ

Published on THURSDAY 30 MARCH, 2023.

CABINET**Morecambe Future High Street Bid Informal Task Group****11th April 2023****Report of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To request Cabinet to consider the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the Morecambe Future High Street bid.				
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Referral from Overview and Scrutiny
				Y
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision.	N/A.			
This report is public.				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**RECOMMENDATION 1**

That Officers ensure in future bids that consultants have a local knowledge base, and that use is made of expertise available in the area, including nearby universities.

RECOMMENDATION 2

That comparisons with other locales should be like-for-like: there is no benefit in comparing a seaside-based, seasonal tourist town with major city yields and operations.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That a Capital Strategy policy be developed to include the purchase of land in Morecambe.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

That any future bids (whether for Morecambe or other parts of the district or the district as a whole) involve consultation with a wider base of stakeholders, with a broader scope of interests, and further that all councillors in the affected area are invited to participate, from Town, City and County councils.

RECOMMENDATION 5

That full consultation takes place with County highways, rail and Eden North to ensure a whole structured, environmentally-friendly transport plan is conceived for the area.

RECOMMENDATION 6

That more sustainable regeneration proposals are developed following wider consultation.

RECOMMENDATION 7

That conversion of empty business premises and new build of housing should be undertaken throughout the town centre, to bring back the community feel of the whole central area.

RECOMMENDATION 8:

That the Winter Gardens is an essential part of Morecambe's future and should be a part of any future bid of a similar nature.

RECOMMENDATION 9:

That the Council tries to source other funding for hyperfast broadband in Morecambe.

RECOMMENDATION 10:

- (i) That this bid is not reused/recycled in the future, as it is outdated and no longer fit for purpose post-COVID.
- (ii) That a new Morecambe Area Action Plan is drafted with full participation of all Morecambe councillors and with business representatives.
- (iii) That for clarity, an Executive Summary be attached to officers' reports on, which also defines the original Council brief, tasks undertaken, personnel involved and third party outsourcing responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATION 11

That, as a rule, final bids (which ultimately involve spending commitments by the Council) should be signed off by the Departmental

Head, the Chief Executive, the portfolio-holder and the Leader of the Council.

1.0 Introduction

To consider the recommendations contained in the Morecambe Future High Street bid Informal Task Group report.

2.0 Proposal Details

2.1 After the unsuccessful Morecambe Future High Street bid, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to carry out a short piece of work to consider the bid that had been submitted and make recommendations to increase the City Council's chances in the future.

2.2 The purpose of the Morecambe Future High Street Bid Informal Task Group was to assist in ensuring that any future bids that were submitted by the City Council were given the best chance of success in accessing the necessary funding for the sustainable economic priorities of the local community.

2.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report of the Informal Task Group and made a number of recommendations for consideration by Cabinet.

2.5 The Morecambe High Street Bid Informal Task Group report is attached.

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 No formal consultation has taken place.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

Option 1:	To accept the recommendations as set out in the report.
Option 2:	Not to accept the recommendations as set out in the report.
Option 3:	To make alternative proposals to those recommended by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5.0 Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Preferred Option (and comments)

5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Preferred Option is Option 1. To accept the recommendations set out in the report.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Cabinet is requested to consider the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee set out in report.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

This report contributes to the Council's priorities, most notably those associated with an Inclusive and Prosperous Local Economy.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

There are no direct impacts as a result of this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

With regard to recommendation 10, Members are reminded that the current Morecambe AAP is a formal Development Plan Document (DPD) that constitutes part of the Council's adopted Development Plan. The current Morecambe Area Action Plan awaits the conclusions of a monitoring report. As the preparation of any new or reviewed Development Plan Document requires the deployment of significant resources, decisions on which Development Plan Documents to prepare must be taken in light of consideration of the necessity, purposes and benefits of such a document, and, in consideration of other tasks and priorities. The Council's formal commitment to prepare or review Development Plan Documents is contained in the published Local Development Scheme (LDS). There are processes for establishing and updating the work programme provided within the LDS; the process is one which requires direction from the relevant Portfolio Holder, accordingly, it is not appropriate for Cabinet to recommend the creation of a new AAP outside of the appropriate formal mechanism.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. Any recommendations resulting in the requirement of officer time will be managed from within existing budgets and any future expenditure needed will be reported back to members as part of future projects.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Risk of unsuccessful bids.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

Although there are no direct financial implications as a result of this report many of the recommendations if fully implemented could have significant financial consequences in future years. These would need to be considered in line with the Council's current Budget & Policy Framework and existing governance requirements.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee support the work of the Cabinet and the Council as a whole and may be supported by Task Groups. These lead to reports and recommendations that advise the Cabinet and the Council as a whole on its policies, budget and service delivery.

It is important that Overview & Scrutiny should act as a 'critical friend' for Cabinet.

Officers are responsible for advising on and implementing policies, and for the delivery of services in the manner that they consider is most appropriate given their managerial and professional expertise. Councillors would not be expected to be involved in the detail of implementation, but can expect reports on progress.

External funding arrangements, and bids for funding, are governed by the Financial Procedure Rules and they provide that Chief Officers (formally Directors) have authority, with the agreement of the Chief Finance Officer, to express an interest in, bid for, and accept external funds where the total value of the bid does not exceed the Council's Key Decision thresholds and the proposal is (at least) budget neutral, subject to due diligence being demonstrated.

Chief Officers have authority to submit expressions of interest for external funding above Key Decision thresholds:

- (a) subject to consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the relevant Portfolio holder, and additionally
- (a) the Leader and the Chief Executive, where the expression of interest falls outside of the Budget and/or Policy Framework.

For clarity, an expression of interest in itself does not constitute a Key Decision.

The advice on procedure from the Monitoring Officer is to take each recommendation in turn and either accept, reject or partially accept, giving reasons for the decision.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact Officer: Stephen Metcalfe
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E-mail: sjmetcalfe@lancaster.gov.uk

Report of

**THE MORECAMBE FUTURE HIGH
STREETS BID**

INFORMAL TASK GROUP



CONTENTS

1. Foreword by Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny
2. Summary of Recommendations
3. Introduction
4. Informal Task Group
5. Findings
6. Conclusions

FOREWORD

Following the Council's unsuccessful bid under HM Government's Future High Streets Initiative, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee established an informal task group to consider why the bid had failed and what lessons might be learned from the experience in order to make success more likely in future bids.

The Report of the task group was submitted to Cabinet on 8th June 2021 but was rejected on the grounds that it consisted substantially only of a list of recommendations, with insufficient explanation of the background giving rise to them. I agreed to produce a fuller Report for consideration by Cabinet. This is the Report I promised.

I was not a member of Overview & Scrutiny when this Report was prepared and did not participate in the task group or in the drafting of the original Report. I have had to base this Report on notes and drafts supplied to me by my predecessor, Cllr Patricia Heath, for which I am grateful to her.

Councillor Richard Austen-Baker

LL.B., Ph.D., Barrister

Chairman, Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Abbeystead, August 2021

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations have been re-ordered to reflect the order they appear in this report with some grammatical corrections.

RECOMMENDATION 1

That Officers ensure in future bids that consultants have a local knowledge base, and that use is made of expertise available in the area, including nearby universities.

RECOMMENDATION 2

That comparisons with other locales should be like-for-like: there is no benefit in comparing a seaside-based, seasonal tourist town with major city yields and operations.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That a Capital Strategy policy be developed to include the purchase of land in Morecambe.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

That any future bids (whether for Morecambe or other parts of the district or the district as a whole) involve consultation with a wider base of stakeholders, with a broader scope of interests, and further that all councillors in the affected area are invited to participate, from Town, City and County councils.

RECOMMENDATION 5

That full consultation takes place with County highways, rail and Eden North to ensure a whole structured, environmentally-friendly transport plan is conceived for the area.

RECOMMENDATION 6

That more sustainable regeneration proposals are developed following wider consultation.

RECOMMENDATION 7

That conversion of empty business premises and new build of housing should be undertaken throughout the town centre, to bring back the community feel of the whole central area.

RECOMMENDATION 8:

That the Winter Gardens is an essential part of Morecambe's future and should be a part of any future bid of a similar nature.

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- (i) That this bid is not reused/recycled in the future, as it is outdated and no longer fit for purpose post-COVID.**
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- (iii) That for clarity, an Executive Summary be attached to officers' reports on, which also defines the original Council brief, tasks undertaken, personnel involved and third party outsourcing responsibilities.**

RECOMMENDATION 11

That, as a rule, final bids (which ultimately involve spending commitments by the Council) should be signed off by the Departmental Head, the Chief Executive, the portfolio-holder and the Leader of the Council.

I INTRODUCTION

- I.1 The Future High Streets Fund ('FHSF') was launched by HM Government in December 2018 to '...support and fund local areas' plans to make their high streets and town centres fit for the future' (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, *Future High Streets Fund Call for Proposals*, 26 December 2018). The fund offered a total of £675 million pounds in co-funding, as well as the offer of expert input and assistance, and represented an attempt to assist in redevelopment of town centre areas in decline. The history of Morecambe's decline as a tourist destination and its accompanying general social and economic malaise is well-known locally. The causes of this and the prospects of visitor-led rejuvenation of the town are canvassed in, amongst other places, D. Jarratt, 'The Development and Decline of Morecambe in the 19th and 20th Centuries: A resort caught in the tide' (2019) 11 *Journal of Tourism History* 1-21. The revival of Morecambe's economic, physical and social fabric is generally seen as a key priority for Lancaster City Council, and Morecambe was an obvious candidate for support such as that offered by the FHSF.
- I.1 Lancaster City Council submitted a bid to the fund on 21st March 2019
- I.2 A letter to Councillor Heath from Luke Hall MP (Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government) of 28 June 2021 (hereinafter 'the letter' or 'the Government letter') explained that although the bid passed the 'gateway' criteria it fell very far short of the central benefit cost ratio ('BCR') threshold required for a successful bid. The original bid document stated in its first line that the BCR was expected to be - 0.48. This increased after clarification to +0.27, but that is still a long way short of the +2.0 expected. The Council argued that conditions in Morecambe were especially challenging owing to market failure and low land values, which are not unique to Morecambe, as the minister points out in paragraph 4 of his letter: 'The Fund has awarded up to £149m to 13 local authorities in the North West, all experiencing a challenging context. [The Council] may wish to contact them and learn about how they addressed similar issues.' Further feedback in the minister's letter identified that '...whilst there was some evidence of stakeholder engagement, public consultation had not taken place, so could not evidence the public backing we were looking to see demonstrated.' Deliverability was also a concern because '...contingencies were on the low side given the early nature of the projects and no allowance for optimism bias.' Council funding had not been explicitly approved; private sector funding had not been secured; there was a lack of clarity as to the rationale for calculating levels of grant required for some aspects, for example, the market hall. Inadequate progress had been made on contractual arrangements with much work to be undertaken, including negotiations with market traders, leading to a risk that not all funding could be deployed by the end date of 31 March 2024.

- 1.3 The bid process was managed by the directorate for Economic Growth and Regeneration and signed off by the Director of Economic Growth and Regeneration.

2 TASK GROUP

- 2.1 On 10th March 2021 the Overview & Scrutiny Committee resolved to establish an informal task group to establish what went wrong with the bid and what could be improved in relation to future bids. The membership of the task group was as follows: Councillors Anderton, Dennison, Duggan, Heath and Matthews. Councillor Heath chaired the Task Group meetings.

- 2.2 The task group assessed documentary evidence as well as having oral input from a number of people with relevant knowledge.

At the Committee meeting on 10th March 2021 the Director of Economic Growth and Regeneration attended the meeting and provided the Committee with an overview of the recent Future High Street bid for Morecambe.

The Task Group met on two occasions. At the task group meeting held on 15th April 2021, the Director of Economic Growth and Regeneration along with the Head of Economic Growth attended the meeting to discuss the bid process and respond to questions from Members of the group. This was an evidence gathering meeting.

The minutes of the Committee and Task Group meetings when this issue was considered are Appended to this report as Appendix B.

- 2.3 The Report of the task group was submitted to Cabinet to consider on 8th June 2021. After some discussion Cabinet agreed to defer consideration of the item to the next Cabinet meeting in order that enquiries could be made with Democratic Services as to whether there was a report from the task group that could be presented to Cabinet along with the recommendations.

- 2.4 As referred to in the Foreword to this report the current Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was not a member of Overview & Scrutiny when the Report was prepared and did not participate in the task group or in the drafting of the original Report. He has agreed to produce a fuller Report for consideration by Cabinet.

3 FINDINGS

- 3.1 The reasons given by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for the failure of the City Council's bid have already been adumbrated above (paragraph 1.3). They may be summarized as: (i) very low BCR, far below the

threshold set by HMG; (ii) lack of evidence of public engagement; (iii) insufficient clarity relating to delivery, in particular inadequate contingencies, poorly explained rationales, and a lack of evidence of realism (optimism bias); (iv) a failure to put Council and private-sector funding commitments in place; and (v) inadequate progress on connected matters (e.g., negotiations with market traders). This Report will briefly deal with these in turn, before considering a number of substantive elements of the bid which caused concern to the members of the task group. The Report will turn finally to general questions of process not addressed elsewhere in the Report.

