



Leader's Report

24 April 2024

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 20 February later in this agenda.

2.0 Decisions required to be taken urgently.

2.1 No urgent Cabinet decisions have been taken since the last Leader's Report.

3.0 Leader's Comments

3.1 Firstly I'd like to extend a warm welcome to Councillor Isabella Metcalf-Riener, who was elected to Council at a by-election last month following the resignation of Shelagh McGregor, both of the Green Party.

Supaskip Emergency

3.2 I am delighted to share with members that an exceptional grant from the Government of £764,916 has been given to the Council in accordance with Section 31 of the Local Government Finance Act 2003 by the Government. These funds are support to Lancaster City Council's response to the waste fire as there was

clear partnership advice and agreement to a strategy to tackle the fire and reduce the impacts on public health and sensitive neighbouring natural environment involving demolition and waste removal. A specific limitation for the grant is that the DLUHC provided funding is specifically used to meet the incurred demolition and waste removal costs only, with Landfill Tax costs to be met by Lancaster City Council. Government have also asked (and indeed we were already exploring) that Lancaster City Council take steps to investigate bringing the site into public ownership, recognising that the legal position on site ownership is currently unclear. This grant constitutes a reimbursement of approximately half of the total expenditure from the Council in dealing with this emergency since December 2023.

- 3.3 Securing this exceptional funding from the Government is a significant accomplishment for this administration, and for the residents of our district. We have continually taken decisions to tackle this emergency effectively and protect residents, businesses, and the environment from the impact of so much harmful waste burning within the city. At times this has meant releasing funds from our reserves to act swiftly, even when there has been no statutory responsibility for the Council to do so, and no certainty that we would be able to recoup any of this sizeable expenditure. However, I have always believed that stepping forward and promptly taking action to meet the emergency was the right thing to do. I am delighted that retrospectively, other partners are beginning to help shoulder this financial burden.
- 3.4 It is said that success has many fathers, and that is certainly true on this occasion, and it has been heartening to coordinate a cooperative, cross-party effort. I would like to thank County Councillor Philippa Williamson and the officers of the County Council, local Green Ward Councillors and David Morris MP for all their support in working towards securing this grant. I would also like to thank Cat Smith MP for her tireless efforts to secure meetings and facilitate agreements with Ministers, and her continued effort to demand accountability from the EA (who have been aware of concerns about the Supaskips site for some time before the fire began). Thanks too to Ministers Hoare and Moore for hearing us out and agreeing the release of funds. Finally the greatest thanks go to our own Chief Executive Mark Davies. Throughout this emergency Mark has ensured that the Council's response was rapid and appropriate, helped to coordinate a multi-agency response, and tenaciously pursued fair and meaningful funding from Government. Together, Mark and I haven't taken no for an answer. I'm proud of both what we have done in responding to the emergency, and in ensuring that the impact to our budgets during a Local Government funding crisis has been significantly mitigated.

UK100 Pledge

- 3.5 I have signed the UK100 Pledge for the 'Mission Zero Coalition'. The pledge reads as follows:

3.6 Taking the heat out of local climate action:

As leaders, cabinet members, councillors, and candidates seeking election to local and regional authorities, we, the undersigned, in the interests of promoting healthy local democracies and collaborative climate policymaking, commit to:

- **Rise** above party politics when addressing the climate crisis, recognising that it transcends political divides and requires collaborative action.
- **Support** an evidence-based, rational climate conversation by resisting the urge to drag climate policies into culture wars or use misinformation as a tool for division. We call on national politicians to do the same.
- **Acknowledge** the dangers associated with a rising tide of climate misinformation and endeavour to counter it by providing accurate, accessible information about climate policies and the need for urgent local action. And proactively communicate the benefits of these measures while addressing legitimate concerns.
- **Champion** the role of local authorities in driving the transition to Net Zero, working in partnership with central government, businesses, and civil society to deliver inclusive, equitable place-based solutions.
- **Engage** residents, civil society and businesses in the co-design of local climate action plans, using best practice guidance to enable meaningful participation in shaping the future of our communities.
- **Recognise** that local authorities are constrained and will need to make difficult decisions. While accountability is essential to local democracy, we will scrutinise with an understanding that our shared goal is to learn from our mistakes and advance climate action by improving delivery.

Deputy

- 3.7 On 25th March Cllr Caroline Jackson deputised for the Leader at a meeting of the North West Regional Board. The agenda included an item on the use of AI in local authorities and have proved pertinent to discussions within our own council.
- 3.8 On 26th March Cllr Jean Parr deputised for the Leader in a meeting with the Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire (LLOL) at the town hall. Cllr Parr was struck by the LLOL's commitment and passion in recognising the important contributions of volunteers to our county.

4.0 Decisions

The following decisions were scheduled to be considered by Cabinet on 16 April 2024:

Projects and Performance: Q3 2023-24
Review of the Consultation on Landlord Licensing and the enforcement of housing standards in the West End of Morecambe.

No Officer Delegated Key Decisions have been taken since the last Leaders report.

The following Individual Cabinet Member Decision has been taken since the last Leader's report.

ICMD 26	Procurement of Planning and Building Control database , Gazetteer management and associated modules/add-ons via CCS	Taken by: Cllr Jean Parr Published on: 11.03.24
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	VAS Framework	
ICMD 27	Health and Safety Work to Former Ice-Cream Factory	Taken by: Cllr Tim Hamilton-Cox Published on: 21.03.24
ICMD 28	UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), Grant Award: Visitor Economy, Community Wealth Building and Culture	Taken by: Cllr Catherine Potter Published on: 05.04.24
ICMD 29	UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), Grant Award: Regeneration, Skills and Digital Innovation	Taken by: Cllr Nick Wilkinson Published on: 05.04.24
ICMD 30	UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), Grant Award: Climate Action	Taken by: Cllr Gina Dowding Published on: 05.04.24

Background Papers

Cabinet agenda of the meeting held on 16 April 2024.