



## **Leader's Report**

**05 November 2025**

### **Report of the Leader of the Council**

#### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To present the Leader's report to Council.

This report is public.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**To receive the report of the Leader of Council.**

#### **REPORT**

##### **1.0 Cabinet**

- 1.1 Information on Cabinet matters is provided in the minutes from the Cabinet meeting held 16 September later in this agenda.

##### **2.0 Decisions required to be taken urgently.**

- 2.1 No urgent Cabinet decisions have been taken since the last Leader's Report

##### **3.0 Leader's Comments**

- 3.1 We have had another very busy month as a council with major progress made in a number of areas alongside many community events and festivals. We have also received very good news from government detailed at the end of the report.

#### **Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution**

- 3.2 The proposals for the five different possible unitary structures for Lancashire are now virtually complete. A timetable for all councils involved, districts, unitaries and counties to meet and endorse their choice has been worked through. In order to ensure parity between proposals district leaders have

asked authorities agree that once published, the proposals will not be significantly changed. Work is taking place to consider how all councillors in all authorities can have access to all the proposals. However, since these run to hundreds of pages each we are hoping to offer summaries for councillors. Our special council meeting will be on 26th November the same week as a majority of other councils, followed by Cabinet which is required to make the final decision.

- 3.3 The Lancaster district-based consultation survey gained over 700 responses. The results have been circulated to all councillors. I hope you have found them a useful contribution to the debate. As with the Pan Lancashire survey, LGR was not a popular move with those that contributed. However Steven Reed in LGA councillors Forum this month re-iterated the governments' intentions and government belief that residents do not have strong ties to their current form of democratic representation.
- 3.4 On wider devolution matters, the Combined Authority Scrutiny Board met for the second time with its new chair. A clear work plan is proposed with papers to be circulated well in advance of meetings. The new committee Chair, Tony Oakman is also Interim Chair of UHMBT. I have also joined the county-wide Integrated Care Partnership meeting to represent districts.

#### **Eden Morecambe Project.**

- 3.5 The progress of the project was significantly furthered by the revised planning application being put in as a result of the changes to the original plans. Eden Morecambe is continuing with the recruitment of staff members for the Morecambe office and more work is being done to develop the gardens that will be open to the public on the site. A fund-raising dinner was held in London to garner support from Lancastrians now living there. Cllr Martin Bottoms attended to represent the council and community.

#### **City Council Priorities**

- 3.6 The first stage of the rollout of the district Waste Strategy has begun: each household is receiving two new 240 litre wheelie bins to contain recycling and replace the boxes currently used. Intended outcomes are higher recycling rates, no recycling blowing around the streets and better working conditions for staff. Waste department staff are working hard with residents to fit the new strategy to the complex needs of the residents in the terraced housing in the district in particular. The "Street Meets" are proving a popular way to work out individual problems with residents. All credit to officers as they work through the complexity and multiplicity of problems this produces.
- 3.7 Overview and Scrutiny met the Leader and Chief Executive for a Peer Challenge review. It was agreed that most of the recommendations of the challenge were either achieved or clearly progressing. There was further discussion of the budget and the way in which the Fit For the Future groups realise financial benefits. An LGA Transformation Action Learning group has

been established working with two other local authorities on data and timelines in order to support this.

- 3.8 Partnerships was a Peer Challenge priority, in particular the work with Lancaster District Strategic Partnership. Our most recent meeting has considered how concerted work on the economic strategy - in our terms the Health and Prosperity plan - for the district, could achieve faster and more effective change. In a future that is unclear in terms of the nature and character of the district the LDSP is developing as a distinctive voice for the area
- 3.9 The Mainway Board has met on two occasions and following a workshop on the progress of the business case, a paper was put to cabinet to outline the way ahead. Cabinet voted to follow a twin track approach, firstly to gain accurate costings for the Skerton site redevelopment which has planning permission and secondly to undertake preliminary market testing to find a partner to work on either both sites or either of the sites individually. A group of county council and district councillors for the area have met again to look at local developments, including the need to support Morecambe West End by working on the possibility of an Article 4 Designation to limit HMOs.

