



Leader's Report

18 December 2020

Report of the Leader of the Council

PURPOSE OF REPORT
To present the Leader's report to Council.
This report is public.

RECOMMENDATION

To receive the report of the Leader of Council.

REPORT

1.0 Cabinet

Information on Cabinet matters is provided in the minutes from the Cabinet meetings held 15 September 2020, and 6 October 2020, 27 October 2020, 5 November 2020 & 24 November 2020. The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2020 were not available at the time of publication of the agenda and will be tabled at the December Council meeting.

2.0 Decisions required to be taken urgently

No urgent Cabinet decisions have been taken in this period.

3.0 Leader's Comments

COVID

At the time of writing the Lancaster District's infection rates have fallen once again to somewhat more than half of the national infection rate. However, the infection rate is only one of the government's five factors. The other four being – direction of travel of the infection rate, infection rate among the over 60s, test positivity rate, and local NHS pressures. We know that a reassessment of our tier will have been based on the data available on the 15th, for a decision on the 16th, announcement on the 17th and implementation of the 19th. The majority of leaders across Lancashire have continued to advocate for Lancashire to be assessed on a sub-regional level.

I have worked to mobilise leaders across Lancashire to raise with government our concerns that there has been less economic support provided by the government to businesses in Lancashire than in other parts of the country. As you will remember, when we agreed to go into tier 3, Lancashire leaders agreed with the government £20 per head in economic support. However, when the government subsequently announced four weeks of national lockdown, they granted everyone that same £20 per head in economic support, and no further support for Lancashire, Greater Manchester or Liverpool. Thus, short-changing Lancashire businesses by £15 per head at least.

Our business support team continues to work hard to distribute the funds we do have available to support local businesses. However, the almost inevitable outcome of reducing levels of government support and businesses already stretched thin, is that businesses are suffering in our district.

The council continues to work with parish councils and community partners to support residents with food, housing and social support. If you are working with residents who are experiencing financial hardship as a direct result of COVID and do not have the financial resources to meet immediate short-term needs and are on a low income, remember they may be eligible for emergency financial assistance. More details www.lancaster.gov.uk/coronavirus

All expectations are that we will see a rise in infections in the new year, following the relaxation of rules over Christmas. The virus won't be taking a break & remember 🧼 hands – 😷 face – ↔ space is still the best protection we have.

Climate Emergency

Tonight, we are pleased to welcome members of our People's Jury to our meeting and grateful that they have given their time to address us. The recommendations of the People's Jury appear elsewhere on the agenda and we will ask cabinet to ensure that each recommendation is carefully considered and that we find ways to act and to encourage others to act on the recommendations.

Earlier this month many of us noted that it has been five years since Storm Desmond. For many residents and businesses, too little has changed since Desmond. This week the Caton Road flood defences will reach technical completion, but many areas of Lancaster are still awaiting survey reports.

Many people observe that Lancaster hasn't always flooded like this. The causes & reasons are complex. Reducing flood risk & helping communities to become more resilient to flooding is hard work, but across the district, there is a network of flood groups & community emergency groups each doing their bit to try & make their neighbourhood safer & stronger. Thank you to everyone who is part of one of these groups.

The Bay

Following last week's cabinet and council meetings across Lancaster, South Lakeland & Barrow endorsing the submission of the Bay authority proposal our proposal was submitted to government. This week, along with the leaders of South

Lakeland and Barrow, I met with Luke Hall MP, the Minister for Local Government, and senior Ministry officials to further outline our proposal.

The Minister advises that proposals will be read over the Christmas/New Year period, and that consultation on one or more models will begin in early to mid-February for an expected eight-week period, with a decision to be announced before the summer recess.

New cabinet

I am pleased to advise of new appointments & changes to portfolio titles. Portfolio details are provided at attachment A.

Cllr Dr Erica Lewis – Leader – Strategic Initiatives, Partnerships & Emergency Responses

Cllr Janice Hanson – Deputy Leader – Economic Regeneration & Planning

Cllr Anne Whitehead – Finance & Resources

Cllr Tim Hamilton-Cox – Sustainable Economic Prosperity

Cllr Merv Evans – Economic Recovery & Resilience

Cllr Jean Parr – Arts, Culture, Leisure & Wellbeing

Cllr Caroline Jackson – Housing

Cllr Dave Brookes – Natural Environment

Cllr Gina Dowding – Sustainable Neighbourhoods

Cllr Kevin Frea – Climate Action

Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays

After what has been a very odd year, I want to say thank you once again to officers and councillors for the care you have taken in supporting residents, local businesses and organisations. The feedback I get time and time again, is that our council has maintained more work through the pandemic, as well as providing more support to the district through the pandemic than many other councils. We can be justly proud of the service Lancaster City Council has provided this year.

I hope everyone will have the opportunity to catch up with family & friends in safe ways across the holiday season and return refreshed for the challenges of a new year.

