

Corporate Plan 2015 - 2018

Our Core Purpose

The role of the council is to:

- Provide the democratic leadership, with high ethical standards, needed to help the district address the major issues facing it.
- Bring communities and agencies together to work in partnership to address the major issues affecting the district.
- Provide a range of customer focused services, offer value for money and meet the needs of people who live, work and visit the district.
- Maintain a cohesive community by ensuring we understand the needs of our communities and provide equality of access to our services and employment opportunities.

Our Ethos

- **Stewardship** – ensuring the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the local area.
- **Core capacity** – maintaining the strategic advantages of in-house services to meet local needs.
- **Municipal entrepreneurialism** – capturing opportunities for collaborative innovation and income generation.
- **Collaboration** – working with a range of service providers on a collaborative basis rather than through competition.
- **Policy** – grounding local decision making in political accountability.
- **Social justice** – ensuring the values of local government are founded on equality and meeting community needs.
- **Sustainability** – ensuring that the council contributes positively to the challenge of climate change and the need to manage our environment
- **Value for Money** – focusing on economy, efficiency and effectiveness

Our Vision

A sustainable self-contained and varied group of communities with a population remaining in balance to support its local economy, comprising:

MORECAMBE AND HEYSHAM - a confident community with a regenerated living, working and leisure environment, acting as a focal point on Morecambe Bay to enjoy and interact with the wider landscape;

LANCASTER - a prosperous historic city with a thriving knowledge economy;

CARNFORTH - a successful market town and service centre for North Lancashire and South Cumbria, and;

A conserved, enhanced and diversified **COAST AND COUNTRYSIDE** with a network of vibrant rural communities; which will lead the North West in its quality of life and environmental and design standard and within which sustainable housing, economic and retail development to meet local needs will be supported.

Our Priorities

Our outcomes are supported by headline success measures that identify the best overall measures of progress towards delivering our outcomes in line with our priorities and ethos. In addition we will track other indicators and measures of our progress so that we have a detailed understanding of the factors that impact on achieving our priorities.

The intention to protect the most vulnerable in our society will be a thread that runs through all of our priorities.

Priority: Clean, Green & Safe Places

Lancaster district has much to offer. To ensure that it maintains and builds upon its reputation of being clean, green and safe, the council will encourage local communities and individuals to take pride in their local area and become involved in protecting and improving the quality of local areas, parks and public spaces in a way that is sustainable.

The council will continue to undertake activities to maintain levels of recycling and composting. It is developing an energy strategy as a means of planning to reduce the overall amount of energy used in the delivery of its service, increase the use of energy from renewable sources, reduce carbon emissions and generate income and efficiencies.

The council will work together with partners and communities to deliver a range of community safety initiatives aimed at making our streets clean and safe and meeting its responsibilities to preserve and enhance the special protected landscapes.

Outcomes

Success Measures

Impact of crime and anti-social behaviour across the district will be minimised

- Work with the Police and Community Safety Partners to minimise the impact of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Reduce hate crime and the fear of crime felt by minority communities

The council's impact on the environment will be minimised

- Annual reduction in energy consumption used by the council's operations
- Annual reduction in carbon dioxide emissions from the council's operations
- Increased proportion of the council's energy needs generated from renewable sources
- Increased proportion of council business travel mileage provided by electric or ultra-low emission vehicles
- Maintain and /or improve average Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating in council homes to a high level
- Amount of household waste reused,

The council's impact on the environment will be minimised (continued)

recycled or composted is maintained

- Increase income from energy and recycling projects

Local neighbourhoods are clean and safe and residents have a sense of pride in the district

- Perception of people who live in, work in, or visit the district that streets and public spaces are safe and clean is increased
- Increased number of projects that directly involve local communities in improving local areas, parks and open spaces

Priority: Health & Wellbeing

A range of actions to support the positive health and wellbeing of residents in the district have been identified. This includes continuing work to improve the quality and availability of housing, including council housing stock and building new one-bedroomed properties, housing renewal, particularly in the West End of Morecambe and improvements in the private rented sector. We will work to ensure the standard of new and existing housing meets current regulations and promotes safe, high quality, energy efficient housing.

