

Executive Annual Report 2017/18

Councillor Darren Clifford

Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder with Responsibility for Leisure, Culture and Tourism and Climate Change



Executive Membership

- Cabinet
- Corporate Property Review Cabinet Liaison Group
- Museums Advisory Forum
- Museums Cabinet Liaison Group (Chairman)

Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc

- LGA Coastal Issues Special Interest Group
- Museums Advisory Forum

Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder with Responsibility for Leisure, Culture and Tourism and Climate Change

Corporate Plan Key Outcomes/Success Measures

Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lancaster and Morecambe Bay will be recognised as important visitor destinations • The attractiveness and offer of the district as a place to visit or invest in will be improved • Health and wellbeing of our citizens is improved

Success Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Improve facilities on offer at Salt Ayre Sports Centre and ensure that they are financially sustainable • Improve local air quality from long term improvements in transportation

Progress made during 2017/18

Visitor Economy, Arts and Culture

Museums

During 2017 a great deal of work was undertaken to look in detail at the City Council’s museums and, as a result, a proposal to bring the museums service back in house was wholeheartedly supported by full Council in September. A new post has been created that will bring in specialist capacity to help to develop the museums to take a central role in the heritage and culture of the district moving forwards. Recruitment is currently underway and the transfer of the service will be effected by 30 September 2018.

Archaeological site

Following the exciting excavations that have taken place in recent years, the Council has now taken back management responsibility for the Beyond the Castle project from County Council. New plans have been agreed that will protect the site, establish an expert Project Board and begin the process of developing a funded programme of works. Further details will be considered during 2018/ 19.

Festivals

Vintage by the Sea 2017

- Vintage by the Sea is building its reputation as an international vintage event. Achieved an audience of 35,000 over the 2 days.
- 48% of the audience were from outside of Lancaster District with post codes reaching as far as Brighton and Glasgow
- 94.5% of the audience agreed that VbtS improves the perception of Morecambe as a visitor destination
- Achieved 3,326 bed nights in paid accommodation
- £510,505 was generated for the local economy from visitors outside of the District specifically attend the festival
- 200 local individuals and businesses engaged in the festival
- Value of PR coverage £20,983 and reached an estimated 15,619,877 persons, including coverage of the festival on BBC Breakfast News, BBC North West Tonight, BBC Radio 2 Alan & Mel Show, BBC Radio Lancashire, Women's Weekly, Vintage Life Magazine and many more
- As a result of festival PR campaign, Morecambe was selected as one of the coastal towns showcased in a series of BBC Breakfast features. A morning of BBC Breakfast was filmed around Morecambe promenade, featuring footage from the festival, the outdoor areas of the Midland Hotel and locals, including Cedric Robinson.
- Shortlisted for Large Event of the Year in the Lancashire Tourism Awards.

Audience member quote: "A wonderfully well organised event with a fabulous backdrop of not only the Midland Hotel but the stunning coastline of Morecambe. Lot of stalls and activities for the whole family".

Light Up Lancaster 2017

- Achieved an audience of 45,800 for a two night festival of light, art and fireworks
- 21% of the audience were from outside of Lancaster District
- 2.5% of the audience stayed overnight in paid accommodation
- 90% of the audience stated that the festival was the reason for their visit
- £359,512 of economic impact was generated by the festival
- 92% positive ratings, up significantly from 65% in 2016
- 137 local volunteers involved in the festival
- 54 artists were employed, 6 were international artists, 14 were emerging artists
- 152 participatory workshops were delivered with 2,822 individuals participating, with 35 days of activity in libraries and museums
- From the local businesses surveyed 71% said they were a lot busier than usual over the course of the festival, and 29% were a little busier
- Shortlisted for Large Event of the Year in the Lancashire Tourism Awards.

