



Committee: CABINET

Date: TUESDAY, 9 JULY 2024

Venue: MORECAMBE TOWN HALL

Time: 6.00 P.M.

A G E N D A

Lancaster City Council welcomes members of the public to attend meetings. However, space in the public gallery is limited to 30 seats due to Fire Regulations. The seats are allocated on a first come, first served basis and no standing is permitted. Meetings are livestreamed please click [here](#) to watch using MS Teams.

1. **Apologies**

2. **Minutes**

To receive as a correct record the minutes of Cabinet held on Tuesday, 4 June 2024 (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.

6. **Reports from Overview and Scrutiny**

None.

Reports

7. **Lancaster District Strategic Partnership'Memorandum of Understanding'** (Pages 4 - 18)

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Peter Jackson)

Report of the Chief Executive

8. **LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report** (Pages 19 - 52)

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Phillip Black)

Report of Chief Executive

Whilst the report is public the appendix is exempt and notice is hereby given that the press and public will need to be excluded from the meeting if Cabinet wish to discuss the information within the exempt appendix.

9. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

This is to give further notice in accordance with Part 2, paragraph 5 (4) and 5 (5) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 of the intention to take the following item(s) in private.

Cabinet is recommended to pass the following recommendation in relation to the following item(s):-

“That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business, on the grounds that they could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of that Act.”

Members are reminded that, whilst the following item(s) have been marked as exempt, it is for Cabinet itself to decide whether or not to consider each of them in private or in public. In making the decision, Members should consider the relevant paragraph of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and also whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. In considering their discretion Members should also be mindful of the advice of Council Officers.

10. **Burrow Beck Solar Project** (Pages 53 - 60)

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Dowding)

Report of Chief Officer - Planning and Climate Change

11. **Asset Consideration - Lancaster** (Pages 61 - 69)

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Hamilton-Cox)

Report of Chief Officer Housing and Property

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

(i) Membership

Councillors Phillip Black (Chair), Caroline Jackson, Joanne Ainscough, Gina Dowding, Tim Hamilton-Cox, Peter Jackson, Jean Parr, Catherine Potter, Nick Wilkinson and Jason Wood

(ii) Queries regarding this Agenda

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

(iii) Changes to Membership, substitutions or 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 Monday 1 July, 2024.

CABINET

**Lancaster District Strategic Partnership
'Memorandum of Understanding'**

Report of Chief Executive

PURPOSE OF REPORT			
To request that Cabinet adopts the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Lancaster District Strategic Partnership.			
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
			Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision	N/A		
This report is public.			

RECOMMENDATIONS OF CLLR PETER JACKSON

- (1) That Cabinet agrees to the principles of the partnership as detailed in the Memorandum of Understanding and authorises the Chief Executive to sign on the Council's behalf.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the objectives of the Lancaster District Strategic Partnership (LDSP) and the content of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Terms of Reference (TOR's) for the partnership.
- 1.2 It should be noted that district strategic partners have agreed on the partnership's objectives and the content of the MOU and TOR's. Workshops and discussion with council officers and some cabinet members established the partnerships objectives and resultant MOU and TOR's.
- 1.3 The MOU sets out some principles of how strategic partners can coordinate mutually beneficial city and regional projects via the Lancaster District Strategic Partnership.
- 1.4 The MOU is not legally binding.

1.5 The full list of partner organisations can be seen in the Appendix A to this report and listed below. It is anticipated that all partner organisations will commit to the MOU and become the Founding Members of the Lancaster District Strategic Partnership.

- Lancaster City Council
- Lancaster University
- University of Cumbria
- Lancaster and Morecambe College
- Lancaster District Chamber of Commerce
- University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay
- Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB
- Lancaster District CVS
- Lancaster Arts Partnership
- Lancashire County Council

2.0 Proposal Details

2.1 The Lancaster District Strategic Partnership (the "LDSP" or the "Partnership") has been established to spearhead the wider district's collective strategic ambitions. The overarching strategic priorities for the partnership will be: 1) Sustainability and the Climate Emergency, 2) the Economy, 3) Health and Wellbeing and 4) Communities.

