

## PROCEEDINGS

A meeting of the Lancaster City Council was held in the Town Hall, Morecambe, at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 23 July 2025, when the following Members were present:-

Margaret Pattison (Mayor)

Suhir Abuhajar

Mandy Bannon

Phillip Black

Louise Belcher

Dave Brookes

Roger Cleet

Claire Cozler

Roger Dennison

Tom Fish

Alan Greenwell

Chris Hanna

Paul Hart

Caroline Jackson

Jack Lenox

Sarah McGowan

Abi Mills

Paul Newton

Sue Penney

Sarah Punshon

James Sommerville

Sandra Thornberry

Paul Tynan

John Wild

John Hanson (Deputy Mayor)

Joanne Ainscough

Matthew Black

Martin Bottoms

Gerry Blaikie

Keith Budden

Wilson Colley

Maria Deery

Gina Dowding

Martin Gawith

Tim Hamilton-Cox

Prof Chris Harris

Colin Hartley

Peter Jackson

John Livermore

Isabella Metcalf-Riener

Hamish Mills

Andrew Otway

Joyce Pritchard

Robert Redfern

Jackson Stubbs

Sue Tyldesley

David Whitaker

Jason Wood

**28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Catherine Armistead, Phil Bradley, Ruth Colbridge, Brett Cooper, Andrew Gardiner, Ross Hunter, Sally Maddocks, Jean Parr, Catherine Potter, Sam Riches, Paul Stubbins and Nick Wilkinson.

**29 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2025 were signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

**30 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

**31 ANNOUNCEMENT - HONORARY ALDERMAN JUNE ASHWORTH**

The Mayor reported the sad passing of Honorary Alderman June Ashworth earlier in July.

June was first elected in 1991 and served on many Committees and Cabinet and became Mayor of the City in 2013. She stepped down from the Council in 2019 after serving 24 years.

June's funeral took place on 21 July 2025.

**Members stood in a minute's silence in her memory.**

At his request, the Mayor then invited Councillor Dennison to say a few words about his longtime colleague and personal friend of many years, Honorary Alderman June Ashworth.

**32 ANNOUNCEMENT - MUNICIPAL JOURNAL AWARD**

The Mayor informed Councillors that in June, the City Council had won the Municipal Journal award and trophy for Leadership in Responding to the Climate Emergency. The award showed how the Council was leading the way on climate action and recognised the pioneering work behind its Climate Emergency Local Plan Review.

The Council was also shortlisted as finalists for Local Authority of the Year and also Digital Transformation. City Council officer Susanna Dart was also shortlisted as a Rising Star.

The Mayor offered her thanks and congratulations to everyone involved.

**33 ANNOUNCEMENT - FREEMAN'S COURT**

The Mayor reported what a pleasure it had been to welcome 26 new Freemen and Freewomen at the recent Freeman's Court on 12 July 2025. The popularity of the ancient tradition continued to grow each year with two courts having to be held due to the high numbers. She encouraged all Councillors to attend the annual Court to see for process for themselves and perhaps become a Freeman or Freewoman themselves if they met the criteria.

**34 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 11**

The Mayor advised that no questions had been received from members of the public in accordance with the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 11.

**35 PETITIONS AND ADDRESSES**

Councillors were informed that three speakers had registered to speak at the meeting in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13, and that two of the speakers would deliver one speech jointly.

A petition had also been received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 27, which would be considered at agenda item 8, following the public speakers.

The first speakers were Dr Sunil Banga and Dr Shakthi Nataraj who jointly addressed the Council on the financial position and proposed job cuts at Lancaster University.

Next, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Engagement) for Lancaster University, Professor Sarah Kemp, gave a speech regarding the financial position, student numbers and reduction in workforce at Lancaster University.

Copies of both speeches had been circulated to Councillors.

The Leader responded to Doctors Banga and Nataraj and Professor Kemp and thanked them all for attending the meeting to speak.

**36 PETITION - CAMPAIGN TO PRESERVE THE GREEN BELT STATUS OF LAND BETWEEN MANOR LANE, SLYNE-WITH-HEST AND GREENWOOD DRIVE/AVENUE AND PINWOOD AVENUE/CRESCENT , BOLTON-LE-SANDS AND OBJECT TO ITS USE FOR DEVELOPMENT**

A petition had been submitted which was part online and part on paper. The online petition alone contained more than the 500 signatures required to trigger an officer report for the petition to be considered at a Council meeting.

