



Leader's Report

11 September 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 23 July 2013, later in this agenda.

2.0 Decisions required to be taken urgently

There are no decisions to report since the last Leader's Report on 17 July 2013.

3.0 Leader's Comments

On Thursday 11 July the Chief Executive and the Leader of South Lakeland District Council came to see us. Their main concern was Morecambe Bay Hospitals. All three areas, Lancaster, South Lakes and Barrow, are concerned about the future, but as yet no decisions have been made. We discussed the Lancaster City Council Branding Exercise which includes the Bay area.

We are always looking at possibility of closer working opportunities and they thanked us for the help that has been given by one of our officers who has been working with them on leisure matters. Second homes is one of their concerns and Building Control and dangerous properties. Our Areas of Outstanding Natural

Beauty (AONB) adjoin each other and we will work together on these. Jobs throughout the area, the cost of housing in the travel-to-work area and further budget cuts were also mentioned.

Lancaster District and Lancashire Leaders' meetings have taken place. The new Leader of Lancashire spoke of her intention to work in partnership with all districts. Three-tier forums were discussed. Members felt that these should again be decision making and that members should be able to put items on the agenda. They also felt that they should be open to the public again.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue gave a presentation on the Emergency Cover Review. There will be consultation until the 20 October with a decision on the 09 December. There were to be no Fire Station closures, but they have to save £5.3 million over four years, with at least £10m savings overall.

Welfare Reform and its effect on Lancashire was a major item. The collection rate information is being assessed, but it is too early to gauge the impact. The total additional debit for Lancashire households is estimated at £6.5m. On the Bedroom Tax, Lancaster has 758 households affected with an additional rent to collect of £524,056. National roll-out of the Benefit Cap commenced in July 2013 and will be completed by September 2013.

I raised the issue of the expensive 0845 number that has to be used by vulnerable people who are making enquiries. They agreed to look at it.

Reports on the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership and the Preston and Lancashire City Deal were given verbally. Members feel that there should be more District Representatives on the Board of the LEP, there are two now for 12 authorities, and that there should be at least three.

Talks about fracking are on-going with County and other agencies. This is a national issue not just a Lancashire one, but members felt that districts should have an input. However, it was suggested that the Government may take it out of local hands.

The changes in Police divisions were discussed at the District meeting. There was concern about the impact on policing and Police Community Support Officer PCSO funding was raised at the Leaders' meeting.

The International Youth Games were a great success. The weather was kind, apart from the Opening Ceremony evening. There was a tremendous spirit and all our competitors did well. Congratulations to the organisers! This was a first time for some of them and they did a magnificent job. The Opening and Closing Ceremonies were incredible and much appreciated. Our guests and their leaders were very impressed by the games and by our area. Some want to bring their families back for a holiday.

We will be having a reception for the competitors, the host families, our staff and sponsors to thank them for making it such a happy well organised event.

Both Happy Mount Park and Williamson Park have won Green Flag Awards again. Both are an incredible asset to our area and they are much appreciated by both visitors and the public. I visited Williamson Park on their Play Day. I have never seen so many people in the Park (about a thousand) and so many attractions – all free! Lovely weather and happy faces made it a joy. Again, thanks to all those who made it happen.

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 23 July 2013:-

- (1) Grant Assisted Alleviation of shingle migration and flooding, Teal Bay, Morecambe
- (2) Provisional Revenue, Capital and Treasury Management Outturn 2012/13

The following Officer Delegated (Key) Decisions were taken during this period:-

- (1) School Swimming Transportation Contract – Chief Officer (Health & Housing)
- (2) Remedial Works at Mitre House/Parksafe Car Park, Lancaster – Chief Officer (Resources)

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cabinet agenda and minutes of the meetings held on 23 July 2013.