2.2 Agreed strategic priorities have alignment with the ambitions of the Council Plan 2024-2027. It is anticipated that the LDSP will add value to the council's ability to deliver strategic ambitions, by applying a partnership approach to delivery.

2.3 Adoption of the MOU will commit the council to the collective objectives of the LDSP.

2.4 The overarching objectives for the LDSP are to;

- Improve the transparency of strategic workstreams that already take place in the district
- Coordinate and facilitate improved ways of working between partners, to add value to existing strategic programmes
- Identify gaps in strategic and operational workstreams in the district
- Prepare, plan, resource and deliver new collaborative workstreams with 'Project Teams'. (This will only take place where there is an identified gap or where new activity adds value to the partnership vision and objectives)
- Mitigate any duplication of efforts between partners

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 Portfolio Holders have worked with Officers to engage with strategic partners to agree the content of the MOU.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Adopt the MOU and commit the council to the stated objectives of the partnership.	Option 2: Do not adopt the MOU and do not commit to the objectives of the partnership.
Advantages	If adopted, the Chief Executive will sign the MOU and formalise the partnership with all other strategic organisations involved.	No advantages are identified for this option.
Disadvantages	No specific disadvantages are identified for this option.	The Council will need to revise aspects of the MOU with partners. Or if not adopted, the Council will be weakened in its ability to work with partners to deliver mutually beneficial strategic outcomes for the district.
Risks	None identified.	None identified.

5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

5.1 The recommended option is to proceed with adopting the MOU so that the Chief Executive can sign the MOU with all other partners and move towards the delivery of outcomes (Option 1).

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The report provides details of the objectives of the Lancaster District Strategic Partnership and outlines the content and importance of the MOU. Cabinet adoption of the MOU will enable officers and strategic partners to deliver on the stated objectives outcomes.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The strategic priorities for the Lancaster District Strategic Partnership correlate with the strategic principles of the Council Plan 2024-2027. The partnership may evolve so that there is added resource and capacity, between partners, to deliver projects and services aligned to the strategic and financial decision-making already set out in the Council Plan 2024-2027.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

No direct impact.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

No legal implications arising directly from this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications arising directly from this report.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

No HR implications arising directly from this report.

Information Services:

No ICT implications arising directly from this report.

Property:

No property implications arising directly from this report.

Open Spaces:

No open spaces implications arising directly from this report.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A: Memorandum of Understanding

Appendix B: Terms of Reference

Contact Officer: Mark Davies

Telephone: 01524 582401

E-mail: MDavies@lancaster.gov.uk

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

Introduction

Below is a Memorandum of Understanding that sets out some principles of how we can coordinate mutually beneficial city and regional projects via the **Lancaster District Strategic Partnership**. It is not intended to be legally binding.

Memorandum of Understanding: Relating to Projects to be coordinated by Lancaster District Strategic Partnership

This MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (“**MOU**”) is made by and between:

- Lancaster City Council
- Lancaster University
- University of Cumbria
- Lancaster and Morecambe College
- Lancaster District Chamber of Commerce
- University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay
- Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB
- Lancaster District CVS
- Lancaster Arts Partnership
- Lancashire County Council

(together the “**Founding Members**” or “**Members**”)

Background

- A. Lancaster District Strategic Partnership (the “LDSP” or the “Partnership”) has been established to spearhead the wider district’s collective strategic ambitions. The overarching strategic priorities for the partnership will be: 1) Sustainability and the Climate Emergency, 2) the Economy, 3) Health and Wellbeing and 4) Communities.
- B. It is the belief of the Members that district-wide collaboration and strategic projects (“Projects”) are required to deliver the ambitions of the LDSP.
- C. It is anticipated that this MOU will form the basis for collaboration between the Members to commence and progress projects in the short-term to medium term.
- D. This MOU sets out some principles by which the Members have agreed to work together and progress the Partnership. Partnership and collaboration being the key enabler to meet strategic ambitions.
- E. Sustainability and the Climate Emergency will be the primary focus of the partnership in the years 2024 – 2027. A Lancaster District Climate and Nature Strategy could be the first emerging project for partners to shape. The ambition is for a district wide implementation of the plan with and by the founding partners within this MOU.

