



Leader's Report

9 November 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 13 September. The minutes from the Cabinet meeting held on 25 October will be tabled at December's Council meeting.

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 last month has been extremely busy for cabinet and officers as the financial implications of the cost of living crisis and the problems caused at national government level have been taken into account within our finances, plans and processes. We are continuing to be ambitious about our strategic priorities whilst realistic about the actions required to ensure a robust budget. We recognise repeatedly the amazing role that volunteers play in achieving ambitious outcomes across the district; the Mayor's afternoon tea for volunteers was very well attended and it was inspiring to hear more about the projects the volunteers represented.

General matters

- 3.2 **The Eden Project:** We are now aware that there is unlikely to be an announcement until December. Plans to further the project are ready and we are in regular touch with all partners.
- 3.3 **UKSPF:** We continue to await government approval. In the meantime, many of those expressing interest have been asked to submit more detailed plans and costings. Recent meetings have made partners aware of our desire to work in partnership to make this funding a catalyst for achieving joint ambitions for the district.
- 3.4 **OBR/Budget:** Peopletoo, our consultants, have completed their initial survey and presented an extensive long list of items for savings and efficiencies over a 2-3-year period. Cabinet has conducted a reserves review with senior officers. Cabinet and officer working groups have begun weekly meetings to look at in year and 23/24 budget possibilities. These groups report into an overall strategy group. There is also a scrutiny group with membership from all political groups in council. The first draft of the budget will be ready for week beginning 12 December.
- 3.5 **New Hospitals Project:** Gerry Hawker, the lead on this announced that they would be looking for two new hospitals built on new sites, one in Lancaster and one in Preston. Hospitals in Morecambe, Kendal and Barrow would not be affected. Decisions on the New Hospitals Project, a government manifesto pledge, are due in December.
- 3.6 **Cost of Living Crisis:** Suzanne Lodge has set up an over-arching multi agency strategy group along with two Officer groups to cover work with businesses and residents. The Household Support Fund 3 has been announced. Our team is working on criteria and distribution for the devolved amount.

New Matters

- 3.7 **Lancashire county matters:** Through county officers we were invited to bid for an Investment Zone at very short notice. The area proposed was Heysham Gateway, no housing was to be included and acceptance was to be based on an IZ proving to be in line with our corporate priorities. It is not clear whether government will continue with this initiative. Lancashire Leaders have continued work on Plan 2050 with overarching priorities laid out for all areas and meetings between leaders, officers and chief executives to agree progress so far. Mark Davies and I attended the Transport and Environment groups.
- 3.8 **Fair Work Charter:** Extensive progress has been made through a research paper outlining our baseline data and surveying good practice elsewhere. The draft charter is in development as well as consideration how of our procurement strategy might cover wage matters.

3.9 Cabinet in its role as the Shareholders' Committee has met for training and then to approve the business plan for the LA Trading Company Morehomes for the Bay.

3.10 With many thanks to cabinet members and officers for all their hard work over the last month.

4.0 Decisions

The following decisions were scheduled to be considered by Cabinet on 13 September 2022:

Asset Management Strategy (Non-Housing) 2022-26
Electricity Contract Renewal
Updated Reserves Strategy 2022/2
Building and Fire Safety Update
Fibre Network and Digital Exchange

The following items were considered as urgent business.

Treasury Management Mid-Year Review
Acceptance of External Funding (Exempt)

No Officer Delegated Key Decisions have been taken since the last Leader's report.

No Individual Cabinet Member Decisions have been taken since the last Leader's report:

Background Papers

Cabinet agenda of the meetings held on 25 October 2022.