

EXECUTIVE MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT – 2008/09

COUNCILLOR EVELYN ARCHER, CABINET MEMBER WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR

- PROPERTY SERVICES
- JOINT ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO
- EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND REGENERATION IN MORECAMBE AND LUNESDALE CONSTITUENCY

From 4th February the following was added to Councillor Archer's portfolio:

- NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT IN THE DISTRICT



1 EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP:

- Cabinet
- Canal Corridor Cabinet Liaison Group
- Festivals and Events Cabinet Liaison Group
- Lancaster and Morecambe Markets Committee
- Morecambe Retail, Commercial and Tourism Cabinet Liaison Group
- Neighbourhood Management Cabinet Liaison Group
- Planning Policy Cabinet Liaison Group
- Transport Cabinet Liaison Group

2 EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES etc:

- LGA Coastal Issues Special Interest Group
- LSP Economy Thematic Group
- LSP Education, Skills and Opportunities Thematic Group
- Morecambe Bay Partnership
- Winning Back the West End Steering Group
- LGA Rural Commission

3 OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES

Property Services

Joint Economic Environment Portfolio – Employment Opportunities and Regeneration in Morecambe and Lunesdale Constituency

From 4th February the following was added to Councillor Archer's portfolio:-

Neighbourhood Management in the District

CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITY OUTCOMES:

Improve economic prosperity throughout the Lancaster District:

- *Implement Phase 2 of the Morecambe Townscape Heritage Scheme*

From 4th February the following priorities/outcomes were added to Councillor Archer's portfolio:-

- *Morecambe Bay Regional Park.*

Local Communities have more influence and involvement in the way services are delivered:

- *Develop Neighbourhood Management arrangements for the district.*

4 PROGRESS MADE DURING 2008/9

Morecambe Regeneration

The adoption of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy confirms that Morecambe remains as a priority location for regeneration schemes and new investments when the upturn in the economy arrives.

- 2008/09 has seen the City Council, with funding from the NWDA, clear the harbour band arena site and landscape the area which will be completed by the end of March. This along with the completion of the Hovercraft lifeboat station in June will see a greatly improved setting for the Midland Hotel.
- There is a current funding bid in place for a second Townscape Heritage Initiative and the City Council is eagerly awaiting the Heritage Lottery Funds decision.
- A review of the West End Master plan is being carried out and before going to Cabinet the Board of the West End Partnership will be given the opportunity to comment.
- During the past year the City Council has been giving support to the Winter Gardens Preservation Trust in its efforts to secure funds for the restoration of this key building. Officer support was provided to help the Trust secure an initial Heritage Lottery Project Planning Grant, and the Council has agreed to act as accountable body for a £300,000 grant contribution from the Northwest Development Agency to assist with the preparation of bids for capital funding. Cabinet also agreed to support the Winter Gardens project as a candidate for a £4 million bid to the "Sea Change" seaside resort regeneration funding scheme, and further officer support is being given to the preparation of this bid.
- We will take a leading role in the formation of a Morecambe Bay Regional Park which will, among other things coordinate all the main regeneration projects around the Bay, and demonstrate that the neighbouring local authorities can work together in a sub regional partnership. It is hoped that through this programme Morecambe could be the chosen location for a Regional Park interpretation centre.

Changing policy

The past year has seen some important developments in terms of the local, national and regional policy framework for economic regeneration.

At national level we have seen the publication of the government's "Sub National Review" (SNR) of economic development. The important element of this is the move to bring together a single regional strategy for planning, economic development, and housing by 2010, officers and members have been working with other Lancashire councils and Lancashire Economic Partnership in preparation for this.

Another element of the SNR is the recommendation that Regional Development Agencies should take action towards greater delegation of funding down to local authorities.

Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership

At local level, there has been a full review of the Sustainable Community Strategy by the LDLSP and the establishment of new LSP structures, including the formation of the Economy Thematic Group to take forward the relevant elements of the Community Strategy.

City Council members and officers have been working closely with the Thematic Group to review the economic vision and to translate it into an economic action plan that can be adopted by the LSP and its partners.

It was approved by Cabinet in October 2008 that the new framework for the Economic Vision, which is based on the LDLSP Action Plan, is based around five area themes:

- Reinvention of Morecambe
- Lancaster City and Riverside
- Lancaster Science Park and the Knowledge Economy
- The Heysham/M6 Employment Corridor
- Carnforth and the rural areas

The development of this local strategy, in conjunction with the proposals of the Sub National Review referred to earlier, means that there is now an important opportunity for this district to negotiate with Northwest Regional Development Agency for the establishment of a delegated regeneration programme. This would provide a greater certainty and commitment of funding from the NWDA over a number of years, and would also allow funding to be steered more closely towards locally agreed priorities.

Officers are now working on a detailed proposal to NWDA and to the new Homes and Communities Agency which seeks to develop this approach.

Whilst the formation of the LSP has been successful, and the adoption of the Regeneration Programme for the District by the Economic Thematic group has progressed, concern remains that there is no direct representation on the Economy group from the City Councils Regeneration portfolio holder for Morecambe, despite the fact that 3 of the 5 major projects lie with the remit of this portfolio. Further work will be required regarding this representation over the next few months.

Property Services

- Backlog repairs: the condition of the Council's building stock is a major concern. Despite a backlog repairs survey having been completed in 2005, with a five year repairs programme having been compiled, and whilst some funding has been made available, the lack of the major funds required has meant that only minimal works have been undertaken. The delays will inevitably mean that the buildings will be deteriorating further with the cost increase that this will bring about.
- Cabinet has considered the difficulties being experienced at Lancaster Market and asked for further information to determine future direction. This will continue to be an issue during 2009/10. Conversely, the Charter Market and Festival Markets have been particularly successful and are a draw for shoppers in Lancaster and Morecambe.
- The current economic climate is having a significant effect on the property market. Capital receipts have proved difficult to achieve during the past year and this has become a problem for funding the capital programme. Cabinet has considered the position on the capital receipts schedule and acknowledged that in many cases offers for surplus property are not being received or that the offers are too low to consider disposals at the present time.
- Work has however continued on major schemes such as the Lancaster's Canal Corridor where the call-in process is crucial to determining the future of the scheme. However, the scheme to develop new stadium facilities for Morecambe Football Club has resulted in a capital receipt and will in future add considerably to the provision of sports facilities in the district.

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