- F. It is anticipated that Members may need to enter into a specific Partnership Agreement for particular projects, on terms to be agreed and based on the agreed principles set out below.
- G. Whilst Sustainability and the Climate Emergency is the primary focus of the LDSP in the initial period, the partners will collaborate to consider all other emerging projects of strategic importance related to the four strategic objectives agreed and identified in this MOU.
- H. Members recognise that by focusing on Sustainability and the Climate Emergency, the partnership will not neglect the strategic priorities of the Economy, Health and Well-Being or Communities. Sustainability and Climate Emergency projects will also deliver outcomes and impacts across all strategic priorities.
- I. The partnership will keep under review the resources required to realise its strategic ambitions. The potential for a longer-term, permanent structure will be explored, where shared resources could add value and amplify strategic goals.
- J. The LDSP will work together to agree measurable outcomes for the partnership and strategic projects.
- K. Governance arrangements will ensure that the partnerships objectives and outcomes are reviewed annually and from the point in which the MOU is signed by partners. Members will act as the governing body for the partnership. Project teams will feedback on outcomes to support the governing process.

Agreed Principles

1. The **Members** will work together, along with strategic/policy experts and the community, to set out a clear vision for the Partnership and to establish its priorities and specific goals. The agreed goals will guide the activity of the Partnership.
2. **Core Team(s)** ("Core Team") will be established to be responsible for the day-to-day operations and shaping of the LDSP and emerging projects. Lancaster City Council will align resource to the development of the LDSP and the initial responsibilities of a 'Core Team'.
3. **Project Teams** will be developed relevant to emerging projects agreed by the LDSP.
4. The **Members** of the **Lancaster District Strategic Partnership** will provide strategic oversight and the steering of the partnership. Information on the key responsibilities of the Core Team(s) and Project Teams is set out in the Annexes to this MOU.
5. Founding Members agree to a minimum level of commitment to the Partnership, details of which are included in the Annexes to this MOU.
6. **Projects** can be proposed by the Member organisations of the LDSP and connected stakeholders. Proposed projects will need to be democratically agreed between all partners in the LDSP.
7. The Members agree to help shape and refine a **Project** and will work together to identify, agree and promote ways to deliver agreed projects.

8. The Members expect the Core Team(s) and Project Teams to coordinate and manage **Projects** between, and for, Members.
9. Where appropriate, specific Members will enter into an agreement to confirm their involvement and resourcing of a particular **Project** (“Project Agreement”).
10. In order to deliver a **Project** in accordance with a Project Agreement, the Core Team and/or Project Team will likely require resource to manage the Project on behalf of Members. The requirements for the resource will be set out by the Core Team when a Project is presented to Members.
11. Resource requirements of specific projects will be assessed on a case by case basis, and, dependent on the nature of the project, will be met by those Members agreeing to participate in the project. Where suitable skills, or other required resource, are available within Member organisations, these can be provided in lieu of funding.
12. Whilst the LDSP operates without a formal legal structure, it has no ability to undertake procurement, or enter into agreements, directly. Any procurement, or contractual arrangements, will be undertaken and managed by relevant Members, determined by the nature of the transaction, and undertaken in line with their own, specific, governance arrangements.
13. The Core Team(s) and Project Teams will be responsible for managing any Projects within an agreed measurement framework (the “Measurement Framework”), to be established and agreed by the Members. This will include data collection and progress reporting against agreed KPIs. The Core Team(s) and Project Teams will also be responsible for communicating the existence, progress and impact of individual Projects.

Generally

- i. A Member may withdraw from this MOU at any time by written notice to the other Members. If a Member withdraws the MOU will continue with the remaining Members.
- ii. Nothing in this MOU will create, constitute or evidence any partnership, joint venture, agency, trust or employer/employee relationship between the Members. Nor will it constitute any obligation to be a member of any future structure, formal or otherwise, that the LDSP might establish.
- iii. This MOU and any dispute or claim arising out of or in connection with it (including non-contractual disputes or claims) shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the law of England.
- iv. This MOU will become effective when it is signed by all parties and the date it is signed by the last party to sign it (as indicated below under that party’s signature) will be deemed the date of commencement of this MOU.
- v. Additional Members can be added to the LDSP under this MOU with mutual and unanimous agreement in writing from the Founding Members. Once agreed, a revised version of the agreement will be signed by the joining Member, which together with the original MOU

signed by the Founding Members, will constitute the full MOU under which the LDSP operates.