Audience member quote: *"Strolling around the city with huge numbers of families discovering delights and surprises at every turn. The event was stunning, all the art was of the highest quality and it was both memorable and inspirational. It made me feel really proud of Lancaster and some of the images have lasted for days. Utterly marvellous experience – heart-warming, happy and outstanding."*

Platform

- Achieved an estimated audience of 30,000, an increase from 27,000 in 2016/17
- 20% of the audience were from outside of Lancaster District
- 69 Platform presented shows e.g. Showaddy Waddy, Bay City Rollers, Syd Lawrence Orchestra, Barbara Dickson, Gordon Buchanan and The Pretty Things
- 2 Platform presented children's' shows
- 84 community events e.g. blood bank, flower club, tea dance, craft fairs and weddings

- 26 shows present by private hires e.g. Promenade Concert Orchestra, Morecambe Band, 90's Sorted and Rock Back the Clock
- 5 festivals e.g. Vintage by the Sea, Kite Festival, Steam Punk x 2 and Morecambe Music Festival

Audience member quote: *“One of my best nights out ever! Watched the pretty things last week! Fantastic”*

Marketing and events

- Launched standalone visitor websites for Lancaster and Morecambe Bay with positive feedback.
- Produced and distributed 60,000 visitor guides for Morecambe Bay and Lancaster targeting the visitor market.
- Supported Marketing Lancashire in promoting Lancaster as one of England's Heritage Cities including supporting the Discover England Funded Project.
- Promoted the Lune Valley under the 'City of Outdoors' campaign.
- Programmed and promoted Lancaster and Morecambe Bay as part of the national Heritage Open Days Campaign in September.
- What's On Campaign – Highlighting the best events of the year across Morecambe Bay with digital and print marketing.
- Added to the destination brands image library for partners to use for promotional use.
- Promotional activity to drive visitor numbers with 'Top Ten things to do' and 'Easter Activity'.
- Supported Lancaster University Campus in the City Programme promoting our Twin Towns and Light Up Lancaster under the International Connections theme.
- Programmed and promoted 16 free Brass Band concerts in Happy Mount Park.
- Supported both Universities with student recruitment with various pop-up stalls at their Visit and Arrival Days.
- Financially supported More Music's Catch the Wind Kite festival.
- Devised, promoted and delivered a second season of Town Hall Tours over the summer including a Christmas tour special.

- Supported Armed Forces Day Organisers for delivering and promoting successful events in both Lancaster and Morecambe.
- Supported Lancaster Canal Regeneration Partnership and its plans to celebrate 200 years of the Lancaster Canal in 2019.

Visitor Information Centres (VIC's)

- 2017/8 Visitor enquiries: 110,500 (est)
- 2017/8 Gross income: £286,000 (est)
- 72 Tourism & local businesses supported through VIC sales
- 45 Event Organisers supported via promotion and ticket sales

VIC updates:

- Launch of the new separate Facebook pages for each VIC – branded to reflect destination and services
- Working closely with The Platform Manager & staff to ensure the smooth and effective operation of tickets sales. Development of the dedicated VIC 'Ticket Box' system, information sheet produced to send out to potential customers/event organisers
- Lancaster VIC – information hub for Light Up Lancaster 2017 weekend. VIC opened 10am-10pm to support the event. Busiest weekend ever for the VIC over the two days with 2,000 visitors
- Ongoing partnership with Lancaster BID – Lancaster VIC was used as a base for customers for the Easter Treasure Trail and selling Christmas raffle tickets on their behalf. VIC staff assist with events listing for the BID brochure.
- Re- branding and launch of the Visit Card available exclusively through the VICs encouraging locals and visitors to explore the District
- Working with Morecambe Bay Partnership with the sales/promotion of the Morecambe Bay Seldom Seen map – the VICs are the main agent supplying both over the counter and online sales
- Working with Lancaster Arts Partners to help promote local events and support local creative organisations

