

PROCEEDINGS

A meeting of the Lancaster City Council was held in the Town Hall, Morecambe, at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 18 June 2025, when the following Members were present:-

Margaret Pattison (Mayor)	Suhir Abuhajar
Joanne Ainscough	Mandy Bannon
Matthew Black	Phillip Black
Martin Bottoms	Louise Belcher
Gerry Blaikie	Phil Bradley
Dave Brookes	Roger Cleet
Ruth Colbridge	Wilson Colley
Claire Cozler	Maria Deery
Roger Dennison	Andrew Gardiner
Alan Greenwell	Tim Hamilton-Cox
Chris Hanna	Prof Chris Harris
Paul Hart	Ross Hunter
Caroline Jackson	Peter Jackson
Jack Lenox	John Livermore
Sally Maddocks	Sarah McGowan
Abi Mills	Hamish Mills
Paul Newton	Andrew Otway
Jean Parr	Sue Penney
Joyce Pritchard	Sam Riches
James Sommerville	Jackson Stubbs
Sandra Thornberry	Sue Tyldesley
Paul Tynan	David Whitaker
John Wild	Jason Wood

16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Catherine Armistead, Keith Budden, Brett Cooper, Gina Dowding, Tom Fish, John Hanson, Colin Hartley, Izzy Metcalf-Riener, Catherine Potter, Sarah Punshon, Robert Redfern and Nick Wilkinson.

17 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 9 and 12 May 2025 were signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

19 ANNOUNCEMENTS - SUE TAYLOR

The Mayor reported the sad death of Council Officer Sue Taylor on 4 June 2025 after a short illness.

Sue worked for many years within Financial Services before she moved across to Salt Ayre as both an administrator and a fitness instructor.

Sue made a lasting impact on so many people, colleagues and Councillors alike. Her absence would be deeply felt across the team and by everyone who had the pleasure of knowing her and thoughts were with her family at such a very sad time.

Councillors stood in a minute's silence in Sue's memory.

20 ANNOUNCEMENTS - MAYOR'S QUIZ NIGHT

The Mayor announced that she would be holding her first fundraiser of the year, a Quiz night on Thursday 17th July commencing at 7.00pm at Lancaster Town Hall. Teams of no more than five were asked to take part and the cost was £4 per person. Tickets were available from the Mayor's office.

Councillors were informed that the Mayor was reordering the agenda slightly in view of the public speakers who were present to hear the debate on the motion. She would take item 9, the motion on notice, before item 8, the Leader's report.

21 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 11

No questions had been received from members of the public in accordance with the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 11.

22 PETITIONS AND ADDRESSES

The Mayor reported that two members of the public had registered to speak to Council regarding the motion on notice supporting local trans and intersex community in response

to the Supreme Court judgement on the definition of 'sex' in equality law.

Firstly, Mr Robert Mee addressed Council on behalf of Out in the Bay. Next, Dr Lewis Turner spoke on behalf of Lancashire LGBT. Copies of each speech had been previously circulated to Councillors.

The Mayor thanked both speakers and invited Councillor Caroline Jackson, Leader of the Council, to respond.

Councillor Caroline Jackson responded to both speakers and thanked them for taking the time to speak to Councillors.

23 MOTION IN SUPPORT OF LOCAL TRANS AND INTERSEX COMMUNITY IN RESPONSE TO THE SUPREME COURT JUDGEMENT ON THE DEFINITION OF 'SEX' IN EQUALITY LAW

Councillor Phil Black proposed the following motion having given the required notice to the Chief Executive in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15:-

Like trans and intersex people across the country, the local community is trying to make sense of the supreme court judgement and understand the implications in their daily lives. This is a period of upset, anxiety and uncertainty about the future that is impacting one of the most vulnerable groups in our society. As an employer, public service provider (particularly with facilities such as Salt Ayre Leisure Centre) and political organisation it is incumbent upon us to demonstrate our support for trans and intersex people in our district. Whilst we have no choice but to adhere to laws created in other places, we have the latitude to create and implement local policy founded in principles of equality, equity, dignity and compassion.

Council notes that:

- The Supreme Court ruling on the definition of 'sex' has prompted guidance from the Equality & Human Rights Commission that requires (in the language of the judgement):
 - Workplaces provide single-sex facilities for staff in addition to mixed-sex facilities
 - Public services can provide mixed sex facilities, but must also provide single-sex spaces.
 - Best practice is to provide mixed-sex facilities in addition to single-sex facilities, and indeed it is a requirement that suitable facilities are available for everyone.
 - A mixed-sex facility should have lockable 'rooms' rather than cubicles (i.e. have complete floor-to-ceiling sides and doors.)
 - Organisations which offer memberships to more than 25 people can do this on 'single-sex' basis.
- The Supreme Court ruling does not remove the protected characteristic status from trans individuals. Under the Equalities act of 2010 trans people retain a legal right to a life free of discrimination and harassment.
- Whilst possessing a gender recognition certificate (GRC) does not exempt a trans individual from the implications of this ruling, the Gender Recognition act of 2004 still applies. The legal sex of a person possessing a GRC is that which they have acquired in line with their identity.
- The council has operated family and unisex changing facilities at Salt Ayre, and unisex toilets in the Storey Institute, successfully for many years.