As part of the statutory planning process, the council will allocate land for housing purposes, to meet the challenges of finding space for sustainable growth to address the need to alter the course of demographic change. It will seek opportunities to include new affordable housing as part of the development plans and champion the need for younger generations in our community to have access to their own homes.

The council will continue to work with partners as part of the health and wellbeing partnership to improve the health outcomes for our citizens. The council intends to take action to improve health; for example, by enabling access to sports and leisure activities and supporting measures to keep vulnerable people warm in their homes. Actions to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the district will continue. The council will also continue to work with partners to help manage the implementation of ongoing welfare reforms and their impact.

Outcomes

Success Measures

Enhanced quality of life of local residents through access to affordable, decent housing

- Increased number of improved homes
- Improve access to housing
- Increase number of affordable homes

Health and wellbeing of our citizens is improved

- Maintaining adequate supply to reduce demand led unsustainable price rises in the housing market
- New build council social housing is energy efficient
- Improve the wellbeing of our residents through collaborative, preventative and

Health and wellbeing of our citizens is

improved (continued)

reactive measures

- Increased number of people participating in sports and leisure activities
- Maximise opportunities for access to innovative leisure activities by working collaboratively with public and private sector partners
- Increased number of vulnerable households benefiting from Warm Homes Initiative
- Facilitate long term improvements in transportation to improve local air quality
- Maintain percentage of “broadly” compliant food businesses (category 3-5)
- Work in partnership to optimise access to welfare benefits and related support

Priority: Community Leadership

The council continues to face up to the challenges presented by the current economic climate by placing an increased emphasis on the things that matter most to people of the district and by rationalising and developing its use of resources, be they staff, property or technology – and of course, finance. As community leaders, we are committed to working with those public services who can help us to have a positive impact on life in the district. This will help us to support our key partnerships to ensure they are really effective and can deliver the outcomes the district needs.

The role of our ward councillors is vital in engaging with communities and working with community groups and individuals to make a difference through a wide range of initiatives in local areas and the council’s process will be strengthened to support this. Community pride is a key theme that has emerged from our local engagement work and the council wishes to support local groups and communities to become involved locally, improving where they live in many ways so that they can Take Pride in their local areas and the communities around them.

The council will work with partners to achieve efficiencies and protect the services that matter by taking a collaborative approach where this is effective. The council continues to support voluntary, community, faith, arts and culture groups and will work with these sectors to consider how together we can ensure important services for the district are delivered.

Outcomes

Communities are brought together and the major issues affecting the district are addressed through working in partnership

Well run, value for money services that are valued by the public and demonstrate good governance, openness and transparency

Success Measures

- Improve neighbourhood working by engaging with communities to understand their needs and empowering them to deliver services locally
- Ensure Ward Councillors feel supported in their Community Leadership role
- Maintain working arrangements with voluntary, community, faith, arts and culture groups in support of key service delivery
- Improve our understanding of the needs of our communities to inform our service delivery, improving standards of diversity and equality
- Deliver quality services through a skilled and motivated workforce
- Rationalise our property holdings, to deliver better value for money
- Improve efficiency and effectiveness, reduce waste and develop customer service through re-shaping our services, using technology and collaborative working as appropriate
- Gain an 'unqualified' value for money conclusion from our External Auditors

Priority: Sustainable Economic Growth

Lancaster district has exceptional opportunities and a pressing demographic need to develop its economy. The main prospects for economic growth relate to energy including nuclear and renewable energy; the knowledge sector developing around Lancaster's two universities; and the Visitor Economy, capitalising on the district's outstanding arts and cultural heritage and entertainment offer, its beautiful coastline and stunning natural landscapes.

The council's actions for the coming years, in collaboration with Lancashire County Council, will seek to develop these opportunities and help to secure economic benefits through new jobs and business growth, including support for new energy and transport infrastructure and the nuclear nomination for Heysham. Work to improve the attractiveness of central Morecambe and Lancaster's heritage assets, public spaces and retail offer is underway. In the district's rural areas, the aim will be to improve the focus of their tourism identities linked to the branding of Morecambe Bay and Lancaster. A few high impact festivals and events will provide economic stimulus to help local businesses across the district. The council will continue to engage with economic partners, including

the Lancaster District Chamber of Commerce and the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership, to develop the economy of the district. The council will continue to set an example by paying a living wage to its employees, and by supporting the principles of Fairtrade.

