



Leader's Report

22 June 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 12 April 2022, later in this agenda.

2.0 Decisions required to be taken urgently

No urgent Cabinet decisions had been taken in this period.

3.0 Leader's Comments

3.1 Since last report we have had the end of our Mayoral year

3.2 **Cabinet** - Over the last 5 weeks cabinet has been busy with a number of major projects. There have been briefings on the replacement for EU funding the UK shared Prosperity Fund, a visit from Sarah Kemp current Chief executive for the LEP and soon to replace Sue Black at Lancaster University and the first of our Shared Leadership meetings which are intended to give Cabinet and the executive team opportunity to discuss matters in greater depth than cabinet briefings. The report for the first stage of Outcome Based Resourcing was received and discussed. We are currently waiting for the tenders for the second stage, for the detailed directorate by directorate work, to be returned. The next stage of the Canal Quarter development is currently moving forward with a further consultation.

- 3.3** Cabinet members have been involved in an extensive site visit and workshop to explore elements of housing, green space and travel in and through the site. The cabinet meeting considered and passed motions on three further SPDs that form part of the Local Plan Review, placed funds aside to make sure we can match fund grants to decarbonise heat in council buildings and received the Quarterly Monitoring report. Cllr Lewis requested to step down from her portfolio and will be replaced for a six-month period by Cllr Wood.
- 3.4 Matters beyond our borders** - No further progress has been made on the local government reform agenda. Further discussions are taking place across the country on the substance of “county deals”. The outcome of the May elections has meant few major changes to district leadership in Lancashire and the discussion of the Plan 2050 format, including who will lead the sub committees, will take place before next full council
- 3.5 Staff Matters** - In April we welcomed Mark Davies as Chief Exec, stepping up from his director role. A number of members were happy to have him visit their wards to get a greater perspective on the resident and councillor view of the council. The very limited opening of the town halls was reviewed in the light of resident demand and they are now open every day which has been very well received. Members report they have found themselves with better access to the Town Halls and a greater number of face-to-face meetings are being booked into both Morecambe and Lancaster Town Hall. Members are still waiting for the report on Working Well to fully understand the new working conditions for staff and organisation of council premises.
- 3.6 Eden** - The Levelling Up Fund round 2 bid for a £50 million is being prepared by Eden and external experts with the support of Lancaster University, LEP, Lancashire County Council and Lancaster City Council. The bid is being prepared in stages and each draft is being shared with the city council. The Eden team have been to Morecambe and met with all the bid partners. Whilst the whole process is rigorous and pressurised, particularly in its examination of the sustainability of the project, there is a great sense of optimism that we will see a positive announcement from government in the autumn. The Eden team visit was combined with the inaugural Eden lecture, part of the Lancaster University lecture series, given at the Winter Gardens by Sir Tim Smit to a large audience.
- 3.7 Community Meetings and Events** - Mayor Making was celebrated in style this year for the first time since 2019. It was wonderful to see everyone involved and enjoying both the ceremonial and the socialising afterwards. The Town Hall looked beautiful and we are grateful to the staff who worked so hard to make the event enjoyable and to find all the lost and put away equipment that hadn't been seen since pre-lockdown. Especial mention for Democratic Services who had to manage without Jenny Kay at the last minute. Cllr Pritchard looked amazing in the first of her charity shop outfits and her intention to source all her clothing from the mayoral year in the same way is a challenge to us all. The last six weeks has also seen a raft of community events attended by myself and other cabinet members which includes the launch of the second round of the Poverty Truth Commission in a packed meeting at the Storey; two major Eid celebrations; a well-attended Chamber lunch at which both Mark Davies and I spoke; the opening of the Police

Museum in Lancaster Castle (well worth a visit); Festa Italia organised by the BID and Totally Local Lancaster and the Carnforth Annual Assembly showcasing once again, the remarkable amount of activity in the town.

