

Lancaster City Council | Report Cover Sheet

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| Meeting | Cabinet | Date | 1st March 2022 | | |
| Title | Lancaster City Council Corporate Branding | | | | |
| Report of | Chief Executive | | Kieran Keane | | |
| Purpose of Report: | | | | | |
| <p>To seek Cabinet approval for the newly designed version of the Lancaster City Council logo as part of a wider corporate branding development project.</p> <p>To seek Cabinet approval to develop a brand implementation programme that will build a consistent identity across the district and council services which incorporate the principles of the new logo design.</p> | | | | | |
| Key Decision (Y/N) | Y | Date of Notice | 13 January 2021 | Exempt(Y/N) | Y - Appendix 1 & 2 |

Report Summary

The council has, over time, evolved and changed dramatically, both in terms of the services it delivers and how it engages with its communities. The existing logo does not represent the inclusive, forward-thinking and innovative council that we now are, and so the council wants to refresh its brand image to reflect its new focus and encompass the whole district.

As part of brand development work, a change in the current council logo would help transform public perception of the council, allowing it to be seen as friendly and outward-focused, while also inspiring staff internally as they recognise the council as an employer of opportunity and innovation.

Based on research and consultation, the images chosen in the proposed new logo are designed to help unite the district, incorporating city, coast, and countryside. The new design symbolises community and captures the true characteristics of our brand.

This proposal is to decommission the existing Lancaster City Council logo and replace it with a new version, alongside a brand implementation programme. This programme would look to incorporate all the different and diverse geographical locations within the district, with interpretations of the logo to reflect their individuality.

Implementation costs for the new logo and brand roll out will be kept to a minimum, through a phased rollout programme over a 24-month period, utilising existing budgets. This is a straightforward and very deliverable programme.

The development of a brand implementation programme will incur design and marketing costs. These are currently estimated to be in the region of £20,000 and would be incurred over a period of time. It would be funded from within the existing service marketing budgets.

Recommendations of**It is recommended that:**

- 1) Cabinet approves the decommissioning of the current Lancaster City Council logo and the implementation of the newly designed logo.
- 2) Cabinet approves the development of a phased brand implementation programme that will build a consistent brand identity across the district and council services.

Relationship to Policy Framework

The proposal is entirely consistent with and supports Lancaster City Council's policy framework by increasing public awareness of the council and its overall brand characteristics as highlighted in the research.

Conclusion of Impact Assessment(s) where applicable**Climate****Wellbeing & Social Value****Digital****Health & Safety****Equality****Community Safety**

The new logo and brand implementation programme has no direct impact in relation to the above assessments but will directly raise awareness of the council and its operations.

Details of Consultation

The new logo design project has been developed following research and ongoing engagement with external partners, the senior management team, heads of service, Leaders from different political groups, Cabinet, and selected councillors.

Legal Implications

Legal Service can advise on any Intellectual Property issues. Projects and activities within the corporate rebrand will be subject to the council's normal governance and decision-making processes where any direct legal implications will be considered.

Financial Implications

Current estimated design and marketing costs for the above programme are £20K to be funded from within existing service marketing budgets.

Projects and activities developed in the brand implementation programme will be subject to the council's normal governance and decision-making processes where any direct financial implications will be considered

Other Resource or Risk Implications

Resource implications and risks will be considered as the new logo and brand implementation programme phased rollout are developed.

Section 151 Officer's Comments

The future costs of rebranding could be significant as the new brand would be expected to be delivered across the whole Council including its property estate, vehicle fleet, public realm assets as well as other areas such as uniforms and clothing.

As has been documented on several occasions the Council is facing significant short-, medium-, and long-term financial challenges and so consideration of the recommendations of this report should be made against that backdrop. If not be approved consideration should be given to repurposing the funding identified to assist in addressing those challenges

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| Monitoring Officer's Comments | |
| The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add. | |
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| Links to Background Papers | |
| N/A | |

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The council has evolved dramatically in recent years, with a renewed focus on climate awareness and community engagement. The existing logo and brand image are no longer representative of the whole district or of the approachable and innovative council that we are. While the updated Council Plan sets out the council's priorities and objectives, we need a modern and welcoming logo and identity to help portray that.
- 1.2 A dramatic change to the council's logo and broader identity will help to transform the perception of the council and its work, both internally and to the wider public. We need to embrace and unite the varied communities and diverse geographical locations across our district – city, coast, and countryside – and show off the transformation the city council has undergone. It is also vital to bring together the individual services of the council, in recognition of our work as one organisation.
- 1.3 This will be achieved through the eventual decommissioning of the existing Lancaster City Council logo and replacing it with a bold new version.
- 1.4 To ensure that our new logo and message is properly relayed to internal and external stakeholders, it must be accompanied by the development of a brand implementation programme, incorporating design and marketing elements such as brand guidelines, toolkit, and design assets. This strategy will ensure that the new branding can be implemented both internally and externally and achieve consistency across the organisation.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The current logo appears outdated and is not largely representative of current council operations and the local community it represents. Alongside this, some services within the council have established their own identity and are no longer easily recognised as part of the council. This can be damaging to the council, as it may be overlooked for the important work it is doing in the community. This strategy will help align those individual aspects to reflect the parent brand.
- 2.2 As the council's proactive recovery work from the pandemic continues and the council develops improved services – including business support, mobile customer services and hubs, climate action measures and community engagement initiatives – the timing is now right for a fresh and exciting new corporate image to realign the council's brand and how it is characterised within the local community.

