



Leader's Report

16 March 2022

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

1.1 Information on Cabinet matters is provided in the minutes from the Cabinet meeting held 8th February 2022, later in this agenda.

2.0 Decisions required to be taken urgently

2.1 No urgent Cabinet decisions had been taken in this period.

3.0 Leader's Comments

3.1 The background to this month's report has been the increasing tension over Ukraine and finally the Russian invasion and terrible scenes of destruction. Lancaster district is linked to Ukraine in many ways through historic links, our twin town and our many residents with family members and friends in Ukraine and also in the countries around which have taken in refugees in huge numbers. We share in the support of Ukraine and a renewed sense of how far our community extends.

3.2 **Cabinet and the Budget** - Cllr Whitehead's budget was given strong support at budget council and we all acknowledge the time and expertise that has gone into its creation from officers, from Cllr Whitehead and from cabinet. The extent of

financial hardship likely to be facing many of our poorest residents as a result of inflation linked to energy prices was recognised in budget provision. Cabinet also approved the the dedication of residual Covid and new funds to support vulnerable residents through the Household Support Fund system. Cabinet set up a new advisory group to involve and support the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector. A number of cabinet members joined others recently to attend a meeting on the uses of data gained on travel and spend during lockdown. The material provided by Insights and Analytics was of use to council and partners – the data looks to be an important decision- making tool and we expect to explore further how it might be used. As Leader I met with our LGA support to discuss ways to increase the effectiveness of cabinet work and I am implementing some of their suggestions with members and officers.

- 3.3 **County Deal** - Since the publication of the Levelling Up white paper, District leaders have met twice to consider how to proceed on the agreement that went through all councils involved in January/February. All councils were asked to present the opinions of their groups based on papers sent out by Chief Executives. All groups in our council were asked for their views on the white paper and how we should proceed. Predictably we held a wide range of views that are still coming in as I write this and the final notes will be passed to the meetings on 9th March. I have also attended several meetings of the LGA Independent group convened by Marianne Overton to discuss the effect of the white paper on authorities across the country.
- 3.4 **Chief Executive Recruitment** - The Recruitment committee has continued to meet frequently, consulted with Tile Hill our consultants and has attended training. I have been in attendance at all meetings. By the time of the Full Council, this recruitment will be completed and hopefully we will know who the new Chief Executive will be.
- 3.5 **Eden** - Following the Convention of the North at which the Eden partners met Michael Gove, we arranged to meet Alistair Burt Pro Chancellor for Lancaster University. We had a wide ranging conversation on the matter of Eden and implications for the area and for Lancaster University. Wee also discussed Lancaster University's place in the development of skills relating to local and wider needs for medical, energy, construction, flooding and water management and the electech sector.
- 3.6 **Community meetings, arts, culture and events** - This month we have had a large number of community events. We restarted our community conversations with a meeting on community safety and now have a programme of meetings going forward, the next of which will be for and run by young people. The community network meetings in Lancaster Morecambe and the Rural areas have taken place and through one of those regular attenders we were asked to convene a community meeting on Ukraine. This was well attended and explored in particular our relationship with Lublin our twin town and how we might give practical support. We have set up a fund to support Lublin and all members are asked for their support especially by sharing details through your own social networks. There will also be a peace vigil on Thursday 10th March in Dalton Square.

- 3.7 In addition a number of councillors met with Lancaster Medical Practice and local NHS managers to receive a presentation on how the GP practice was developing following concerns raised by ward members. Statistics were share on improvements in appointments, wait times and access to GPs and other services both face to face and by phone. Members of cabinet were also invited to meet involved both in the Escape2Make conference at the Castle and to view the progress made on Queen’s Market in Morecambe.

4.0 Decisions

The following decisions were considered by Cabinet on 1st March 2022:

Viability Protocol Supplementary Planning Document
Covid 19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF)
Covid 19 Lancaster District Hardship Fund (Use of Residual Funds)
Delivering our priorities Q3 2021/22
VCSE Advisory Group
Lancaster City Council Corporate Branding
Land forming part of Lancaster Leisure Park, off Wyresdale Road

No Officer Delegated Key Decision has been taken since the last Leaders report.

The following Individual Cabinet Member Decisions were taken since the last Leader’s report:

ICMD16	Slate Purchase for 1 Lodge Street, Lancaster	Cllr Caroline Jackson Published on 11.2.22

Background Papers

Cabinet agendas of the meetings held on 8th February 2022 & 1st March 2022.