3.2 Low Cost-Benefit Ratio

- 3.2.1 HMG's criteria for bids included a 'BCR' (benefit-to-cost ratio, more usually referred to as a cost-benefit ratio) of +2.0 or better. That is to say, that for every £1 spent under the bid, at least £2 of benefits should accrue to the local economy. The City Council's bid opened with a statement to the effect that we recognized that our bid failed to meet this criterion, having actually a *negative* BCR of -0.48. For every pound spent, then, there would only be 52 pence of benefit to the area. Given this analysis, it is hard to avoid the question of why a bid was submitted at all. However, the so-called 'gateway' criteria were met and funding of £150,000 was given to the Council allowing expertise to be bought in to improve the bid. The net benefit of this money was to improve the BCR to a positive +0.27, meaning that for every pound spent £1.27 of benefits would be achieved. This was still a very long way below the threshold.
- 3.2.2 The robustness of the economic assumptions underlying the stated BCRs is also a matter which ought to have been questioned before any bid was submitted. While it is not certain that they were not robust, it is equally unclear that the various possible outturns were given adequate consideration. For instance, a programme of investment improving a town centre environment, and capital investment in town centre land, might well act as correctives for market failure and a stimulus for increasing land values. Indeed, that is part of the rationale of such investment. The engagement of economic analysts, perhaps from the university, might have resulted in a different view being taken of the BCR achievable from the proposals. This seems not to have been the only area where choice of consultants and the design of consultation processes could have been better.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Officers ensure in future bids that consultants have a local knowledge base, and that use is made of expertise available in the area, including nearby universities.

That comparisons with other locales should be like-for-like: there is no benefit in comparing a seaside-based, seasonal tourist town with major city yields and operations.

That a Capital Strategy policy be developed to include the purchase of land in Morecambe.

3.3 Lack of Evidence of Public Engagement

3.3.1 The Government letter identified this is a consideration. The letter stated that HMG expected evidence of public backing for bids, but that this was lacking in Morecambe's case because a public consultation had not been held. It seems that the only consultee was Morecambe Coastal Communities Team ('MCCT'), which was set up by the Council and comprised three councillors from one political grouping and two festival organizers. Morecambe BID was listed but the management board was not in fact consulted. Morecambe Town Council was also listed as a consultee, but again, members were not consulted: the chair at the time was one of the three councillors on the MCCT. It is evident that HMG did not consider this to amount to public consultation at all. MCCT does not appear to represent a sufficiently wide range of stakeholders and viewpoints.

3.3.2 It is, perhaps, not surprising in the circumstances, that the bid was heavily reliant on the development/maintenance of festival events, the wider benefits of which are not demonstrated and may be questionable.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) That any future bids involve consultation with a wider base of stakeholders, with a broader scope of interests.**
- (ii) That all Morecambe councillors are invited to participate, from Town, City and County councils.**

3.4 Insufficient Clarity Relating to Delivery

3.4.1 The Government letter contains the following paragraph:

The picture on deliverability was more mixed. There was a reasonable delivery plan and budget costings were generally clear. However, contingencies were on the low side given the early nature of the projects and no allowance for optimism bias. Risks existed on co-funding as council co-funding had not been expressly approved and the private sector funding was

not secured. In some cases, it was not clear what the rationale was for calculating the level of FHSF grant required e.g. market hall. Finally, with respect to contractual arrangements, it appeared that a great deal of work still needed to be undertaken on a number of complex projects including negotiations with market traders. Consequently, there was a risk that not all funding would be deployed by 31 March 2024 when the FHSF grant would end.

3.4.2 This is a fairly damning judgment on the bid put forward by the Council. It is impossible to avoid asking why Council funding had not been approved and why private-sector funding was also not secured. These would be, in anyone's terms, basic matters to be established before the bid was put forward. In the view of the task group, these are basic failings in approving the bid document. It is not clear that a proper business plan was put forward. If not, why not? Indeed, evidence seems to be lacking of business plans being prepared for major Council projects generally. Why is this? An individual businessperson approaching a funding source would be expected to have a fully worked-out business plan to back their funding bids.

3.4.3 The question of contingencies being 'on the low side' and 'optimism bias' are matters of professional judgment and the papers on which this Report is based do not give sufficient grounds for comment beyond saying that these points need to be borne in mind during preparation of future bids.

3.5 Inadequate Progress on Connected Matters

3.5.1 There seems to have been a lack of evidence put in to support the bid, in relation to connected matters, so any progress was not made clear (assuming progress had been made).

3.6 The task group considered and made recommendations on a number of substantive specifics, viz.: (1) 'Destination Morecambe'; (2) 'New Contemporary Heart'; (3) redevelopment of telephone exchange car park; (4) Winter Gardens provision; (5) 'Art Deco Revival'; (6) 'Start-up St Laurence'; (7) 'Animated Arndale'; and (8) Hyperfast broadband. These will now be considered in turn and in that order.

3.6.1 'Destination Morecambe'

3.6.1.1 This concerned 'restructuring and reimagining how people arrive and connect with the town. the bid was very vague on how this was to be achieved. For instance, station platforms are open to the elements, but there was no suggestion of covering for protection of passengers. There are no directional signs - passengers arrive to a 'void' and at a loss of which way to turn, but this has not been addressed. There were no details on directing vehicles to the centre of town or the car parks

etc. The Task Group was at a loss to find any positive suggestions as to what this would actually mean.

RECOMMENDATION:

That full consultation takes place with County highways, rail and Eden North to ensure a whole structured, environmentally-friendly transport plan is conceived for the area.

3.6.2 *'New Contemporary Heart'*

3.6.2.1 The bid proposed one new indoor and two outdoor events areas, alongside the indoor facility at the Winter Gardens and the proposed events venue at Eden North, without any suggestions as to how all these areas would be sustainable, and no revenue budget from which they could be facilitated.

3.6.2.2 In respect of the proposed indoor events space, the task group observes that the current 'Festival Market' was originally built as an indoor events space, but it only lasted a short time before it became a permanent market, because it was not sustainable as an indoor events venue, even at a time when the Council had its own large arts and events department. The bid does not make clear why the proposed indoor events space would not merely be a repeat of the same mistake. Moreover, the scheme does not make clear where the 80-plus existing businesses would be relocated.

3.6.2.3 In respect of the additional outside events spaces, there is no rationale given for the establishment of these. If these spaces were only in occasional use, and unused for most days in the year, it is hard to see what value they add. Again, there is no mention of revenue funding to support festivals year-round.

3.6.2.4 The task group noted that the Portas funding attempted to repurpose Victoria Street as the town's 'high street' was unsuccessful. The group believed that the Promenade will always be Morecambe's 'high street' and the bid missed the chance to direct people from the Promenade into the various business-based streets behind.

RECOMMENDATION:

That more sustainable regeneration proposals are developed following wider consultation.

3.6.3 *Development of Telephone Exchange Car Park*

3.6.3.1 The task group found that there was no clear rationale for developing more retail premises when there are so many retail premises in Morecambe that are empty at the present time.

RECOMMENDATION:

That conversion of empty business premises and new build of housing should be undertaken throughout the town centre, to bring back the community feel of the whole central area.

3.6.4 *Winter Gardens*

3.6.4.1 The task group approved that aspect of the bid which concerned the provision of essential new infrastructure at the Winter Gardens, to increase capacity, opportunities and viability.

RECOMMENDATION:

That this aspect is an essential part of Morecambe's future and should be a part of any future bid of a similar nature.

3.6.5 *Art Deco Revival*

3.6.5.1 The task group agreed with the principle of bringing former department store buildings back into use, as the bid proposed. However, it was unclear in the bid how this was to be achieved.

3.6.6 *Start-up St Laurence*

3.6.6.1 The proposal here was the provision of high-quality workspace in order to boost Morecambe's 'offer' to business. The task group considered that more information was needed on this aspect of the bid and observed that the cost of this seems extremely high.

3.6.7 *'Animated Arndale'*

3.6.7.1 This came with the strapline 'creating flexible spaces to activate traditional shopping core'. The task group was unclear what this actually meant. Would it, for instance, mean another void events area? Again, more detail is required in future, including specifics on use and sustainability, lacking in the bid. Questions of detail will need to be addressed; for instance, would the current problematic access to the delivery/service area be changed?

3.6.8 *Hyperfast Broadband*

3.6.8.1 This involved installation of engineered servicing to facilitate hyperfast broadband provision for Morecambe town centre. The task group considered this to be an essential development, the future of which should not be blighted by the failure of this bid.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Council tries to source other funding for this essential purpose.

4 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Morecambe represents a clear case for intervention to revive a struggling tourist-based economy, and to restore a sense of purpose, pride and community cohesion. The town ought to succeed in bids such as the FHSF and was indeed expected to do so. That the bid failed was due to multiple factors, which have been identified and discussed in this Report.

4.2 There would seem to be various reasons for the unsuccessful bid. These include over confidence and a lack of use of expertise and experience in the local area. Not enough local consultation was undertaken in the pre-bid processes. There is also the need for a more open and wider consultation from a wider range of people with an interest and expertise in the relevant field, elected members of the City Council and relevant town and/or parish councils, and the wider public

Without a change in outlook and attitudes, there is little likelihood of learning from past errors to improve success rates in the future.

- 4.3 A culture of transparency and accountability, coupled with a willingness to listen to a wide range of voices and adapt proposals to take account of outside views, would probably lead to greater success in future bids and proposals. A more business-like approach to planned investments is also needed, involving the development on each occasion of proper business plans, revenue projections, and criteria for failure (e.g., 'the project will be considered to have failed if: (a) the cost exceeds budget by more than 10%; or (b) practical completion is more than 6 months behind schedule...'), and proper oversight of major projects, bids and proposals needs to be maintained at all stages, to avoid a silo situation, where one senior officer is in complete control from start to finish. Nevertheless, there should be a senior officer who has 'ownership' of a project or bid, and will be held accountable if it fails (as well as being given due credit where it succeeds).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (iv) That this bid is not reused/recycled in the future, as it is outdated and no longer fit for purpose post-COVID.**
- (v) That a new Morecambe Area Action Plan is drafted with full participation of all Morecambe councillors and with business representatives.**
- (vi) That for clarity, an Executive Summary be attached to officers' reports on, which also defines the original Council brief, tasks undertaken, personnel involved and third party outsourcing responsibilities.**
- (vii) That, as a rule, final bids (which ultimately involve spending commitments by the Council) should be signed off by the Departmental Head, the Chief Executive, the portfolio-holder and the Leader of the Council.**



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

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Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government

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Our Ref: 10953461

28 June 2021

Thank you for your email dated 8 April, to Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, regarding Lancaster City Council's unsuccessful application to the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF). I appreciate how disappointing this news is to you and I am grateful to you for taking the time to contact this department along with it.

I know from your Chief Executive's letter in February how disappointing the outcome of our competition was. I appreciate you are looking to learn from the experience and have outlined below how the competition was run and feedback on your business case.

All 101 places that passed our expression of interest stage, including Morecambe, were supported to develop strong business cases through a combination of up to £150 thousand of revenue funding, workshops and guidance. Business cases were assessed against the gateway criteria and minimum central benefit cost ratio (BCR) threshold.¹ Proposals that passed these requirements were then assessed for value for money, deliverability and strategic fit with the objectives of the Fund.² The clarifications exercise provided all places an opportunity to address a small number of common mistakes around the gateway criteria and minimum BCR threshold, where places had not followed guidance correctly.

Morecambe's business case passed the gateway criteria, but it failed to meet the minimum threshold for the central BCR. The BCR increased from a negative 0.48 at the business case stage to a positive 0.27 at the clarification stage. However, this remained significantly below the expected threshold of 2.0. The council was aware of this and stated in the business case that this low BCR was due to persistent market failure and low land value. The Fund has awarded up to £149m to 13 local authorities in the North West, all experiencing a challenging context. You may wish to contact them and learn about how they addressed similar issues.³

Whilst we were not able to consider Morecombe's business case further due to the low BCR, I am happy to offer some wider feedback. The strategic case was good, with a clear articulation of how Morecombe's plans met the Future High Street Funds objectives and wider local objectives. It also clearly demonstrated how it addressed local challenges and market failure. We also looked for strong local stakeholder and public support in applications, and whilst there was some

¹ A central BCR of 2.0 was required for a business case to be eligible for the fund. In exceptional circumstances a central BCR of between 1.5 and 2.0 would have been acceptable, if a business case demonstrated strong non-monetised benefits and strategic vision.

² This assessment has been done in accordance with HM Treasury Green Book appraisal guidance and criteria.

³ Details of the 72 places in receipt of FHSF awards: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/830-million-funding-boost-for-high-streets>

evidence of stakeholder engagement, public consultation had not taken place, so could not evidence the public backing we were looking to see demonstrated.

The picture on deliverability was more mixed. There was a reasonable delivery plan and budget costings were generally clear. However, contingencies were on the low side given the early nature of the projects and no allowance for optimism bias. Risks existed on co-funding as council co-funding had not been explicitly approved and the private sector funding was not secured. In some cases, it was not clear what the rationale was for calculating the level of FHSF grant required e.g. market hall. Finally, with respect to contractual arrangements, it appeared that a great deal of work still needed to be undertaken on a number of complex projects including negotiations with market traders. Consequently, there was a risk that not all funding would be deployed by 31 March 2024 when the FHSF grant would end.

Once again, I appreciate how disappointing this news will be to you and I hope that this feedback will prove useful to you for any future funding bids.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'LUKE HALL', with a long, wavy horizontal line extending to the right.

LUKE HALL MP

Appendix B

Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting – 10th March 2021

The Chairman welcomed the Corporate Director for Economic Growth and Regeneration, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Sustainable Economic Prosperity and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Recovery & Resilience to the meeting.

The Corporate Director for Economic Growth and Regeneration provided the Committee with an overview of the recent Future High Street bid for Morecambe.

