



Leader's Report

23rd July 2008

Report of the Leader of the Council

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present the Leader's report to Council.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) To receive the report of the Leader of Council.

REPORT

1.0 General Matters of Interest

My report informs Council of some of the items considered at Cabinet on 8th July 2008 and other matters. Details are set out below for Members' information.

Cabinet – 8th July 2008:

1.1 Community Cohesion Call-In - Overview and Scrutiny

Cabinet considered a referral from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a result of the Call-in of Cabinet's decision with regard to Community Cohesion (Minute 12).

After considering the report it was agreed:

- (1) That Cabinet does not appoint a Community Cohesion officer at the present time.
- (2) That recommendation 2 of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

"That Cabinet considers alternative ways of achieving the aims of the Corporate Plan on cohesive communities, including working with the universities. Overview and Scrutiny draws the attention of Cabinet to priority outcome 16 and highlights that:

- The Community Cohesion Strategy could be achieved through working with the LSP and voluntary sector. A future programme of spending on Community Cohesion should be based upon this strategy.
- Area Based Grant (ABG) money could be used to implement the Children and Young People Strategic Plan.
- Area Based Grant money could be used to achieve the aim of a civic programme that celebrates our heritage and benefits our communities.”

be noted.

- (3) That Cabinet reconsiders the way the ABG be spent in November 2008, by which time the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) should have options ready for consideration.

1.2 Canals Task Group – Final Report

At the meeting Cabinet considered a report of the findings of the Canals Task Group, seeking the agreement of Cabinet to the recommendations set out in the report.

Following consideration of the report, Cabinet resolved:

- (1) That, regarding recommendation 1a, the Council retains its existing definition of a community asset.
- (2) That all other recommendations set out in the report, as far as they are capable of being taken forward within the current budget, be approved, including using existing links with the British Resorts and Destinations Association (BRADA) to pursue recommendation 4.
- (3) That a report be brought to a future meeting identifying possible funding for other recommendations within the Canals Task Group report.

1.3 Lancaster Science Park

At the meeting Cabinet considered a report that advised of progress with project development work for Lancaster Science Park and requested confirmation that the Council should lead the next stages of project development, including the submission of outline planning application and recruitment of a development partner.

After considering the report, it was agreed:

- (1) That, subject to release of sufficient project development funding from the NWDA, the Corporate Director (Regeneration) be authorised to proceed with the next phases of project development, including the recruitment of a development partner on the basis outlined in the report, and commissioning of relevant specialist consultancy support.
- (2) That a further report be made back to Cabinet on the outcome of the developer recruitment and to agree the detailed terms and conditions of the development agreement.
- (3) That the Head of Financial Services be authorised to make the appropriate adjustments to the revenue and capital budgets.

- (4) That the Corporate Director (Regeneration) be authorised to make any amendments to the Memorandum of Understanding with Lancaster University if these are required to reflect the revised approach to the project, in consultation with the Head of Legal and HR and the Head of Financial Services.

1.4 Lancaster District Economic Vision

A report was submitted that provided an update on both the management arrangements and key projects within the Lancaster District Economic Vision. It provided background to the strategic context for the Vision and funding arrangements, including the potential for regeneration funds to be delegated to the Council. The report recommended the means by which the Council might manage the development of the Vision projects and also proposed the means by which the range of projects within the Vision might be reviewed and adapted over time.

After considering the report it was agreed:

- (1) That the Corporate Director (Regeneration) is granted continuing authorisation to proceed with project development and feasibility work for currently identified Vision projects, including bidding for funds, subject to the availability of existing resources and/or external funding.
- (2) That the Corporate Director (Regeneration) is authorised to undertake investigation and development of new Vision projects requiring Council support, subject to the availability of resources and/or external funding, in order to determine their relevance and suitability to bid for funding support and gain formal Council endorsement as part of normal decision making processes.
- (3) That the Corporate Director is authorised to submit an application to North West Development Agency for further management costs to support the management and development of the Lancaster District Economic Vision for the financial years 2009/2010, 2010/2011 and 2011/2012.
- (4) That Cabinet approves the proposed strategic programme framework for the Economic Vision, as outlined in this report, as a basis for attracting external funding and managing delivery and performance.
- (5) That the Corporate Director (Regeneration) be asked to bring to Cabinet for approval programmes of activity relating to the Lancaster District's Economic Vision instead of approval on a project by project basis to be the basis of negotiations with the NWDA for future delegation of funding.
- (6) That the Head of Financial Services be authorised to update the General Fund Capital Programme and the General Fund Revenue Budget as required, subject to there being no net impact on the Council's budgets.