Outcomes

Sustainable economic growth and jobs will be created in key sectors, including energy, knowledge, health and the visitor economy

The attractiveness and offer of the district, as a place to visit or invest in, will be improved

Lancaster and Morecambe Bay will be recognised as important visitor destinations

Success Measures

- New and improved employment sites and premises will become available in key business locations targeting key sectors
- Regeneration of central Morecambe supported by the Morecambe Area Action Plan
- Land Allocations, Arnside and Silverdale AONB and Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Development Plan documents completed and adopted
- Inward investment opportunities will be maximised by working with key partners, including the universities of Lancaster and Cumbria, University Hospitals Morecambe Bay and British Land
- Level of support for business growth and skills development will be maximised
- Supporting small businesses as important components of thriving retail centres
- The development of the Assembly Rooms as an important visitor destination and enhancer of the local economy
- Lancaster and Morecambe urban centres will be enhanced by investment in the built environment, heritage assets and the public realm
- Economic impact of the arts in the district will be measured with the Council moving towards an ensuring role to support a range of delivery partners
- Destination brands for Lancaster and the Lune Valley and Morecambe Bay will be developed with partners to establish these areas as important visitor destinations
- Visitor numbers and spend will be increased

Delivering the Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan sets out the council's four priorities, but it also needs to make sure it has the resources to deliver them, which is an increasing challenge. The council's Medium Term Financial Strategy supports and informs the Corporate Plan, and sets out how it will manage its finances in order to deliver these priorities. Local Government however, continues to face major funding reductions year on year, meaning that a lesser range of services will be provided at some point in the future. To help demonstrate this challenge, the Council's forecasts indicate that it will need to save around £1.6 million in 2016/17 and £2.0 million in 2017/18; thereafter these targets look set to increase still further.

Balancing the Budget

Nonetheless, each year the council must deliver a balanced, robust budget that matches and realigns resources to its priorities and statutory needs. One of the key objectives is to ensure it gives value for money. This means getting the most from council assets and resources, maximising the potential of staff, increasing income, reducing waste and improving effectiveness without raising costs. Value for money is regarded as a priority over reducing services when savings are required

Service Reviews and Organisational Change

To achieve this approach, the council will complete a programme of organisational change across all services over the coming years, to achieve better value for money for the community as a whole, but also to balance its budget. Such reviews and organisational change will continue to form the basis for tackling the medium to longer term budget funding gap, as well as being informed by (and helping to embed) the council's ethos. Service reductions are to be expected as part of this programme.

Governance

Another key element in ensuring successful delivery of the Corporate Plan is having sound governance arrangements in place. Good governance enables an authority to pursue its vision effectively as well as underpinning that vision with control and the management of risk.

The council has a governance framework that brings together an underlying set of legal requirements, ethical and behavioural principles and management processes. Each year the council reviews these arrangements, and amongst other things, will measure the quality of services for users, ensuring they are delivered in accordance with the authority's objectives and represent the best use of resources and value for money. The results of the review are published in an Annual Governance Statement.

Council Tax

The council aims to keep council tax increases to 1.99% year on year, subject to the future thresholds for holding local referendums, which are set by Government. These targets apply to the basic city council tax rate across the district excluding parish precepts.

Rather than reverting back to freezing council tax, the council has kept with the difficult decision of increasing the tax rate and targets for future years, as a way of helping to mitigate the impact of Government funding reductions. To some extent, increasing council tax will help protect key services. To help the most vulnerable households, the council has retained its existing local scheme for providing council tax support in 2015/16, and this will be kept under annual review.

Business transformation and improvement

The council will continue to develop its skilled workforce with a more flexible, coordinated approach to working across services, through the delivery of a new People Strategy. This will support continuous improvement, help build partnership working, increase shared service and support more devolved services.

We will champion a high performance culture throughout the council and continue the delivery of high quality services through continued modernisation of back office services as well as explore the potential for new delivery models, early intervention and capacity to reduce costs and provide further savings.