Members were advised of the application process and the reasons the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government gave for the bid being unsuccessful. The bid was one of many Lancashire bids that were not successful with only one in the county securing funding.

It was suggested that an Informal Task Group be established to consider the bid and report back to the next meeting of the Committee and that the 2 Cabinet Members be invited to the April meeting to consider the Task Group's findings.

Resolved :-

- (1) That the Corporate Director for Economic Growth and Regeneration and the Cabinet Members be thanked for their attendance at the meeting.
- (2) That an Informal Task Group be established to consider the bid and report back to the next meeting of the Committee.
- (3) That the 2 Cabinet Members be invited to the April meeting to consider the Task Group's findings.

Task Group Meeting – 30th March 2021

The Informal Task Group had a general discussion about the Future High Street Morecambe bid.

As it was such a lengthy document, it was agreed that the consideration of the document would be split between two groups and reported back to the next meeting of the Group.

Task Group Meeting – 15th April 2021

The Director for Economic Growth and Regeneration gave the Group a detailed overview of the process that was undertaken in submitting the bid for the Future High Streets funding. Members of the Group were guided through the criteria and the complexities of putting the bid together and how resource intensive this was.

The Group went on to discuss the issue of land value in Morecambe and the benefit cost ratio the Government applied to such projects which put Morecambe at a huge disadvantage.

Members of the Group asked a number of questions relating to the bid and how Morecambe's chances could be improved for future bids.

The Chair thanked the Director of Economic Development and Regeneration and the Head of Economic Development for their attendance and valuable input into the meeting.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting – 28th April 2021

The Chairman presented the recommendations of the Morecambe Future High Street Bid Informal Task Group. It was reported that the informal group had studied the failed bid and had a number of positive suggestions to assist with future bids for funding for the district that the City Council made.

The Committee considered each recommendation individually and made comments.

The Report of the task group was submitted to Cabinet to consider on 8th June 2021.

CABINET

Planning Informal Task Group

11th April 2023

Report of the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To request Cabinet to consider the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the Planning Informal Task Group.				
Key Decision	N	Non-Key Decision	Y	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision	N/A.			
This report is public.				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- (1) More (and more regular) training for members of Planning Regulatory Committee, including both planning law and on the respective roles of officers and members.
- (2) More guidance for residents wishing to speak at Committee meetings, in order to make the best of the available time, and more guidance for residents wishing to make written submissions.
- (3) That Council Business Committee, in the new municipal year, be requested to seek the views of the new Chair of the Planning Regulatory Committee as to the most suitable location for meetings of that Committee.
- (4) There should be no change to the system of calling-in applications: the suggestion that there are too many is not supported by evidence from members.
- (5) No substantial change to the scheme of delegation, but if a way could be found to streamline decisions in cases where the application is only coming to committee because of a connexion between the applicant and a council officer, this might be helpful.
- (6) Presentations by officers at Committee should be made shorter. Members

can be expected to read the papers beforehand, so the presenting officer only needs to make a brief introduction, draw attention to any particular 'highlights' and then answer questions from members.

- (7) Officers should be encouraged to avoid advocacy of their recommendations. Non-delegated decisions are made by the Committee and officer recommendations are just that: professional recommendations. The role of officers is to advise the Committee, not push a particular view. If the Committee refuses permission where officers had recommended approval, then officers should be prepared to assist the Council in arguing its own planning grounds for refusal against the applicant's position in the event of an appeal to the extent that this can be done within the rules and codes of conduct of the Royal Town Planning Institute, or other relevant professional body.
- (8) When officers are determining matters of detail after the granting of outline planning permission, they should work co-operatively and proactively with applicants to settle details. The current practice of rejecting detailed plans in relation to specific points, e.g., positioning of the building within the site, and then leaving it to the applicant to come up with new plans, which might also be rejected is wasteful of the time and other resources both of applicants and officers. Officers should be prepared to state what *would* be acceptable to them, to enable applicants to submit or revise detailed plans accordingly.
- (9) It should be easier for applicants to secure a site visit by an officer – for a reasonable fee (if permitted by law).
- (10) With consistency being vital to public confidence in the planning system, the Task Group strongly urges that there should be constant review of the question of how to secure maximum consistency of approach amongst officers.
- (11) Pre-application advice should follow the application throughout the process, so that officers determining or making recommendations on an application will be aware of what advice was given to the applicant and seek to avoid taking views contrary to the advice where the applicant has adopted the advice given at pre-application stage.
- (12) Effective and prompt enforcement is vital to public confidence, and failure in this area might result in negative ombudsman findings as well as general reputational damage. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Council should lift the freeze on recruitment in respect of the post in enforcement left vacant by the appointee pulling out. It would also be helpful if elected members could receive periodic briefings as to priorities and application of the enforcement process, to enable them to deal most effectively with residents' queries.

1.0 Introduction

To consider the recommendations of the Planning Informal Task Group.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to consider service delivery of Council services and to focus on one Council Service each year beginning with Planning. A scoping meeting was arranged and it was then for the

Committee to agree which type of Task Group to be established. The scoping document was submitted to and the establishment of the Task Group was agreed.

2.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report of the Informal Task Group and made a number of recommendations for consideration by Cabinet.

2.3 The Planning Informal Task Group report is attached at Appendix A.

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 Details of consultation are contained in the Task Group report.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

Option 1:	To accept the recommendations as set out in the report.
Option 2:	Not to accept the recommendations as set out in the report.
Option 3:	To make alternative proposals to those recommended by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5.0 Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s Preferred Option (and comments)

5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s Preferred Option is Option 1. To accept the recommendations set out in the report.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Cabinet is requested to consider the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in report.

<p>RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK</p> <p>This report contributes to the Council’s priorities.</p>
<p>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)</p> <p>There are no direct impacts as a result of this report.</p>
<p>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>Recommendation 6 – concision is desirable. However, it is important that officers do not feel pressured into abridging presentation at the cost of missing vital information or clarity that is needed during committee presentations. The role of the presenting officer is to ensure that</p>

the Committee are adequately informed about the application, have their professional views and are advised on the law in procedure and substantive terms. The officer may have to update the committee on development since the report and including late representations and any comments on these as well as referring to any supplementary report.

Recommendation 7 – it is right that officers should not push their views. However, officers are there to advise the committee and should warn them if a prospective decision appears indefensible – particularly if there is a real risk of costs being awarded against the authority on appeal or unlawful.

Recommendations 8, 9,10 and 11 – it is important that members do not bind the hand of officers on operational matters. In doing so there is a danger of creating unrealistic expectations for the public at large and constraints on the LPA officers discharge of their statutory functions. Best practise notes/guidance could advocate a particular approach but should leave officers unfettered in the discharge of their professional duties.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. Any recommendations resulting in the requirement of officer time will be managed from within existing budgets and any future expenditure needed will be reported back to members as part of future projects.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None.

SECTION 151 OFFICER’S COMMENTS

The section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER’S COMMENTS

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee support the work of the Cabinet and the Council as a whole and may be supported by Task Groups. These lead to reports and recommendations that advise the Cabinet and the Council as a whole on its policies, budget and service delivery.

It is important that Overview & Scrutiny should act as a ‘critical friend’ for Cabinet. Officers are responsible for advising on and implementing policies, and for the delivery of services in the manner that they consider is most appropriate given their managerial and professional expertise. Councillors would not be expected to be involved in the detail of implementation, but can expect reports on progress. In addition to this decisions surrounding recruitment of officers is a matter for the Head of Paid Service.

The advice on procedure from the Monitoring Officer is to take each recommendation in turn and either accept, reject or partially accept, giving reasons for the decision.

OFFICER COMMENTS

The Head of Planning and Place comments are provided below:

Recommendation 7 cannot stand as it is currently worded. The intent of the recommendation

is accepted, but it needs to be caveated by reference to the advice on probity provided by the Royal Town Planning Institute. Part of that probity advice is copied in the suggested additions in red, below.

1. Officers should be encouraged to avoid advocacy of their recommendations. Non-delegated decisions are made by the Committee and officer recommendations are just that: professional recommendations. The role of officers is to advise the Committee, not push a particular view. If the Committee refuses permission where officers had recommended approval, then officers should be prepared to advocate for the Council against the applicant's position in the event of an appeal where it is appropriate to do so. The advice on probity provided by the Royal Town Planning Institute is noted and will need to be taken into consideration (*"RTPI Members representing a decision that is a committee overturn and therefore contrary to their officer report should take care to avoid giving the impression any evidence they are presenting is their own professional view...Clearly the RTPI Member whose professional opinion does not conform with recommendations the evidence is supposed to support is unlikely to be the best witness in such circumstances.*) It is encouraging to see that one of the proposed workstreams identified in the Peer Review response includes devising a process for dealing with committee overturn appeals.

Recommendation 8 is not an accurate appraisal of the current situation and is not accepted. Officers do state what is acceptable to them. They do not reject detailed (Reserved Matters) plans without explaining what would be necessary to make their proposals acceptable. A recent RM application is a case in point, where an applicant has (a) not followed the pre-application advice on design and layout that was provided by both Officers and Members at the pre-application stage; and (b) the applicant has also rejected the specific points that would make the proposal acceptable.

Recommendation 9 is not correct. Applicants *do* receive a visit to their site on every application. The Council has also introduced (late last year) a site visit for every pre-application proposal submitted by an applicant. That is a chargeable service. It has been welcomed by developers and applicants (a point made during the Peer Review sessions with developer and applicants apparently).

Recommendation 11 is fair – but this already happens. The officer giving the pre-app advice will usually be the case officer (unless long-term sickness is an issue, or the officer has left the authority).

The Head of Human Resources comments are provided below:

Recommendation 12 -_The Council is not currently operating with a recruitment freeze, rather recruitment by-exception, meaning all requests to fill vacant, budgeted posts require a robust business case that is reviewed by Senior Leadership Team. Approval of vacancies remains a paid service function.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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Report of
THE PLANNING INFORMAL
TASK GROUP



Lancaster City Council
MARCH 2023

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Chair's Foreword

It was resolved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to establish an informal task group to review service delivery of the Council's planning functions as part of the work programme for 2021-22. The idea was that Overview & Scrutiny should look each year at a different aspect of the Council's service delivery, particularly in those areas which most immediately or widely affect residents and businesses coming into contact with the Council.

Regrettably, it proved impossible to organize the necessary meetings with officers from Planning during that year, but Overview & Scrutiny placed the item on the new work programme for 2022-23. At that point, senior officers decided that a peer review of the planning department by the LGA, using the knowledge and experience of planning officers at other authorities, should be carried out during this period, and that it would not be appropriate or practicable to service the needs of an informal task group at the same time.

In January, the outcome of the peer review became available and the informal task group began its work. Although the time was by then extremely limited, members of the group rose to the occasion and organized an abbreviated process to lead to a Report: this Report.

The group had the benefit of the work of the LGA peer review team, which meant that the most could be made of the limited opportunities for gathering evidence, with a focus on recommendations in the report of the peer review and also gaining additional perspectives from smaller professional users of the planning service and members of the Planning Regulatory Committee, as well as the experiences of members of the task group itself in relation to planning services in Lancaster and contacts they had had from residents.

The group very largely supports and stands behind recommendations of the peer review, with some additions and some exceptions, derived from local knowledge and evidence given to the group. Where the group depart from the peer review is entirely to do with the matter of the number of applications coming to Planning Regulatory Committee and the procedure for 'calling in' of applications, to be considered by the Committee rather than decided by officers under delegated powers. These matters had been seen as problematic by the peer review, but the evidence received by the task group suggested that they are not after all problematic, and the group have therefore suggested no change should be made that might diminish involvement by elected members.

**Councillor Richard Austen-Baker
on behalf of the Task Group**

March 2023

1. Introduction/ Background/Role of the Task Group

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to consider service delivery of Council services and to focus on one Council Service each year beginning with Planning. A scoping meeting was arranged and it was then for the Committee to agree which type of Task Group to be established. The scoping document was submitted to and the establishment of the Task Group was agreed.

2. Terms of Reference

The following Terms of Reference for the Task Group were agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- To explore how the Council can provide a Planning Service which is responsive resilient with consistent, measurable service delivery.

3. Membership of the Group

The Task Group comprised of Councillors Richard Austen-Baker (Chair), Darren Clifford, Roger Dennison and Abi Mills.

The Task Group was supported by Mark Cassidy, Head of Planning and Place and Stephen Metcalfe, Principal Democratic Support Officer.

The Task Group gratefully acknowledges the contributions and evidence freely given by:

4. Timetable of Meetings

Date of Meeting	Who Gave Evidence?	Issues Scrutinised
2 February 2023	Mark Cassidy, Head of Planning and Place	Terms of Reference and Methodology of Evidence Gathering. The Current Position in the District and the Way Forward.
10 February 2023	Mark Potts, Service Manager - Development Management Local Builder and Architect	Enforcement issues with the Council's Service Manager – Development Management. The Task Group agreed to call additional witnesses. This was to obtain stakeholder feedback from smaller businesses.
16 February 2023	Councillor Sandra Thornberry (Chair of the Planning Regulatory Committee) and Keith Budden (Vice- Chair of the Planning Regulatory Committee)	To obtain Planning Regulatory Committee Members views regarding service delivery.

-	Mark Cassidy, Head of Planning and Place	To consider by email.
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5. **Evidence Considered**

Evidence provided by the LGA PAS report, Planning and Place Service, local small builder and architects, Councillor Thornberry, Chair of the Planning Regulatory Committee and Councillor Budden, Vice-Chair of the Planning Regulatory Committee was considered.

