



Leader's Report

10 April 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 5 March 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 13 March 2019.

3.0 Leader's Comments

This will be my last report after eight years as Leader. It has been an eventful time, starting with the recession period when Local Government cuts started to take effect and have continued each year. Councils have had to make difficult choices. Some have closed venues and service centres, reduced other services or slashed jobs. Lancaster decided not to do this, we increased efficiency, made savings and increased income.

We now face a new system where we will not be receiving a government grant, so we have to be willing to think quite differently to balance our budgets. Change is always a concern and it will be a big change. I am grateful to Councillors and Officers for their willingness to put ideas forward and for members to consider them carefully.

We have seen two Chief Executives go in the last 8 years and these last year have seen many long serving Officers leave and new ones come in. I know there have been big changes, but I truly think that our structure is now bedded in and the district is in safe hands.

Thank you all for your support and contributions to the Budget. I feel that it is a good budget in the context of austerity.

In 32 years as a Councillor I have met many wonderful people of all parties. I have represented Lancaster in other forums and been able to work with Lancashire County Council as well as South Lakeland District Council and Barrow Borough Council. I am so pleased that I have been able to bring together the Chamber, BIDs and the City Council and the district has benefitted from it in so many ways. I sincerely hope that the efforts to improve our area and to attract tourism are successful.

I am proud of the Tern project in Morecambe which I chaired. It has been a success and a catalyst for Morecambe that was very well received by all. Council Leaders were brought together to tackle the Lancaster Market Hall with expert advice called in from outside. The traders who stayed took some of the empty shops and are still there and the street market is popular. This brought Primark to Lancaster which other districts are envious of.

We now have a close relationship with Lancaster University, and this has made working together on the Eden Project and many other things more possible. I hope that our district can maintain its long-standing support for the arts, culture and heritage as these are among our great strengths and are part of our economic development. The Canal Quarter looks as if it will definitely happen this time and the funding for the Garden Village makes it another really interesting probability.

Climate change is a massive global problem and we must make sure that we do everything we can to reduce and recycle and make changes that help to reduce emissions and look at green initiatives.

I want to express my admiration for our excellent and dedicated work force who reflect well on our district. I hope the Celebrating Success award continues in future years. I shall miss some of the exciting new developments and I will miss seeing everyone even though we may have differences. I wish our district well. I am sure it will flourish. We have come through hard times together and we have the best of all areas: City, Coast & Countryside.

4.0 Other Matters

Cabinet minutes for 5 March 2019 are attached at the end of this agenda.

5.0 Key Decisions

The following Key Decisions were taken by Cabinet on 5 March 2019:

- (1) Cultural Policy
- (2) Disposal of Land, Heysham Business Park
- (3) Application for Grant Funding from the Community Housing Fund
- (4) The Dukes Future Business Model

The following Officer Delegated Key Decision was taken during this period:

(1) Electricity Supply Contract

Background Papers

Cabinet agenda and minutes of the meetings held on 5 March 2019.