

Executive Annual Report 2017/18

Councillor James Leyshon

Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Property Services, Car Parking, ICT, Digital Strategy, Customer Services



Executive Membership

- Cabinet
- Corporate Property Review Cabinet Liaison Group (Chairman)

Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

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Corporate Plan Key Outcomes/Success Measures

Outcomes	Success Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Well run, value-for-money services that are valued by the public and demonstrate good governance, openness and transparency• Maintain a financially stable position and strong financial forecast for the delivery of council services • Establish and implement the council's wider plans for 'digital' to understand and meet the changing needs of our communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review and rationalise the council's future accommodation needs to support service delivery and save money• Develop and implement a range of further savings and income generation opportunities to sustain the council's budget• Review and refresh internal processes and systems to drive efficiency and cost savings• Implement programme of energy efficiency works in council buildings• Improve customer experience through the use of technology

Progress made during 2017/18

Car Parking

- Over last 12 months the overall usage of off street car parks has increased by 4.3% on short stay in Lancaster and 2.3% on long stay. There has been a slight decrease in Morecambe, but this is counteracted to result in an overall increase.

- Use of RingGo continues to prove popular, and currently usage is increasing around 5% each month. RingGo transactions now account for 6% of overall payments.

- Free Christmas parking dates have been agreed again for 2018, in order to support businesses during this key trading period.

- The administration of Residents Parking returned to Lancashire County Council on 1st April 2018, meaning Lancaster City Council are only now responsible for off street parking. We will continue to discuss the implementation and administration of the resident parking scheme with the County Council to minimise any disruption to residents during the transition.

- We have continued to invest and improve our car parks, for example St Georges Quay, Rylands and St Leonards Gate. We have also invested in rural car parks such as Bull Beck and will be looking for long term solutions to issues in management of non-formally adopted car parks.

- Looking forward, a number of key potential developments in our district highlight the strategic importance of our retained car park portfolio. Our management of these sites means we can develop an effective car parking strategy that supports our ambitions for the district whilst utilising new technologies, rationalising pricing structures, focuses on our customers' needs and also supporting with wider aims for the reductions of air pollution and traffic. We will also use the coming year to explore new methods of parking management including exploring the feasibility of pay on exit ticketing and transferable tickets.

- The coming year will allow the development of our car parking strategy for the district, and I intent to engage meaningfully with all of our stakeholders in the development of our vision.

Property

Corporate

- An extensive restructure of the Property Group was completed, which amongst other things has increased capacity for strategic asset management and introduced a new hospitality team to capitalize on our events spaces. It is hoped that the increased resource and commercial focus will allow greater income generation and better use of our assets.
- Printroom Cafe has entered its second year of trading at the Storey and business has continued to grow financially and develop in new directions. For instance, plans for a pop up café in the foyer of Lancaster Town Hall are being developed to improve economies of scale and ensure the Printroom quality offer is more accessible to staff.
- Work has continued to further develop and improve the Council's asset management database including compliance management.
- Work has commenced on reviews of our corporate property strategy, corporate office accommodation and commercial property portfolios.
- The establishment of my Corporate Property Review Cabinet Liaison Group is allowing full exploration of all challenges and opportunities within the portfolio. I thank all members who have engaged so enthusiastically thus far, and sincerely look forward to making progress in this area.

Building projects

- This year has seen the continuation of the 5 year building work and repairs program across our property and heritage assets as the work identified in the 2012 condition surveys moved into its fifth year.
- A new round of condition surveys has been commissioned to identify essential repairs and maintenance for the next 5 years and improve the accuracy of financial planning in the years to come.

Commercial Land and Buildings

- Throughout the 2017/18 financial year the occupation rate across the Council's operational commercial property portfolio has remained at around 97% representing a relatively stable position and a good level of occupancy overall.
- The disposal of St. Leonard's House to Robertson Construction was completed and work on redevelopment of the building has now commenced.

Energy Investment Grade Audit Programme

- Work has commenced on the installation of a new combined heat and power unit (CHP) and energy efficient lighting at Salt Ayre.

Heysham Gateway

- Progress has been made on the delivery of a major employment-focused development unlocking under-used and poorly-performing land off Imperial Road in Middleton and the conditional sale of a plot of land has been agreed.
- Work is continuing to ensure we make the most of our assets in this area, and we hope to make substantial progress over the coming year.

ICT & Digital Strategy

- The ICT Team have been working to make the best use of cloud and hosting opportunities, including commencing build of the customer experience platform on Microsoft Dynamics 365. The team have been utilising Microsoft tools in the cloud and creating the platform for more use in the future, for example; migration of the Planning system to a hosted solution and starting to use PowerBI for reporting, all on the assumption that most future developments will be cloud based.

- A baselining exercise of staff digital ability has been undertaken, allowing the ICT manager to start working on minimising knowledge and skills gaps and making use of previously hidden potential.

- We have started piloting the use of Office 365 for staff across the institution.

- Work has also started on a bid for local full fibre network, partnering with Lancaster University and involving Digital Lancaster, local businesses, the NHS and Lancashire County Council.

- The ICT Team have been working closely to support a number of other service areas with developments and improvements in systems, for example; procurement and deployment of a spa management system, design and procurement of systems to allow Salt Ayre to run independently of the main data centre while also acting as a disaster recovery datacentre and the development of the garden waste renewals system.

- The service also continues to proudly support apprenticeship initiatives, with two of our apprentices now securing permanent employment with the organisation. Another apprentice started with the team in September with the addition of a further apprentice shortly, 20% of ICT staff will be made up of apprentices or previous apprentices.

- ICT staff also continue to work hard in their own professional development and in sharing best practice. Staff contribute actively to work across the sector, for example the ICT Manager is now a vice president of Socitm (the society for IT management within Local Government), and is a core member of the local public services chief information officer council (LCIOC).

Customer Services

- In order to fully support residents we have worked closely with colleagues in the Revenues and Benefits Service to provide an increasing level of Personal Budgeting Support for Universal Credit claimants struggling with rent arrears, utility debts, lifestyle challenges etc.

- Working collaboratively, the Customer Service and ICT teams have established a preferred supplier on Stage 1 of our Customer Experience Platform to provide an improved digital offering for our customers and a process driven customer database capable of being rolled out to other Council Services.
- Customer Services have continued to support key council initiatives and changes, including successfully supporting Environmental Services to ensure customers were able to renew their Garden Waste subscriptions in good time for the start of the new subscription period, and with minimal effort.