

PROCEEDINGS

A meeting of the Lancaster City Council was held in the Town Hall, Morecambe, at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 25 March 2026, when the following Members were present:-

Margaret Pattison (Mayor)	John Hanson (Deputy Mayor)
Suhir Abuhajar	Joanne Ainscough
Catherine Armistead	Mandy Bannon
Martin Bottoms	Louise Belcher
Gerry Blaikie	Dave Brookes
Keith Budden	Roger Cleet
Ruth Colbridge	Wilson Colley
Claire Cozler	Gina Dowding
Tom Fish	Tim Hamilton-Cox
Chris Hanna	Paul Hart
Colin Hartley	Ross Hunter
Caroline Jackson	Peter Jackson
Jack Lenox	John Livermore
Sally Maddocks	Sarah McGowan
Isabella Metcalf-Riener	Hamish Mills
Paul Newton	Andrew Otway
Robert Redfern	Sam Riches
James Sommerville	Jackson Stubbs
Paul Stubbins	Sandra Thornberry
Sue Tyldesley	Paul Tynan
David Whitaker	John Wild
Nick Wilkinson	Jason Wood

133 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Matthew Black, Phil Black, Phil Bradley, Brett Cooper, Maria Deery, Roger Dennison, Andrew Gardiner, Martin Gawith, Alan Greenwell, Chris Harris, Kate Knight, Abi Mills, Jean Parr, Susan Penney, Catherine Potter, Joyce Pritchard and Sarah Punshon.

134 MINUTES

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 25 February 2026 and the Special Council meeting held on 5 March 2026 were signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

135 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this stage.

136 ANNOUNCEMENT - MAYOR'S CHARITY EVENT

The Mayor expressed her thanks to all those who attended and assisted with her recent charity event at the Mazuma football stadium. Over £900 was raised for the Mayor's charity at the event.

137 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.

138 PETITIONS AND ADDRESSES

The Mayor informed Members that no petitions or requests to address Council had been received from members of the public.

139 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader presented her report updating Members on various issues since her last report to Council. She then responded to a number of questions from Councillors and confirmed that a written response would be given to Councillor Belcher's request for a written update on parking, park and ride, transport and accessibility between Carnforth and Eden.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

140 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2026/2027

The Mayor informed Councillors that, since the Chief Officers had an interest in the Pay Policy, they would leave the Chamber for the duration of the following item of business.

Councillor Wood, Chair of the People and Organisational Development Committee, presented a report of the Committee seeking approval for the Pay Policy Statement 2026/27. There were no questions and Councillor Wood proposed:

“That the Pay Policy Statement for 2026-2027 be approved.”

The proposition was seconded by Councillor Maddocks.

There was no debate and a vote was taken on the proposition.

Resolved unanimously:

That the Pay Policy Statement for 2026-2027 be approved.

141 INCLUSIVE ACCESS VERIFICATION FOR DISABLED PEOPLE AT COUNCIL-OWNED AND COUNCIL-SUPPORTED VENUES

The following motion of which notice had been given to the Chief Executive in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15 was moved by Councillor Belcher and seconded by Councillor Cozler:

“This Council notes that:

- Disabled residents in the Lancaster district have historically been able to access venues, events, and services, including provision for personal assistants or essential carers, by presenting recognised forms of disability verification such as a Blue Badge or evidence of entitlement to Personal Independence Payment (PIP).
- Some venues have introduced third-party access accreditation schemes, including the Nimbus Disability Access Card, as a method of verifying access requirements.
- The Council has recently indicated that, within the access policy for The Platform, the Nimbus system will operate as a primary method of verification, while also providing a free venue-specific card option and allowing alternative forms of evidence where individuals do not hold a Nimbus card.
- While access card schemes may offer administrative convenience, any system that effectively requires disabled people to obtain third-party accreditation risks creating financial, administrative, or procedural barriers.
- Many disabled people already undergo extensive statutory assessment processes through the Department for Work and Pensions for Personal Independence Payment or through local authority Blue Badge schemes.
- City Council-owned and Council-supported venues have duties under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments and to ensure policies and practices do not place disabled people at a substantial disadvantage.

This Council believes that:

- Disabled residents should not be required to undergo additional third-party assessment processes, or incur costs, in order to demonstrate access needs that have already been recognised through statutory systems.
- Access policies should be inclusive, respectful, and focused on enabling participation rather than creating additional hurdles.
- Where access card systems are used, they must operate as optional tools to support access, not as mandatory gateways.
- Disabled people should be able to request reasonable adjustments using a range of accessible and proportionate methods of verification.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Ensure that Council-owned and Council-operated venues do not require disabled

people to obtain a Nimbus Access Card or any other third-party access card as a mandatory condition for accessing events, facilities, or personal assistant/essential carer tickets.

2. Confirm that alternative forms of disability verification, including Blue Badges, Personal Independence Payment award documentation, Disability Living Allowance evidence, or confirmation from recognised support services, will be accepted when individuals request reasonable adjustments.