The full wording of the online petition had been circulated to Councillors in advance and read:

"We the undersigned support the campaign both to preserve the green belt status of land (land between Manor Lane, Slyne-with-Hest and Greenwood Drive/Avenue and Pinewood Avenue/Crescent ,Bolton-le-Sands), and to object to its use for development.

We the undersigned petition the council to retain the green belt status of the land between Slyne-with-Hest and Bolton-le-Sands and to reject proposals to build there. We ask that District housing targets are met by using more appropriate and sustainable locations. We would like our petition presented and debated by full council and to be offered an opportunity to present our issue to full council.

The residents of Slyne with Hest and Bolton-le-Sands are passionate and proud of their villages. Each village has a distinct community and gives its residents a strong sense of place.

The retention of the green belt that has so effectively prevented the villages from merging and forming what would be essentially a town larger in population than Carnforth, is absolutely essential.

Both communities strongly opposed development of their green belt in the creation of the last Local Plan and opinions remain just as strong today.

We wish to retain our local green belt to ensure that the historic villages of Slyne-with-Hest and Bolton-le-Sands can continue to exist independently. We wish to safeguard the land for its wildlife, its beautiful views, its capacity to mitigate flooding and to retain our District's history.

To release this land for development would result in the urban sprawl of Lancaster marching forward virtually unchecked to Carnforth swallowing villages that the north Lancaster green belt was created to preserve. Only 3% of our District is designated as green belt. We do not need to sacrifice this small percentage for development. Developing our stunning piece of local green belt will not produce the truly affordable homes the District needs.

We should be true to our District's slogan 'Promoting City, Coast and Countryside.' Development of our green belt would be in stark contradiction to this.

Councillor Tyldesley, Cabinet Member with special responsibility for Planning, introduced the report and responded to questions from Councillors. She then proposed the recommendations in the report, seconded by Councillor Brookes:

"(1) That Council receives and notes the petition.

(2) That planning matters, including any future proposals for the development of this site, would be appropriately considered by the local planning authority, (including by the Planning Regulatory Committee). It would be inappropriate for Council to articulate a view outside of this regulatory process."

In response to queries from Councillors about the petition should simply be noted, the Mayor clarified that the proposition which had been made formed the response to the petition.

The Mayor called for a debate and the proposition was clearly carried when put to the vote.

***Resolved:***

(1) That Council receives and notes the petition.

(2) That planning matters, including any future proposals for the development of this site, would be appropriately considered by the local planning authority, (including by the Planning Regulatory Committee). It would be inappropriate for Council to articulate a view outside of this regulatory process.

**37 LEADER'S REPORT**

The Leader presented her report updating Members on various issues since her last report to Council. She then responded to numerous questions from Councillors.

***Resolved:***

That the report be noted.

**38 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2025/2026 UPDATES AND PAY RATIOS**

***(The Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Chief Finance Officer and Senior Manager, Democratic Support and Elections all left the Chamber for the following item, each***

***having an interest in the pay policy as Council employees.)***

Councillor Wood presented a report of the People and Organisational Development (P&OD) Committee recommending amendments to the Pay Policy 2025/26 which was agreed by Council in March 2025. The amendments included information about pay ratios requested by Council as well as other amendments requested by the P&OD Committee.

Councillor Punshon asked whether, in 14.5 of the document at the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet points, the words "Put simpler" could be changed to "Put simply" to make for easier reading.

In response to Cllr Punshon's question, Cllr Wood indicated that he would be happy to make that change as a typographical/grammatical correction providing that the Monitoring Officer was willing to accept that minor change in the Pay Policy Statement.

Councillor Wood then proposed:

"That Council approves the minor amendments to the Pay Policy Statement 2025-2026 as set out in the report."

Councillor Harris seconded the proposition which was carried unanimously when put to the vote.

***Resolved unanimously:***

That Council approves the minor amendments to the Pay Policy Statement 2025-2026 as set out in the report.

***(The Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Chief Finance Officer and Senior Manager, Democratic Support and Elections returned to the Chamber at this point.)***

**39 MOTION IN SUPPORT OF THE MORECAMBE FESTIVAL MARKET, ITS TRADERS AND THEIR CUSTOMERS**

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

"The Council seeks to acknowledge the vital role Morecambe's Festival Market plays in the community, the opportunity it provides for small local businesses and sole traders, and in delivering the council's mission for sustainable growth. However, the seasonal nature of the market's business requires that the council, which owns and maintains the market itself, to show flexibility and consideration to those who operate out of it so it can serve Morecambe and the visitor economy all year round.