- Continued working relationship the Lancaster University Conference Office – assisting with enquiries from the Conference office regarding groups/conferences.
- Dedicated B2B promotion campaigns via our social media channels concentrating on VIC Ticket Box and VIC services
- ‘Pop-up VIC’ at University Visit Days/Arrivals Days/Housing Fairs/Heysham Viking Festival and Morecambe Bay Partnership conference.
- New banner flag signage at Morecambe VIC highlighting the VIC as The Platform Booking Office
- English Tourism Week (competition, pop ups, literature)
- St Georges Day (information, pop-ups)
- Lancashire Day (tasters local produce, pop ups, information)

Climate Change Agenda/ Energy Efficiency

- Approval granted for x2 electric pool cars and x1 electric van – currently out to tender. Expected to have them by May 2018
- Electric charging points to be installed in our Depot (and possibly one in Lancaster) for our electric fleet – commencing April 2018
- County are starting locating on street chargers during this financial year
- City Council are submitting a bid to get 75% funding towards and off street car parking charges scheme- which will be located in car parks near residential areas
- The programme of energy efficiency across the council continues
- Funds to continue feasibility into two potential sites for solar farms were secured at the most recent budget council.

SPORT & LEISURE

Salt Ayre Leisure Centre

- The new Tranquil Spa facility opened in October, which completed the vast majority of the transformation of Salt Ayre Leisure Centre.

- The project has been delivered on time and within budget.

Success

- We won the Connected Procurement and Commissioning award at the national iNetwork Innovation Awards
- The new facility has seen a remarkable turnaround in, not only revenue generation, but also the number of people using the facility whilst maintaining the diverse demographic of customer. The introduction of classes specifically for expectant women, coupled with a gym membership that includes for customers over eighty years of age, has seen a truly unique lifecycle of customers provided for.
- Health and Fitness membership numbers have increased from approximately 700 to 2,860.
- Health and Fitness income is projected to achieve approximately £860k by March 2017, compared with £340k in previous years.
- Compared to previous financial years :
 - Fitness classes in general have increased by 83%.
 - Number of active female members have increased by 78%.
 - Swimming in general has increased by 10%.
 - Swimming lessons have increased from 300 to 500 participants and is rising.
 - Activities have increased by 267% (Energy and Xheight).
 - Average travel distance from people within Lancaster has increased from 3.7km to 4.6km.

Tranquil Spa

- The new spa facility opened in October 2017 and has proved to be popular with customers. As a new business 'within a business', it is gradually improving and the month of February has seen week on week improved performance with projections to meet target by the end of the financial year.
- The facility provides tremendous wellness opportunities for users and the thermal journey and Feel Good Suite are gathering popularity as each week goes by.

- The thermal journey consists of a salt inhalation steam, aromatherapy steam, herbal sauna and larger standard sauna. All of the facilities are finished to an extremely high standard, as are the changing / shower facilities.
- The Feel Good Suite is a facility area within the Spa that includes equipment that specifically supports people with various mobility issues and enables exercise to be undertaken in a controlled and safe environment with highly qualified staff in attendance.
- The final feature within the Spa is the 'Hub' which has up to date equipment for meetings / conferences and can hold approximately 100 people. The area also doubles up to hold activities such as karate and yoga (not at the same time!) and is used by the leisure centre to undertake a staff training programme.

Future

- Whilst the majority of the transformation is now complete, officers are keen to maintain the momentum and are exploring the possibility of introducing some to the 'Gravity' feature and 2.) Possible introduction of a children's play feature to help maximise catering revenue during the warm summer months when families are less likely to want to visit indoor facilities (apart from swimming!).
- Building on the success of the centre and maximising the financial benefits to the council, we are also exploring the setting up a Local Authority Trading Company, subject to member approval, with immediate savings around VAT and business rates. The learning from this puts us in a position to exploit trading opportunities throughout the rest of the council.

Community pools

- Following the decision to hand the pools back to Lancashire County Council and to try and help facilitate community ownership, I'm pleased to be able to report that so far all 3 pools have a realistic chance of survival in the hands of community groups or schools. Carnforth pool has already re-opened and Heysham has confirmed its opening date. This result shows just what can be achieved when we all work together for the good of our communities.