

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

6.10 P.M.

6TH DECEMBER 2017

PRESENT:- Councillors June Ashworth (Chairman), Nigel Goodrich (Vice-Chairman), Alan Biddulph, Tracy Brown, Brett Cooper, Rob Devey, Charlie Edwards, Caroline Jackson and David Whitaker

Also in Attendance

Councillor Tim Hamilton-Cox
Michael Gibson – Digital Lancaster

Officers in attendance:-

Kieran Keane	Assistant Chief Executive
Nadine Muschamp	Chief Officer (Resources)
Stephen Metcalfe	Principal Democratic Support Officer
Jenny Kay	Civic & Ceremonial Democratic Support Officer
Paul Rogers	Senior Regeneration Officer
Gary Watson	Senior Property Officer

28 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29th November 2017 were withdrawn from the Agenda in view of the Minutes not being published prior to the meeting.

29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Charlie Edwards declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Digital Lancaster, having attended meetings where Mr Gibson was present.

30 DIGITAL LANCASTER

The Chairman welcomed Michael Gibson representing Digital Lancaster and Paul Rogers, Senior Regeneration Officer, to the meeting.

The Committee were given a presentation on Digital Lancashire which helped professionals and businesses grow by providing support, benefits and opportunities and had over 600 members. Digital Lancaster had supported many projects in the district, had run 30 events to date, launched apprenticeship programmes and worked with Lancaster University, Lancaster & Morecambe College and University of Cumbria.

It was reported that there were already over 750 people employed in the digital sector in Lancaster. Many of these local businesses were expanding and were in need of bigger premises but wanted to remain in Lancaster. Unfortunately, there was a lack of suitable accommodation in Lancaster to provide for a collaborative workspace and also a poor infrastructure of broadband. If a solution was not reached, many of these companies would leave Lancaster and head for centres such as Manchester.

Digital Lancaster were requesting the City Council to support and act as facilitators to improve Lancaster's offer and retain these growing companies.

Members were advised that this was a once in a lifetime opportunity for Lancaster with so many companies in need of expansion, Lancaster University on our doorstep and with the Government offering a £400 million Digital Infrastructure Investment Fund. Lancaster would retain the talent it had and attract inward investment in this fast growing sector.

The Committee was informed that Digital Lancaster envisaged 500 new high value jobs in Lancaster, buildings refurbished with external grant funding, huge levels of inward investment in the city, cultural regeneration benefits from disposable income spend and with Lancaster being seen as a world class location for digital companies.

The Committee discussed the presentation and unanimously agreed :

“That a Task Group be scoped to investigate the potential of a vision for Lancaster being an innovative digital City working with representatives from Digital Lancaster, Lancaster University and Lancashire County Council.”

Resolved :-

- (1) That Michael Gibson be thanked for his informative presentation.
- (2) That a Task Group be scoped to investigate the potential of a vision of Lancaster being an innovative digital City working with representatives from Digital Lancaster, Lancaster University and Lancashire County Council. That those Councillors indicating at the meeting be invited to the scoping meeting.

31 DISCUSSIONS WITH COUNCILLOR JAMES LEYSHON

The Chairman welcomed Councillor James Leyshon, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Property Services, Car Parking, ICT, Digital Strategy and Customer Services, to the meeting.

The Committee was given an overview of Councillor Leyshon’s portfolio. It was reported that, regarding car parking, budget proposal’s were being drawn up to maximise the income received but the proposed Canal Corridor development would impact on the revenue car parking generated for the City Council.

Members were advised of ICT developments in connection with Salt Ayre redevelopment and Green Waste charging. Customer Services were about to receive a new system to improve service delivery and business intelligence.

It was reported that a Digital Strategy for the City Council was being developed and talks with local businesses on how to move forward had taken place.

Members were invited to ask questions.

Resolved :-

That Councillor Leyshon be thanked for his attendance at the meeting.

32 DISCUSSION ON PROPERTY STRATEGY

The Chairman welcomed the Chief Officer (Resources) and Gary Watson, Senior Property Officer to the meeting.

The Committee was advised that Property Services had recently been restructured, and a hospitality team had been introduced who would focus on income generation within the Town Halls.

It was reported that phase 3 of the capitals work programme was to begin focusing on the Ashton Hall, Lancaster. A Cabinet Liaison Group had been established which would examine areas one by one, undertake site visits and oversee a review of accommodation.

Members went on to discuss the importance of utilising the performance space the district had and not to be in direct competition with other venues.

A number of questions were raised relating to the Co-op building in the West End of Morecambe, accommodation space in the Storey, Lancaster and the importance of the Property Group to work jointly with the Planning service.

Resolved :-

That the update be noted.

33 VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH SECTOR COMMISSIONING INFORMAL TASK GROUP FINAL REPORT

This agenda item had been withdrawn. This would be re-scheduled for the January 2018 meeting.

34 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT

It was agreed that the scoping of a Task Group to investigate the potential of a vision for Lancaster being an innovative digital City working with representatives Digital Lancaster, Lancaster University and Lancashire County Council be added to the Committee's Work Programme.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8.05 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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