The Council notes:

- The vitality of the market to Morecambe and its visitors as an accessible and affordable place to shop and do business.
- The importance of traders at the market who make its operation possible, and as such the necessity to attract and maintain Morecambe's fantastic small businesses and sole traders.
- Concerns raised by market traders about the inflexibility of the Council's management of the market, and concerns raised by residents about the vitality of the market as a result.

The Council commends:

- The Festival Market traders for their continued work despite the difficulties posed by the seasonal nature of their hard work and lack of attention paid to that work by the current council administration.
- The work of Madame Mayor, Councillor Pattison in promoting the success of the market in her business as a councillor and advocate for Morecambe.

The Council regrets:

- The difficulties faced by market traders in light of the Council's current approach to rent and debt collection, which lacks an awareness of the ebbs and flows to Morecambe's seasonal economy.
- The lack of investment in the Festival Market, which has worsened the impact of seasonality on its ability to trade, such as in the absence of effective heating.
- That it has been unable to support market traders who have left the Festival Market, by choice or financial pressure, in keeping their business within its walls.

The Council resolves:

- (1) To task the Leader of the Council to clarify which Cabinet Member is responsible for the Morecambe Festival Market, the Cabinet Member for Morecambe Regeneration and Local Economy or the Cabinet Member for Lancaster Regeneration and Local Economy.
- (2) To task that Cabinet Member to contact current market traders with an opportunity to hear their thoughts and to consider them in light of the pressures they are under and the ability of the Council to relieve that."

Councillor Whitaker seconded the motion.

A briefing note had been submitted by officers to accompany the motion.

Councillor Ainscough responded to a number of questions from Councillors prior to the debate. During debate, an amendment to the motion was moved by Councillor Bottoms, removing text and changing one word 'contact' to 'revisit', as follows:

"The Council seeks to acknowledge the vital role Morecambe's Festival Market plays in the community, the opportunity it provides for small local businesses and sole traders, and in delivering the council's mission for sustainable growth.

The Council notes:

- The vitality of the market to Morecambe and its visitors as an accessible and affordable place to shop and do business.
- The importance of traders at the market who make its operation possible, and as such the necessity to attract and maintain Morecambe's fantastic small businesses and sole traders.

The Council resolves:

- (1) To task the leader of the Council to clarify which Cabinet Member is responsible for the Morecambe Festival Market, the Cabinet Member for Morecambe Regeneration and Local Economy or the Cabinet Member for Lancaster Regeneration and Local Economy.
- (2) To task that Cabinet Member to revisit current market traders with an opportunity to hear their thoughts and to consider them in light of the pressures they are under and the ability of the Council to relieve that."

At the conclusion of the debate a vote was taken on the amendment, which was clearly carried and became the substantive motion. It was debated briefly before a vote was taken, which was unanimously in favour of the motion.

***Resolved unanimously:***

The Council seeks to acknowledge the vital role Morecambe's Festival Market plays in the community, the opportunity it provides for small local businesses and sole traders, and in delivering the council's mission for sustainable growth.

The Council notes:

- The vitality of the market to Morecambe and its visitors as an accessible and affordable place to shop and do business.
- The importance of traders at the market who make its operation possible, and as such the necessity to attract and maintain Morecambe's fantastic small businesses and sole traders.

The Council resolves:

- (1) To task the leader of the Council to clarify which Cabinet Member is responsible for the Morecambe Festival Market, the Cabinet Member for Morecambe Regeneration and Local Economy or the Cabinet Member for Lancaster Regeneration and Local Economy.
- (2) To task that Cabinet Member to revisit current market traders with an opportunity to hear their thoughts and to consider them in light of the pressures they are under and the ability of the Council to relieve that.

**40 EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS - CABINET PORTFOLIOS (Pages 10 - 12)**

Council considered a report of the Senior Manager, Democratic Support and Elections reporting changes to the membership of Cabinet and portfolio areas made by the Leader since the last Council meeting. The revised list is appended to these minutes.

***Resolved:***

That the report be noted.

**41 ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS**

The Senior Manager, Democratic Support and Elections had submitted a report to advise Council of the calculations relating to the allocation of seats in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. This was following Councillor Harris's resignation from the Labour Group and his decision to become a non-aligned independent Councillor.