- vi. The LDSP can collaborate/affiliate with other organisations or partnerships without their becoming a Member of the LDSP. There may be mutual benefit from doing so, particularly on projects where there is cross-district interest or where there may be benefits from being able to acknowledge an association. Any such informal affiliation, including, but not limited to, use of any established LDSP branding, with organisations outside of the LDSP, would typically require mutual and unanimous agreement in writing from the Members.

Each party hereby confirms its agreement to the principles contained in this MOU on the date set out below.

<p>Date:.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Print Name</p> <p>.....</p> <p>duly authorised for and on behalf of</p>	<p>Date:.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Print Name</p> <p>.....</p> <p>duly authorised for and on behalf of</p>
<p>Date:.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Print Name</p> <p>.....</p> <p>duly authorised for and on behalf of</p>	<p>Date:.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Print Name</p> <p>.....</p> <p>duly authorised for and on behalf of</p>
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Annex 1 – Core Team Responsibilities: this section details the anticipated key responsibilities of the Core Team. This is not an exhaustive list.

Annex 2 – Project Team Responsibilities: this section details the anticipated key responsibilities of the Project Team. This is not an exhaustive list.

Annex 3 - Minimum Commitment of Members: this section will detail the minimum commitment required of all Founding Members.

Annex 1: Core Team Responsibilities

As a minimum, this is anticipated to consist of a Programme Lead and Coordinator, with additional roles being expected as the Partnership progresses. The key responsibilities of the Core Team will include, but are not limited to:

1. Co-ordinating the Members to establish:
 - a. The Vision, priorities, specific goals and the Measurement Framework of the emerging projects.
 - b. The pipeline of potential joint projects to be delivered by the LDSP, ensuring these align with both the priorities of the Partnership and its individual Members, as well to the agreed LDSP goals.
2. Actively seeking and identifying funding and partnership opportunities.
3. Establishing and managing any joint communications platforms, including, for example, a website.
4. Progressing initial joint projects, including data collection and reporting against the agreed Measurement Framework KPIs.
5. Managing the review and optimisation of the long-term structure for the LDSP.
6. Secretariat functions, for example, convening meetings and updating partners.

Annex 2: Project Team Responsibilities

The key responsibilities of a Project Team will include, but are not limited to:

1. Co-ordinating and delivering projects that are democratically agreed by the LDSP and within an agreed measurement framework.
2. Project delivery will include data collection and progress reporting against agreed KPIs.
3. Work closely with the LDSP Core Team(s) to communicate the progress and impact of individual projects.
4. Raise any issues with risk management and delivery during the lifecycle of the project.
5. Propose further project collaborations or long-term opportunities with stakeholders to ensure the LDSP members can affectively steer long term strategic ambitions.
6. Attend LDSP Member meetings when required to update on project progress.

Annex 3: Minimum Commitment of Members

Including, but not limited to:

1. Attendance at meetings and contributions to the steering of the partnership
2. Members unable to attend meetings should send a colleague who is briefed on the partnership objectives
3. Provide strategic oversight of the partnership objectives and act as the governing body for the strategic partnership
4. Interfacing internally within individual member organisations to energise the partnership for strategic outcomes
5. Interfacing internally within individual member organisations, where necessary, to identify colleagues to make up Project Teams for agreed projects.
6. Providing content for any established communications platforms, including, for example, a website
7. Share data in line with data protection polices, to inform and support strategic work in the district and by the partnership
8. Utilising networks to share the activity and news of emerging projects such as the LAEP and The Bay Anchor Network.
9. Where budgets and individual operations allow, to contribute time, resource and funding to the establishment and ongoing operations of the Core Team(s) and Project Team.
10. Scaling up involvement as relevant joint projects come forward, including providing resources and / or funding to those projects in which members agree to participate.

