



# Lancaster City Council



## Corporate Plan 2016-2020



**LANCASTER  
CITY COUNCIL**

*Promoting City, Coast & Countryside*

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# 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-focussed services that deliver our statutory responsibilities, offer value for money and meet the needs of people who live in, work in and visit the district
- maintain a sustainable and 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

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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
- **COAST AND COUNTRYSIDE** - a conserved, enhanced and diversified environment 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

Community Leadership

Health and Wellbeing

Clean and Green Places

Sustainable Economic Growth

Our outcomes are supported by published strategies and headline actions and measures that identify 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.**



# Community Leadership

The council continues to face up to economic challenges and government cuts 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 partners 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 the council is vital in engaging with communities and working with community groups to make a positive difference through a wide range of initiatives. Community pride is a key theme that has emerged from our local engagement work and the council wishes to support groups and communities to become involved locally, improving where they live and to take pride in their local areas and the communities around them.

The council will establish and implement plans for the 'digital workplace' approach to delivering a computing environment that is focussed on understanding and meeting the changing needs of our communities and uses technology to improve the customer experience whilst being more efficient and saving money.

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 will review the delivery and funding of services provided on its behalf by 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

what we want to achieve

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

Establish and implement the council's wider plans for 'digital' to understand and meet the changing needs of our communities

Maintain a financially stable position and strong financial forecast for the delivery of council services

## Success measures

how we intend to achieve it

- Determine the future delivery and funding of voluntary, community and faith sector services groups
- Improve performance and effectiveness of partnerships in delivering corporate priorities
- Improve neighbourhood working by engaging with communities to understand their needs and build resilience
- Maintain an "unqualified" value for money conclusion from our external auditors
- Review the Localised Council Tax Benefits Support Scheme (LCTS) to determine a sustainable scheme for the future
- Act on the Government's future roll-out of Universal credit in the district and other welfare reforms
- Review and rationalise the council's future accommodation needs to support service delivery and save money
- Improve customer experience through the use of technology
- Review and refresh internal processes and systems to drive efficiency and cost savings
- Implement agreed budget proposals and take positive action where they do not deliver desired outcomes
- Develop and implement a range of further savings and income generation opportunities to sustain the council's budget

# Health and 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; continuing to assess the viability of 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 demographic changes in the district. 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 by, for example, enabling access to sports and leisure activities and 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

what we want to achieve

## Success measures

how we intend to achieve it

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

- Increase the number of improved homes
- Improve access to housing by addressing evidence of need
- Increase provision of social housing
- Continue to try to establish a new build and acquisition programme to increase the number of council houses in the district

Health and wellbeing of our citizens is improved

- Complete feasibility study of selective licensing of private sector landlords
- Improve facilities on offer at Salt Ayre Sports Centre and ensure that they are financially sustainable
- Increase the number of vulnerable households benefiting from Warm Homes Initiatives
- Improve local air quality from long term improvements in transportation
- Maintain a percentage of "broadly" compliant (rating 3 or higher) food businesses



# Clean and Green Places

Lancaster district has much to offer. To ensure that it maintains and builds upon its reputation of being clean and green 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 plan and deliver waste collection services in a way that encourages the reduction, reuse and recycling of household waste.

The council will work together with partners and communities to deliver a range of community initiatives aimed at making our streets clean and meeting its responsibilities to preserve and enhance the special protected landscapes. It will also strengthen its approach to enforcement to actively discourage the minority who spoil the district through littering, fly tipping and allowing their dogs to foul etc.

The council has in place an energy strategy as a means of planning to reduce the overall amount of energy used in the delivery of its services; increase the use of energy from renewable sources; reduce carbon emissions and generate income and efficiencies.

## Outcomes

what we want to achieve

## Success measures

how we intend to achieve it

The impact on the environment from council operations and services will be minimised

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

- Maintain and / or improve average Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating in council homes
- Implement programme of energy efficiency works in council buildings
- Install electric vehicle charging points in the district
- Reduce business travel mileage across all council services
- Maintain percentage of household waste reused, recycled or composted
- Maintain percentage of people who perceive the districts streets and public spaces are clean
- Increase involvement of local communities in improving local areas, parks and open spaces
- Implement a pilot scheme for litter enforcement services

# Sustainable Economic Growth

Lancaster district has exceptional opportunities and a pressing demographic need to develop its economy. The Northern Powerhouse concept is heavily dominated by the metropolitan cities and there is potential to overlook the important contributions of Lancashire and Cumbria to the overall economy of the north. The council will seek to address this by promoting the need to acknowledge the importance of districts like Lancaster to the overall functioning of the Northern Powerhouse.

The main prospects for economic growth relate to skills retention; the energy sector 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, and neighbouring authorities in Cumbria 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. It will facilitate festivals and events that 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, Lancaster Business Improvement District (BID) 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

what we want to achieve

## Success measures

how we intend to achieve it

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

- Determine Lancaster districts contribution to the emerging concept of the Northern Powerhouse
- Realise benefits to the Lancaster district of a combined authority for Lancashire

- Regenerate central Morecambe through the Morecambe Area Action Plan

- Complete Local Plan for the Lancaster district, setting out a vision for the natural and built environment to 2031

- Achieve the annual requirement for the availability of land for housing development

- Adopt the Lancaster City Masterplan
- Improve local conditions for business growth and skills development

- Sustain small businesses as important components of thriving retail centres

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

- Enhance Lancaster's urban centre through investment in the built environment, heritage assets and the public realm

- Improve inward investment through the attractiveness of the district as a place to live and work

- Evaluate economic impact, delivery and funding of the arts in the district

## Outcomes

what we want to achieve

Lancaster and Morecambe Bay will be recognised as important visitor destinations

## Success measures

how we intend to achieve it

- Adopt visitor destination management plans for Lancaster and Morecambe Bay
- Increase the number of visitors to the district
- Increase visitor spend in the district
- Develop plans to improve the sustainability of The Platform and other council-managed performances
- Complete a detailed feasibility of the potential to improve the quality and sustainability of the city's museums





# 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 in the future, even allowing for income generation and innovation.

## 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 has taken a decision to increase its portion of council tax by £5 (for a Band D property). As the majority of households are Band A – C the actual increase will be less, at around £3.33 for the year. The council has made this difficult decision to raise more money and reduce the overall savings target as a way of helping to mitigate the impact of Government funding reductions. To some extent, increasing council tax will help protect key services.

## Business transformation and improvement

The council will continue to develop its skilled workforce with a more flexible, coordinated approach to working across services. 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 deliver high quality services through continued modernisation of back office services as well as exploring the potential for new delivery models, early intervention and the capacity to reduce costs and provide further savings.