1.5 Lancashire Municipal Waste Strategy

Members considered a report that informed of the implications of adopting the revised waste strategy 'Rubbish to Resources' for Lancashire 2008 to 2020 and requested a decision on the course of action regarding adoption of the strategy.

It was agreed:

- (1) That Cabinet adopt in principle, subject to financial capacity, the New Waste Management Strategy 'Rubbish to Resources' for Lancashire 2008 to 2020.
- (2) The Cabinet delegate the final adoption of the Strategy to the appropriate Cabinet Member, and subject to the budget framework being updated accordingly.
- (3) That a further report providing options for the implementation of the Strategy and its impact on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) be presented to Cabinet in September 2008.
- (4) That Cabinet receives a further report on the Middleton Recycling and Re-use Plant.

1.6 Capital Programme for Private Sector Housing

A report was submitted that sought approval for the allocation of the Regional Housing Board funding between the Winning Back Morecambe's West End, Poulton Renewal Area and Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG).

Cabinet agreed:

That Option 3 and the Disabled Facilities Grant funding from the capital allocation of the Regional Housing Board be approved, and that the Capital Programme be updated accordingly.

1.7 Homelessness Strategy

At the meeting Cabinet considered a report that requested Members to approve the Homelessness Strategy 2008 – 2013, which was provided as an appendix to the report. The report provided details of the consultation undertaken as part of the development of the strategy.

After considering the report it was agreed:

- (1) That the commissioning of specialist housing advice be considered on renewal of the SLA with the CAB.
- (2) That the Homelessness Strategy 2008-13 be approved, subject to any cost implications being referred back to Cabinet to be considered as part of the 2009/10 budget exercise.

1.8 Review of Staff and Member Permits and Charges

Cabinet considered a report that presented a review of Employee and Elected Member permits and charges.

Following consideration of the report it was agreed:

- (1) That the Employee, Member and Public permit renewal dates be realigned to ensure that all parking charges be determined and introduced at the same time, namely at 1st April.
- (2) That charges for permits of each type be increased with effect from the 1st April 2009 by a percentage no higher than the rate of inflation since the previous setting of the charge for that permit.
- (3) That with an implementation date of 1st April 2009, an option of a separately priced 5-day permit (i.e. 24-5) be introduced for all permit holders (at a cost lower than the equivalent 24-7 permit).
- (4) That charges for the eight month period from 1st August 2008 to 31st March 2009 should be at the same monthly rate as for the permits expiring on 31st July that they replace.

1.9 Lancashire Local Area Agreements

Cabinet were advised of the decision taken by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader in accordance with Minute No. 3 of 3rd June 2008.

It was reported to Cabinet on 3rd June 2008 that the Government Office North West (GONW) required that the Local Area Agreement (LAA) submission, due to be sent to GONW by the end of that week, should show lead partners against each performance target.

In order to meet that deadline, Cabinet agreed to delegate this task to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council as follows (Minute No. 3 refers):

‘That Cabinet authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to agree a list of lead partners for delivering the individual Lancashire Local Area Agreement targets, and further to that, to determine those targets that Lancaster City Council will contribute to delivering, subject to sufficient resources being available within existing budgets.’

The report outlined that the action taken by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader ensured that the Council has complied with its duty to co-operate in having regard for LAA targets and also met the designated deadline for supplying the information requested i.e. 10th June 2008. The decision would also ensure that the resources required to deliver the agreed targets are identified and considered before delivery commences and that they are consistent with the Corporate Plan.

A copy of the signed Partnership Agreement was attached to the report at Appendix B for information.

Following consideration of the report it was agreed:

That the following decisions of the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be noted:

- (1) That the list of targets, attached as Appendix A to the report, that the City Council will contribute towards delivering during the lifetime of the Local

Area Agreement, be agreed in principle, subject to sufficient resources either being available within existing budgets or being identified.

