

## CABINET

10.00 A.M.

4TH OCTOBER 2011

**PRESENT:-** Councillors Eileen Blamire (Chairman), Janice Hanson (Vice-Chairman), Jon Barry, Abbott Bryning, Tim Hamilton-Cox, Karen Leytham, Ron Sands and David Smith

Officers in attendance:-

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Mark Cullinan  | Chief Executive                                       |
| Richard Tulej  | Head of Community Engagement Service (Minute 45 & 47) |
| Mark Davies    | Head of Environmental Services (Minute 46)            |
| Suzanne Lodge  | Head of Health and Housing (Minute 48)                |
| Derek Whiteway | Internal Audit Manager/Deputy 151 Officer             |
| Liz Bateson    | Principal Democratic Support Officer                  |

### 40 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6 September 2011 were approved as a correct record.

### 41 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE LEADER

The Chairman advised that there was one item of urgent business. This was an item regarding Climate Change Invest to Save Projects (Minute 45 refers).

### 42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hanson declared a personal interest with regard to the Festivals and Events Report, in view of its reference to and her being a member of Morecambe Town Council (Minute 47 refers).

### 43 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Members were advised that there had been no requests to speak at the meeting in accordance with Cabinet's agreed procedure.

*The Chairman advised the meeting of a revision to the order of the agenda and Item 11, West End Local Centre Parking would be considered first.*

### 44 WEST END LOCAL CENTRE PARKING

**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Hanson)**

Cabinet received a report from the Head of Regeneration and Policy to enable Members to consider the need for additional parking provision in the West End to serve the local centre's retail businesses and the potential re-use of the former Parliament Street play area for car parking.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option,

were set out in the report as follows:

|   | Advantages  | Disadvantages  | Risks  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Option 1:</b><br>Do Nothing                          | No additional costs. Evidence indicates that existing on street parking capacity is sufficient to meet short stay shopper's parking.  | No additional car parking. Remnants of play area remain detracting from quality of open space and boundary wall continues to provide cover for nefarious activities  | Missed opportunity to evaluate need for car park.  |
| <b>Option 2:</b><br>Formal Pay & Display Car Park       | This option provides 38 additional parking spaces (but this might not necessarily be an advantage, as evidence indicates sufficient capacity exists already). The creation of off-street parking areas could help the regeneration of the West End. Formal off street parking can be promoted and signed.   | Significant costs of £65K capital and £10K revenue annually is greater than the funds potentially available. Survey data does not indicate a need for additional off street parking. Unless they can be incorporated this proposal would see the loss of 9 mature trees that provide amenity value.            | Invest proves to be a waste of resources in absence of demand. Pay and Display charges may lead to car park being unused as vacant free short stay on street parking is utilised instead.  |
| <b>Option 3:</b><br>Low Cost Temporary Car Parking Area | Lower capital and revenue cost that could be met by available Empty Shops Funding. Provides 14-17 additional parking spaces (As with option 2, however, the above points might not necessarily be advantages, as evidence indicates sufficient capacity exists already). Enables demand from shoppers and traders to be confirmed, albeit at a cost – subject to results this could lead to consideration of establishing a permanent car park. Retains all the street trees. Positive action to promote the retail area through the use of | 14-17 parking spaces may be viewed as too few by traders. Temporary car parks often become permanent and it would, in time, require some of the features and associated costs of a more formal permanent car park. Boundary wall remains in place and will continue to provide cover for nefarious activities. | Investment proves to be a waste of resources in absence of demand. If proved to be needed, no guarantee that council could find resources to formalise car park. It would be hard to manage expectations once temporary car park has been provided. Without parking controls it may be abused. It may also discourage purchase of residents' parking permits. Residents not entitled to a permit Clarendon Road may also take advantage of these spaces. |

|   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
|   | Empty Shops Funding.   |  |   |
| <b>Option 4:<br/>Temporary<br/>Car Park</b> | Lower capital and revenue cost than a formal car park. Provides an additional 33 parking spaces. Again though, these may not prove to be advantageous. Parliament Street entrance to car park makes for easy access to a car park from Regent Road. Positive action to promote retail area through use of Empty Shops Funding. Minimises the loss of street trees. | Temporary car parks often become permanent and it would, in time, require the features and associated costs of a more formal permanent car park and therefore presents a future cost liability. Higher capital cost means that it would not be possible to include a means of control to the parking with the available funding. | Investment a waste of resources in absence of demand. If proved to be needed no guarantee that council could find resources to formalise car park. It would be hard to manage expectations once temporary car park has been provided. Without parking controls it may be abused. It may also discourage purchase of residents' parking permits. Residents not entitled to a permit Clarendon Road may also take advantage of these spaces. Future costs to formalise car park if proven to be needed. |

Utilising the Empty Shops Funding to provide a temporary car park was a positive action to promote retail businesses in the West End and met the objects of this external funding that aimed to support struggling retail businesses in the recession. Option 3 the Low Cost Temporary Parking Area was the only affordable option that would provide additional parking in the locality and include a suitable and enforceable means of control.

Although the lack of demand meant there was a risk that the investment in a car parking was a waste of resources, local consultation shows that there was strong support for additional car parking. Therefore it was recommended that:

- Option 3 the provision of a Low Cost Temporary Parking Area was approved to enable demand for a permanent car parking facility to be assessed by further parking surveys over the course of the temporary period.
- That an appropriate means of control was determined.
- That the temporary period for the car park would be for 12 months.
- That the £22K unspent Empty Shops Funding be allocated to meet the cost of providing the temporary parking facility.