- Enforcement of a law is a matter for the Police and justice system.
- Further guidance is expected in June and the issue will go before Parliament in the summer months.
- People and Organisational Development Committee are considering a draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy along with reports from consultants on related matters. This is a workstream due for completion in July 2025. Council's concerns related to this judgement:
- The guidance from the EHRC suggests there is provision from excluding trans people from any single-sex space based on their appearance/presentation.
- Repeated instances of challenges and accusations against people attempting to use facilities that they are entitled to use are being reported, typically where these individuals do not conform to stereotypical appearance/presentation (hair-cuts, clothing, build, body-hair, medical conditions such as Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) etc).
- Evidencing ones 'biological sex' when challenged is virtually impossible.
- Policing the use of all facilities is effectively impossible.
- Binary definitions of sex and gender are gross oversimplifications of the scientific biological reality and ignore cultural context and individual identity.
- This ruling leaves intersex individuals in a legal grey area and they are largely excluded.
- The Equality Act 2010 makes the non-voluntary disclosure of a persons status as trans to be a criminal offence. However under current guidelines individuals will be forced to 'out' themselves, either directly by responding to challenges or by accessing single sex facilities aligned to their sex as assigned at birth, or indirectly by conspicuously seeking to use limited mixed use facilities where single-sex spaces are otherwise readily available.
- There is no burden of proof for a complainant or accuser to demonstrate their own legal right to access a single-sex space when challenging that same right for others.
- Non-trans users of single-sex spaces will in practice be no safer than before this ruling, and may in fact be at greater risk due to false challenges and accusations.
- Trans users of single-sex spaces that match their sex as assigned at birth are self evidently less safe in being forced to do so.
- The default mixed-sex facilities that trans people will be expected to use will be disabled facilities, negatively impacting the availability of these facilities for their intended users.

Resolutions:

- (1) The base principle in dealing with the supreme court judgement and consequences, now or in the future, whilst acting within the law, will be to seek to create policy that maximises trans inclusivity at all times in our workplace and services.
- (2) Council declares its unequivocal support for the trans and intersex communities at this difficult time, and reaffirms our long standing commitment to embrace diversity and inclusion and to continue to actively embody this as an organisation.
- (3) The Council will actively welcome trans and intersex people and seek to provide additional inclusive events, services and facilities.
- (4) That People and Organisational Development Committee will be tasked with determining further responses to guidance and mandatory requirements in future as these are published. That the specifics of any policy response determined by the committee will be in line with the spirit of this motion as per the first resolution.

- (5) The Chief Executive will write to the Minister for Women and Equalities, Cat Smith MP and Lizzi Collinge MP to share our concerns.
- (6) A response will be made to the EHRC consultation on behalf of the Council. In light of tight submission deadline (30th June), Council delegates the formulation and submission of this response to the Chief Officer for People Policy, in consultation with members of the People and OD Committee. Whilst Council will not dictate the exact content, the response will reflect our concerns and conform with the spirit of this motion as per the first resolution.
- (7) Best practice to maximise inclusivity will be sought from / shared with, other authorities and trans-inclusive LGBT+ charities etc.
- (8) Best practice to maximise inclusivity will be sought from / shared with, other authorities and trans-inclusive LGBT+ charities etc.

Councillor Ainscough seconded the motion.

An officer briefing note had been included on the agenda to accompany the motion.

Following a very lengthy debate, a vote was taken and the motion was clearly carried.

Resolved:-

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 - The Equality Act 2010 makes the non-voluntary disclosure of a persons status as trans to be a criminal offence. However under current guidelines individuals will be forced to 'out' themselves, either directly by responding to challenges or by accessing single sex facilities aligned to their sex as assigned at birth, or indirectly by conspicuously seeking to use limited mixed use facilities where single-sex spaces are otherwise readily available.
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- (9) Best practice to maximise inclusivity will be sought from / shared with, other authorities and trans-inclusive LGBT+ charities etc.

(Factual Correction after the meeting: The reference to the “Equality Act 2010” in the 7th bullet point of resolution (1) to this motion should have read “Gender Recognition Act 2004”)

24 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader reported on events since the last Council meeting and responded to questions from Councillors.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

25 APPOINTMENTS AND CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Several changes were reported.

- Two substitutes had been appointed to the Local Government Reorganisation Working Group since the last Council meeting. They were Councillor Ainscough for the Labour Group and Councillor Greenwell for the Liberal Democrat Group.
- Councillor Gardiner had been replaced on the Standards Committee by Councillor Newton and on the Licensing Committee by Councillor Wild.
- Councillor Phil Black had taken up the Labour vacancy on the People and Organisational Development Committee
- Councillor Wood had taken on a substitute role on both the Council Business and Standards Committees.
- Councillor Ainscough had taken up the Labour vacancy on the Appeals Committee.

26 QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12

The Mayor advised that no questions had been received by the Chief Executive in accordance with Council Procedure Rules.

27 MINUTES OF CABINET

Council considered the Cabinet minutes of the meetings held on 11 February, 15 April and 20 May 2025. Councillor Hamilton-Cox responded to a question regarding property.

Resolved:

That the minutes be noted.

Mayor

(The meeting finished at 7.35 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these minutes,
please contact Debbie Chambers, Senior Manager, Democratic Support & Elections/Deputy
Monitoring Officer - email dchambers@lancaster.gov.uk**