6. **Status of Report**

This report is the work of the Informal Task Group, on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and where opinions are expressed they are not necessarily those of Lancaster City Council.

7. **Background and Context**

Each year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees a programme of work. The Committee agreed to consider service delivery of Council services and to focus on one Council Service each year beginning with Planning.

The Committee was advised that a LGA Peer Challenge Review was being undertaken regarding the Planning Service. The Committee was advised to await consideration of the findings of the LGA Peer Challenge Review prior to the work of the Task Group being commenced. This would help look at key issues and feed into the work of the Committee.

The first meeting of the Task Group was held on 2 February 2023.

8. **Information Gathering**

8.1 **Evidence Gathering/The Way Forward**

At the first meeting the Head of Planning and Place was invited to attend. Evidence had already been provided in the form of the LGA PAS Peer Challenge Review report, this being previously circulated to all Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Further questions that had been raised by the Chair of the Task Group had been submitted to and responded to by the Head of Planning and Place.

The Group asked whether further details regarding the feedback and information from those consulted as part of the LGA PAS Peer Challenge Review information gathering could be provided. The Head of Planning and Place advised that he would provide the Chair with the LGA consultant's contact details so a Teams meeting could be arranged to discuss the report and issues Members wished to raise. Unfortunately, due to time constraints the Chair of the Task Group was unable to meet with the LGA's representatives.

A further evidence gathering meeting was agreed to be held face to face on Friday, 10th February 2023, commencing at 2.00pm in Lancaster Town Hall. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Regulatory Committee were invited to give evidence, together with local architects and builders and also officer(s) to inform on the Enforcement Section. Also, provided by email, was a letter submitted by the Clerk of Aldcliffe and Stodday Parish Council regarding Planning Enforcement. Unfortunately, evidence was unable to be taken from the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning and Regulatory Committee at this meeting and a further meeting on Microsoft Teams was arranged to obtain evidence on 16 February 2023.

8.2 Information Gathering

Enforcement Section

The Service Manager – Development Management, had been invited to attend the meeting for this item. An overview of the Council's enforcement section was provided. This advised of the currently staffing levels and the excessive workload of the Section, with 750 outstanding cases. The way forward was discussed, including the unfreezing of a vacant post, whether it was expedient to continue with some of the cases, to clear historic work as soon as is practicable, the need to have a digital system in place to deal more effectively with the huge workload of the section and undertaking a review of the Enforcement Charter. The Group was informed of the 4 and 10 year rules regarding when enforcement action needed to be taken.

The Group agreed to consider recommendations from the evidence provided for inclusion in the Task Group's final report.

Additional Witnesses

A local builder/developer and a local architect had been invited to attend the meeting to provide evidence of their experiences of the service delivery provided by the Council's Planning Service. The Group wished to discuss issues with local stakeholders who may not have been involved in the LGA PAS evidence gathering interviews, from smaller local providers of building and architect services. The Chair had also been provided with evidence from a local planning consultant, regarding this issue. This to be shared with other members of the Group.

Both stakeholders provided evidence, the points being:

- The feeling that they have to "jump through hoops" and the processes are more rigorous for local/smaller developers than those for larger developers.
- Some of the processes seem to be irrelevant, particularly regarding the information required, which then seem to create backlogs.
- The Council should look at the processes from the applicant(s) point of view.
- The necessity for small developers to provide detailed information regarding drainage, air quality, environmental reports. These may be appropriate for large developers but not for small schemes.
- There was a feeling that there were inconsistencies in the advice given by case officers even when considering similar planning applications.
- It would be helpful and more consistent if the officer responsible at pre-application stage/meetings remained as the case officer throughout the planning process. Also the pre-application documentation should go forward and be submitted with the Planning application report submitted to the Committee.
- The length of time to obtain planning permission, sometimes this up to 9 months, even when using the pre-application process.
- Different views between the case officer(s) and other more senior planning staff. For instance a case officer left the Council and was replaced. From a position where the plans were being recommended for approval the new case officer required planning amendments.

- Request an earlier co-ordinated consensus view rather than having to change plans at a later date. Could there be regular Planning team meetings to discuss issues at an earlier stage. This to include conservation officers, where appropriate.
- Based on evidence provided the Task Group recommendation is to ensure that the Councillors right to call-in planning decisions and that these be submitted to Committee for consideration. (**Note:** There was a query raised at the meeting as to whether there had been a change in policy – this to be clarified. Also see recommendation of LGA PAS report).
- Possible recommendation – going forward to ensure that there is a system that is consistent and is a reliable decision making process.
- Site visits. Some developers may pay for an on-site meeting with the planning case officer prior to submission of an application. Members of the Task Group felt that more site visits should be provided for application sites being considered by the Committee.
- HIP Home Owner Pack. The Task Group requested a copy including instructions on how to complete. There are additional costs for the developer/consultant. Query why are these required as part of the Council's planning processes.
- Neighbour objections. There is a need for consistency.
- Streamlining of processes. Are there processes that are not required that would make obtaining planning decisions more efficient/effective. For instance the need for unnecessary surveys/air quality assessments. Do we have a one blanket policy covers all.
- Better communication.
- Alleged delays in the validation processes.

The view, from the evidence provided was, that the Council was a fair Council to work with, however there seemed to be a number of unnecessary documents that are required to be completed as part of the planning application process.

8.3 Information gathering

Further to the previous meeting the Task Group had agreed to meet virtually on Microsoft Teams and had invited the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Regulatory Committee Councillors Sandra Thornberry and Keith Budden to provide evidence to the Group.

Councillors Thornberry and Budden were advised by the Chair of the discussions at the previous Task Group meeting and of the issues raised by a local architect and builders. This to be added to the evidence already provided by officers from the Planning and Place service, together with the LGA PAS review report. The Group would then consider the evidence and make recommendations as part of its report.

The Chair asked both Councillors Thornberry and Budden to provide evidence and to comment upon the planning processes.

Councillor Thornberry advised that the LGA PAS review report had made valid points and that the Head of Planning and Place was addressing most of these in the form of an Implementation Plan, which had been submitted as the City Council's formal response. However, it was noted that the livestreaming recommendation had not

been taken up. It was felt that the recommendations regarding Member training, education and having time together were helpful. Currently Members held a briefing on the Friday before the meeting. This was limited to one person per group, who then could feed back to their other group members.

With regard to enforcement Councillor Thornberry had spoken to the Service Manager – Development Management, regarding recommended improvements and it had been suggested that after the Friday briefing an update be provided to all Members of the Planning Regulatory Committee.

There was a discussion regarding the venue used for meetings of the Planning Regulatory Committee. It was noted that the current venue was the Council Chamber was the Council Chamber, Morecambe Town Hall. Some Members felt that a better venue would be the Banqueting Suite, Lancaster Town Hall in an oval layout, so that it was more beneficial for members of the public attending the meeting being able to see members of the Committee. An alternative could be the upstairs meeting rooms (Rooms 1 and 2) in Morecambe Town Hall. The current venue was also seen to provide difficulties for officers being able to communicate to Councillors and each other whilst the meeting was taking place. It was agreed that the venue should not be in the Ashton Hall, Lancaster Town Hall due to the poor acoustics. Also raised was the standard of equipment in the meeting rooms, such as the screens and other IT equipment which was not seen as to the required standard.

The Group then discussed the LGA recommendations regarding amending the current Scheme of Delegation so that fewer applications were submitted for consideration by the Planning Regulatory Committee. Members of the Group were of the opinion that the current Scheme of Delegation should not be changed, as the right balance of applications being considered by Members did not appear to be excessive. By reducing the number of applications being submitted to the Committee could be seen as not being democratic or transparent. There was a further discussion regarding undertaking a review regarding the planning applications to be considered by the Committee and those to be agreed using Officers Delegated Powers.

Members also discussed the LGA PAS report recommendation regarding having fewer Councillor planning application Ward call-ins at meetings. It was felt by all attending that this was an unnecessary recommendation as the number involved was not significant. Estimation of being in single figures over the last 12-month period. It could also be seen as undemocratic by members of the public and an unnecessary restriction on Ward Councillors representing their Ward(s).

Also discussed was the content and length of officer presentations to the Committee. Some Members of the Task Group felt that the presentation to the Committee should be streamlined, taking 5 minutes, with only the key relevant and essential information being provided. The report should be taken as already read by the Committee, being already publicly available, with no need for officers to repeat the information at the meeting, with the result being meetings that were more streamlined and efficient. Also raised at this point was that of advocacy by some officers, with some recommendations pushed strongly and with the minimising of counter arguments. It was felt that some officers did not advise regarding their recommendations, but rather advocated the recommendations. Examples were referred to. There was a need for a consistent approach by officers.

The Task Group also considered the issue of public speaking at meetings of the Planning Regulatory Committee. This could, in some circumstances, be seen as repetitive, or could raise issues outside of the Committee's remit. It was suggested that either speakers be allowed to speak for a shorter period of time or reduce the

number of speakers and encourage the speakers to have a spokesperson to speak on their behalf. It was felt that this issue should be reviewed.

Regarding the reports provided to Members of the Committee it was noted that this was good with well over a week provided prior to the meeting.

The Task Group also discussed issues relating to Planning Committee decisions that had gone against officer advice and the current procedures, in particular the role of officers, when defending a decision of the Committee when appealed against. Cases were discussed. Currently it was understood that the Council's Planning Officers did not get involved in these types of cases at the appeal stage. Recently a consultant Planning Officer had been employed to put together the case for Councillors prior to the appeal hearing. The case had been lost. It was felt that the Council's Planning Officers should advocate the City Council's position. The legal position regarding this was discussed and the group felt that this should be followed up.

Members then discussed, as raised at the previous meeting, that the officer attending the pre-application advice meetings should remain as the case officer throughout the planning application process. Previous evidence had advised that when there was a change in case officer there was sometimes a change in the decision or conditions that were included if the application was to be recommended for approval. This issue to be raised with the Head of Planning and Place.

The Group discussed the Enforcement Section. The Chair and vice-Chair of the Planning Regulatory Committee advised that there had been delays in dealing with enforcement cases which was due to understaffing. However, things had improved recently. The Group was also informed of the legal procedures regarding the enforcement processes. Members of the Task Group to make a recommendation regarding the filling of the frozen post of Planning Enforcement Graduate in the Enforcement Section in view of possible complaints being made to the Council regarding delays and also the possible risk of complaints being referred to the Local Government Ombudsman. This issue to be raised with the Head of Planning and Place.

Generally, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Regulatory Committee felt that things were working well, Members of the Committee understood their roles and that there was a fair degree of support provided. It was not perfect, but close to it.

The Chair thanked Councillors Thornberry and Budden, Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Regulatory Committee, for their attendance and providing evidence to the Task Group.

The Task Group agreed to consider draft recommendations by email, to then hold a meeting with the Head of Planning and Place to go through these prior to reporting to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting. Note: If a meeting could not be arranged the draft recommendations to be submitted to the Head of Planning and Place via email.

The Group agreed to consider recommendations from the evidence provided for inclusion in the Task Group's final report.

9. Findings

At the final meeting the findings of the Task Group were discussed. The Group then considered the conclusions and recommendations.

A number of key emerging themes from the previous meetings were considered and the main issues/points to take forward as conclusions and recommendations of the Task Group were agreed.

Generally, the planning service provided by the Council is a good one. The Council faces the usual challenges with recruitment and retention, especially at a senior level, because of competition for staff with private sector planning consultancies.

Some users of the planning system are concerned that planning officers are not always consistent in their approach and this needs to be ever at the forefront of the head of department's mind.

Enforcement is a real problem, this is due to short staffing and the Council needs to get the vacant post filled in spite of the freeze on recruitment.

The Task Group supports the conclusions of the peer review, except that it does not think that too many applications come to committee, that the committee's role ensures some public confidence in the democratic accountability of the service, and that the call-in procedures should not be altered.

10. Recommendations

Set out below are the recommendations that have emerged from the Task Group's work.

From the evidence provided at its meeting held on 16 February the Task Group agrees that.

Recommendation 1

More (and more regular) training for members of Planning Regulatory Committee, including both planning law and on the respective roles of officers and members.

From the evidence provided at its meeting held on 16 February the Task Group agrees that.

Recommendation 2

More guidance for residents wishing to speak at Committee meetings, in order to make the best of the available time, and more guidance for residents wishing to make written submissions.

From the evidence provided at its meeting held on 16 February the Task Group agrees that.

Recommendation 3

That Council Business Committee, in the new municipal year, be requested to seek the views of the new Chair of the Planning Regulatory Committee as to the most suitable location for meetings of that Committee.

From the evidence provided at its meeting held on 16 February the Task Group agrees that.

Recommendation 4

There should be no change to the system of calling-in applications: the suggestion that there are too many is not supported by evidence from members.

From the evidence provided at its meeting held on 16 February the Task Group agrees that.

Recommendation 5

No substantial change to the scheme of delegation, but if a way could be found to streamline decisions in cases where the application is only coming to committee because of a connexion between the applicant and a council officer, this might be helpful.

From the evidence provided at its meeting held on 16 February the Task Group agrees that.

Recommendation 6

Presentations by officers at Committee should be made shorter. Members can be expected to read the papers beforehand, so the presenting officer only needs to make a brief introduction, draw attention to any particular 'highlights' and then answer questions from members.

From the evidence provided at its meeting held on 16 February the Task Group agrees that.