- 2.3 Using in-house skills and resources, high-level research was conducted involving external partners, senior management team, heads of service, leaders from different political groups, Cabinet, and selected councillors to explore the characteristics of the existing logo and how the council brand may be developed to reflect our forward-thinking approach. **(See research summary - Appendix 1)**
- 2.4 Using the results of this research, a member and senior officer-led group were consulted. It concluded that a change to the existing logo and brand image was necessary. It was decided the council needed a look that was more modern, brighter, more welcoming and a reflection of the united district it serves. A number of design options were considered for the replacement of the current logo. The final option for consideration was strongly supported and felt it symbolised and captured the true characteristics of the council. **(See Design & Visual Concepts - Appendix 2)**

3.0 Proposal

- 3.1 The proposal is straightforward and very deliverable and implementation costs can be kept to a minimum using the existing service budgets, which will avoid many of the costs usually associated with a full rebranding exercise.
- 3.2 For the vast majority of council assets, costs will be covered within existing service budgets as replacement branding will happen gradually as-and-when assets are updated – either as part of scheduled works or when they are replaced due to reaching the end of their functional life. While some applications of the logo are yet to be identified as part of a brand audit, this will be further explored when developing the brand implementation programme.
- 3.3 The 24-month phased brand rollout will be project-managed in-house using the existing skills and professional services of the corporate communications and marketing team, supported by an external design agency. Estimated unavoidable costs associated with the design and marketing elements of the programme will be in the region of £20,000, incurred over a period of time, which is within the existing service marketing budgets.
- 3.4 Sub brand* development for services (*using certain elements of the main brand) will involve Heads of Service consultation and engagement. This will be part of the brand implementation programme and look to re-establish brand consistency throughout the organisation.
- 3.5 The programme would also involve the brand imagery being designed and adapted to reflect the individual geographical locations within the district (such as Morecambe, Carnforth, Heysham and rural areas), and their unique characteristics and offerings. This will be done using colours that reflect city, coast and countryside, and tag lines to promote and refresh existing projects and work, as well as for the promotion of future initiatives.
- 3.6 Although not developed yet, the brand implementation programme will consist of elements including full brand audit; decommissioning the existing logo; design work; phased implementation plan; and a multimedia campaign. The campaign will be implemented both internally and externally to raise awareness of the changes.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

Option 1: Approve the newly designed version of the Lancaster City Council logo and develop a brand implementation programme

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| <p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to refresh the city council logo and re-establish its brand, reflecting the current community focus and engagement work • A logo that is more representative of the district and a brand that recognises the different geographical locations and their characteristics • The change addresses key research results from members and senior stakeholder groups • Opportunity to realign services to the parent brand and establish brand consistency • Raise awareness of the city council and its renewed focus • Improve current perceptions of the city council to both staff and external audiences • Strengthen partnership working across the district and the subregion • Provide an engaged approach that takes account of business needs • Potential to drive commercial revenues • Opportunity for national and local PR |
| <p>Disadvantages: None</p> |
| <p>Risks: Brand imagery is subjective and can illicit different responses. For this reason, the brand development work was researched and consulted with key stakeholders and senior staff with a high level of support – therefore mitigating risk.</p> |
| <p>Option 2: Do not approve the newly designed version of the Lancaster City Council logo nor develop a brand implementation programme</p> |
| <p>Advantages: None</p> |
| <p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current logo and brand of the city council may remain outdated in the eyes of key stakeholders • Council and services will remain fragmented and lack brand consistency • Public perception of the council could remain detached from the progressive and positive changes the council is implementing • Opportunities to build on the current very high levels of public and business engagement will be undermined • Limiting commercial opportunities • Lack of unity or recognition across district |
| <p>Risks: Potential to attract staff could have consequences on service delivery</p> |

5. Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

- 5.1 The Officer preferred option is Option 1, which is to approve the newly designed version of the Lancaster City Council logo and develop a brand implementation programme. This will improve current perceptions of the city council to its multiple stakeholders, while firmly positioning the council as an innovative and forward-thinking organisation which is open to change. The programme would involve the brand imagery being designed and adapted to reflect the individual geographical locations and their characteristics within the district.