Councillor Hanson proposed, seconded by Councillor Leytham:

- “(1) That Option 4 the provision of a Temporary Parking Area is approved to enable demand for a permanent car parking facility to be demonstrated.

- (2) That an appropriate form of control is determined.
- (3) That the temporary period for the car park be for 12 months.
- (4) That the £22K unspent Vacant Shops Fund be allocated to meet the cost of providing the temporary car park and the revenue budget be updated accordingly."

Councillors then voted:-

**Resolved:**

**(6 Members (Councillors Blamire, Bryning, Hanson, Leytham, Sands and Smith) voted in favour, and 2 Members (Councillors Barry and Hamilton-Cox) abstained.)**

- (1) That Option 4, the provision of a Temporary Parking Area involving unplanned /unbudgeted capital investment be referred to Council for approval.
- (2) That an appropriate form of control is determined.
- (3) That the temporary period for the car park be for 12 months.

*The Chief Executive confirmed that a report to Council would be required if Cabinet were minded to support Option 4.*

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Head of Regeneration and Policy  
Head of Financial Services

**Reasons for making the decision:**

The proposals accord with the Parking Strategy and the West End Masterplan. Referral of this issue for Council approval was necessary as Option 4 involved unplanned/unbudgeted capital investment and would either have to be appraised as part of the budget process or be approved by Council as a variation to the capital programme. The Option required Council approval as car parking provision did not fall within the uses previously agreed by Cabinet on 19th January 2010 for the Morecambe element of the Vacant Shops Fund.

**45 ITEM OF URGENT BUSINESS - CLIMATE CHANGE INVEST TO SAVE PROJECTS**

**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Hamilton-Cox)**

In accordance with Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman agreed to consider the report as an item of urgent business as a decision was required prior to November's Cabinet meeting.

Cabinet received a report from the Head of Community Engagement to seek approval to the proposals set out in the report with regard to Climate Change Invest to Save Projects.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

| <b>Option 1:</b><br>Do not invest in solar PV installations.   | <b>Option 2;</b><br>Invest a lesser amount than that suggested in the report  | <b>Option 3:</b><br>Invest to the level recommended in the report   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Advantages</b>  |   |   |
| Allows Cabinet to consider other uses of the Invest to Save budget   | Allows Cabinet to consider other uses of the Invest to Save budget  | Maximises the financial benefits offered by the FIT scheme, reduces our energy costs and carbon footprint.<br><br>Solar PV is a proven technology |
| <b>Disadvantages</b>   |   |   |
| Misses the opportunity to secure the financial benefits offered by the FIT scheme, reduce our energy costs and carbon footprint. | Reduces the opportunity to maximise the financial benefits offered by the FIT scheme, reduce our energy costs and carbon footprint. |   |

**Risks:** The Council has no expertise in solar technology. Whilst it is mainstream activity in many other authorities the Council would need to rely on independent expertise in this first phase. It may be that it would not prove possible to invest the whole amount by 31 March 2012.

Option 3 was the officer preferred option.

Councillor Hamilton-Cox proposed, seconded by Councillor Hanson:-

“That the recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved.”

Councillors then voted:-

**Resolved unanimously:**

- (1) That Cabinet approves the allocation of £750,000 from the General Fund's Invest to Save Reserve to install solar photo voltaic (PV) panels on the Council's municipal buildings.
- (2) That Cabinet approves the allocation of £1M of from the Housing Revenue Account's Major Repairs Reserve to install solar photo voltaic (PV) panels on council housing communal buildings.
- (3) That a further report is brought back to Cabinet on developing the Councils wider approach to the use of renewable energy.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Head of Community Engagement  
Head of Financial Services

**Reasons for making the decision:**

The decision supports the Economic priority in respect of 'Energy Coast' and Climate Change and the redefined priority around climate change: 'prioritising reducing the council's energy costs and increasing income' as the focus of the City Council's objective to 'tackle the challenges of climate change.' The new financial incentives for renewable energy generation can provide income streams over the long term and other significant opportunities. In addition to the obvious benefits (free energy, cost savings and income generation) there are potentially wider benefits from our local communities, greater energy security, CO2 emissions reductions and a potential boost to the local economy).

**46 MAINTAINING THE PUBLIC REALM**

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Smith)

Cabinet received a report from the Head of Environmental Services which provided members with a number of proposals as to how some aspects of the District's public realm could be best maintained.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

The outline report was provided to allow Cabinet to consider at an early stage what options existed with regard to maintaining the public realm. Cabinet were requested to consider each of the proposals and if required add further. This would provide officers with the direction required to develop the relevant parts of the corporate plan, for later consideration by Members.

For the purpose of the report 'the public realm' was defined as any publicly owned streets, pathways, parks, publicly accessible open spaces. The main activities that had an impact on the public realm for the purposes of this report were-

- Street cleansing
- Grounds maintenance
- Planning
- Street nameplate management

**Street Cleansing / Grounds maintenance-** Following an earlier organisational restructure and comprehensive review of service provision these two functional areas were delivered through the same line management structure. This merging of the functions had resulted in improved efficiency and had led to higher standards of service delivery.