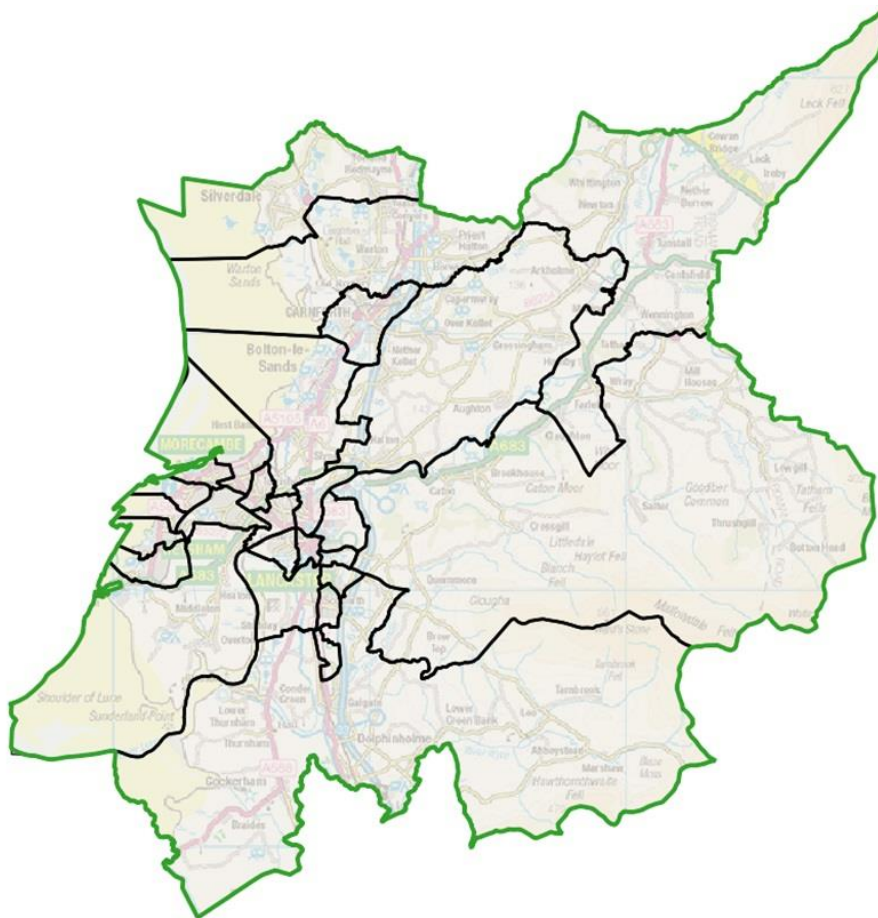
Lancaster District Strategic Partnership – Terms of Reference

Who we are

The Lancaster District Strategic Partnership consists of local stakeholders from the public, private, third and education sectors. Founding members of the 'LDSP' are represented by organisational leads and strategic decision makers. Through the partnership, member organisations will work together to improve the Lancaster District aligned to agreed strategic priorities.

The partnership has a defined geographical focus. Members of the partnership are all located in or have a strategic presence in the Lancaster District. All strategic development and operational delivery of workstreams will aim to improve the entire district. The formation of the partnership will also enable cross boundary working to:

- add value to strategic programmes that have a larger geographical focus
- share learning and best practice with stakeholders and partnerships that are outside of the Lancaster District



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Vision and Ambition

As Lancaster District and regional organisations, we are stronger together. A coordinated approach to regional challenges and opportunities will deliver solutions that are felt across the district. Sustainable change will have a lasting beneficial impact on our member organisations, residents and communities, and businesses in the Lancaster district. By working together, member organisations can coordinate mutually beneficial city and regional projects via the **Lancaster District Strategic Partnership**.

Founding members of the LDSP agree to work together to improve the Lancaster District aligned to the strategic priorities of:

- The Climate Emergency and Sustainability
- The Local Economy
- Health and Wellbeing
- Communities

Objectives

The partnership will apply a proactive approach to amplify the vision and ambitions detailed in this document. The objectives for the partnership are to:

- Improve the transparency of strategic workstreams that already take place in the district
- Coordinate and facilitate improved ways of working between partners, to add value to existing strategic programmes
- Identify gaps in strategic and operational workstreams in the district
- Prepare, plan, resource and deliver new collaborative workstreams with 'Project Teams'. (This will only take place where there is an identified gap or where new activity adds value to the partnership vision and objectives)
- Mitigate any duplication of efforts between partners

Measurements for Success

Members have shown a willingness to work together to develop collaborative and new ways of delivering effective and efficient services and strategic projects. Outcomes will be defined by the member organisations and supported by the appropriate organisational experts and representatives. As the partnership develops, it is the role of the member organisations to agree metrics and measurements for success for any identified and agreed workstream.

