



Leader's Report

28 July 2021

Report of the Leader of the Council

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present the Leader's report to Council.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To receive the report of the Leader of Council.

REPORT

1.0 Cabinet

Information on Cabinet matters is provided in the minutes from the Cabinet meetings held on 7 June 2021. The minutes from the Cabinet meeting held on 13 July will be tabled at September's Council meeting.

2.0 Decisions required to be taken urgently

No urgent Cabinet decisions have been taken in this period.

3.0 Leader's Comments

3.1 July has been an extremely busy month in terms of the opening up of what was "normal" council business and projects and there have been a great many meetings as officers, members and outside agencies begin to pick up on their concerns and ambitions.

3.2 **Covid 19 work** - the month has been dominated by a rapid rise in infections and the stepping up of work at county and local level to ensure communities are best protected. Work with businesses has been ongoing and the excellence of this has been recognised in the way Lancaster materials have formed a significant part of

the Toolkit published by the county council for the use of all councils. The community meetings that recommenced this month revealed a level of anxiety about the end of restrictions and this was followed up by a very full and useful briefing for all communities week week ending 16th July. Our communications team are regularly putting out messages relating both to cautious opening up and being respectful of people's choice to wear masks.

- 3.3 Support for staff** - the combination of Covid work, rising infections and staff absence because of isolation and childcare requirements has put staff under a great deal of pressure. The pressure is felt in every department but particularly for staff working with the community. Recent public comment over weeds, litter and grass-cutting whilst understandable must feel very demoralising to staff. Thanks to the Environment staff who have done excellent work getting key areas cut, cleared and planted, despite all the other difficulties and for ensuring day to day waste collection goes ahead whatever. If members can find opportunities to indicate their support for staff wherever possible it will help keep up everyone's morale and hopes at this difficult point.
- 3.4 The Bay Unitary** -the leaders and chief execs plus consultants have met every week to progress the work required whatever the outcome might be. By the time you read this, the announcement will have been made and if we are successful, Lancaster will be plunged into an exciting series of discussions to take forward the work to create a unitary authority.
- 3.5 Eden** - Dave Harland CEO of Eden has visited, cabinet passed the land transfer arrangements and briefings have been arranged with council members and community regarding Eden's application for planning permission. We are all extremely hopeful that a government announcement of funding will happen in the autumn. I am expecting to meet with David Morris in the near future to discuss what more we can do to show government that this project is, as they say, not only a wonderful example of "levelling up" for the north, but also absolutely "shovel-ready".
- 3.6 Lancashire County Council** - the new county council leader, Cllr Phillippa Williamson, has approached all councils involved in the District Leaders' Forum asking for a joint shortlist of areas on which they would like to work with the county council. This request has gone to all leaders of groups in this district as agreed by the Forum. The Forum has welcomed the co-operative approach that is being taken by the county council.
- 3.7 Various Building Projects** - firstly, the plans for Mainway are developing fast with the support of a new consultancy with good appreciation of the social and environmental ambitions of the city alongside rigorous financial requirements. Secondly the city council helped lead an inspiring conference on community-led housing, "Solid Foundations" to explore initiatives like the current Lune Valley Land Trust development of passivhaus affordable housing. Thirdly, I attended a guided walk in Ancoats, Manchester to look at the highly successful regeneration work there, an invitation received after a recent article on Canal Quarter in Place North West. Definitely pause for thought and well worth a visit if you are in Manchester. Finally the Collaboration Agreement required for the HIF has been received from Lancashire county council and is being worked on by our legal officers.

3.8 Community and partnership work - Sharon Parkinson who leads on Housing Options took on the difficult job of bringing together a district contribution to the Changing Futures bid jointly with NHS colleagues in an incredibly short time. Announced 17 July it will bring £6.5 million into the Lancashire area for work with those with multiple vulnerabilities such as mental health needs, homelessness, domestic violence and substance use. In addition I was privileged to be invited to speak by Carnforth Town Council at their annual meeting, to meet the candidates for the position of the vicar of the Priory Church and to attend the Lancaster Black History Group presentation of young people and community research into Lancaster's family links to slavery.

3.9 Finally, the cabinet has been concentrating on revisiting plan 2030 priorities for action in the light of our corporate plan and budget situation and has now got to the point of considering what will form the affordable priorities for the next two years.

4.0 Decisions

The following Decisions were taken by Cabinet on 13 July 2021:

1. Provisional General Fund Outturn 2020/21
2. Release of Capital Programme – Development Pool (Electric Van)
3. Release of Capital Reserves for South Lancaster Growth Catalyst
4. Climate Emergency Review of Local Plan – consultation
5. Shared Services Agreement – Revenues & Benefits
6. Shared Services Agreement – Fraud Investigation Services

The following Officer Delegated Key Decision has been taken since the last Leader's report.

ODD3	Award of contract – Air Source Heat Pumps	Decision to proceed with award of contract authorised by Cabinet on 23 March 2021.
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The following Individual Cabinet Member Decisions were taken since the last Leader's report:

ICMD2	Roofing Contract	Councillor Matthews 18.6.21
ICMD3	Farming in Protected Landscapes programme for the Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB	Councillor Frea 18.6.21 (Call-in waived)
ICMD4	Participation in the Afghan locally employed staff relocation scheme	Councillor Matthews 5.7.21 (Call-in waived)

Background Papers

Cabinet agenda 13 July 2021