Councillor Wood proposed "That the recommendation, as set out in the report, be approved." The proposition was seconded by Councillor Caroline Jackson.

There was no debate and the proposition was carried unanimously when put to the vote.

***Resolved unanimously:***

That in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989 and Part 4 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations, 1990, the City Council approves the calculations and allocation of seats set out in the report.

**42 APPOINTMENTS AND CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

It was noted that Labour Group changes made since the last meeting were:

- Passing Councillor Ainscough's seat on the Appeals Committee to the Green Group to effect the adjustment required due to the revised calculation of political balance (minute 40 refers)
- Appointing Councillor Phil Black to the vacant seat left by Councillor Harris on the People and Organisational Development Committee
- Appointing Councillor Wood as a substitute for Council Business Committee and Standards Committee in place of Councillor Harris

The Green Group informed Council of the following changes:

- Appointing Councillor Stubbins and Councillor Tyldesley as substitute members of the Local Government Reorganisation Working Group
- Cllr Andrew Otway replacing Cllr Sally Maddocks on the Local Plan Review Group
- Appointing Cllr Gina Dowding to the Appeals Committee
- Cllr Sally Maddocks to become a substitute member of Council Business Committee
- Cllr Wilson Colley to replace Cllr Mandy Bannon as a substitute member of the Planning Regulatory Committee

#### 43 QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12 (Pages 13 - 14)

The Mayor advised that four questions had been received by the Chief Executive in accordance with Council Procedure Rules. The first three questions were from Councillor Whitaker to Councillor Bottoms regarding boarded up shops in the West End of Morecambe. Question four was from Councillor Cleet to the Leader of the Council regarding Memoranda of Understanding with the two Town Councils.

Details of the questions and answers together with any supplementary questions and responses are appended to the minutes.

#### 44 MINUTES OF CABINET

Council considered the Cabinet minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2025. The Leader responded to Members' questions. She indicated that the relevant Cabinet Member, Councillor Riches, who was not present at the meeting, would provide a written answer to Councillor Belcher in response to her questions about establishing habitat banks in Lancaster district.

***Resolved:***

That the minutes be noted.

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Mayor

(The meeting finished at 8.00 p.m.)

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



**Leader – Councillor Caroline Jackson**

Principal Spokesperson  
Emergency Response  
Council Priorities & Principles  
Comms  
Eden

**Housing and Homelessness**

Council Housing  
Homelessness  
Private Sector Housing  
Social Housing  
Caravan Sites  
Traveller Sites  
Refugee / Asylum Seeker Housing  
Home Improvement Agency

**Deputy Leader – Councillor Peter Jackson**

Deputise for the leader as required  
Salt Ayre Leisure Centre

**Lancaster Regeneration and Local Economy**

Lancaster BID  
High Streets  
Markets  
Regeneration  
Community Wealth Building/ Local Supply Chains  
Jobs and Skills – Including Green Skills  
Digital Strategy and Implementation  
Canal Quarter  
Business Recovery (Response to economic shocks)  
Business Support & Information  
Parking

**Councillor Mandy Bannon****Communities, Well-Being and Partnerships**

Rural Communities and AONB  
Partnerships – Police, NHS, Morecambe Summit, Community Events  
Public order and antisocial behaviour  
Voluntary, faith and community groups  
Health & Well-Being  
Community Safety Partnership  
Community Connectors /UKSPF  
Community resilience and recovery  
Household Support Fund

**Councillor Martin Bottoms**

**Morecambe Regeneration and Local Economy**

Morecambe BID  
Sustainable Business Innovation  
Economic development and growth  
Community Wealth Building/ Local Supply Chains  
Tourism and Marketing  
Arts, culture and festivals  
Frontierland  
Engineers  
(and Theatres and Visitor Information)

**Councillor Sam Riches**

**Climate Action**

Flood Prevention  
Low Carbon Energy Generation and Energy Conservation  
Climate Emergency Response (cross portfolio)  
Climate Change Resilience  
District Net Zero Partnership  
Retrofit and Electrification  
EV charging  
Active Travel and Modal Shift (Strategic development Implementation and Monitoring)  
Low Carbon Sector  
(and Museums)

**Councillor Tim Hamilton-Cox**

**Finance and Property**

Strategic Control of Financial Resources  
Treasury Management  
Audit and Risk Register  
Financial Services  
Revenues and Benefits  
Property and Assets (Commercial and Investment, Civic and Operational, Council Owned Community Facilities)  
ICT