Risk Management

If a new project of work emerges through this partnership, a collective approach to Risk Management will need to be agreed before commencing any course of action.

Financial Context

Partners will work together within collective financial constraints, to deliver strategic objectives. The partnership provides an opportunity to identify new ways of working to maximise how organisations use resources effectively and collaboratively.

Strategic Oversight

Members of the LDSP will provide strategic oversight of the partnership. It is anticipated that members will meet on a quarterly basis. This will enable members to steer the partnership's objectives.

Ways of Working

Regular partner meetings will provide a forum where strategic ideas and views on a particular issue can be exchanged. It is envisaged that a more formal structure will be explored for the partnership. This could enable joint funding bids for strategic projects. As the partnership develops, member organisations may consider collective branding for the partnership along with a website.

Partnership Structure

The structure of the partnership will ensure clarity of roles, accountability and process. The Memorandum of Understanding provides greater detail of the following structure;

- Core Team(s)
- Members
- Project Teams

Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed regularly to consider any change experienced by founding members and as the regions challenges and opportunities develop.

CABINET

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report

Report of Chief Executive

PURPOSE OF REPORT			
To request that Cabinet formally accepts the feedback in the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge report for the final report to be published by the deadline of 18 th July 2024.			
Key Decision		Non-Key Decision	X
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision		N/A	
This report is public however Appendix A is exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 until Cabinet agree to publish the document.			

RECOMMENDATIONS OF CLLR PHILLIP BLACK

- (1) That Cabinet formally acknowledges the work undertaken by the peer team and accepts the feedback in the Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) report.
- (2) Delegates responsibility for the development of an action plan to meet the CPC recommendations to the Chief Executive.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The CPC is a highly valued improvement and assurance tool that is delivered by the sector for the sector. The process is led by the LGA and brings together political and managerial leadership, through the use of member and officer peers. The LGA state that a peer challenge provides robust, strategic and credible challenge and support to Councils. Peer challenge also enhances the capacity of the sector and helps to avoid insularity within Councils. It is expected that all Councils will receive a CPC at least every five years. The Council last had a review in June 2015.
- 1.2 The Lancaster City Council CPC took place over three days in April 2024 (16th – 18th)
- 1.3 Peers remain at the heart of the peer challenge process and provide a 'practitioner perspective' and 'critical friend' challenge. The LGA and CPC peers collate the findings from the 3-day challenge to provide robust,

strategic, and credible challenge and support.

1.4 The final CPC feedback report outlines the key findings of the peer team and the recommendations that the council are required to action.

1.5 The report findings and recommendations relate to five core themes:

- Local Priorities and Outcomes
- Organisational and Place Leadership
- Governance and Culture
- Financial Planning and Management
- Capacity For Improvement

2.0 Proposal Details

2.1 The CPC report highlights findings that are both specific to the council but also with significant relevance for the district, stakeholders and partners.

2.2 The CPC report provides a summary of findings as well as specific recommendations that are aligned the five core themes.

2.3 The CPC report highlights many positives, aligned to core themes of the CPC. At the start of the Executive Summary the report makes the conclusion that Lancaster is an ambitious Council, with a 'let's do it' culture and a clear vision for the district as set out within the Council Plan 2024-27. There is an ambition that increased prosperity must be for the benefit of the whole community, which runs alongside an aspiration to help and enable a low carbon future, providing the foundations for future sustainability.

2.4 Whilst specific examples can be found in the full report appended, under each theme the peer team found that:

Local Priorities and Outcomes

- Lancaster is an ambitious Council, with a clear vision for the district as set out in the Council Plan 2024-27. LCC is committed to working "in partnership with our communities, creating a district where people can flourish".
- Members of the peer team witnessed how the Council is making improvements for people and place, with practical examples shared.
- Feedback from staff supported the view that the Council is empowering and trusting staff to be creative when meeting the needs of individuals and identifying new ways to deliver services, embracing a 'let's do it' culture.
- Peers were impressed at how the approach to climate policy is being embedded across the Council.

