

CABINET

6.00 P.M.

1ST MARCH 2022

PRESENT:- Councillors Caroline Jackson (Chair), Kevin Frea (Vice-Chair), Dave Brookes, Gina Dowding, Tim Hamilton-Cox, Tricia Heath, Erica Lewis, Cary Matthews, Sandra Thornberry and Anne Whitehead

Officers in attendance:-

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| Kieran Keane | Chief Executive |
| Mark Davies | Director for Communities and the Environment |
| Sarah Davies | Director of Corporate Services |
| Luke Gorst | Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer |
| Paul Thompson | Chief Financial Officer (Head of Finance & Section 151 Officer) |
| Maurice Brophy | Service Manager - Planning and Housing Strategy (Minute 89) |
| Fiona Clark | Planning Officer (Policy) (Minute 89) |
| Liz Bateson | Principal Democratic Support Officer |

85 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 8 February 2022 were approved as a correct record.

86 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE LEADER

The Chair advised that there were no items of urgent business.

87 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made at this point.

88 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Members were advised that there had been no requests to speak at the meeting in accordance with Cabinet's agreed procedure.

89 VIABILITY PROTOCOL SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Dowding)

Cabinet received a report from the Director for Economic Growth & Regeneration for Members to consider the amendments made to the draft Viability Protocol Supplementary Planning Document (draft SPD) to address representations made during the consultation and seek authorisation for the Service Manager – Planning and Housing Strategy to proceed with formal adoption.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

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| Option 1: Adopt the SPD as a material consideration when determining planning |
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applications.

Advantages: The SPD will provide guidance to applicants about the Council's approach to viability assessments and information required. It will help applicants ensure they provide appropriate information and set a formal agreement for the payment of costs by the applicant. If the guidance is followed it should help minimise delays arising from viability matters.

Disadvantages: No disadvantages.

Risks: The SPD may be subject to a judicial review.

Option 2: Do not adopt the SPD as a material consideration when determining planning applications.

Advantages: No advantages.

Disadvantages: The Council will not have guidance available.

Risks: None.

The officer preferred option is Option 1 – adopt the SPD.

Councillor Dowding proposed, seconded by Councillor Hamilton-Cox:-

“That the recommendation, as set out in the report, be approved.”

Councillors then voted:-

Resolved unanimously:

- (1) That Cabinet delegates authority to the Service Manager – Planning and Housing Strategy to proceed with the statutory process to adopt the Supplementary Planning Document.

Officer responsible for effecting the decision:

Director for Economic Growth & Regeneration

Reasons for making the decision:

The decision is consistent with the Corporate Plan which includes ambitions to improve access to quality housing. The Corporate Priorities (updated January 2021) set out the Council's priorities to reach net zero by 2030; transitioning to low carbon and active transport system; increasing biodiversity and reaching net zero carbon by 2030; supporting new enterprises; securing investment in regeneration; develop housing to ensure people of all incomes are comfortable, warm and able to maintain their independence.

The Lancaster Local Plan includes policies which seek to ensure that the new housing developments include a proportion of affordable housing, provide the necessary infrastructure contributions and support sustainable development, biodiversity, active

travel. The SPD will support the implementation of policies within the Local Plan.

90 COVID 19 - ADDITIONAL RELIEF FUND (CARF)

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Whitehead)

Cabinet received a report from the Head of Shared Service that sought approval to implement a Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund to cover a new business rate relief scheme introduced by Government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The fund would be used to support those businesses affected by the pandemic but were ineligible for existing support linked to business rates (such as previous Covid related reliefs). Details of the scheme were set out in Appendix A to the report.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic the Government allocated funds to local Councils to support businesses financially in the form of business grants and also awarded rating relief for certain business types. e.g. extended retail relief. The aim of CARF is to assist those businesses that do not qualify for assistance but have been affected by the pandemic.

Option 1 – Agree to the proposal as recommended

The scheme sets out a formal approach to awarding relief and follows government guidance to determine eligibility. The approach adopted seeks to maximise use of funds in an open and equitable way, after the scheme has closed in order to limit the risk of the Council being liable for a large overspend on the fund. The Section 151 Officer, Head of Shared Service will consult with Cabinet Member for Resources to determine a fair and equitable distribution of funds.

Option 2 – Refuse to access government funds on behalf of affected businesses

The Council would not access CARF funds and no relief would be awarded. Subsequently local businesses that have not previously received help would need to pay more in business rates.