**PROPOSAL 1-** Cabinet were requested to consider the implications of improving grounds maintenance provision and increasing cleansing provision in Morecambe, in line with seasonal demands. As set out in the financial implications within the report, Phase 1 of grounds maintenance improvements could be delivered from within existing

budgets, with Cabinet's approval, through a virement in this financial year. Phases 2 and 3 would need to be considered within the context of the overall budget and Cabinet was requested to indicate whether any of the other potential improvements in relation to grounds maintenance and cleansing be considered as potential growth in developing the 2012/13 budget.

Currently a situation existed in Williamson Park where some cleansing and grounds maintenance functions were provided directly by Environmental Services and some by Williamson Park staff. Greater efficiencies could potentially be generated through reviewing how maintenance in the park could be best delivered.

**PROPOSAL 2-** That Officers review how the maintenance of Williamson Park is delivered and bring back recommendations to Cabinet

**Working with other Partners-** The overall appearance and perception of the public realm could clearly be improved by working closely with other partners. The County Council has a huge impact on the management and maintenance of the District's public realm and intend to use the proposed 3 Tier Forum as the main way of consulting with stakeholders and thus developing the commissioning plan. From a City Council perspective feeding into the development of this plan provides a real opportunity to put forward public realm priorities within the District.

The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been requested to consider the opportunities the commissioning approach provides and make recommendations to Cabinet in the future.

**PROPOSAL 3-** that following the assessment and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Cabinet considers how the County Council's commissioning plan approach can be best developed.

In addition the County Council were also working with City Council officers on a number of community led projects within the District. These were attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

**PROPOSAL 4-** that where required the City Council provides officer time to work with the County Council and community groups to help deliver these community led projects.

The Council's use of the Community Payback scheme to improve the appearance of the District has to date worked well. Currently the Council contributed £24,000 to the Probation Service to part fund the cost of a Probation Service supervisor, vehicle and tools. In turn the Probation Service undertakes a list of environmental works provided by the Council.

**PROPOSAL 5-** that the City Council continues to work in partnership with the Probation Service and that a list of environmental improvement works for 2012/13 is developed by officers and agreed with the relevant Cabinet portfolio holder.

The Council's Street Pride initiative has been a further success in terms of working with partners and improving the appearance of the District. A suggested refinement for 2012/13 is that calling for streets to be nominated we also call for areas of open space to be nominated.

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**PROPOSAL 6-** that in preparing the Street Pride programme for 2012/13 officers also ask for areas of open space to be nominated

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**Street Name Plates-** The City Council has a statutory duty to provide and maintain street name plates within the whole of the District. The annual budget provided for this service was £13,200. In order to improve the experience for both residents and visitors to our City Centre work has taken place to assess the state of the existing signage in Lancaster City centre. To ensure that the City Centre is clearly signed with name plates that are appropriate to a conservation area would require a one off amount of £16,000 to cover the cost of either repainting or replacing. In addition a further £4,000 would be required to provide directional signage to places to visit (eg VIC, Roman Baths). The financial implication section of the report showed that Phase 1 could be funded within existing budgets through a virement that could be agreed by Cabinet.

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**PROPOSAL 7-** that Cabinet considers the benefits of improving street name plates and directional signs within Lancaster City Centre. Subject to this Cabinet approves the £20,000 virement required to fund the works.

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**Development led improvement-** Many of the environmental issues that the Council deals with are symptoms of bigger and more expensive problems related to existing infrastructure. As an example some parts of the City Centre are very difficult to cleanse because of types of surface, street furniture etc. The Square Routes project in the City Centre and the Morecambe Action Plan present an ideal opportunity to ensure that ongoing maintenance is considered at the design stage. The proposals that develop from these are likely to have positive implications for the management and maintenance of the public realm in Lancaster and Morecambe. The plans when delivered have had the input of managers who will be responsible for maintaining them and as such there is confidence that this development will lead to sustained improvements. In the past this joined up approach has not always happened and developments have taken place without full consideration of the future maintenance or consideration of how section 106 monies could be best used.

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**PROPOSAL 8-** that development is seen as an opportunity to improve the public realm and that full account is taken of the ongoing maintenance implications of development.

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**Recreational Facilities-** the Council has in place a strategy for playground provision that has seen significant improvements to play provision within the District and this approach has been successful at attracting external funding. Feedback suggests that whilst play provision for younger children is catered for there could be more play facilities for teenagers. At this stage the evidence for this is largely anecdotal and furthermore planning of provision of facilities for teenagers needs to take into account what teenagers would actually want and the views of surrounding communities.



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**PROPOSAL 9-** that Officers review current recreational provision for teenagers and bring a further report back to Cabinet. Because of the timescales involved it is expected any financial implications would need to be considered as part of the 2013/14 budget.

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**PCSOs-** Cabinet had requested further information on the position with regards to funding of PCSOs in 2012/13 and clearly PCSOs do make a contribution towards maintenance of the public realm.

In 2011 The Home Office agreed that they would for the next two years continue to provide the 2/3 funding that they currently contribute towards PCSOs if someone else contributed the other 1/3. No further information is available as to the detail of PCSO funding beyond April 2013. For 2011/12 the LDLSP has provided the majority of the contribution to 9 PCSOs within this District. At this stage it seems unlikely that the LDLSP will have the funding to be able to make this contribution in 2012/13.