- The peer team noted that in recent years the Council has made good progress at reviewing and reducing its capital programme.

Organisational and Place Leadership

- Lancaster City Council has well respected political and managerial leadership.
- The Group leaders are to be commended for this cross-party approach.
- The Council is held in high regard by a wide range of key stakeholders, with its convening power being utilised to renew the Lancaster District Strategic Partnership.
- It is clear that the Council is held in high regard by a wide range of key stakeholders, including for example, Lancaster University, Lancaster and Morecambe College, Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board and Lancaster District CVS, who spoke positively about the Council's open and inclusive approach, including a willingness to engage, listen and innovate.
- Health partners spoke of the key role that the Council plays in place leadership and the proactive approach that it is taking in relation to tackling inequality.
- LCC utilises a range of active mechanisms to consult and engage with residents, including traditional approaches, such as the Keep Connected site which is a public facing consultation and engagement platform that enables people to engage with consultations, share ideas and stay connected with the Council.
- Peers note that the Council has an ambition for quality housing that is quite rightly very high and acknowledge that creating new homes alongside other community infrastructure can enhance carbon neutral ambitions if the Council has control of the development agenda.

Governance and culture

- Staff and Councillors that the peer team spoke to are proud to work for and represent LCC, and it is clear that officers and members work well together. The Chief Executive sets a positive tone for the whole organisation, including a proactive approach and strong working relationship with both the Leader and Deputy Leader.
- There is strong, visible direction from the Chief Executive and a new Chief Officer structure that it is viewed as accessible and welcoming. Peers heard and saw that the Council is a supportive, professional and friendly place to work, with a strong emphasis on staff wellbeing and development.

- Peers note that there is political maturity and pragmatism, along with improving working relationships within the coalition administration.
- Dedicated officer capacity has been directed to risk management and a management system has been implemented to capture risks from projects and operational services through to the strategic risk register. All strategic risks (including financial risks) have been mapped to the Council Plan and are reviewed quarterly by the Leadership Team before being reported into the Audit Committee, Budget and Performance Panel, and Cabinet.
- The strategic risk register is instrumental in informing the internal audit work programme, which is reviewed annually, with regular reports and outcomes shared with the Audit Committee. Internal Audit confirm moderate assurance over the operation of key financial controls. The Audit Committee itself is well served with reports on all key areas within its remit, including an appropriate focus on audit, risk and fraud. The relationship between key officers, such as the S151 officer, and the committee is positive and effective.
- There is commitment to reduce inequalities and deliver services that are inclusive and accessible to a diverse community, including examples of best practice, such as the development of a Fair Work Charter that aims to reduce inequalities in the local labour market by promoting equal and fair employment practices.

Financial planning and management

- The Council has a plan to address its budget deficit with the 'Fit for the Future' programme incorporating an Outcome Based Resourcing (OBR) process, including for example a rationalisation and review of assets and use of 'flexible capital receipts' regulations to enable investment in transformation to deliver savings.
- The framework has been put in place to address the medium-term deficit and it is anticipated that it will take another 12 to 24 months to fully achieve its aims. An accompanying governance structure has been created incorporating member and senior officer involvement to oversee progress.
- The Council has adopted the requirements of His Majesty's Treasury Green Book in its capital project business case development and appraisal, requiring all capital projects to be aligned to the strategic objectives of the Council set out in the Council Plan and a full and viable business case to be presented to committee before capital expenditure is approved.

Capacity for improvement

- The peer team were impressed to see that the Council has been on a rapid two-year improvement journey, making significant changes to the operation of the Council and its governance and assurance processes, from the

introduction of a new risk management framework and implementation of a revised complaints system to the reconfigured senior management team structure and establishment of the Lancashire District Strategic Partnership. This progress has been driven with strong, visible leadership and support from the Cabinet and Senior Leadership Team.