Recommendation 7

Officers should be encouraged to avoid advocacy of their recommendations. Non-delegated decisions are made by the Committee and officer recommendations are just that: professional recommendations. The role of officers is to advise the Committee, not push a particular view. If the Committee refuses permission where officers had recommended approval, then officers should be prepared to assist the Council in arguing its own planning grounds for refusal against the applicant's position in the event of an appeal to the extent that this can be done within the rules and codes of conduct of the Royal Town Planning Institute, or other relevant professional body.

From the evidence provided at its meetings held on 10 and 16 February the Task Group agrees that.

Recommendation 8

When officers are determining matters of detail after the granting of outline planning permission, they should work co-operatively and proactively with applicants to settle

details. The current practice of rejecting detailed plans in relation to specific points, e.g., positioning of the building within the site, and then leaving it to the applicant to come up with new plans, which might also be rejected is wasteful of the time and other resources both of applicants and officers. Officers should be prepared to state what *would* be acceptable to them, to enable applicants to submit or revise detailed plans accordingly.

From the evidence provided at its meetings held on 10 and 16 February the Task Group agrees that.

Recommendation 9

It should be easier for applicants to secure a site visit by an officer – for a reasonable fee (if permitted by law).

From the evidence provided at its meetings held on 10 and 16 February the Task Group agrees that.

Recommendation 10

With consistency being vital to public confidence in the planning system, the Task Group strongly urges that there should be constant review of the question of how to secure maximum consistency of approach amongst officers.

From the evidence provided at its meetings held on 10 and 16 February the Task Group agrees that.

Recommendation 11

Pre-application advice should follow the application throughout the process, so that officers determining or making recommendations on an application will be aware of what advice was given to the applicant and seek to avoid taking views contrary to the advice where the applicant has adopted the advice given at pre-application stage.

From the evidence provided at its meetings held on 10 and 16 February the Task Group agrees that.

Recommendation 12

Effective and prompt enforcement is vital to public confidence, and failure in this area might result in negative ombudsman findings as well as general reputational damage. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Council should lift the freeze on recruitment in respect of the post in enforcement left vacant by the appointee pulling out. It would also be helpful if elected members could receive periodic briefings as to priorities and application of the enforcement process, to enable them to deal most effectively with residents' queries.



CABINET

Hackney Carriage Fare Review 2023

11 April 2023

Report of Licensing Manager

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
Cabinet members are asked to consider consultation responses as required by s65 Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions act 1976 and set a new Hackney Carriage fare tariff; including determination of the date any such change will take effect.				
Key Decision		Non-Key Decision	X	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision		Not applicable		
This report is public				

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) In considering consultation responses, members are asked to determine the Hackney Carriage Tariff for 2023/24 with or without modification and set a date of implementation.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 makes provision for the Council to fix the rates of fares within the district for time, distance and all other charges in connection with the hire of a hackney carriage. The table of fares is attached to the inside of a hackney carriage; this allows members of the public to view all charges when hiring a vehicle.

The current table of fares is attached at **Appendix 1**.

- 1.2 The setting of fares is an Executive function as it is not one that is listed in the Local Authorities (Function and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 and therefore falls to the Cabinet to make the decision. In its capacity as an advisory Committee to Cabinet, the Licensing Committee are required to refer any decision to Cabinet for approval.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 At a meeting of the Councils Cabinet on 7 February 2023, the recommendation of Licensing Committee was approved on a proposed hackney carriage tariff. It was decided that there would be an increase on the

flag fall of 20p, from £3.00 to £3.20 (7% increase) and the rolling rate increased by 10% by reducing the incremental charge from 176 yards to 160 yards per 20p. This principle would be applied across tariff.

The proposed tariff is attached at **Appendix 2**.

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 The statutory requirement for advertisement and consultation was duly followed. A public notice was placed in the Lancaster Guardian on Thursday 23rd February 2023 inviting comments/objections on the proposed tariff, additionally notices were placed for public consideration at Morecambe and Lancaster Town Hall throughout the 14-day period.

3.2 As part of the consultation, 2 responses were received from members of the local licensed trade.

The first from a Private Hire Driver:

“I don't think this is a good idea and think it will do more harm than good to the trade as the cost of living is effectively damaging the trade as it is without having a tariff increase so soon after the last one so I formally object to the increase of tariff”.

Secondly, from a licensed dual driver and proprietor of 3 Hackney Carriages:

“I believe another fare increase is unnecessary and unjustified. We had a fare increase last year and there is no good reason to increase the cost of taxis again - fuel is actually cheaper than it was when the last fare increase was implemented. It would seem that other taxi drivers agree with me and I have told them to also email their objections. A fare increase would possibly do more harm to the trade than good. People are struggling to pay their home bills due to astronomical increases in day to day living costs and I believe another fare increase would put people off using taxis and therefore cost taxi drivers money rather than make us more money”.

3.3 Cabinet may wish to revisit comments made by other members of the licensed trade. (See Appendix 3 of previous report – February 2023). 19 individual responses were received during the initial non-statutory consultation with the licensed trade. At that time, of the responses received 13 agreed with proposals and 6 did not.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Maintain current table of fares approved in April 2022.	Option 2: Apply retail price index (RPI) across the tariff. (14%) Rounding down to the	Option 3: Deregulate fare setting.	Option 4: Increase flag-fall by 7% Increase rolling rate by 10% by reducing the
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		nearest 5p.		increment from 176yds to 160yds.
Advantages	Public are aware of expected fares when hiring a hackney carriage.	<p>Drivers income is increased in line with rising cost of living</p> <p>This was identified as the preferred methodology to the trade through consultation.</p> <p>The licensed profession may be perceived as a career option for local people.</p>	Allows licensed trade to calculate their own fares, they may be best placed to calculate costs.	The uplift is consistently applied across the tariff, not disadvantaging service user groups. e.g, those on long/short journeys.
Disadvantages	The current table of fares may not represent current cost of living.	Second increase in quick succession may lead to a decrease in public use.	<p>Licensing Authority has no control on charges passed to the public.</p> <p>May create confusion as fares could vary across the trade.</p>	The changes across the tariff and amending incremental charges may cause public confusion, leading to an increase in complaints.
Risks	<p>Not consistently applying the methodology approved by Cabinet and supported by the trade.</p> <p>Drivers may decide to leave the trade, fares do not meet the demands of the rising costs of living.</p>	Increase too much for service users. Drivers may see reduced income due to lack of public use.	<p>Lack of public confidence in use of Hackney Carriages due to unknown charges.</p> <p>Varying charges between proprietors creating confusion.</p>	<p>Not consistently applying the methodology approved by Cabinet and supported by the licensed trade.</p> <p>Fares will increase earlier in journeys; regular users of taxis may feel penalised by the uplift.</p>

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5.0 Licensing Committee Preferred Option

5.1 Licensing Committee have not considered the consultation responses and therefore make no recommendations to Cabinet.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 At an earlier meeting of the Councils Cabinet in February 2023, members approved an updated rate of fares for hackney carriage operating in the district; additionally approved the licensing manager to undertake the statutory consultation.

6.2 As part of the public consultation 2 responses were received from members of the local licensed trade. Both of which objected to the proposed tariff.

Currently there are 878 active hackney carriage and private hire licences in the district. These licence holders have had time to consider the proposals and respond within the consultation period, members are requested to determine what weight to place on the responses received balanced with the number of active licences.

6.3 Cabinet will need to consider the options set out above and determine the hackney carriage table of fares for the coming year (2023/24). Cabinet will also be required to set the date of implementation. Legislation dictates that any update must take effect (modified or unmodified) within 2 months of the original date. Officers would recommend a lead time of 5 working days to allow the trade to be sufficiently updated and the service prepared to manage the transition. Officers propose the new table of fares be implemented from Midday on Wednesday 19th April 2023.

6.4 Cabinet are reminded to provide full and detailed reasons for their decision.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

This method of reviewing fares was first adopted by this Council in February 2014 when the proposal to use the RPI model was reported to the then Licensing Regulatory Committee.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

Lancaster City Council set the fares for Hackney Carriages operating in the district, in determining the charges for time/distance it must consider the impact on setting fares too low/too high on both the licensed trade and public who use Hackney Carriages, whilst balancing the rising cost of living and building a sustainable trade; one capable of earning a fair salary.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Pursuant to Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the advertising requirements are as follows:-

1. Putting a notice in the local paper
2. Notice must specify a date, not less than 14 days from the date that the notice is published to allow for objections and is the date, if no objections are made, that the revised fare will come into force.
3. If objections are made, and not withdrawn the Council must consider those objections and the fares then will come into effect (modified or unmodified) within 2 months of the original date.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

Not applicable

Information Services:

Not applicable

Property:

Not applicable

Open Spaces:

Not applicable

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The s151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

Should any objections be received then the matter will be brought back to Cabinet for a decision.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 7th February 2023, 6.00 p.m. - Lancaster City Council](#)

Contact Officer: Jennifer Curtis

Telephone: 01524 582732

E-mail: jcurtis@lancaster.gov.uk

Ref: HCF2023

Hackney Carriage Table of Fares 2022/23**Tariff 1**

For hirings commenced between 07.01 and 23.59	
If the distance does not exceed 880 yards for the whole distance:	£3.00
For each of the subsequent 176 yards or uncompleted part thereof:	20p
Waiting Time: For each period of 40 seconds or uncompleted part thereof	20p

Tariff 2

For hirings commenced between midnight and 07.00 For hirings commenced between 19.00 and midnight on the 24 th December For hirings commenced between 19.00 and midnight on the 31 st December For hirings commencing on any Bank Holiday or Public Holiday	
If the distance does not exceed 880 yards for the whole distance:	£4.50
For each subsequent 176 yards or uncompleted part thereof:	30p
Waiting time: For each period of 40 seconds or uncompleted part thereof	30p

Tariff 3

For hirings commenced between 00.01 25 th December and 07.00 27 th December For hirings commenced between 00.01 1 st January and 07.00 2 nd January	
If the distance does not exceed 880 yards for the whole distance:	£6.00
For each subsequent 176 yards or uncompleted part thereof:	40p
Waiting time: For each period of 40 seconds or uncompleted part thereof	40p

For each passenger in excess of one [for the purpose two children aged 11 or under to count as one passenger for the whole distance]	20p
For each perambulator or article of luggage carried outside the passenger compartment of the vehicle	20p

Soiling Charge: A charge may be requested if the passenger[s] soils the vehicle.

This will not exceed £100.00

The driver may at his/her discretion require the payment of an agreed amount in advance of the journey. The amount will be set against the metered fare. A receipt will be given.

A booking fee up to a maximum of £4.00 may be charged where:

- (a) The Hackney carriage is booked in advance; and
- (b) (i) The Customer shall be told the cost of the booking fee at the time that the booking is taken and the amount recorded in the booking log; and
(ii) The customer shall be told that the booking fee is in addition to the fare for the journey; and
- (c) The hiring involves a separate journey of at least one mile, starting from the taxi rank or the operator's premises to the pick-up point.

Any complaints regarding this vehicle and/or driver should be addressed to the Licensing Service, Public Protection, Morecambe Town Hall, Marine Road, Morecambe, LA4 5AF

Telephone 01524 582033 or e-mail - licensing@lancaster.gov.uk

Proposed Hackney Carriage Table of Fares 2023/24**Proposed Hackney Carriage Tariff****Tariff 1**

For hirings commenced between 07.01 and 23.59	
If the distance does not exceed 880 yards for the whole distance:	£3.20
For each of the subsequent 160 yards or uncompleted part thereof:	20p
Waiting Time: For each period of 40 seconds or uncompleted part thereof	20p

Tariff 2

For hirings commenced between midnight and 07.00 For hirings commenced between 19.00 and midnight on the 24 th December For hirings commenced between 19.00 and midnight on the 31 st December For hirings commencing on any Bank Holiday or Public Holiday	
If the distance does not exceed 880 yards for the whole distance:	£4.80
For each subsequent 160 yards or uncompleted part thereof:	30p
Waiting time: For each period of 40 seconds or uncompleted part thereof	30p

Tariff 3

For hirings commenced between 00.01 25 th December and 07.00 27 th December For hirings commenced between 00.01 1 st January and 07.00 2 nd January	
If the distance does not exceed 880 yards for the whole distance:	£6.40
For each subsequent 160 yards or uncompleted part thereof:	40p
Waiting time: For each period of 40 seconds or uncompleted part thereof	40p

For each passenger in excess of one [for the purpose two children aged 11 or under to count as one passenger for the whole distance]	20p
For each perambulator or article of luggage carried outside the passenger compartment of the vehicle	20p
Soiling Charge: A charge may be requested if the passenger[s] soils the vehicle.	This will not exceed £100.00

The driver may at his/her discretion require the payment of an agreed amount in advance of the journey. The amount will be set against the metered fare. A receipt will be given.

A booking fee up to a maximum of £4.00 may be charged where:

- (a) The Hackney carriage is booked in advance; and
- (b) (i) The Customer shall be told the cost of the booking fee at the time that the booking is taken and the amount recorded in the booking log; and
- (ii) The customer shall be told that the booking fee is in addition to the fare for the journey; and
- (c) The hiring involves a separate journey of at least one mile, starting from the taxi rank or the operator's premises to the pick-up point.