In order to maintain the level of PCSOs currently funded by the LDLSP a contribution of £99,000 would be required in 2012/13.

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**PROPOSAL 10-** that Cabinet considers the information provided with regards to PCSOs and indicates whether it wishes to consider their funding further as part of the development of 2012/13 budget.

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Councillor Smith proposed, seconded by Councillor Hanson:-

“That the recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved.”

Councillors then voted:-

***Resolved unanimously:***

- (1) That Cabinet notes and approves the implications of improving grounds maintenance provision and increasing cleansing provision in Morecambe, in line with seasonal demands. And that Phase 1 of the grounds maintenance programme is funded through a virement, in this financial year, from within environmental services budgets
- (2) That officers review how the maintenance of Williamson Park is delivered and bring back recommendations to Cabinet.
- (3) That following the assessment and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Cabinet considers how the County Council's commissioning plan approach can be best developed.
- (4) That where required the City Council provides officer time to work with the County Council and community groups to help deliver a number of community led projects within the District.
- (5) That the City Council continues to work in partnership with the Probation Service and that a list of environmental improvement works for 2012/13 is

developed by officers and agreed with the relevant Cabinet portfolio holder.

- (6) That in preparing the Street Pride programme for 2012/13 officers also ask for areas of open space to be nominated.
- (7) That officers review current recreational provision for teenagers and bring a further report back to Cabinet. Because of the timescales involved it is expected any financial implications would need to be considered as part of the 2013/14 budget.
- (8) That the scheme to improve street names plates and directional signs within Lancaster City Centre is delivered in this financial year through a virement from within environmental services budgets.
- (9) That as a principle development is seen as an opportunity to improve the public realm and that full account is taken of the ongoing maintenance implications of development.
- (10) That Cabinet notes the information with regard to PCSOs and confirms that consideration should be given to the funding aspect as part of the development of the 2012/13 budget.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Head of Environmental Services

**Reasons for making the decision:**

The proposals for the maintenance of the public realm are in line with the Corporate Plan: and Council priorities:

- Improving the attractiveness, accessibility and enjoyment of the district's parks and open spaces for visitors.
- Working with partners to deliver services that keep the streets clean and safe
- Delivering responsive and efficient statutory services
- Delivering City and County Council 'public realm' services, making most efficient use of resources and achieving the aim of keeping the streets clean and maintained.

The decision allows Cabinet to consider at an early stage what options exist with regard to maintaining the public realm and provide officers with the direction required to develop them. In particular delivery of Phase 1 required a decision at this point of the year.

**47 FESTIVAL AND EVENTS REPORT**

**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Sands)**

Cabinet received a report from the Head of Community Engagement to update members on the 2011 festivals and events programme, update on the income achieved and seek approval of plans for 2012.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

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| <p><b>Option 1:</b> Notes the update, agrees revenue budget be updated and commits funding now to allow progress towards festivals and events for 2012 and 2013.</p>   | <p><b>Option 2:</b> Notes the update but does not to agree budget update and delay any decision until budget council in March 2012.</p>  | <p><b>Option 3;</b> Notes update but decides to reduce funding in light of the current budgetary position facing the Council.</p>      |
| <p><b>Advantages</b></p>   |  |  |
| <p>Enables council to work with partners to develop a co-ordinated plan towards event delivery for 2012, take advantage of major regional, national and international events and explore sponsorship opportunities</p> | <p>Council is able to make decision as part of wider budget setting context</p>  | <p>Makes a contribution towards the savings targets required by Council following on from the recent Comprehensive Spending Review</p> |
| <p>Supports the council's priorities and a significant element of the council's Visitor Marketing Plan</p>   |  |  |
| <p>Opportunity to develop a joined up marketing plan for visitors and local people (reducing the plethora of separate marketing approaches and ensuring no event clashes)</p>  |  |  |
| <p><b>Disadvantages</b></p>  |  |  |
| <p>Decision taken ahead of wider budget setting context</p>  | <p>Prevents the council working with partners to develop a co-ordinated plan towards event delivery for 2012 and risks an uncoordinated and less effective series of events.</p> | <p>Uncertainty amongst businesses and the media, leading to potential damaging publicity not just locally but further afield</p>       |
|  | <p>Less likely to achieve sponsorship and therefore income towards 2012 events</p>   |  |
|  | <p>Uncertainty amongst businesses and the</p>  |  |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  | media, leading to potential damaging publicity not just locally but further afield |  |
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There was no Officer preferred option.

Councillor Sands proposed, seconded by Councillor Leytham:-

“That the recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved.”

***Resolved unanimously:***

- (1) That Cabinet notes the update on the 2011 events programme.
- (2) That Cabinet agrees the revenue budget be updated to reflect the additional income and expenditure for the 2011 festivals and events programme.
- (3) Cabinet approves the planned approach for 2012 and 2013, unless the Council’s financial position and changing priorities warrants a review for the 2013/14 budget, and further agrees that the revenue budget be updated to reflect any additional income received to support the festivals and events in those years, to supplement the Council’s investment in the programme, rather than taking any savings.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Head of Community Engagement  
Head of Financial Services

**Reasons for making the decision:**

The decision supports the Corporate Plan priorities relating to Economic Regeneration – Visitor Economy and Partnership Working and Community Leadership. Festivals and events have a direct impact, attracting more visitors to a destination, raising the profile of a place, creating a sense of wellbeing, providing a platform to raise awareness and communicate positive messages, and can help attract residents and investment. Cabinet needs to take a decision with regard to the Council’s future commitments to festivals and events for 2012. Operationally, it makes sense to make early decisions regarding any festivals and events and as the proposals are within the existing budget and policy framework, it is within Cabinet’s remit to authorise progress.

