

COUNCIL

Leader's Report

28 January 2026

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 meetings held 26 November 2025 and 2 December 2025 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 This report is a little shorter than usual due to the Christmas break though there is plenty of interesting and significant news.

Budget and Finance

3.2 Work on this year's budget has continued since the Settlement announced on 17th December. The effect of the Fair Funding review had engendered a good deal of anxiety for all councils however the provisional settlement shows we will receive about £850,000 more from central government than previously anticipated. Cabinet workshops have continued to reduce the small funding gap. In working on future capitals allocations, cabinet has been particularly

concerned to ensure that legacy projects are indicated in allocations to the Development Pool. As usual officers have had significant amounts of work to accomplish whilst the rest of us were enjoying the Christmas break for which we are thoroughly grateful.

Local Government Re-organisation

- 3.3 There has been a very short hiatus since the final proposals were submitted to government in November. We now move into the preparation stage with our working group slightly reconstituted to take this forward. MHCLG has issued a very lengthy list of all their requirements for successful re-organisation: significant amounts of this can be achieved before the June/July announcement. At pan-Lancashire level there has been the appointment of an officer to direct and support the process and agreement between districts and unitaries on funding. One key element of Lancaster district preparation coming to the first working group meeting will be consideration of a Governance Review to cover possible Parishing of both Lancaster and Heysham as the only two unparished areas of the district.
- 3.4 The Leader and Chief Executive have met with MP, Cat Smith to update her on the progress of Local Government Reorganisation and the four unitary submission.

Cabinet

- 3.5 Cabinet has met regularly both formally and informally. To follow up the media training given two months ago, each cabinet member has recorded a brief introduction to their own area and its budget. Michael Hill is editing these to create media pieces to use on the website and for social media to give residents more easily accessible information on the work of the council. Peter Jackson, as members know, suffered a heart attack just after Christmas and is currently recovering. He should be back to cabinet duties by the end of February - my thanks to every cabinet member who has picked up his responsibilities in the short term.

Waste Reform

- 3.6 The roll out of the new bins and recycling collections continues. Thanks are due to the waste officers attempting to cover the many problems associated with the terraced streets in both Lancaster and Morecambe. We also appreciate those ward councillors who have kept in touch regarding the feedback, both positive and negative from their areas. Food waste bin delivery is about to begin and we look forward to the recommencing of food waste collection in the near future. At county level, the disposal process has had some delay because of difficulties with the anaerobic digester. However we are assured that food waste collected between now and September, when the digester will be online, will be disposed of in a way that reduces carbon emissions.

Health, Well-Being and Leisure

3.7 There have been a number of developments in this area. Williamson Park has seen the demolition of the old cafe building. Alongside this there has been the first meeting of the group looking at plans for the replacement. Currently, having reviewed some initial work on design and costing plus a previous design, officers are researching other frameworks. At Salt Ayre, Gravity X is being removed in order that the space it currently occupies can be re-used. In December we were excited to hear that we are one of five cities worldwide given Healthy Cities status. For this we must thank the excellent work of the Planning Department and we look forward to the expertise and support we will be offered, alongside our civic partners, in developing the health of our residents. It is good to see the Planning team after its great work on the Climate Emergency Local Plan and winning the MJ award for Climate Leadership, continues to have a recognisable effect on developing policy not only locally but in a national and international arena.

Business and Community

3.8 The subject of camper vans has regularly featured in all the time I have been a councillor. After some excellent discussion and liaison with other councils we are moving forward to welcome campervans in one of our carparks as has been done elsewhere and to support their tourism impact. We look forward to the Eric Morecambe celebrations and the role that the committee set up by council has started to play, also to the Mayor's Civic Reception for the comedian's family. The Renters Reform Act will lead to a number of significant changes for local landlords. We have begun to support landlords including student landlords by bringing in expert speakers to address Landlord's Forum and will continue to give information and support through Private Housing officers.

3.9 There were a number of enjoyable community events including our own special council to award Freedom of the City to veteran Richard Brock. I was privileged to read a lesson in the Priory Carol service along with the Mayor - a beautiful and peaceful start to the Christmas season. Finally, of course we had the very recent announcement of the Tour De France passing through the district - amazingly exciting news, and testament to the effect of our history of city centre races especially the Grand Prix. The Tour De France passing through our district will have huge potential for greater visitor numbers, will bring greater exposure to our fantastic heritage and countryside and we intend will create a health legacy in encouraging a new generation of young people (and older ones too!) into using cycles as their means of transport and exercise.

4.0 Decisions

The following decisions were scheduled to be considered by Cabinet on 13 January 2026

Corporate Fees and Charges Review 2026/27
Budget and Policy Framework Update 2026/27 to 2030/31

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.

ICMD 18	Provision of a Public Funeral Service	Published on: 4.12.25 Taken by: Cllr Mandy Bannon
ICMD 19	Procurement of Two 7.5 Tonne Cage Vehicles for the Cleansing Department	Published on: 4.12.25 Taken by: Cllr Paul Hart
ICMD 20	Complaints Policy Review and Revision	Published on: 9.12.25 Taken by: Cllr Sally Maddocks
ICMD 21	Rural England Prosperity Fund 2025-26 Grant Awards	Published on: 5.12.25 Taken by: Cllr Mandy Bannon
ICMD 22	Halton-with-Aughton Neighbourhood Plan Decision to Proceed to Referendum	Published on: 11.12.25 Taken by: Cllr Sue Tyldesley
ICMD 23	Progressing Lancaster District Heat Network: Heat Network Zoning Prospectus Grant Funding Proposal	Published on: 22.12.25 Taken by: Cllr Sam Riches

Background Papers

Cabinet agenda of the meeting held on 13 January 2026