Any complaints regarding this vehicle and/or driver should be addressed to the Licensing Service, Public Protection, Morecambe Town Hall, Marine Road, Morecambe, LA4 5AF

Telephone 01524 582033 or e-mail - licensing@lancaster.gov.uk

CABINET**Lancaster City Council's Strategic Vision for Creativity and Culture****11th April 2023****Report of Chief Officer Sustainable Growth**

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To seek Cabinet's views on the draft of the Council's Strategic Vision for Creativity, Culture and Heritage.				
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision				
This report is public				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF Councillor Thornberry

- (1) To seek Cabinet's views on the draft Strategic Vision for Creativity, Culture and Heritage.
- (2) To note that, once adopted the Strategy will be used to inform the Council's Outcome Based Resourcing (OBR) process going forward

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Earlier in the year, the Council embarked on the development of a Culture and Heritage Strategy. Counterculture were appointed to develop a robust evidence base and undertake an extensive consultation process was undertaken with stakeholders from across the sector, which contributed to the development of a Strategic Framework for Creativity, Culture and Heritage in the district. The Strategic Framework sets out the importance of culture and heritage to the local economy and communities and provides a clear vision for what the Council would like to achieve in the District.
- 1.2 This report outlines the content and structure of the draft document and the process undertaken to develop it. Cabinet is asked to consider the report and to make any comments on the draft document before it is brought back to a future Cabinet for adoption. Once adopted the strategy will be used to inform the OBR process going forward.

2.0 Development of the Strategic Vision

- 2.1 Counterculture were appointed in July 2022, following a tender process, to develop an up-to-date, robust evidence base that would assist Lancaster City Council in creating its strategic vision for the use and positioning of its resources. This work provided the Council with a better understanding of the scale, scope, importance, and impact that culture and heritage have on people's lives including their wellbeing, on place making and promoting community cohesion, reflecting the district's diversity and promoting equality and inclusion, on contributing to the local economy, developing skills and creating employment, and in raising Lancaster District's profile as a significant cultural destination.
- 2.2 Counterculture designed and managed a consultation and engagement programme that included a significant number of cross sector stakeholder interviews including local arts and cultural organisations, artists, the arts council, business representatives, and some cabinet members. They conducted a SWOT analysis, produced an economic impact assessment, and identified key cultural assets. Counterculture reviewed a range of relevant local, regional, and national policies, strategies and key reports and identified potential funding opportunities. This information has been passed to The Council together with a summary report of Counterculture's key findings.
- 2.3 Over the past few months Officers have been developing the attached draft strategic vision based on the evidence and key findings provided by Counterculture. The direction of travel that the Strategic Vision has taken has changed significantly since the start of the process. Initially it was felt that the document would be a City Council strategy, determining how it would use its assets and resources to support the culture and heritage offer in the district. However, feedback from the consultation suggested that there was a need for the document to provide a clear vision and strategic context to culture and heritage in the district that would also assist organisations to secure external funding. In drafting the strategic vision Officers have had to consider both the Council's financial challenges and approach to outcome-based resourcing.
- 2.4 The attached draft reflects this context and sets out a strategic approach to delivering culture in the district through partnership working, enabling and engagement. It contains a number of outcomes that the Council, with its partners, can work towards delivering over the short (2023-25), medium (2025-2027) and long term (2027 onwards).
- 2.5 The strategic context and Counterculture's data research, plus feedback from its wide stakeholder consultation, has led us towards a suite of proposed outcomes which form a Strategic Vision aligned with the Council's four Strategic Priorities. The proposed outcomes are:
- A significantly raised national and international creative and cultural

profile.

- Strong commitment by the creative and cultural sector to environmental responsibility and net zero carbon pathways.
- Maximised local and inward investment for creativity and culture.
- Sharply focussed investment in local creative and cultural activity and talent.
- A strong innovative heritage offer which reflects the diverse histories of our communities.
- Broad, deep engagement, participation and inclusion in creativity and culture across all our neighbourhood communities.
- High quality professional and skills development of local people, particularly of young people.
- The year round delivery of a compelling creative and cultural offer for local people and visitors.

2.6 To achieve the proposed outcomes, there is a proposal to explore the appetite, within the District, to establish a high level strategic partnership; ‘a strong single voice for creativity and culture’, comprising the creative and cultural sectors including heritage, the private sector, creative digital businesses, tourism, education, health and wellbeing, as well as the wider community and voluntary sectors which will be fully reflective of our diverse communities. The intention is that the partnership will help to promote the district and secure investment.

2.7 Early drafts were shared with The Arts Council and Cabinet Members for comment and direction. The final document, once approved, will be designed to be available digitally, with graphics to bring the document to life for the public.

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 A comprehensive consultation and engagement exercise was conducted with a range of cross sector stakeholders. The feedback from these workshops and individual sessions has been incorporated as far as possible into the final document. This report enabled members to comment further on the draft.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Cabinet has no amendments to the Strategic Vision and would approve of its use to inform the OBR process once adopted	Option 2: Cabinet would like to see some amendments to the Strategic Vision and would approve of its use to inform the OBR process
Advantages	The Strategic Vision can progress to formal adoption and then Officers can work with partners to deliver the outcomes identified and establish the partnership.	The views of Cabinet members are integral to the successful delivery of the Strategic Vision. Any proposed amendments to the document can be integrated into a redrafted vision ahead of formal approval by Cabinet.

Disadvantages	No disadvantages identified.	Delay the final version of the strategic vision which could have an impact on partner organisations trying to secure funding.
Risks	As with any long-term plan, there are uncertainties about the context in which the strategic vision would be delivered. This will include capacity within the service and the Council's ability to contribute financially to delivery. However, a review mechanism has been built into the delivery planning which will allow these risks to be assessed and the vision amended accordingly.	As with any long-term plan, there are uncertainties about the context in which the strategic vision would be delivered. This will include capacity within the service and the Council's ability to contribute financially to delivery. However, a review mechanism has been built into the delivery planning which will allow these risks to be assessed and the vision amended accordingly.

5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

The officer preferred option is Option 1, given the high level of dialogue that has taken place in reaching the recommendations set out in this report. The degree of flexibility set out within the monitoring and evaluation process contained within the Vision framework must also be considered in reaching a decision on the recommendation.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The strategic vision is based on a robust evidence based and includes a set of specific creative and cultural outcomes that The Council would wish to achieve through the positioning of its support and resources.

<p>RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK</p> <p>The proposal is entirely consistent with and supports Lancaster City Council's policy. It contributes to the Plan 2030 Priorities for a smart and forward thinking council and healthy and happy communities.</p>
<p>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)</p> <p>No direct implications.</p>
<p>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>No direct implications.</p>
<p>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>No direct implications</p>

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

No direct implications

Information Services:

No direct implications

Property:

No direct implications

Open Spaces:

No direct implications

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

Whilst only at the draft stage any subsequent proposals requiring a revision to the Council's Budget & Policy Framework will need to go through the appropriate approval process

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer understands that this report is only seeking the views of Cabinet on the draft Strategy and any formal adoption will be the subject of a further report to Cabinet

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Lancaster City Council's Draft Strategic Vision for Creativity and Culture

Contact Officer: Richard Hammond

Telephone: 01524 582638

E-mail: rhammond@lancaster.gov.uk

Ref: [Click here and type Ref, if applicable]

A Place to Create (working title)

A strategic vision for creativity and culture in Lancaster District.

FOREWORD

Every year, Lancaster district's creative and cultural sector contributes £90 million to our local economy, employs over 2,200 people, and helps attract audiences and visitors in their hundreds of thousands to our historic city, our Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, breathtaking coastal areas around Morecambe Bay, and to our rural villages, countryside, towns and universities.

Our creative and cultural sector includes museums and historic sites, archaeology, public art and galleries, theatres, music and dance organisations, festivals, makers, and creative digital businesses. Together, they provide year-round activities helping support the local economy, contributing powerfully to our sense of place, adding meaning to and pride in where we live.

'Local culture is more than the sum of the outcomes it helps to support...culture is essential to the identity and aspiration of a place and its people.' (Local Government Association's 'Cornerstones of Culture' report December 2022.)

Our creative and cultural offer attracts and keeps talented people here. It engages and involves local people from many diverse local communities across the district. We believe that creativity and culture is central to our lives. It supports mental and social health, personal wellbeing, and resilience. It helps our ambition to create a sustainable environment by offering creative, powerful, and imaginative ways to explore the impact of climate change, helping people better understand the challenges we all face and the steps we need to take.

It's also very clear that there is much more to be achieved and we can work more effectively with others to drive this work forward. Whilst we've many strong creative and cultural assets, there's also a feeling that we can do more to punch above our weight and reach our full potential.

We want to strengthen the many partnerships we have and work harder to bring more investment into the district's creative and cultural economy. We want to ensure the sector plays its role in helping achieve a sustainable environment and create the chances for people in every local community to be creative and enjoy our cultural offer. We want to develop more home-grown talent and create local jobs and opportunities so that even more people want to stay and earn their living here. Finally, we want to significantly raise the district's profile regionally, nationally, and internationally to prominently position ourselves as a premier UK location for creativity and culture.

Although times are difficult for everyone right now, over the horizon, we see many exciting and ambitious projects taking shape.

We can now finally look forward to Eden Project Morecambe opening. The recent, hugely welcome announcement from the government of £50 million of Levelling Up Fund investment will undoubtedly attract additional support from others. Eden will bring hundreds of thousands of new visitors every year to the town and wider district, create jobs, and act as a powerful catalyst to stimulate more creative and cultural opportunities for local people and visitors. It has already put our district and the region beyond in the spotlight and we want to be ready to build on these opportunities.

Right across the road from Eden, the newly revived and restored Winter Gardens is being further improved to house its exciting year-round entertainment programmes. Exciting plans are evolving for the Morecambe Bay Triennial which will support cultural regeneration with a raft of new commissions, community engagement and festivals right around the Bay.

In Lancaster, the 1000-year-old, Grade 1 listed Castle, with its commanding views high above the city, and now beautifully refurbished, will continue to be an important historically significant site, hugely popular, attracting many thousands of visitors every year. The Castle is sited on a Roman Fort and archaeologists are busy exploring nearby Quay Meadow for the possibility of a Romano-Celtic temple being there. If true, it means it'll be only the second to be discovered in the whole of the North. New and existing creative and cultural businesses will benefit as a result of the Canal Quarter's regeneration and the city's Light Up Lancaster, Highest Point and Lancaster Music Festival remain highlights in the events calendar attracting thousands every year.

However, as is well known, Lancaster City Council, like everyone else, has many challenges to face, particularly financially. These have been influenced by national and global forces; the long legacy of Covid-19, the climate emergency, and the cost-of-living crisis which all impact on our local economy and daily lives.

The Council started a process, known as Outcomes Based Resourcing (OBR), to agree the outcomes we want to achieve, how to prioritise resources and work more effectively with partners, including with and for the creative and cultural sector and our communities. As part of this work, we've identified a suite of proposed high level creative and cultural outcomes, which align with the Council's priorities and fit with regional and national funding bodies' strategic ambitions. These will help guide how in the future we'll use our open spaces, buildings, time, and money.

We now also want to explore new models for how the Council might work even more closely with our many partners and stakeholders through a strong single strategic voice for creativity and culture. It would draw on the wealth of local and regional expertise across the creative and cultural, private business, tourism and hospitality, education and health, wellbeing, community, and voluntary sectors.

As a result of the recent data research and wide stakeholder consultation undertaken by Counterculture, [INSERT LINK TO SUMMARY REPORT](#) we now know far more about the nature and size of our creative and cultural economy. We have a robust evidence base, benchmarks and also the benefit of stakeholder input to inform our thinking. Many thanks

are due to Counterculture, and to all those from across a range of sectors who gave valuable time to share their extensive knowledge and experience. Thanks, are also due to the many people who came last November to the first of what will become regular meetings of the new Culture & Heritage Advisory Group.

Despite the undoubted challenges we face as a Council, **I/we (DEPENDS ON WHO IS SIGNING IT*)** are confidently looking forward to the exciting times which lie ahead for our creative and cultural district.

***TO BE SIGNED BY LEADER AND/OR PORTFOLIO HOLDER?**

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE EVIDENCE

- The district's creative industries sector, comprising arts, culture, media and creative service businesses – **employs around 2,200 people, with a direct gross value added output of approximately £61 million.** Adjusting that figure for 'multiplier' effects, **the total annual GVA contribution of the sector, direct, indirect and induced, is estimated to be £90 million.**
- Within the broader creative industries, **the district's cultural sector** - a narrower definition which excludes creative and digital services - **employs approximately 600 people, and has a direct gross value added output estimated at £14 million.** Again, adjusting for multiplier effects, **the total annual gross value-added contribution of this particular sector is estimated to be £27 million,** and this does not include many of the wider 'spill-over' benefits from arts participation and engagement, placemaking and tourism.
- **Between 2015 and 2020, local employment grew by approximately 25% in the creative industries sector and by 33% in the cultural sector** illustrating the attractiveness of the district to creative people.
- **In 2021-22, Lancaster City Council directly invested £1.346 million into local creative and cultural organisations and events which helped lever additional project and revenue funding from the Arts Council alone totalling £1.135 million.** This is in addition to other income received from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, ticket sales for events, sponsorship and grants from trusts and foundations, which is likely to be in the millions.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT, VISION AND OUTCOMES

- The Council will continue to align its work with national and regional policies and strategies and national funders' priorities, so we can work together to achieve joint objectives, benefit from their advice and expertise and help secure invaluable partnership funding for the district.