**48 HOUSING REGENERATION PRIORITIES**

**(Cabinet Members with Special Responsibility Councillors Hanson and Leytham)**

Cabinet received a joint report from the Head of Regeneration and Policy and the Head of Health and Housing which sought approval for the preferred direction for strategic

housing and regeneration priorities in light of the current financial climate, existing housing regeneration commitments and the introduction of self financing for council housing.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

The council potentially had two main options to consider in the current circumstances, although should new funding become available in the future it could revise its options.

**Option 1: To do nothing and rely on the private sector to engage in housing supply. As a result to dispose of the properties already bought (within Chatsworth Gardens and Bold Street/Marlborough Road) and undertake no regeneration.**

This option would mean that the council would seek to minimise its risk by avoiding engaging in further regeneration work. It has acquired 56 properties using external funding and would seek to dispose of them on the open market to remove liabilities amounting to just over £100,000 per annum which arise from securing and maintaining the properties. It would be highly unlikely that any element of profits from sales would be achieved, and more likely that sales would result in a notional financial loss. The only level of affordable housing provision the council would then influence would be through restrictions on planning decisions requiring private sector provision.

**Advantages:** Removal of liabilities from continuing to own the properties, and avoiding the need to spend further monies to undertake refurbishment as part of a regeneration programme.

**Disadvantages:** The council would not be engaging in housing regeneration. It would be placing a further burden on the local housing stock by adding a significant number of unfit properties onto the market and it would fail to add value to the money already spent by public funding to make greater use of the existing housing stock to provide good quality new homes.

**Option 2: To work up a means of engaging in housing provision targeted towards affordable housing using a variety of methods.**

This will consist of a variety of means including: a) allocating land in the Local Development Framework and securing contributions from Section 106 agreements and eventually through Community Infrastructure levy, b) opportunities arising from the self financed Housing Revenue Account coming into effect from April 2012, c) examining options for the completion of outstanding housing regeneration projects at Chatsworth Gardens and Marlborough Road/ Bold Street and d) the provision of the Lend a Hand mortgage support scheme. If as indicative figures show, the HRA business plan can viably support and contribute to the regeneration and provision of additional council homes, it may also be worth considering it as an alternative solution to finance the refurbishment of the empty properties in current regeneration schemes, bringing other empty properties back into use, and to construct new homes on council land.

**Advantages:** Such a move would introduce greater certainty into the outcome of housing regeneration projects as there is likely to be a more assured rental income from rents. It would also provide the council as a landlord with a much wider variety of properties to offer for rent to address the changing demands from society for affordable

housing.

**Disadvantages:** There may be resistance within communities to the provision of council housing in this manner as it could be perceived that the council will be concentrating social rented properties in areas which already experience high levels of deprivation.

The officer preferred recommendation was to pursue option 2. It afforded the council the opportunity in these very difficult economic times to engage proactively in housing regeneration whilst balancing its exposure to financial risk from investing high levels of capital in housing which may not be capable of achieving adequate returns for that investment through sales on the open market. It also allowed the council to rise to the new challenge by the government for councils to demonstrate that they are worthy providers of social and affordable housing, in a market where the private sector was currently stifled.

The council clearly wants to engage in housing regeneration even in what are unarguably the toughest economic conditions for decades. To do so maintains its credibility as a forward looking authority but it had to try and do this in an affordable manner. There could be no safer method available at the present time than to do this with a guaranteed end user available. If Members chose Option 2 Officers would prepare further reports for Cabinet on the opportunities to create affordable homes through the LDF and planning decisions, options arising from the revised rules governing the HRA, and a comprehensive options appraisal for the Chatsworth Gardens scheme, to give Members the choice of how to match their aspirations to the budget which could be available to them.

Councillor Leytham proposed, seconded by Councillor Hanson:-

- “(1) That Members reaffirm that the strategic housing regeneration priorities for the foreseeable future are:
- a) To increase the supply and delivery of affordable housing schemes.
  - b) To complete existing unfinished schemes in the West End.
  - c) To bring empty properties back into use.
- (2) If Members reaffirm the above priorities further reports be prepared for Cabinet to consider examining the potential of affordable housing provision for each of the above categories through:
- a) Options for the completion of outstanding housing regeneration projects at Chatsworth Gardens and Marlborough Road/Bold Street along with the report to include financial options in relation to the Council borrowing to complete the schemes if there is no other external funding available- also that negotiations are entered into with the HCA to agree a change of direction/contractual agreement based upon the possibility that the Council are able to fund completion of the scheme.
  - b) The self financed Housing Revenue Account coming into effect from April 2012.
  - c) Allocating land in the Local Development Framework and securing contributions from Section 106 agreement and eventually through Community Infrastructure Levy.