**Councillor Paul Hart**

**Environmental Services**

Waste and Recycling  
Parks and Green Spaces  
Café and recreational facilities  
Commons, Reserves, Open Spaces  
Water including Rivers and Coast  
Nature Conservation  
Biodiversity  
Street Cleansing  
Environmental Health and Enforcement  
Allotments, Food Production and Food Waste

**Councillor Sally Maddocks**

**Corporate Services**

Human Resources; Fair Work Charter, Equalities

Corporate Performance Management

Legal Services:

Enforcement – Fly tipping, littering, dog fouling, PSPS

Procurement and Fair Trade

Democratic Services (Democratic Support, Induction Civic, Mayoral & Elections)

Governance

Customer and Advice Services

Licensing

Civic Facilities Management (Operational)

Hospitality management

**Councillor Sue Tyldesley**

**Planning**

Planning including Local Plan

Conservation and Urban Design

Transport Policy– Air quality

Development and Building Control

Compulsory Purchase

Neighbourhood Plans

**Questions from Councillor David Whitaker for Councillor Bottoms**

Councillor Whitaker asked:

*“What can The Council realistically do to address the countless boarded up shops in the West End to address the ongoing concerns of businesses in the West End?”*

Councillor Bottoms replied:

I am very passionate about this and do take photos of all properties and keep records myself. Where a building is considered to be affect public amenity and is so untidy to warrant action, there are provisions under the Town and Country Planning Act.

Where a building is considered dangerous following a risk assessment carried out by qualified structural engineers, then action can be pursued under the Building Act.

Where buildings have lesser issues, such as broken doors and windows, but the structure might not be untidy or dangerous, there is potential recourse under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act.

There are also provisions under the Environmental Protection Act if the property is deemed to be causing environmental problems to adjoining properties. I have identified one such property which has been brought to my attention by West End traders.

Councillor Whitaker asked:

*“Is there any funding external avenues being explored in order to address these issues?”*

Councillor Bottoms replied:

There is very little external funding at the moment for commercial properties. Funding sometimes is available to bring residential properties back in to use but nothing much for commercial. As you are aware, some of these properties do have potential for residential accommodation and could bring in Council Tax, so I will be looking at that.

Councillor Whitaker asked:

*“Has any progress been made in finding out who the owners of these properties are, for example, the properties on Yorkshire Street?”*

Councillor Bottoms responded:

The Council uses Land Registry records to identify owners. Difficulties arise when ownership records are incomplete or absent. Where owners are identified then the local authority has pursued and will pursue, where expedient to do so, enforcement action to improve the properties' condition.

More recently, we had a meeting at the town hall with prominent Morecambe stakeholders, including Morecambe BID who are spearheading an initiative to address the number of empty properties in the town (both commercial and residential), to discuss ways in which the district partners can encourage landlords to fill vacant properties and improve their condition. Another

town has used arts and culture to revitalise properties and I value the input of other Councillors and your local knowledge to pull a plan together for this going forward.

Councillor Whitaker thanked Councillor Bottoms for his comprehensive answer. By way of a supplementary question he asked:

*“Do you agree with me that we need to stop the rot and the domino impact of more boarded up properties which residents in the West End are getting really fed up of, so we need to really need to prioritise returning those properties that are boarded up into business or arts opportunities and hopefully we can make the West End a good arts hub when Eden comes?”*

Councillor Bottoms replied:

Yes, I've noticed that when I attend these meetings there are lots of ideas and lots of talk yet there is no real vision or strategy and that's what we need to put together to move it forward. We need positive action and not just words.

#### **Question from Councillor Roger Cleet for Councillor Peter Jackson**

Councillor Cleet asked a question about the recent Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Morecambe and Carnforth Town Council adopted by Lancaster City Council cabinet on 8th July 2025:

*“Could the Cabinet Member explain exactly what these new arrangements are and how they will benefit the residents of Morecambe and Carnforth?”*

Councillor Peter Jackson explained that MOUs were not legally binding documents. Their intention was to set up structures by which Town Councils and City Councils could better communicate, identify projects that they can take forward together and work together on. The MOUs provided for the Chief Executive to establish steering groups.

He went on to say that things said in the Chamber during the Council meeting had highlighted that communication between the City Council and the Town Councils had not always been as good as it should be, particularly in the case of Morecambe. It was necessary to build some understanding and some trust and the MOU would be the mechanism to do that.

Councillor Cleet thanked Councillor Peter Jackson for his reply.