- Staff are empowered to try out new things, with evidence of a 'let's do it' attitude that is permeating the organisation, supported by the new and more dynamic leadership team.
- There is a clear focus on employee development and wellbeing. The Council has recently introduced a new 3-year People Plan, which has incorporated a range of new initiatives including the introduction of a leadership development programme, launch of a learning and development strategy, a refresh of the Council's values, implementation of a wellbeing strategy and establishment of an engagement strategy.
- Peers heard that internal communications, such as the weekly staff newsletter and in-person Chief Officer briefings are well received and valued by staff, although there is a need to ensure that frontline staff who may not have access to ICT are able to see communications, along with wider Council policy documentation, etc. Expansion of the 'We're Listening' front line staff engagement group could present an opportunity to enhance this approach.
- The peer team also heard a number of examples of digital transformation delivering improved outcomes and efficiencies.

2.5 The CPC full report findings and recommendations can be seen in the Appendix A to this report.

2.6 The 10 recommendations detailed in the CPC report are listed below:

- 1) Develop a clear narrative for growth and an economic strategy.
- 2) Incorporate a "call for sites" earlier than the Local Plan process would otherwise allow.
- 3) Use the Council's strong reputation as a collaborative and proactive place leader to further develop partnerships.
- 4) Continue to invest in the learning and development of the new chief officer team.
- 5) Take steps to strengthen and further develop the Fit for the Future savings and transformation programme by:
 - A) Strengthening the alignment of budget planning and Fit for the Future process to the Council Plan and service planning.
 - B) Implementing a prioritisation framework to inform the delivery of the Capital Programme, ensuring resources are targeted where they will have the most impact.
 - C) Accelerating the completion of the asset review and delivery of the asset management programme to reduce costs, maximise income and reduce the need for future borrowing.

- D) focusing on the creation and implementation of a Digital and ICT strategy.
- 6) Implement a whole Council strategic approach to the use of data, performance management and financial monitoring.
- 7) Build on recent improvements in the approach to project and programme management.
- 8) Invest further in member development to support Councillors.
- 9) Engage with Councillors and officers in work to enhance and embed a culture of effective overview and scrutiny across the Council.
- 10) Accelerate the production of a refreshed equality policy that incorporates clearly defined objectives.

3.0 Details of Consultation

- 3.1 The Chief Executive has engaged with the LGA to amend some details in the report to ensure factual accuracy.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Accept the findings and recommendations in the report.	Option 2: Do not accept the findings and recommendations in the report.
Advantages	If accepted, the report will be published, and the Chief Executive will develop an action plan to act on the recommendations and monitor progress.	No advantages are identified for this option.
Disadvantages	No specific disadvantages are identified for this option.	The Council will need to engage with the LGA on any disputed findings and recommendations. This will slow down the process of establishing an action plan for CPC recommendations.
Risks	None identified.	None identified.

5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

- 5.1 The recommended option is to accept the report findings and recommendations, so that the report can be published and for the Chief Executive to develop an action plan to act on the recommendations (Option 1). The report must be published by 18th July 2024, and the action plan by 4th September 2024.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The report provides details of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge and the details of the feedback report. Cabinet acceptance of the findings and recommendations in the CPC report will result in the report being published and a new action plan to be developed to act on the recommendations for organisational developments. Alongside this a comms and engagement plan will ensure that we brief staff, members and partners on the excellent findings

of this review.

<p>RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK</p> <p>The CPC feedback report provides a number of recommendations that align with the strategic principles of the Council Plan 2024-2027. The development of an action plan for the recommendations will consider the scope of actions in consideration of the strategic and financial decision-making already set out in the Council Plan 2024-2027.</p>	
<p>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)</p> <p>No direct impact.</p>	
<p>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>No legal implications arising directly from this report.</p>	
<p>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>No financial implications arising directly from this report.</p>	
<p>OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>Human Resources: No HR implications arising directly from this report.</p> <p>Information Services: No ICT implications arising directly from this report.</p> <p>Property: No property implications arising directly from this report.</p> <p>Open Spaces: No open spaces implications arising directly from this report.</p>	
<p>SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS</p> <p>The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.</p>	
<p>MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.</p>	
<p>BACKGROUND PAPERS</p> <p>Appendix A: LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – Feedback Report</p>	<p>Contact Officer: Mark Davies Telephone: 01524 582401 E-mail: MDavies@lancaster.gov.uk Ref: [Click here and type Ref, if applicable]</p>

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