



Leader's Report

17 July 2013

Report of the Leader of the Council

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present the Leader's report to Council.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To receive the report of the Leader of Council.

REPORT

1.0 Cabinet

Information on Cabinet matters is provided in the minutes from the Cabinet meeting held on 25 June 2013, later in this agenda.

2.0 Decisions required to be taken urgently

As required by Access to Information Procedure Rule 17 and Part 1 Section 7 (5.1) of the Constitution, set out below is detail of a decision taken under the Urgent Business Procedure.

2.1 Terms of Reference for the Canal Corridor North Cabinet Liaison Group

An urgent decision was taken on 11 June 2013. The reason for urgency was that the constitution stipulates that the terms of reference needed to be approved by Cabinet before the liaison group could meet and it was scheduled to meet on 19 June, prior to the scheduled Cabinet meeting on 25 June 2013.

Details of the decision are as follows:

(1) That Cabinet agree to the Terms of Reference for the Canal Corridor North Cabinet Liaison Group.

That a Cabinet Liaison Group be created to consider the emerging development proposals for the Canal Corridor site

The purpose of the Liaison Group is to provide a forum prior to the submission of a planning application where:

- information on the detailed studies undertaken, and the evidence base created to support the development proposals can be shared as they become available;*
- details of the form, design and uses within the proposed development can be shared as they develop and without prejudice feedback given*
- the group can advise the appropriate Cabinet Member(s) on how to take proper account of how best to use the City Council's landownership interests to ensure that the most appropriate regeneration solution for the land is secured within the framework of the development agreement.*

3.0 Leader's Comments

One of the issues at Cabinet in June was the decision on the Market Square centrepiece or plinth. A briefing for councillors was held on the 17 June. Unfortunately only nine councillors were able to attend. The display showed various ideas and themes to decorate the plinth and also examples of suitable materials and councillors were asked whether it should be in two pieces or one whole. A smaller group from Cabinet suggested a "Timeline" theme based on Lancaster's history and that it should not be divided. They also agreed that the edges should be made of granite with the surface made of stone. The quotation from Richard II was to be carved on the top and that an artist is to come back with drawings. Cabinet agreed that a sub-committee of Cabinet will chose the design. The Lancashire Rose will be carved in the centre surrounding the hole to take the Christmas tree. Attractive lighting will be included. We hope that it will be an attractive centrepiece of high quality in keeping with our historic square.

On Wednesday, 19 June a Canal Corridor Liaison Group, made up of councillors from all parties, met with representatives of the British Land Project Team. Their architect presented his ideas for the site. He was particularly concerned that we should protect our heritage and our significant buildings and views. He stressed permeability and connectivity and city centre integration.

Canal side options were discussed including a park, leisure and residential options. He wanted strong pedestrian and vehicle connectivity both across the site and into the centre with an interceptor car park and adequate servicing arrangements. 700 people have been involved in the consultation over a six month period.

The representatives were questioned by members and when they left the meeting members' views were sought. This is the first stage of the process focussing on

the Council's role as landholder and community leader and will be part of the process leading up to a possible planning application in the Spring of 2014.

I am very pleased to announce that Williamson Park is an excellent visitor attraction – and that's official. The park has scored highly on a recent inspection visit through the Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme (VAQAS) run by Visit England and merits the accolade of "excellent standard of quality experience" and can continue to proudly display the 'red rose' quality badge. They also commented on their real determination to upgrade and enhance the overall visitor offer. Congratulations to all our staff in the park.

We are soon to host the Youth Games and I sincerely hope that Councillors will come along to support and enjoy them. The games produce such goodwill and some lasting memories and friendships for those taking part. We are very grateful to all our sponsors and for the hard work of those who are organising the events.

On Friday 28 June the MP for Lancaster, Eric Ollerenshaw, came to see us to discuss a range of local concerns. These meetings are most useful and they allow an exchange of information about ongoing projects and updates on progress, giving both the Council and the MP a chance to exchange information and to ask for advice and help.

4.0 Other Matters

Cabinet minutes are attached at the end of this agenda.

5.0 Key Decisions

The following Key Decisions were taken by Cabinet on 25 June 2013.

- (1) Lancaster Square Routes
- (2) Brand Engagement Update
- (3) Update on the Homelessness Change Programme

No Officer Delegated (Key) Decisions were taken by the Chief Executive during this period.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cabinet agenda and minutes of the meetings held on 25 June 2013.