- d) The provision of a Lend a Hand mortgage support scheme “

Councillors then voted:-

***Resolved unanimously:***

- (1) That Members reaffirm that the strategic housing regeneration priorities for the foreseeable future are:
- a) To increase the supply and delivery of affordable housing schemes.
  - b) To complete existing unfinished schemes in the West End.
  - c) To bring empty properties back into use.
- (2) That having reaffirmed the strategic housing regeneration priorities further reports be prepared for Cabinet to consider examining the potential of affordable housing provision for each of those categories through (a) to (d) below which are set out in order of priority:
- a) Options for the completion of outstanding housing regeneration projects at Chatsworth Gardens and Marlborough Road/Bold Street along with the report to include financial options in relation to the Council borrowing to complete the schemes if there is no other external funding available- also that negotiations are entered into with the HCA to agree a change of direction/contractual agreement based upon the possibility that the Council are able to fund completion of the scheme.
  - b) The self financed Housing Revenue Account coming into effect from April 2012.
  - c) Allocating land in the Local Development Framework and securing contributions from Section 106 agreement and eventually through Community Infrastructure Levy.
  - d) The provision of a Lend a Hand mortgage support scheme.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Head of Regeneration and Policy  
Head of Health and Housing

**Reasons for making the decision:**

In January 2011 council resolved that housing regeneration be included in its corporate priorities noting that these projects required significant funding. The decision enables Officers to prepare further reports for Cabinet on the opportunities to create affordable homes through the LDF and planning decisions, options arising from the revised rules governing the HRA, and a comprehensive options appraisal for the Chatsworth Gardens scheme, to give Members the choice of how to match their aspirations to the budget which could be available to them.

**49 MORECAMBE AREA ACTION PLAN - IMPROVING MORECAMBE'S MAIN STREETS**

**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Hanson)**

Cabinet received a report from the Head of Regeneration and Policy which proposed a

further initiative to improve main streets and spaces in and around Morecambe's established centre as part of work to support delivery of the emerging Morecambe Area Action Plan.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

Option 1 – To rely on the private sector for any investment to improve New Town Square and Euston Road in line with the emerging Morecambe Area Action Plan.

This option would mean that the council would not take a lead in effecting improvements in with and to support delivery of the emerging Morecambe Area Action Plan. It would mean not undertaking outline design work and preparing budget estimates and not seeking to bring forward considered proposals via appropriate community engagement. It would not necessarily mean that nothing happens but the council would be entirely reliant on the private sector to achieve improvements. Recent history evidences relatively low levels of private sector investment in Morecambe centre but the recent Travellodge development shows that it can be instrumental in effecting improvements to public realm. In addition the option would still permit the council to directly bring forward improvements to public realm as possible as part of "A View for Eric", the second Morecambe Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) 2. These must be within the area of the THI and will likely be focused on Victoria Street and Market Street.

The **advantages** are that the option will lead to no additional demands on the General Capital Fund and reliance on the private sector to fund extra investment and improvements is in principle appropriate in circumstances where the public sector cannot afford to commit resources.

The **disadvantages** are that given national and local economic circumstances and that Morecambe evidences generally limited levels of private sector investment no assurance can be given that New Town Square and Euston Road can be improved within any timescale.

The **risks** are that without a delivery lead from the council the private sector will not fill the gap and improvements cannot be achieved within at least the short to medium term meaning the town centre is not positioned well and competitively for the future. In this event this option would not support the trajectory of the emerging Morecambe Area Action Plan.

Option 2 – The Head of Regeneration and Policy work up outline proposals and cost estimates to improve New Town Square and Euston Road and, as part of preparing its budget recommendations, Cabinet uses these as a basis to consider whether appropriate budget provision be included in its draft General Fund Capital Programme for 2012/13.

This option would mean the council takes a lead to vision what improvements may be possible. At minimum it would make for preparation of outline proposals that should fit to the emerging Morecambe Area Action Plan and might set a template for the council and others to work to into the future. Further, the option provides that as part of the budget



process and preparing its recommendations to council Cabinet might consider whether the council might also take a funding lead and direct and programme implementation.

This option would by no means preclude the council from working to secure private sector funding contributions to the improvements and contributions that if secured might mean the council can reduce its outturn expenditure.

The **advantages** include that improvement of New Town Square and Euston Road will likely be integral to any options brought forward through the emerging Morecambe Area Action Plan and Option 2 is therefore likely to be highly supportive of plan delivery.

Works to New Town Square and Euston Road would make for an environment fitting to its functions, a place more active, pleasant and safe to spend time in. This should add significantly to the attraction of the established centre to the benefit of business trading and its general competitiveness in difficult economic conditions. Taken together with works to public realm anticipated via THI2, this should be quite transformative for the main streets and spaces in and around Morecambe's established commercial centre.

Option 2 provides for partnership working and for securing funding contributions from the private sector. Even if a funding lead by the council proves unaffordable for the council to vision what might be achieved should encourage the private sector to step forward. Further, should the council prove able to provide funding, lead private contributions as can be secured should make for reductions in net outturn expenditure by the council.

The main **disadvantage** of option 2 as compared to option 1 is that this option requires more commitment of officer time in bringing forward outline proposals and in due course and, subject to the budget process might have cost implications via an additional demand on the General Fund Capital Programme.

Turning to **risks**, one is that option 2 will unduly raise stakeholder and community expectations only for these not to be met if it proves unaffordable for the council for it to take a funding lead. A further risk identified is that the desired regeneration will not happen because the net affect of wider adverse factors e.g. the decline of established small centres in the face of changing consumer trends and competition proves stronger.