It is recommended that Option 1 be approved. The scheme enables a formal approach to eligibility, with criteria in line with Council priorities, offering financial support in the form of rate relief to those businesses that have previously been impacted by Covid-19 but received no financial assistance.

Councillor Whitehead proposed, seconded by Councillor Lewis:-

“That the recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved.”

Councillors then voted:-

Resolved unanimously:

- (1) That Cabinet approves the use of the proposed COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) as detailed in the report, in line with government guidance and available

funding.

- (2) That Cabinet delegate the final allocation of the funding support to businesses to the S151 Officer and Head of Shared Service, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources.
- (3) That Cabinet authorise the S151 Officer to make final amendments to the policy to accommodate evolving guidance and any technical issues in relation to the scheme and to make all other necessary arrangements for its implementation with immediate effect.

Officer responsible for effecting the decision:

Head of Shared Service
Chief Finance Officer

Reasons for making the decision:

The decision is consistent with Council priorities with the fund:

- supporting existing enterprises at a difficult time in their business journey
- used to benefit local communities
- helping to build a sustainable and just local economy for people and organisation

The proposals as set out are considered a good use of fund to limit the risk of overspend and to achieve the greatest benefit for a range of businesses that have suffered financial hardship during the pandemic.

91 COVID-19 LANCASTER DISTRICT HARDSHIP FUND (USE OF RESIDUAL FUNDS)

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Whitehead)

Cabinet received a report from the Head of Shared Service that sought approval to spend residual funds (£347k) from the Council Tax Hardship Fund in line with the recommendations, setting up a new “Lancaster District Hardship Fund” to financially support residents who have found themselves vulnerable and in financial hardship during the pandemic. Details of the scheme were set out in Appendix A to the report.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic the Government allocated funds to local Councils to support residents financially, initially with the primary aim of helping working age residents in receipt of LCTS pay their Council Tax. The Council has distributed funds in excess of Government expectations and is now free to support other projects with residual funds

Option 1 – Agree to the proposal as recommended

The scheme sets out a formal approach to distributing residual funds and follows a tried and tested path similar to arrangements put in place by Government in the form of its Household Support Fund this last financial year. The approach adopted seeks to maximise use of funds in an open and equitable way across a number of service areas,

and therefore risks associated with any challenge are considered small and manageable.

Option 2 – Suggested amendments to scheme principles

Any amendments would need to have regard to Council priorities and government guidance, allowing extra time for re-consideration of an amended policy. The Household Support fund comes to an end on 31 March 2022 and it would be good to have a local scheme in place at the earliest opportunity to continue to offer support to those most in need.

Option 3 – Do nothing and return residual funds to the Government.

A blanket policy of returning funds to Government is not an option when residents in the district continue to struggle to pay their bills and finance household necessities.

The pandemic has refocused the Council's attention on the needs of the community and the way those needs, however simple, are serviced. It is recommended that Option 1 be approved. The scheme enables a formal approach to decision making, with criteria in line with Council priorities, offering financial support to those most in need of help.

Councillor Whitehead proposed, seconded by Councillor Lewis:-

“That the recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved.”

Councillors then voted:-

Resolved unanimously:

- (1) That the residual balance of £347k from the Covid-19 Council Tax Hardship Reserve Fund be committed to assist residents in the district who have suffered hardship during the COVID-19 Pandemic and continue to struggle financially.
- (2) That the Lancaster District Hardship Fund principles, as set out under Appendix A to the report be approved.
- (3) That the spending be in line with the Lancaster District Hardship Fund, with cost to be met from the Covid-19 Council Tax Hardship Reserve Fund, up to the value of £347k.

Officers responsible for effecting the decision:

Head of Shared Service
Chief Finance Officer

Reasons for making the decision:

The principles of the scheme are in line with Council priorities, with the fund:

- helping to address health and income inequalities, food and fuel poverty, mental health and loneliness.
- focusing on early intervention (as it is proactive rather than reactive.)

- assisting partnership working with residents and local organisations.
- used innovatively to deal with the issues some of our residents are experiencing.
- also providing good value for money through the buying power of the food poverty alliance.

The proposals as set out are considered a good use of remaining funds, to achieve the greatest benefit for those suffering financial hardship.

92 DELIVERING OUR PRIORITIES: Q3 2021/22

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Whitehead)

Cabinet received a report from the Director of Corporate Services that provided members with an update on performance, projects, and resources during the first three quarters of 2021/22 (April – December 2021).

As the report was primarily for noting no options were provided. Officers responded to several questions in relation to the electric bin wagons, flood recovery grant, employee expenses and council tax collection rates.