3. Ensure that any access card systems used by Council venues, including those provided by Nimbus Disability, clearly provide a free option and make explicit that holding such a card is not required in order to receive reasonable adjustments.

4. Require that access policies at venues such as The Platform use inclusive and welcoming language, clearly communicating that reasonable adjustments will be made and that multiple routes exist for disabled people to demonstrate access needs.

5. Issue guidance to Council-supported venues, partners, and event organisers encouraging flexible, inclusive verification processes consistent with the duties set out in the Equality Act 2010.

6. Undertake a review of access verification policies across Council-owned and Council supported venues to ensure they remain proportionate, lawful, and do not create unnecessary barriers for disabled residents.”

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

At the conclusion of the debate a vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Resolved unanimously:-

This Council notes that:

- Disabled residents in the Lancaster district have historically been able to access venues, events, and services, including provision for personal assistants or essential carers, by presenting recognised forms of disability verification such as a Blue Badge or evidence of entitlement to Personal Independence Payment (PIP).
- Some venues have introduced third-party access accreditation schemes, including the Nimbus Disability Access Card, as a method of verifying access requirements.
- The Council has recently indicated that, within the access policy for The Platform, the Nimbus system will operate as a primary method of verification, while also providing a free venue-specific card option and allowing alternative forms of evidence where individuals do not hold a Nimbus card.
- While access card schemes may offer administrative convenience, any system that effectively requires disabled people to obtain third-party accreditation risks creating financial, administrative, or procedural barriers.
- Many disabled people already undergo extensive statutory assessment processes through the Department for Work and Pensions for Personal Independence Payment or through local authority Blue Badge schemes.
- City Council-owned and Council-supported venues have duties under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments and to ensure policies and practices do not place disabled people at a substantial disadvantage.

This Council believes that:

- Disabled residents should not be required to undergo additional third-party assessment processes, or incur costs, in order to demonstrate access needs that have already been recognised through statutory systems.
- Access policies should be inclusive, respectful, and focused on enabling participation rather than creating additional hurdles.
- Where access card systems are used, they must operate as optional tools to support access, not as mandatory gateways.

- Disabled people should be able to request reasonable adjustments using a range of accessible and proportionate methods of verification.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Ensure that Council-owned and Council-operated venues do not require disabled people to obtain a Nimbus Access Card or any other third-party access card as a mandatory condition for accessing events, facilities, or personal assistant/essential carer tickets.
2. Confirm that alternative forms of disability verification, including Blue Badges, Personal Independence Payment award documentation, Disability Living Allowance evidence, or confirmation from recognised support services, will be accepted when individuals request reasonable adjustments.
3. Ensure that any access card systems used by Council venues, including those provided by Nimbus Disability, clearly provide a free option and make explicit that holding such a card is not required in order to receive reasonable adjustments.
4. Require that access policies at venues such as The Platform use inclusive and welcoming language, clearly communicating that reasonable adjustments will be made and that multiple routes exist for disabled people to demonstrate access needs.
5. Issue guidance to Council-supported venues, partners, and event organisers encouraging flexible, inclusive verification processes consistent with the duties set out in the Equality Act 2010.
6. Undertake a review of access verification policies across Council-owned and Council supported venues to ensure they remain proportionate, lawful, and do not create unnecessary barriers for disabled residents.

142 APPOINTMENTS AND CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Changes to Committee memberships since the last Council meeting were reported.

It was reported that Councillor Hamish Mills would replace Councillor Metcalf-Reiner as a substitute for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

143 QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12

The Mayor advised that 1 question had been received by the Chief Executive in accordance with Council Procedure Rules. The question had been raised by Councillor Whitaker to Councillor Bottoms with regard to Centenary House.

Details of the question and answer together with any supplementary question and responses were appended to the minutes.

144 MINUTES OF CABINET

Council considered the Cabinet minutes of the meetings held on 25 February 2026 and 5 March 2026.

Resolved:

That the minutes be noted.

Mayor

(The meeting finished at 6.37 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes,
please contact Democratic Support - email democracy@lancaster.gov.uk**

Question from Councillor David Whitaker to Councillor Martin Bottoms

Has any engagement with external funding streams taken place regarding Centenary House on Regent Road taken place and what do you see as the most realistic options about the future use of this building whilst taken on board the implications for car parking if hopefully a commercial or community use is established for this building.

Councillor Bottoms responded

Its previously been said in Council that brownfield release money is available for developing this. That money is still there and is available and waiting for a developer to move this project forward. Its very difficult because Centenary House is bordered by roads with little to no parking and whatever you put there there's going to be parking issues. If a community centre there will be parking issues, if its commercial there'd going to be parking issues. We are in negotiations with an affordable housing developer but they're aware that the parking issues need to be part of the process and part of an effective resolution. I will keep you informed of progress on this.

Supplementary question from Councillor David Whitaker

Can you see an answer being found before LGR comes into place?

Councillor Bottoms responded

It's something we've all had concerns about since this administration was formed and we do need to find a solution and if we're going to get something done its down to us to get it done under this administration or at least get it started before our term ends and before LGR so I will keep pressing for this.