To those who will stay on roster across the holidays to support residents and keep us safe in case of emergency. Thank you.

4.0 Decisions

The following Decisions were taken by Cabinet on 6 October 2020:

- (1) Covid-19 Pandemic – Policy for decision making and spending delegations within the Budget & Policy Framework – Public Realm
- (2) Covid-19 Pandemic – Policy for decision making and spending delegations within the Budget & Policy Framework – Purchase of electric vans
- (3) Installation of Solar PV Panels to sheltered scheme bungalows

The following Decisions were taken by Cabinet on 27 October 2020

- (1) Proposed designation of Conservation Area Slyne Road
- (2) Direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015
- (3) Preparation of Lancaster South Area Action Plan Development Plan Document
- (4) Review of Housing Allocations Policy
- (5) The Homes Strategy for Lancaster District
- (6) Options to set up the Housing LATCo
- (7) Adoption of Public Space Protection Orders (Dog control)
- (8) Green Waste Subscription fees
- (9) Lancaster Business Improvement District Renewal
- (10) Capital Investment Strategy
- (11) Investment Proposal: Site Acquisition
- (12) Investment Proposal

The following decision was taken at an extraordinary meeting of Cabinet on 5 November 2020:

- (1) Local Government Reform Developments

The following decisions were taken by Cabinet on 24 November 2020:

- (1) Delivering our Ambitions Quarter 2
- (2) Treasury Management Mid-Year Review
- (3) Localised Council Tax Support Scheme
- (4) Budget & Policy Update - Revision to 2020/21 Budget

The following decisions were taken by Cabinet on 8 December 2020:

- (1) Residential Conversions and Houses in Multiple Occupation
- (2) Local Government Reform proposal for the Bay area

The following Officer Delegated Key Decisions have been taken since the last Leader's report :

ODD3 Procurement of 6 Electric Pool Cars
ODD4 Purchase of 14 Electric Vans
ODD5 Approval of Lancaster BID Renewal Proposals

Background Papers

Cabinet agendas 6 October 2020, 27 October 2020, 5 November, 24 November, 8 December

Cllr Dr Erica Lewis – Leader – Strategic Initiatives, Partnerships & Emergency Responses

- Principal spokesperson, communications & press office
- Lead on establishment & achievement of council priorities & principles
- Community & stakeholder engagement & development
- Emergency response, community resilience & recovery
- Governance
- Human Resources
- Customer & Advice Services
- Soft Facilities Management

Cllr Anne Whitehead – Finance & Resources

- Strategic control of financial resources
- Treasury Management
- Procurement & Fair Trade
- Audit
- Financial Services
- Revenues & Benefits
- Democratic, civic & mayoral support
- Elections
- Legal services

Cllr Jean Parr – Arts, Culture, Leisure & Wellbeing

- Arts, Culture, Festivals, Events & Museums
- Visitor Information Centres
- Sport & Leisure
- Community health & wellbeing
- Equalities & social justice initiatives including age; disability; race; religion or belief; sex, gender or gender identity.
- Community safety

Cllr Caroline Jackson – Housing

- Council Housing
- Homelessness
- Private sector housing
- Social Housing
- Caravan sites
- Traveller sites
- Refugee housing
- Household support & resilience

Cllr Janice Hanson – Deputy Leader – Economic Regeneration & Planning

- Economic regeneration
- Planning including local plan
- Conservation & urban design
- Development & building control
- Compulsory purchase
- Climate change resilience
- Neighbourhood Plans
- Transport policy & Parking

Cllr Merv Evans – Economic Recovery & Resilience

- Tourism & Marketing
- Hospitality
- Community wealth building
- Fair work charter - good jobs & fair pay

Cllr Tim Hamilton-Cox – Sustainable Economic Prosperity

- Responsible & resilient businesses & industry
- Asset & property management
- Green jobs & skills
- Digital strategy & ICT
- Markets
- Hard facilities management

Cllr Dave Brookes – Natural Environment

- Waste & recycling
- Parks & green spaces
- Street cleansing
- Commons, reserves, open spaces
- Water including rivers, coast, & flooding
- Nature conservation
- Biodiversity

Cllr Gina Dowding – Sustainable Neighbourhoods

- Active transport & modal shift
- Environmental health & enforcement including air quality
- Allotments, food production & food waste
- Council owned community facilities

Cllr Kevin Frea – Climate Action

- Community action
- Climate partnerships
- Renewable Energy Production & Energy Efficiency
- Rural communities & AONB

Reflecting new ways of working across the council, cabinet members will increasingly work in & across the SDG clusters (social, environmental, economic & governance) this should help manage inevitable cross-overs and provide back up in case of sickness or absence. All portfolio holders will work to meet the climate emergency, build community wealth, reduce inequalities & increase well-being, as well as to increase community engagement & power