- The strategic context and Counterculture’s data research, plus feedback from its wide stakeholder consultation, has led us towards a suite of proposed outcomes which form a Strategic Vision aligned with the Council’s four Strategic Priorities:
 - A Sustainable District
 - An Inclusive and Prosperous Local Economy
 - Happy and Healthy Communities – which currently has related outcomes of *‘improving access to and involvement in arts, culture, leisure and recreation / supporting our thriving arts, culture and heritage sector.’*
 - A Co-operative, Kind and Responsible Council
- The proposed outcomes are:
 - **A significantly raised national and international creative and cultural profile.**
 - **Strong commitment by the creative and cultural sector to environmental responsibility and net zero carbon pathways.**
 - **Maximised local and inward investment for creativity and culture.**
 - **Sharply focussed investment in local creative and cultural activity and talent.**
 - **A strong innovative heritage offer which reflects the diverse histories of our communities and builds upon Lancaster’s strong national heritage profile.**
 - **Broad, deep engagement, participation and inclusion in creativity and culture and heritage across all our neighbourhood communities.**
 - **High quality professional and skills development of local people, particularly of young people.**
 - **The year-round delivery of a compelling creative, cultural and heritage offer for local people and visitors that supports the Visitor Economy and sustainable Local Wealth Building.**

A HIGH LEVEL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

- To achieve our proposed outcomes, we wish to explore the appetite, within the District, to establish a high level strategic partnership; ‘a strong single voice for creativity and culture’, comprising the creative and cultural sectors including heritage, the private sector, creative digital businesses, tourism, education, health and wellbeing, as well as the wider community and voluntary sectors which will be fully reflective of our diverse communities. Such a partnership would ensure that:
 - **Strategic leadership is joined up.**
 - **Local and inward investment is maximised.**
 - **The creative and cultural sector strongly contributes to a sustainable environment and local wealth building.**
 - **Local talent is developed and retained.**
 - **Pride in place & ‘cultural placemaking’ is promoted via a joined up offer.**

MONITORING, ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

- We will put in place new, ongoing, robust monitoring, analysis and evaluation programmes to show value for money, impact and need, help monitor performance, support funding bids and to inform future strategic reviews, planning and decision-making. We will also improve our evidence base to ensure we capture the economic and wider social 'non-monetised' outcomes and impacts.

TIMEFRAME

- We will phase our approach over short, medium and long terms coupled with interim review points:
 - **In the short term, 2023-25**, in the light of Council's ongoing OBR exercise and review of our services, we will plan for change in how we work and collaborate with the cultural and creative sectors to explore new models of strategic partnership working.
 - **Medium term 2025-27** sees the *possible* establishment of a new strategic partnership during 2025-26 and the review of our Creative & Cultural Investment Framework to inform our future funding decisions.
 - **Long term from 2027** Lancaster district will have firmly positioned itself as one of the UK's premier creative and cultural locations.
 - Towards the end of each term we will review, refresh and update our plans and strategies mindful of the Council's ongoing OBR framework to ensure we are on track and that we remain relevant to changing circumstances.

2. THE EVIDENCE

Nationally, creativity and culture is widely recognised as a significant part of this country's economy.

In 2019, the creative industries contributed **£115.9 billion to the UK. They accounted for 5.9% of the economy, and for 2.2 million jobs which grew at four times the rate of the rest of the economy prior to the pandemic.** (LGA 'Cornerstones of Culture' Report Dec 2022)

Public funding is an essential part of the ecology of arts and culture in the UK and **in 2020, for every £1 generated in arts and culture, an additional £1.23 gross value added** was generated in the wider economy. (LGA 'Cornerstones of Culture' Report Dec 2022)

Locally, Counterculture's research demonstrated that the district's **creative industries sector**-comprising arts, culture, media and creative service businesses – **employs around 2,200 people, with a direct gross value added output of approximately £61 million.** Adjusting that figure for 'multiplier' effects, **the total annual GVA contribution of the sector, direct, indirect and induced, is estimated to be £90 million.**

Within the broader creative industries, **the district's cultural sector - a narrower definition which excludes creative and digital services - employs approximately 600 people, and has a direct gross value added output estimated at £14 million.** Again, adjusting for multiplier effects, **the total annual gross value added contribution of this particular sector is estimated to be £27 million,** and this does not include many of the wider 'spill-over' benefits from arts participation and engagement, placemaking and tourism.

Against this background, in **2021-22 Lancaster City Council directly invested £1.346 million into local creative and cultural organisations and events which helped lever additional project and revenue funding from the Arts Council alone totalling £1.135 million.** This is in addition to other income received from the National Heritage Lottery Fund, ticket sales to events, sponsorship and from trusts and foundations, which is likely to be in the millions.

Counterculture also found that, **between 2015 and 2020, local employment grew by approximately 25% in the creative industries sector and by 33% in the cultural sector** illustrating the attractiveness of the district to creative people. **The concentration of employment in the creative industries in Lancaster is comparable with that of Lancashire as a whole, at 0.8% of the total population and 1.9% of people aged 16 – 64 in employment.** However, the district and Lancashire both lag behind the wider North West at 1.4% and 3.0% respectively, and England at 2.1% and 4.6%, so there is ground to make up.

Also, our district has the third largest creative industries sector in Lancashire after Chorley and Preston and has the fourth largest creative industries sector in the county relative to its population and workforce, but it has a higher concentration of film, TV, video, radio and photography than Lancashire as a whole.

By way of comparison with some other local authority areas elsewhere in the UK, **our district, at 1.9%, has a higher concentration of workers in the creative industries sector than does County Durham at 1.2%, but is lower than in Lincoln at 2.7% and significantly lower than Exeter which has 4.4%.** This would indicate that there is room for further growth given that Lincoln, Exeter and Lancaster are all historic cities with universities and broadly similar levels of population.

Counterculture identified over 200 'noteworthy cultural assets' in the district with a healthy representation of cultural venues, high-quality festivals and art in the public realm. But we also know that many venues and buildings need investment to upgrade through capital refurbishment and improvement. Importantly, **we also recognise that our 'assets' also include the 2,200 talented and skilled people who work in the sector here.**

In respect of audiences, Counterculture found that these are distinctly split between different parts of the district which broadly corresponds to relative levels of deprivation. They used the Audience Agency's Spectrum 'profiles' <https://www.theaudienceagency.org/audience-finder-data-tools/audience-spectrum>, to describe different cultural audience segments. **The most prominent in the district being middle to highly engaged groups such as 'Trips and Treats', 'Dormitory Dependables',**

‘Home and Heritage’ and ‘Experience Seekers’. Lancaster District has high engagement in the arts, according to Arts Council England.

This indicates a healthy appetite for cultural engagement amongst some in the community. But we also know that there is much work to be done to increase access to creative and cultural experiences for local people in *all* of our communities. Our district has many neighbourhoods suffering multiple deprivations. In 2013 for example, more than 20 Local Super Output Areas were in the most deprived 25% of the country. Seven areas were in the worst 5% nationally, with one in the most deprived 1% of all 32,468 areas in England. Whilst it's widely recognised that a growing creative and cultural offer provides life-enhancing opportunities for local people, from supporting social cohesion and pride of place, to building skills, broadening education and opening opportunities, not everyone, for a variety of reasons, engages and benefits or even feels creativity and culture is for them. We want that to change in our district.

Counterculture also believes there may still be post-Covid barriers to participation and engagement due to people's previous, pre-Covid disinterest in arts, culture and heritage now coupled with lower levels of engagement and higher levels of reluctance to returning to live events in the North West when compared to the UK overall.

All the above should be seen in the wider context of **the district's strong tourism economy, which in Lancashire is second only to Blackpool. In 2017, STEAM data from Visit Lancashire shows that there were 7.54 million tourism visits to the district delivering an economic impact of £476.54 million. By 2019, this had risen to 7.74 million visits with an impact of £492.33 million. Despite the adverse impact of the pandemic in 2020 which saw a fall to 2.55 million visits and an economic impact down to £192.13 million, the district showed a strong and resilient recovery in 2021 with 4.96 million visits and an economic impact of £363.22 million.**

Our overall tourism offer, including creative and cultural events and festivals is diverse, and these elements clearly contribute to the overall mix. Given the current underlying strength of the broad visitor economy, plus the anticipated significant increase in visitor numbers that Eden will attract, there is great potential for the sector, and the wider economy, to benefit further from these visitors and potential cultural audiences if, as Counterculture's stakeholder interviews strongly suggested, there is also *'a more compelling creative & cultural offer'* available.

Much of the evidence above is related to economic performance and we are aware that creativity and culture also contributes to many non-economic outcomes and impacts which in the future we will monitor and evaluate at a district level. In section 6.1, we outline our approach to being in a far better position to measure social value and impact in the future.

3. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Where it makes sense, the Council will continue to align its work with national and regional partners to achieve joint objectives, benefit from their advice and expertise and to help secure partnership funding.

In particular, these include Arts Council England whose ten year strategy *Let's Create*: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create> states the following which also reflects our beliefs:

'Culture and the experiences it offers can have a deep and lasting effect on places and the people who live in them. Investment in cultural activities and in arts organisations, museums and libraries helps improve lives, regenerate neighbourhoods, support local economies, attract visitors and bring people together.'

The Arts Council has three key Outcomes it seeks to achieve:

Creative People: *Everyone can develop and express creativity throughout their life.*

Cultural Communities: *Villages, towns and cities thrive through a collaborative approach to culture.*

A Creative and Cultural Country: *England's cultural sector is innovative, collaborative and international.*

Our proposed outcomes closely fit these, and we know the Arts Council already supports several innovative and exciting organisations and events here. A key priority for the Council is to achieve a Sustainable District, and 'Environmental Responsibility' is one of the Arts Council's 2023-26 Investment Principles which The Dukes, More Music, Imitating the Dog and Lancaster Arts, all in the Arts Council's National Portfolio from April, will be required to deliver against.

The Arts Council's ambition in this vitally important area is for:

'...the organisations and individuals we support to forefront their commitment to environmental responsibility through considered planning and actions. We expect this to result in continued carbon reductions and to also highlight the potential of culture to connect, mobilise and inspire places and communities, and champion cultural leadership.'

This ambition aligns fully with the Council's priority. Our proposed outcomes include that all organisations, whether they are in the Arts Council's National Portfolio or not, events and initiatives in receipt of Council investment or support, as well as the Council's own services and initiatives, will similarly be expected to demonstrate a strong and clear commitment to environmental responsibility.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund, another of our key funding partner's, Strategic Funding Framework

<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/attachments/Heritage%20Fund%20-%20Strategic%20Funding%20Framework%202019-2024.pdf> aims to support heritage projects that create better places to live, work and visit, have a 'sense of place' that inspires local pride and increases wellbeing. As with the Arts Council, our core priorities, and our proposed outcomes align with those of the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Our overall approach also reflects key points in the Local Government Association's recent 'Cornerstones of Culture' Report (December 2022) <https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/culture-tourism-leisure-and-sport/cornerstones-culture> mentioned earlier, which stated that:

'local culture is more than the sum of the outcomes it helps to support...culture is essential to the identity and aspiration of a place and its people.'

Similarly, The Department of Culture Media and Sports Select Committee's 'Re-imagining where we live report' (October 2022)

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/31429/documents/176244/default/> reflects our thinking: said,

"Cultural placemaking", which refers to the role of arts, culture and heritage in shaping the places where we live, is an important concept in the context of Levelling Up. Place-based approaches to culture can be locally-led and engaging, deliver direct and indirect benefits and support education, pride in place, health and wellbeing.'

As with the national funding bodies, our Strategic Vision and proposed outcomes echo the Northern Local Enterprise Partnerships - NPII's A Place Strategy for the North

https://www.np11.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/FINAL-NP11_PlaceStrategy.pdf which stated that,

'The arts, heritage, cultural and environmental assets of the North are intrinsic to developing the northern economy and to supporting economic recovery and growth. The UK cannot have a truly successful economy without a strong cultural sector...which in turn play(s) a vital role in regenerating places, provide(s) a voice and identity to its cities, towns, and villages, and contribute(s) to biodiversity and sustainability to build our resistance to climate change.'

Lancashire Enterprise Partnership's 'Remade: A cultural investment strategy for Lancashire (May 2022)

<https://www.creativelancashire.org/app/creativelancs/files-module/local/library/LEP%20Cultural%20Strategy%20TFCC%20v10%20June%202020%20FINAL%20DRAFT%20.pdf> identified five outcomes:

- **Increased Connectivity:** A better connected cultural and creative sector
- **Enhanced Capacity:** A stronger, more diverse, sustainable and appropriately skilled cultural sector

- **Improved Crossovers:** *An international reputation for the strength, depth and ingenuity of our partnerships and collaborations.*
- **Bolder Commissioning and Innovative Infrastructure:** *National and international recognition for the strength of our connected cultural and creative infrastructure, and for delivering high quality work to diverse audiences.*
- **Compelling Cultural Narratives:** *National and international recognition for the distinctiveness of our places, people and environment.*

Many of our proposed outcomes clearly link with ‘Remade’. We see great potential to continue to work alongside our Lancashire partners in the years ahead. We welcome the strong support for Eden which greatly benefitted from invaluable feasibility funding, and also for the re-development of Lancaster’s Canal Quarter, which proposes a new mixed use development with creative and cultural opportunities complementing the nearby Fraser House Co-working space & Tech Hub at Whitecross whose development was also supported by Lancashire County Council.

Geographically, the district is home to the largest concentration of arts organisations between Merseyside and Greater Manchester to the South and Scotland to the North. Of the nine Arts Council National Portfolio Organisations in Lancashire, four are located here and Counterculture noted that the district,

‘...has a strong cultural offer which has the potential to grow to national significance. It is a day at the seaside, a gateway to the lakes, railway heritage, castles, canals, and the coast. It has a deep pool of talent from musicians to visual artists, events coordinators, and much more in between.’