Option 2 was the officer preferred option as it would inform Cabinet, in preparing its recommendations to council as part of the budget process, in considering an important aspect of how the council might provide support to the performance of Morecambe's established centre, very likely to be an early priority for the emerging Morecambe Area Action Plan. Taken together with works to other public realm via THI2 improvement of New Town Square and Euston Road it should make for a coherent programme of phased works to streets and spaces over three years.

Councillor Hanson proposed, seconded by Councillor Bryning:-

“That the recommendation, as set out in the report, be approved.”

Councillors then voted:-

**Resolved unanimously:**

- (1) That the Head of Regeneration and Policy work up outline proposals and cost estimates to improve New Town Square and Euston Road and, as part of preparing its budget recommendations, Cabinet uses these as a basis to consider whether appropriate budget provision be included in its General Fund Capital Programme for 2012/13.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Head of Regeneration and Policy

**Reasons for making the decision:**

The 2010-2014 Corporate Plan sets Economic Regeneration Priority as one of four priorities for the council and the second Morecambe THI is identified as one of the actions under "Visitor Economy". In spatial terms the Lancaster District Core Strategy, 2003-2021 (adopted 2008) made central Morecambe the regeneration priority for the council and the community (Policy ER2). Work on the Morecambe Area Action Plan reflects these priorities and is central to achieving on them. The September 2011 Cabinet meeting considered a report on a Priorities Review that detailed on a number of areas of activity that cabinet members had requested be considered in more detail. This was to be fed into the corporate plan and budget process (Minute 34). As an established spatial planning and regeneration priority this proposal might reasonably be considered as part of the corporate plan and budget considerations.

**50 LANCASTER SQUARE ROUTES****(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Hanson)**

Cabinet received a report from the Head of Regeneration and Policy to update on this initiative and to propose how the Council might continue to support implementation including making available additional resources via a capital growth proposal in the forthcoming budget.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

In the context of previous decisions by Cabinet authorising the Lancaster Square Routes initiative the report set out options for continuing delivery of the programme of work required.

Option 1 - As per the established project priority for Lancaster Square Routes to reserve the balance of funding likely remaining in the investment fund after Market Square phase 1 towards a second phase of work in Market Square and in addition, in preparing its General Capital Fund budget proposals for 2012/13, Cabinet to consider recommending an additional £220k contribution to the Fund.

This option has the **advantages** of positioning the council to undertake a second phase of works to Market Square if it wishes to achieve the Square Routes design vision and

also does not preclude the council securing further private contributions to Lancaster Square Routes and actually might assist this by adding further credibility as to delivery.

The main **disadvantages** are that the balance of funding likely to be remaining in the investment fund after completing a first phase of works to Market Square is of itself insufficient to fund a worthwhile second phase and insufficient to complete works to the Square. Also that this option does not position the council to be able to enhance the specification of highway works to Penny Street and Horseshoe Corner in a way consistent with the Square Routes design visions.

The option presents no real **risks**.

Option 2- After completing the first phase of works to Market Square, reserving the balance of council funding likely remaining in the Investment Fund for Lancaster Square Routes fund to enhance the specification of any highway works to Penny Street and Horseshoe Corner and, in preparing its General Capital Fund budget proposals for 2012/13, Cabinet considers including an additional contribution estimated at £300k to the fund in order to facilitate a second phase of works to Market Square.

This option has the **advantages** of both positioning the council to undertake a second phase of works to Market Square to achieve the Square Routes and permitting the council to take an opportunity to secure improvements to Penny Street and Horseshoe Corner consistent with the design visions for Lancaster Square Routes. Further, it both does not preclude the council securing further private contributions to Lancaster Square Routes and actually might assist this by adding further credibility as to delivery.

The only **disadvantage** is that reserving the balance of approved funding for Penny Street / Horseshoe Corner means that should Cabinet wish to recommend to council as part of the budget process that it should allocate additional funding to undertake a second phase of works to Market Square the call on additional council resources will be higher than it would were this funding not so reserved.

The option presents no real **risks**.

Option 3 – As per the established project priority for Lancaster Square Routes to reserve the balance of funding likely remaining in the investment fund after Market Square phase 1 towards a second phase of work in Market Square and await sufficient private contributions before proceeding with a second phase of works to the Square

This option has the **advantages** of retaining the ability for the council to draw in further private contributions and of making no additional demand on the council's capital funding resources.

However it has the **disadvantages** of meaning the council will not have any ability to influence the timing by which it can bring forward a second phase of works to complete improvements to Market Square.

Consequently it **risks** that the council cannot bring forward a second phase in a timely

manner if at all, albeit that officers are hopeful that over time contributions will be secured and these may in time aggregate to the level of sum required.

Option 2 was the officer preferred option.

Options 1 and 2 both provide that as part of the budget process Cabinet can consider recommending that the council make an additional contribution to the investment fund for Lancaster Square Routes towards a second phase of works to Market Square. Option 3 does not provide for this and places reliance on the council securing private contributions to a level sufficient to fund the works. This means there can be no certainty to delivery with this option.