- 3.8** The biggest community event was undoubtedly the Jubilee, celebrated in so many ways - from all those informal ward events like the Ridge community barbecue I attended, to the formal Lancashire wide church service at Blackburn Cathedral very beautifully organised but attended with great ceremonial and such formality of dress that our Mayor was asked where her hat was. The highlight in formal celebrations for me was the Priory service with amazing choral music and the beacon lighting performed by the Lord Lieutenant and his deputy Pam Barker. However, the standout Jubilee event was, of course, Morecambe's record-breaking Big Lunch. It brought a huge amount of positive and excited media coverage and a crowd of over 5000 people to participate plus many, many more who came to watch the fun. All credit goes to the organising team from Morecambe town council led by cabinet member and MTC leader, Cary Matthews and to Luke Trevaskis their proper officer. Thanks too, to all city council staff who gave support.
- 3.9** As a footnote to the last report we have had a further meeting of the Community Safety Partnership regarding serious concerns about increased anti-social behaviour in both Lancaster and Morecambe including evidence of victimisation and hate crime. Due to police deployment and closer work with social services the incidence of this behaviour seems to have dropped. However, it has brought with it increased reflection on the health and well-being of young people in the Lancaster district following the pandemic and concern that resources are found to support their mental and physical needs.
- 3.10 Significant District Developments** - A cabinet meeting with officers on Frontierland developments agreed that a Constraints report on the site be commissioned and completed by July and that following this the city council would invite expressions of interest on ways to use the site. Cabinet members also met with Homes England to discuss a recent article mentioning Morecambe as a suitable place for regeneration funding including housing. Further meetings are planned. Weeds and weed spraying have been a topic of interest for several years now. Meetings have taken place with the county council who are responsible for the matter and the good news is that more will be spent this year on weed control. Cabinet members continue to meet with Lancaster Vision which is providing excellent information on specific problems like buddleia damaging the infrastructure as well as consideration of the whole problem of weeds as we all acknowledge that spraying cannot be the long-term answer.
- 3.11 Low Carbon Futures** - The Salt Ayre solar array was officially turned on by our departing Mayor Cllr Greenall and the off-gas project is continuing to attract a large amount of interest from all over the country. Officers report a very large saving in energy bills for Salt Ayre leisure centre and in circumstances where councils are considering closing pools because of heating costs we are very fortunate to have been so far-sighted. Other developments on our climate action agenda included a meeting organised at Lancaster and Morecambe college engaging local contractors to promote green skills in the construction work force. In the Sunny Slopes area of Heysham a good number of residents turned out to take part in the

first part of a seed sowing project supported by Eden, to restore meadows to increase biodiversity in the district. A meeting developed by Cllr Lewis at Cumbria University set off a project to investigate the way UN Sustainable Development Goals can become part of the way we monitor progress in our district. It was good to see our Housing department figure as a leader in using the goals.

3.12 Finally, amongst all this activity and celebration, there was the huge shock of Cllr Janice Hanson's death. I don't think we have yet come to terms with how much we will miss her as a wise, hard-working and resilient member of our councillor community. Her funeral brought together many friends from across our community to mourn and to celebrate her life with her family. It felt very fitting to stand in line in our robes to attend the arrival of the funeral procession to the crematorium.

4 Decisions

The following decisions were scheduled to be considered by Cabinet on 7 June 2022:

Supplementary planning documents to support the Climate Emergency Local Plan Review (Suite 2)
Heat Decarbonisation Programme
Delivering our priorities Q4 & End of year 2021/2
Appointments to Outside Bodies and Lancashire Police & Crime Panel

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:

ICMD22	Mainway next steps – appointment of strategic management and construction delivery partner	Published on 11.5.22 Taken by Cllr Matthews
ICMD1	Aldcliffe with Stodday Neighbourhood Plan Decision to Proceed to Referendum	Published on 18.5.22 Taken by Cllr Dowding
ICMD2	Insurance Decision – exempt report & decision	Published on 26.5.22 Taken by Cllr Matthews Call-in waived

Background Papers

Cabinet agenda of the meeting held on 7 June 2022.