Finally, international economic consultants Hatch <https://www.hatch.com/About-Us/About-the-Company> were commissioned by the Council to prepare the *Lancaster Prosperity and Resilience Strategy* which highlights that:

‘Recognising these (arts and cultural) assets in providing an attractive quality of life offer and continuing to invest in growing its arts, cultural and leisure scene will help support growth in Lancaster’s economy by creating a thriving location that people want to live, work in and visit.’

All in all, the district’s sector and the Council’s proposed outcomes are well placed to contribute to, and benefit from the priorities and ambitions of our many strategic partners, locally, regionally and nationally.

4. STRATEGIC VISION & PARTNERSHIP

The strategic context above and Counterculture’s research, has led us towards a suite of outcomes which form a Strategic Vision:

- **A significantly raised national and international creative and cultural profile.**

- **Strong commitment by the creative and cultural sector to environmental responsibility and net zero carbon pathways.**
- **Maximised local and inward investment for creativity and culture.**
- **Sharply focussed investment in local creative, cultural and heritage activity and talent.**
- **A strong innovative heritage offer which reflects the diverse histories of our communities and builds upon Lancaster’s strong national heritage offer to support the Visitor Economy.**
- **Broad, deep engagement, participation and inclusion in creativity, culture, and heritage across all our neighbourhood communities.**
- **High quality professional and skills development of local people, particularly of young people.**
- **The year-round delivery of a compelling creative, cultural and heritage offer for local people and visitors.**

To help realise this vision, and most importantly by working closely with our partners from within the creative and cultural sectors, and other relevant bodies, we wish to explore the potential appetite, within the District, to establish a high level strategic partnership which will be reflective of our diverse communities, comprising the creative and cultural sectors including heritage, the private sector, creative digital businesses, tourism, education, health and wellbeing, as well as the wider community and voluntary sectors.

There are many such partnerships across the country, and we will look at different models, examples of best practice and hear about the lessons learned by others, so that, in the event such a body is to be created here, it will be directly relevant to our district and our needs, vision and ambition.

The Council will be a key partner and facilitate its establishment. The partnership will be an accountable ‘strong single strategic voice for creativity and culture’, importantly promoting dialogue and collaboration to help better link the creative and cultural sectors with wider local agendas for mutual benefit.

Such an approach would chime with proposals for ‘Cultural Compacts’ made in 2019 in the UK Cultural Cities Enquiry

<https://www.corecities.com/sites/default/files/field/attachment/Cultural%20Cities%20Enquiry%20%5Bweb%5D.pdf> - which stated that such bodies would be a

“locally determined strategic partnership to create ‘whole place leadership’ for culture. It is designed to create a sustainable local framework to replicate the impact of a major cultural programme. It will significantly raise levels of ambition and align investment and resources toward shared priorities.”

and the Local Government Association’s ‘Cornerstones of Culture’ Report, already mentioned, stated:

'What will need to change...is the way in which we collaborate ...no single organisation now has the funding, staff time or skills to do this alone. So councils, cultural organisations, and our partners in central government will need to keeping working together to support each place to be the most vibrant, best place it can possibly be.'

and

'Collaboration with the wider cultural sector, business and enterprise, and national and regional partners is essential if we are to safeguard the services that mean so much to our communities.'

In recent years, we worked in close partnership with our neighbour local authorities, South Lakeland and Barrow to explore the possibility of establishing a 'Bay Cultural Compact'. Whilst it was decided not to progress that work, due to local government re-organisation, many positive ideas about new ways of working emerged through that process which could help inform and be further explored for potential application at a local level in our district.

Such a partnership, if established, could provide:

- **JOINED UP STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP** by having in place the right partners, at the right levels, with a deep knowledge of the district coupled with the expertise, energy and commitment to formulate a robust business plan underpinning the delivery of a shared vision. It will be responsible for developing, advocating and implementing the business and strategic plans to achieve valuable positive outcomes and impacts meeting the needs and aspirations of local people and their communities.

A strategic partnership would assist with the delivery of the strategic vision set out in this document in the following ways:

- **MAXIMISING LOCAL AND INWARD INVESTMENT** over the long term, into the creative and cultural sector, for both core revenue and capital purposes through a coherent joined-up, 'single voice' approach to major bids for public funding or for infrastructure development such as digital capacity and connectivity. It would help to lever private and public investment, partnership funding, sponsorship and philanthropy from as wide a range of local, regional, national and international sources be they central government or local authorities, the Local Enterprise Partnership, major trusts and foundations and bodies such as the Arts Council, Historic England and National Lottery Heritage Fund. Care would be taken to ensure that any major funding applications, complemented rather than competed with bids to such sources from local creative and cultural organisations.

- **ENSURING THAT THE CREATIVE AND CULTURAL SECTOR STRONGLY CONTRIBUTES TO A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT** - creativity and culture are powerful tools which can help inspire, inform and educate people, raise awareness and promote the need to tackle climate change. By working in partnership with others, encouraging and supporting innovative approaches to environmentally sustainable creative and cultural production, presentation and consumption, support for the creative and cultural sectors' activities and future development, helps address the climate emergency and can support the path to net carbon zero and enhanced bio-diversity.
- **TALENT DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION** by creating and nurturing a diverse talent pool and pipelines to grow local and attract external talent. By working with local colleges and regional and national bodies such as Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub and Creative & Cultural Skills, supporting education, skills and training providers, creative and cultural organisations and local businesses would provide effective work experience, formal and informal, as well as employment and professional development opportunities. This is most important for our young people from historically under-represented sectors of our communities to secure work, earn a living and realise their ambitions within the creative and cultural industries and other sectors.
- **PROMOTING PRIDE IN PLACE & CULTURAL PLACEMAKING** by helping develop and capitalise on our many creative, cultural and related assets, human and physical. Critically, by joining with other sectors, local communities, business and tourism bodies, we can further promote the district as a distinctively different, creative, bold and ambitious place with vibrant, creatively animated high streets and public spaces. Local people will feel a vital part of where they live, fully involved in helping nurture a powerful sense of pride, and our many visitors will delight in coming here and leave eager to return.

Given the current and likely continuation of severe pressures on public and other funding for creativity and culture, such a partnership would need to closely align its work with local, regional and national strategies as outlined earlier. This will ensure we can swiftly, proactively and successfully respond to major funding opportunities and initiatives as they emerge from national funding bodies and/or central government – many often at very short notice – so we can successfully secure resources to support activities, seize chances, and underpin the longer term economic and environmental sustainability of the sector.

It will ensure the district's voice is listened to, and that our creative and cultural sector can demonstrate its ability to fully contribute to and benefit from wider strategic initiatives across the public sphere beyond itself e.g. in health, education, and the environment. The partnership would of course work closely with the Council itself, so that culture and creativity is embedded across the latter's economic, planning, growth, regeneration and environmental policies and strategies.

5. A CHANGED ROLE FOR THE COUNCIL

Currently, the roles the Council carries out include:

- Enabler and facilitator of others' programmes such as music festivals, Vintage by the Sea.
- Creative (co-)producer and/or direct deliverer for example, Light Up Lancaster.
- Venue operator of The Platform and our 4 nationally Accredited Museums.
- Festival and event project management.
- Direct funder and co-funder of the district's cultural organisations.
- Advocating the district's offer to the Arts Council, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic England amongst others and also more widely to non-arts sectors such as health, education and government.
- Ensuring the creative and cultural sectors and our activities contribute to place-making and destination marketing.
- Provision of advice to the sector.
- Licencing.
- Hire and management of spaces for cultural events.

As the Council itself, through the OBR process, changes to a more strategic role, we will also re-imagine and explore how we can best work most effectively and collaboratively with, and contribute to, a possible new strategic 'joined up' approach with others to creative and cultural development and delivery.

We also want, as stakeholder feedback to Counterculture suggested, to create '*a space for dreams*'. So, we will build on the success of the inaugural meeting held in November 2022 of the Council's Culture & Heritage Advisory Group and work with Lancaster Arts Partnership and other groupings and organisations ensuring that the creative, cultural and other related sectors, like tourism and hospitality continue to inform our thinking and plans and feed into the work of the proposed higher level strategic partnership.

6. PROPOSED CREATIVE AND CULTURAL OUTCOMES

The Council currently has in place four strategic priorities to 2030

<https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/the-council-and-democracy/about-the-council/corporate-plan> :

- A Sustainable District
- An Inclusive and Prosperous Local Economy
- Happy and Healthy Communities – which also has related outcomes of '*improving access to and involvement in arts, culture, leisure and recreation / supporting our thriving arts, culture and heritage sector.*'
- A Co-operative, Kind and Responsible Council

to which the following suite of proposed creative and cultural outcomes would be aligned:

- **A significantly raised national and international creative and cultural profile** than is the case currently, benefitting particularly from the huge impact of Eden Project Morecambe as a unique, world class cultural institution at the heart of our district.
- **Strong commitment by the creative and cultural sector to environmental responsibility and net zero carbon pathways** by both the district's creative and cultural sector, and the Council's own cultural activities and initiatives, demonstrating inspiring and positive change through action, initiatives and individual organisations' strategies, projects and events.
- **Maximised local and inward investment for creativity and culture** from public, private, trusts, foundations and other sources.
- **Sharply focussed investment in local creative and cultural activity and talent** ensuring they contribute to the economic success of our re-imagined high streets, town centres and rural areas as well as the district's overall health and wellbeing.
- **A strong and innovative heritage offer which reflects the diverse histories of our communities** that continues to attract visitors to the district's historic city and towns and builds local wealth.
- **Broad, deep engagement, participation and inclusion in creativity and culture across all our neighbourhood communities**, particularly in those areas where access and engagement is low, particularly amongst young people and groups currently under-represented, be that as a result of class, age, health, race or disability, and particularly from amongst those areas 'in greatest need'.
- **High quality professional and skills development of local people, particularly of young people** through close working with the creative, cultural and digital sectors and training providers.
- **The year round delivery of a compelling creative & cultural offer** through the presentation, and energetic marketing, of amongst other things a 'distinctively different' collaboratively curated programme of high impact, high quality open air festivals, events and innovative world class 'art in the public realm'.

6.1 MONITORING, ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

We will put in place new, ongoing, robust monitoring, analysis and evaluation programmes to show value for money, impact and need, help monitor performance, support funding bids and to inform future strategic reviews, planning and decision-making. We will improve our evidence base to ensure we capture the economic and wider social 'non-monetised' outcomes and impacts, such as on the environment, community, health and wellbeing and education and to monitor people's access to creativity and culture.

Such information is vital if we want to know if we're on track to achieve our outcomes, to understand all our impacts and be in a position to make compelling business cases for external, often very competitive, funding or when putting together 'pitches' for major arts and cultural events and 'designations', either on our own or in collaboration with others. It would also be a valuable resource helping support the district's individual creative and cultural organisations when they're preparing their own bids.

It would help show value for money, impact and need to funders and partners, including to the Council itself, help monitor performance, inform future strategic reviews, planning and decision-making. To achieve this we would build on Counterculture's recent research to secure external funding and support from funding bodies, and agencies like the UK Research & Innovation and Arts & Humanities Research Council to establish such programmes. We would also explore the potential for working with independent research bodies and specialist consultancies, and / or possibly with our universities to advise us about relevant standards and appropriate methods.

7. TIMEFRAME - SHORT, MEDIUM AND LONG TERM

We live in a rapidly changing world. As recent global events have shown only too well strategies and plans must evolve and adapt to changing circumstances. As mentioned, the Council itself is changing, so, we'll be phasing our approach over short, medium and long terms with built-in strategic review points mindful of the Council's ongoing OBR framework.

- **In the short term, 2023-25**, the Council, like others, will have less resources available to it. We face economic challenges, and in the light of the OBR exercise, and review of our services, we'll plan for change in how we work and collaborate with the cultural and creative sectors to explore new models of strategic partnership working.

Autumn 2024: first strategic review, refresh and update point.

- **Medium term 2025-27** sees the possible establishment of a new strategic partnership during 2025-26, maximising the district's 'inward' investment potential and we'll also review our Creative & Cultural Investment Framework to help inform future funding decisions. This will help deliver our proposed outcomes and support events and initiatives with greater impact to raise the district's 'game' and national and international profile. Importantly, it will help us seize the opportunities that the massive increase in visitors that Eden will bring to Morecambe and the wider district, so that these visitors will be encouraged to spend even more of their time and money here and to make return visits.

Autumn 2026: second strategic review, refresh and update point.

- **Long term from 2027** imagines what might be ‘over the horizon’; Eden is attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors every year to its awe-inspiring iconic pavilions; Morecambe Bay Triennial is presenting spectacular new commissions along the coast; vibrant creative and cultural businesses are thriving in Lancaster’s regenerated Canal Quarter; the Castle continues to draw thousands through its gates; our museums’ and galleries’ visitors, and theatres’ and festivals’ audiences are booming and the Winter Gardens’ newly expanded programme is playing to packed houses – the creativity and culture of our district is all year round making a huge difference to all our lives.

8. SUMMARY

Over recent months, the Council, through its OBR process has started the process of taking an in-depth look at what, how and why it does things. At the same time, we’ve worked with consultants to gain a deeper understanding of our creative and cultural sectors through data and by listening to our stakeholders.

Despite the undoubted challenges we face, the Council firmly believes that creativity and culture is absolutely vital to this district’s future and that the approach we have outlined here, and the many exciting plans and ideas the sector is developing, will position us as one of the UK’s premier creative and cultural locations – a place in which we can all dream and imagine!

This document is a starting point. We hope you find it a helpful contribution to our collective thinking in the years ahead.

END