By a second phase of works to Market Square the council can look to complete a transformation for the public benefit, providing:

- An environment fitting to the Square's role as the civic centre of the city
- A place more active, pleasant and safe to spend time in
- An improved layout for the outdoor market
- An environment fitting and complementary to the Old Town Hall and the council's ambitions for use of this building
- An improved setting and staging for events and performance

This should add to the attraction of the city to the benefit of business trading, much needed in difficult economic conditions

Option 2 in addition gives the council the flexibility to enhance any highways works to Penny St / Horseshoe Corner consistent with the Lancaster Square Routes design visions. This should optimise the efficiency and benefits of public investment whether via the city or county councils. Neither options 1 or 3 provide for this. On balance therefore taking the relative merits of each option into account option 2 is preferred if this can be afforded.

Councillor Hanson proposed, seconded by Councillor Sands:-

"That the recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved."

Councillors then voted:-

**Resolved:**

***(7 Members (Councillors Barry, Blamire, Bryning, Hanson, Leytham, Sands and Smith) voted in favour, and 1 Member (Councillors Hamilton-Cox) abstained.)***

- (1) That Cabinet notes the progress in delivering the first phases of improvements as part of Lancaster Square Routes including in Market Square.
- (2) That Cabinet notes that officers will in due course report to the appropriate

portfolio holders on the future layout of the outdoor market, potentials for a street café(s) in Market Square and how the existing Traffic Regulation Order for the city centre pedestrian zone might best be revised and subsequently enforced.

- (3) That Cabinet notes that officers will report to the portfolio holder on any need or potential to support the county council in works to remedy the surface condition of Penny Street and Horseshoe Corner in a way that is consistent with the Lancaster square routes design visions and that the anticipated balance of funds in the city centre investment after the first phase of works in Market Square fund for Lancaster Square Routes be reserved for this purpose pending further reporting.
- (4) That in preparing its proposals for the 2012/13 General Fund Capital Programme as part of the budget process, Cabinet considers including an additional £300K contribution to the city centre investment fund for Lancaster Square Routes in order to provide for a second phase of works in Market Square.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Head of Regeneration and Policy  
Head of Financial Services

**Reasons for making the decision:**

The 2010-2014 Corporate Plan identifies Square Routes under the Economic Regeneration Priority and Lancaster Square Routes is identified as one of the actions under "Visitor Economy". The Indicators for success in implementing the plan include if: the number of visitors to the district is increased and improved; the profile of the district as a visitor destination is improved; the retail offer and built environment in the city centre is improved; the economic impact of festivals and events is improved and an improved future for the district's museums is improved. The project contributes to all these. In addition, its importance is clearly identified in the new Lancaster District Cultural Heritage Strategy.

The September 2011 Cabinet meeting considered a report on a Priorities Review that detailed on a number of areas of activity that cabinet members had requested be considered in more detail. This was to be fed into the corporate plan and budget process (Minute 34). As an existing priority Lancaster Square Routes should be considered as part of the corporate plan and budget considerations.

**51 SHARED SERVICES - MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Blamire)**

Cabinet received a report from the Chief Executive to report on the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the City Council and Lancashire County Council setting out the intention to work together in partnership with OneConnect Limited, the strategic partnership established between Lancashire County Council and BT.

Cabinet were requested to note the progress being made in respect of service areas identified in the Memorandum of Understanding and to receive reports back as appropriate to meet any decision-making deadlines and to ensure that any service improvements and efficiencies were considered as part of the budget exercise.

Councillor Leytham proposed, seconded by Councillor Hanson:-

“That the recommendation, as set out in the report, be approved.”

***Resolved unanimously:***

- (1) That Cabinet notes the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the City Council and Lancashire County Council as a commitment between the two Authorities to work towards a partnership to deliver the shared services as identified in the Memorandum of Understanding.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Chief Executive

**Reasons for making the decision:**

The efficiencies delivered from developing a shared service programme will greatly assist in achieving the outcomes of the council’s savings and efficiency programme and targets included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The decision also supports the council’s Corporate Plan priorities for working closely with other partner organisations to deliver improved benefits for the Lancaster district community.

**52 SHARED SERVICES CABINET LIAISON GROUP**

**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Blamire)**

Cabinet received a report from the Chief Executive to establish a Shared Services Cabinet Liaison Group with appropriate terms of reference as requested by Cabinet at its meeting on 26 July 2011.

Councillor Blamire proposed, seconded by Councillor Leytham:-

“That rather than establishing a Cabinet Liaison Group, arrangements be made for a Council Briefing Meeting on Shared Services and that all members be invited to this evening briefing.”

Councillors then voted:-

***Resolved unanimously:***

- (1) Not to establish a Shared Services Cabinet Liaison Group.
- (2) That arrangements be made for a Council Briefing Meeting on Shared Services and that all members be invited to this evening briefing.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Chief Executive  
Head of Governance

**Reasons for making the decision:**

The decision will enable all members to get more involved in the details in respect of delivering the Council's Shared Services Programme. The efficiencies delivered from developing a shared service programme will greatly assist in achieving the outcomes of the council's savings and efficiency programme and targets included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

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Chairman

(The meeting ended at 12.35 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Liz Bateson, Democratic Services - telephone (01524) 582047, or email  
ebateson@lancaster.gov.uk**

**MINUTES PUBLISHED ON MONDAY 10 OCTOBER, 2011.**

**EFFECTIVE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE DECISIONS CONTAINED IN THESE MINUTES:  
TUESDAY 18 OCTOBER, 2011.**