



Leader's Report

23 September 2015

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 4th August 2015 and 1st September 2015, 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.

Details of the decision are as follow:-

VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE – THE PLATFORM, MORECAMBE

The Chief Executive consulted with the Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Property to make a decision in accordance with the City Council's Urgent Business Procedure. The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was consulted and agreed to waive the five day call-in period in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure 17. The 999-year leasehold of the above property was up for auction and consideration was required as to whether the City Council should seek to acquire it, subject to valuation and due diligence. At the time the decision was taken the report was exempt from

publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and the exemption was subsequently lifted by Cabinet on 4th August 2015 (minute 15 refers) when it was agreed that the reason for the exemption, i.e. not to prejudice the Council's position at auction, was no longer applicable.

At the Cabinet meeting on 4th August 2015 Cabinet made the following resolution with respect to the item of urgent business.

- (1) That the exemption on the Urgent Business Report (Visitor Information Centre – The Platform, Morecambe) dated 4th July 2015 be lifted.
- (2) That the actions taken by the Chief Executive in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Members in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, in respect of the following be noted:-
 - (1) *That Officers be authorised to acquire the unexpired 999 year lease for the VIC Offices at the Platform, Morecambe, either through pre-auction negotiations or through participation in the auction, subject to a maximum valuation ceiling of £310K.*
 - (2) *That the Capital Support Reserve be used to finance any acquisition, with any additional incidental costs being met from existing revenue budgets.*
 - (3) *That (1) and (2) above be subject to consultation being undertaken with a view to waiving call in, in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 17, to enable the decision to be implemented immediately.*

NOTE: The Council's bid was not successful and the premises were sold for £323,000.

3.0 Leader's Comments

Lancaster Museums Joint Steering Group met on Friday 24 July. The new opening hours for the City Museum are now in place and will be monitored to see how the change affects visitor numbers. The City Museum Redevelopment proposals have been agreed and essential works are to start in late September. A new boiler has now been costed and should be in place soon. A feasibility study to assess the potential to connect the Museum and the Lancaster Library is being looked at. We need to develop and approve the vision statement for the proposed redevelopment in line with Lancaster as a heritage city.

Water damage at the Maritime Museum has been attended to. Three boats held externally are deteriorating badly. County Council staff have been successful in gaining some funding through Museums Development North West to undertake some work to develop options for the future of the boats.

The last Accreditation Scheme submission was made to The Arts Council in 2013. The next return is due in December 2016 and it has to be submitted by June 2016. A signed and sealed management agreement has to be in place by then or there is

a risk that full Accreditation cannot be sustained. Funding, loans and acquisitions as well as donations could well be affected. It was agreed to draw up a new management agreement as a matter of urgency.

The Police Commissioner for Lancashire, Clive Grunshaw, came to meet us on the 06 August. Councillor Brendan Hughes and Councillor Janice Hanson were present. Councillor Hughes raised the Morecambe BID survey which put security at the top of their concerns. The loss of Police funding (£21 million) and over 700 PC jobs gone were discussed. By the end of this Parliament they will have lost a third of their staff. Because of this, they have invested heavily in technology including recording devices that can be used in public places rather than back at the office. They are also using social media very successfully. You can sign up to receive messages from the police by means of "In The Know". 25,000 people have already signed up.

Their priorities are: planning ahead, on-line-policing-victim services, consultation to educate the public, child sexual abuse, counter terrorism and visible policing. They are employing mental health workers and family support workers in each division. North West Ambulance workers are now at Hutton. This idea of joined-up working includes the Fire Service helping with break-ins, missing persons and detecting drugs.

We raised the cost of PCSOs and CCTV and warned of our budget problems. There are new ideas on CCTV which include Central Hubs which are monitoring in each division. We will receive more information on this from a specialist policeman.

On the 17 August the Chief Executive of The Duchy of Lancaster, Nathan Thompson, came to meet an officer and myself. He stressed that repairs to the Castle are vital. It has to be made watertight and this is their first priority. A very attractive new brochure has been produced saying that it is affectionately known as The Queen's Second Castle. It includes a timetable of events and offers outdoor productions, opera, music, live cinema etc. Also discussed was a close working with "Visit Lancashire" through Ruth Connor. The vision is to make a truly local and visitor venue and not an elite offer or a boutique hotel.

The Transport Masterplan and its effect on tourism and the need for city centre hotels and parking were also discussed.

A meeting with South Lakeland and Barrow was held on the 07 August. This is a first. We discussed Morecambe Bay Partnerships and cross border relationships. Moving between areas – transport and infrastructure and their problems. There are more jobs and more high quality jobs in Cumbria, but housing growth is more problematical. Authorities around the Grid and the Energy Coast and economic development in Morecambe Bay. In the short term there are skill shortages and special issues around the bay for industries. Asking Lancaster University to look at these issues was suggested.

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 4th August 2015:

- (1) Lancaster Business Improvement District (BID) Renewal – Draft Proposals
- (2) Accountable Body Authorisation for Community Groups
- (3) Reorganisation of the Office of the Chief Executive (Decision called-in by Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Call-in held on 17.8.15)

The following Key Decisions were taken by Cabinet on 1st September 2015

- (1) Request for authority to tender for provision of Building Control Services
- (2) Land at Back Lane, Carnforth
- (3) Land at the former Shell ICI site – option agreements for sale and lease

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

- (1) Window and door refurbishment to conservation area
- (2) Corporate Non-Housing Delivery Plan – Williamson Park (Palm House) Butterfly House Phase 1 works
- (3) Award of contract for provision of school swimming transport service
- (4) Corporate Non-Housing Delivery Plan – Lancaster Town Hall Banqueting Suite – ceiling repairs
- (5) Corporate Non-Housing Delivery Plan - Maritime Museum Phase 2

Background Papers

Cabinet agenda and minutes of the meetings held on 4th August 2015 and 1st September 2015.