



Leader's Report

14 December 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 25 October. The minutes from the Cabinet meeting held on 6 December will be tabled at January'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 October and November for Cabinet and Officers have been heavily focused on the needs of the budget and our wider OBR implications. The more general fallout from the cost-of-living crisis has continued to affect our financial calculations. The cost of operations and the viability of our own projects has to be under review in order that we can make responsible financial decisions and retain the best possible sustainable future for residents. In addition, we know that our county council is faced with a £47 million deficit and is reconsidering some of its activities and commitments.

General matters

3.2 UKSPF including Rural UKSPF: The initial work to identify priorities for the £500k rural capital sum has been done by Officers with the help of a number of rural ward Councillors. There is enthusiasm for parish small renewable energy projects and EV infrastructure which fits well with both rural fund and city council outcome priorities.

3.3 OBR/Budget: Cabinet and Officer working groups have met weekly to look at in-year and 23/24 budget possibilities, our assets portfolio and the capital programme. The first round of key findings have been reported back, setting up the main options for savings to the 23/24 budget. The cross-party scrutiny group with membership from all political groups, has also been asked to comment on them. Members should all have received an invitation to an all-member briefing in early December.

We have had an introductory online meeting with local residents and a further online meeting will be held 13th December. In view of the extensive change that savings proposals may involve it is important that as wide a constituency as possible has the opportunity to understand our position and give views. The first draft of the budget is still on schedule for end of the week beginning 12 December.

3.4 The OBR Partnership group, consisting largely of the anchor institutions, has made rapid progress towards creating a more formal partnership that will explore common priorities, make a memorandum of understanding and survey its current projects to identify current and future opportunities for joint working.

3.5 Cost of Living Crisis: The first meetings of the Strategic and Business groups have taken place. Members have agreed to co-ordinate information and support available. The Cost of Living webpage has been updated see: [Cost of living - Lancaster City Council](#). More warm and welcoming spaces were added; also details of the Lancashire warm spaces grant fund were disseminated through social media and council community contacts.

3.6 Lancashire County matters: The IZ proposals have been dropped. In its place ministers have promised to concentrate on areas of need. It remains to be seen whether Heysham Gateway will be included in the new scheme. Lancashire Leaders agreed to support the overall Plan 2050 framework, with the strong proviso that the extremely general statements for the eight key areas be accompanied by clear action plans. There remains a great deal to do to involve all authorities more fully and to create a governance structure that will support the call to action. The launch of

Plan 2050 took place 23rd November in London at Speaker's House and was attended by 200 people including Lancashire MPs, business and political leaders.

New Matters

- 3.7** As the city council becomes more outcomes focused, responding to our corporate priorities, there is a need to review Performance Management. Human Resources have worked with staff members to refresh the Your Voice strategy. This has been presented to Members, to Officers, to Unions and to Members. An associated reworking of the Values document has been undertaken.
- 3.8** The Leader and Chief Executive met with Chief Inspector Dave Britton to discuss the community security concerns for the district, the availability of police resources and the future for policing. Concerns included ASB, gangs, serious violence, and threats to community cohesion. Inspector Britton also attended the yearly meeting of Overview and Scrutiny in its role as the safety partnership.
- 3.9** Audit and Risk Management have been a particular concern to me since June 2021. At this point it is good to report that there are no further concerns about our internal or external auditors. Ongoing work on the Risk Management Action Plan will be regularly reported to Audit Committee.
- 3.10** The LGA (Local Government Association) undertook both a Peer Review of the Planning function and a one-day Health Check of our Comms. The feedback from both was positive: the LGA Peer team did an excellent session with Officers and Members whilst the Comms team created an extensive report from their brief visit. It remains for Cabinet portfolio holders and Officers to pick up the development points and make the most of the experience once we have completed our budget work.
- 3.12** The Richardson Institute for Peace at Lancaster University have asked to develop a project regarding peace activities in our communities and wish to ensure students have a better understanding of the ways local government works and the contribution of local government to community engagement.
- 3.13** Members and Officers here and at county have worked closely together with David Morris MP largely across a weekend, regarding the standing up of a further Home Office sponsored hotel in Morecambe.

With many thanks to Cabinet Members and Officers for all their hard work over the last month.

4.0 Decisions

The following decisions are scheduled to be considered by Cabinet on 6 December 2022

Lancaster Moor Conservation Area
Morehomes for the Bay (Investments) Ltd and Morehomes for the Bay (Developments) Ltd Terms of Reference
Business Plan in Relation to Morehomes for the Bay (Investments) Ltd and Morehomes for the Bay (Developments) Ltd
Delivering Our Priorities: Q2 2022/23
Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/4
MTFS
4.8MW Solar – South Lancaster (Exempt)

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

The following Individual Cabinet Member Decisions have been taken since the last Leader's report:

ICMD6	Council Housing Asset Strategy	Published on 16/11/22 Taken by Cllr Matthews
ICMD7	Carnforth Neighbourhood Plan	Published on 17/11/22 Taken by Cllr Dowding
ICMD8	Innovate UK Funding Bid	Published on 2/12/22 Taken by Cllr Hamilton-Cox Call-in Waived
ICMD9	Slyne-with-Hest Neighbourhood Planning Referendum	Published on 2/12/22 Taken by Cllr Dowding

Background Papers

Cabinet agenda of the meetings held on 6 December 2022.