### **Cabinet Meetings**

- 3.10 Cabinet has met twice - details of the meeting are elsewhere in the report. The budget preparation cycle has begun so cabinet members have begun on a sequence of face-to-face meetings to establish new and ongoing expenditure on both revenue and capital budgets. Engagement with residents is always part of budget preparation and has previously been done with online meetings and surveys. This year as a new strategy, cabinet members will be preparing short informative talks to be videoed and used on our website and social media.
- 3.11 Cabinet has received training this month on both the use of AI Copilot and on appearing in the media. It was also briefed on the new procurement act and the way that is affecting officers. Officers provided a briefing on the city renewable energy projects which was both enjoyable and highly informative. We hope all members will be able to access a similar briefing.

### **Assets And Developments**

- 3.12 October Cabinet passed the in-principle decision to grant a lease on Ryelands House to a not-for-profit group. Further details remain to be worked out but we understand there is already a possible tenant for part of the building and look forward to the shutters being removed as soon as possible.
- 3.13 In Williamson Park the new manager is bringing forward plans to provide a replacement covered outdoor seating area and following the demolition of the cafe building the tea and coffee cabins are to be re-sited next to the Butterfly House.
- 3.14 The Ashton Hall has had its new sound system fitted. Bookings are up and the hall is now becoming a significant music venue for the district.

- 3.15 On parking matters, the Edward Street carpark extension is almost complete and the installation of ANPR on our carparks has been carried out. This will begin to give us accurate parking data from November.

### **Events, community matters, celebrations and achievements**

- 3.16 This last month there have been a huge number of events big and small across the district, including both the Love Lancaster Music Festival and LitFest. The Salt Ayre Fun weekend returned and was well attended with the truck pull winners this year being Healthier Heroes CIC. Lancaster District CVS held the lively and hugely engaged young people's festival District Reach at the Mazuma stadium. I was pleased to meet a representative of the funder, Francis C Scott trust who praised the involvement of young people and the talented CVS team that had put the event together. The Catholic Diocese of Lancaster held a packed and beautiful celebration of its centenary followed by a cheerful get together in the Ashton Hall. The Town Hall also hosted Meet Your Muslim Neighbour, another well attended event with many opportunities to talk with local volunteers about their faith and their community activities as well as enjoy abundant hospitality. Two smaller but significant events to mention are the relaunch of the Captured Africans Memorial on the quay and the launch of the Disability Access forum led by Cllr Abi Mills.
- 3.17 Members will have heard the news about the County Council review of the provision of Day Care services at Vale View. This is a matter of concern for residents in the district. Please do consider your views - you can contribute to the consultation [here](#).
- 3.18 Finally in terms of community events, we have to celebrate this year's Festival of Culture in the Town Hall. The numbers were capped at one thousand attendees or I am sure we would have had more. Representative of all the diverse communities in the district attended, brought displays, provided singers, dancers and instrumentalists and ate some amazing food, which came round in never-ending platefuls. The organisers, principally Sarah Baines and Cllr Suhir Abuhajar have to be congratulated for providing the opportunity for so many connections and friendships to be made across our community.
- 3.19 As last time, I will finish in Morecambe. We heard this month that Morecambe West End area received one of the government's Pride in Place £20 million awards. This is yearly regeneration funding which will empower residents to bring about huge change in their neighbourhoods. From now until April 2027 when the funding will be released, the local community will be coming together to create their local board and make their plans. This is an incredibly exciting opportunity and we look forward to further news.

Caroline Jackson

## **4.0 Decisions**

The following decisions were scheduled to be considered by Cabinet on 21 October 2025

Risk Appetite
Review of Council Housing Tenancy Agreement
Statement of Gambling Policy 2025-2028
Industrial Style Roof Repairs
Letting of Community Asset (Ryelands House)
Skerton School Procurement

There have been no Officer Delegated Key Decisions taken since the last Leader's Report

The following Individual Cabinet Member Decisions have been taken since the last Leader's report.

<b>ICMD 12</b>	Procurement of Ground Care Vehicles for the Public Realm Department.	Published on 12.9.25 Taken by: Cllr Paul Hart
<b>ICMD 13</b>	Rural England Prosperity Fund 2025-26 Grant Awards	Published on 30.09.25 Taken by: Cllr Mandy Bannon

### **Background Papers**

Cabinet agenda of the meeting held on 21 October 2025