Resolved unanimously:

- (1) That the report be noted.

93 VCSE ADVISORY GROUP

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Caroline Jackson)

Cabinet received a report from the Chief Executive to propose that Cabinet form an Advisory Group to consider how the council can play its most effective role, alongside other local partners, in supporting the work of local Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise organisations.

The council's provision of 'core' funding to local Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise organisations was established in 2013. The council is also engaged in various other financial and non-financial relationships, such as joint projects and initiatives, with organisations across the sector. It is recognised that local groups across these sectors contribute significantly to the council's 2030 Priorities around environment, economy, community and services. The report proposed that an Advisory Group be established to take a democratic leadership role and an engaging, deliberative approach to considering how the council and local partners could support the work of local VCSE organisations. Draft Terms of Reference were appended to the report, although the Advisory Group itself would have a role in defining its activities. Membership of the group was at the discretion of the Chair and would be established as part of the group's formation; it was envisaged that membership would include a mix of elected members, officers, VCSE partners and other cross-sector partners.

Councillor Caroline Jackson proposed, seconded by Councillor Dowding:-

"That the recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved."

Councillors then voted:-

Resolved unanimously:

- (1) That a Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise Advisory Group be established.
- (2) That the Advisory Group be established based on the Terms of Reference proposed at Appendix A to the report, recognising that the Advisory Group itself will have a role in shaping its specific activities.

Officer responsible for effecting the decision:

Chief Executive

Reasons for making the decision:

The work of partners across the Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise sector contributes substantially to each of the council's 2030 Priorities:

- A Sustainable District
- An Inclusive & Prosperous Local Economy
- Healthy & Happy Communities
- A Co-operative, Kind & Responsible Council

Support for partners makes an indirect contribution to the achievement of each of the Priorities. The Advisory Group will consider the most effective ways to collectively achieve this impact.

94 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was moved by Councillor Caroline Jackson and seconded by Councillor Matthews:-

"That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that it could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of that Act."

Members then voted as follows:-

Resolved unanimously:

- (1) That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that it could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

95 LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL CORPORATE BRANDING**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Caroline Jackson)**

Cabinet received a report from the Chief Executive that sought approval for the newly designed version of the Lancaster City Council logo as part of a wider corporate branding development project and sought approval to develop a brand implementation

programme that would build a consistent identity across the district and council services which incorporate the principles of the new logo design. The item had been deferred from the Cabinet meeting on 18 January 2022 in order that enable officers could hopefully address the concerns that were raised at the time (Cabinet minute 68 refers).

Whilst the report was public the appendices were exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

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

Advantages:

- 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
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Disadvantages:

None

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.

Option 2: Do not approve the newly designed version of the Lancaster City Council logo nor develop a brand implementation programme

Advantages:

None

Disadvantages:

- 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

Risks:

Potential to attract staff could have consequences on service delivery

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.

After much discussion Councillor Caroline Jackson proposed, seconded by Councillor Dowding:-

“That the recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved.”

Councillors then voted:-

Resolved:

(7 Members (Councillors Brookes, Dowding, Hamilton-Cox, Frea, Heath, Jackson and Matthews) voted in favour, and 3 Members (Councillors Lewis, Thornberry and Whitehead) abstained.)

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

Officer responsible for effecting the decision:

Chief Executive

Reasons for making the decision:

The council has 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.

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.

96 LAND FORMING PART OF LANCASTER LEISURE PARK, OFF WYRESDALE ROAD, LANCASTER (Pages 12 - 13)

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Hamilton-Cox)

Cabinet received a report from the Director for Economic Growth & Regeneration with regard to the land currently forming part of Lancaster Leisure Park, off Wyresdale Road, Lancaster. The report was exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the exempt report.

It was proposed by Councillor Hamilton-Cox, seconded by Councillor Lewis and resolved unanimously when put to the vote:-

Resolved unanimously:

- (1) The resolution is set out in a minute exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972.

Officer responsible for effecting the decision:

Director for Economic Growth & Regeneration

Reasons for making the decision:

The decision is consistent with Council priorities. Exactly how the decisions fits with Council priorities is set out in the exempt minute.

Chair

(The meeting ended at 7.31 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Liz Bateson, Democratic Services - email ebateson@lancaster.gov.uk**

MINUTES PUBLISHED ON FRIDAY 4 MARCH ,2022.

**EFFECTIVE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE DECISIONS CONTAINED IN THESE MINUTES:
MONDAY 14 MARCH ,2022**