- (2) That the Lancashire Partnership Executive be advised of those targets by the due date (10th June 2008).
- (3) That officers undertake further work to ascertain the resources required to deliver the City Council's contribution to achieve the LAA targets agreed in (1) above.
- (4) That officers review the Council's existing Corporate Plan to ensure consistency with the targets agreed in (1) above and if amendments are required, they be reported back to full Council in due course.
- (5) That, notwithstanding the targets included in (1) above, the City Council will work with its partners in the Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership to support the delivery/achievement of all the objectives, outcomes and targets referred to in the LAA wherever practicable.

2.0 Allocation of Cabinet Appointments

Cabinet considered a report that advised of those appointments to partnerships and outside bodies which required re-allocation following the resignation of Councillor Johnson from the Cabinet.

After considering the report it was resolved:

- (1) That Councillor Susie Charles be appointed to fill the vacancies on the following Partnerships and Outside Bodies following the resignation from Cabinet of Councillor Tony Johnson:
 - LSP Management Group substitute.
 - Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB Unit Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB (Forum, Countryside Management Service and Limestone Heritage Project)
 - Forest of Bowland AONB Advisory Committee
 - Lancashire Rural Affairs
 - Lancashire Rural Partnership
 - Lancaster Canal Restoration Partnership
 - North West Rural Affairs Forum
 - LGA Rural Commission

2.1 Land at Scotforth

At the meeting Cabinet was requested to consider the bids that had been received for the sale of the Council's land at Scotforth Road, Lancaster. Following consideration of both a public and exempt report it was resolved: -

It was agreed:

- (1) That the content of the public report be noted.
- (2) That the sale of land to EH Booth and Co Ltd, as outlined in Option 2 of the exempt report, be approved.

- (3) That the proposal to designate the footpath in the Council's retained land as a permissive right of way or a public footpath be included in the proposals for the overall development and if this cannot be achieved then Officers pursue such designation directly with the County Council.

2.2 Other Matters

Since my last report, I have represented Lancashire at the Brussels meeting of the North West Region European Partnership. The item on The Irish Sea Platform that appears later in this agenda has been brought to Council as a consequence of a presentation at that meeting.

More recently, I attended (with Councillor Blamire) the annual conference of the Local Government Association in Bournemouth. As usual there were a number of speeches from national politicians representing the major parties. This year, the verbal message from all of them was of greater localism and the importance of democratic accountability in local government - but that did not mean that the parties had a single vision for the future.

On the subject of visions for the future, I was a guest at a dinner on 7 July to celebrate the opening of The Midland Hotel. The renaissance of the Hotel is a powerful symbol of the regeneration of Morecambe, and is expected to encourage the bringing forward of other regeneration projects.

On 10 July, I attended (with Councillor Sherlock) the Launch meeting of "Team Lancashire", a new partnership which has been signed up to by all the local authorities in Lancashire for working better together on the strategy for improvement and efficiency.

In relation to Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership (LDLSP), I can report that all the newly created Thematic Groups have now had their initial meetings, and that the first meeting of the Management Group (consisting of representatives of six stakeholders and the chair persons of all of the Thematic Groups) will take place on 31 July.

Returning again to the subject of visions for the future, the Lancaster and Morecambe Vision Board was a Building Block of the former LSP, and is now represented alongside representatives from the City Council and the County Council on the Economy Thematic Group of the LDLSP. The Vision Board also currently provides the representatives of the Economy Stakeholder on the LDLSP Board and on the LDLSP Management Group. At the meeting of the Vision Board on 10 July, I was appointed to represent the Council on a small sub-group tasked with determining a firm recommendation for the future of the Vision Board to be put to Board Members at their next meeting on 5 September.

3.1 Decisions required to be taken urgently

Summary of Decisions

As required by Access to Information Procedure Rule 17.03, set out below are the matters which required immediate implementation and in respect of which call-in was waived in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 17.

Luneside East Regeneration Project

At its meeting, held on Tuesday, 3rd June 2008, Cabinet considered and approved the recommendations of a report on the Luneside East Regeneration Project (Minute 14 refers).

Having consulted the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rule 17(a), the Chief Executive agreed that call-in be waived to enable the immediate implementation of this decision.

The urgency to implement this decision was to enable the Council to begin to prepare for the Lands Tribunal and any delay could be detrimental to the Council's handling of any case.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cabinet minutes dated 3rd June and 8th July 2008.