



Leader's Report

30 January 2019

Report of the Leader of the Council

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present the Leader's report to Council.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) To receive the report of the Leader of Council.**

REPORT

1.0 Cabinet

Information on Cabinet matters are provided in the minutes from the Cabinet meeting held on 18 December 2018 and 15 January 2019 later in this agenda.

2.0 Decisions required to be taken urgently

There are no decisions to report since the last Leader's Report on 19 December 2018.

3.0 Leader's Comments

Happy New Year to everyone. Work has been continuing on the budget which is to be presented on 22 January. This will be the last budget based on a Government settlement and though it can be balanced, we know that the future is uncertain with a new funding system.

In my last report, I omitted the meeting at the end of October with the Chamber of Commerce and Business Improvement Districts. They were pleased with the events during the year including the new Lancaster Festa Italia and with their Winter in the City marketing campaign which included events every weekend. Christmas lighting and decorations throughout the district were much improved this year and the ice rink in Dalton Square was a wonderful new attraction. I was pleased to see that the city defied national trends in footfall and in the first week of 2019 saw a 5.8% increase. Lots of ideas for this year were mentioned working on ideas for the "Great British High Street." They have an ambitious programme of improvement of plating

and horticulture and are considering ways to reduce impact on the wider environment.

I am very impressed by their commitment and they thanked officers who are proactive in helping to benefit our area. Morecambe BID report spoke about a really attractive Christmas display and their commitment to support events and improvements. Since I became Leader, I have tried to improve relationships with the Chamber by meeting them very regularly and working together. This is one of the best things that we have done, and I congratulate all involved.

For those who missed the Christmas show at The Dukes, it was a wonderful family show enjoyed by all and very well reviewed. I keep learning about the crocodile from my four year old great granddaughter! Keep supporting them throughout 2019.

The Lancaster and South Cumbria Economic Region Group met on 12 December. We are a great place and we have a strong, high quality arts culture and heritage offer, and our collective investment makes the sub region a significant player in the North West. We need a strategic plan that builds on our collection strengths, aiming to achieve more together to deliver clear benefits to our people, place and economy. Arts Council England are willing to consider an investment of £15-20k from strategic funds for the partnership to deliver a strategy that would act as a 'roadmap' of the route and steps we wish to take to develop a shared vision and to support the Business Prospectus drawing growth together in our region. We propose to match fund the ACE investment from all authorities and I suggested that we start by joint arts advertisements of events and exhibitions. A joint project officer would be sourced to arrange events, promotion and a website etc. There will be a launch of the LSCER promotion brochure soon.

The launch of the Place-Story presentation on 6 December showed our district at its very best. It was very well attended and received, and I thank all who organised it so well.

Lancashire Leaders met on Wednesday 9 January in the new Savoy Suite at County. The successful business rates bid of £10m was made, albeit without including Lancaster as I have explained previously. Updates on the work programmes were given but the main part of the agenda was an update from the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership on their progress on their review. They are employing consultants and lawyers to work on an Industrial Strategy and a Cultural Strategy for Lancashire among other proposals. A promised Development Framework for a Combined Authority was due in January but I feel that the Government may be otherwise occupied.

4.0 Other Matters

Cabinet minutes for 18 December 2018 and 15 January 2019 are attached at the end of this agenda.

5.0 Key Decisions

The following Key Decisions were taken by Cabinet on 18 December 2018:

- (1) Investment Strategy Principles
- (2) Land at Scotforth Road

The following Key Decisions were taken by Cabinet on 15 January 2019:

- (1) Budget and Policy Framework Update 2019-23
- (2) Proposed Governance Arrangements for Investment Strategy
- (3) Detailed Investment Strategy Proposals
- (4) Discretionary Rate Relief Policy Update – Retail Discount (Business Rates)
- (5) Lancaster Caton Road (Phase 3) Flood Risk Management Scheme

There following Officer Delegated Key Decisions were taken during this period:

- (1) Williamson Park Adventure Play Offer
- (2) Ripley Court Bedsit Remodelling Phase 2

Background Papers

Cabinet agenda and minutes of the meetings held on 18 December 2018 and 15 January 2019.