

Lancaster District

Local Assessment 2012

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The Purpose of this report

This assessment has been produced by the Community Engagement Service to help inform the commissioning process for Lancaster City Council's funding of the local Voluntary, Community and Faith (VCF) and Arts Sectors, for 2013-14 and beyond. It is focused on providing a snapshot of factual information about the local area, national issues that affect the district, and other matters relevant to those sectors.

As an assessment it is designed to give an overview rather than be a comprehensive study of what is a very wide area of research. It does not seek to replicate needs assessments and sources of data published by other City Council services, by Lancashire County Council and by other organisations – wherever possible these are referenced in the text or under Section 6. Some data have been provided internally and are therefore not referenced, but more information can be provided as appropriate via the Partnerships Team.

1. The Demographic Picture

A general introduction to the district that includes geographical and economic information is produced by Lancashire County Council's Corporate Research and Intelligence Team: [click here to view](#) or see link (1) in the references.

Population

The 2011 Census (i) estimates Lancaster District's population as 138,400, representing an average growth rate of 3.4% over the last decade and giving it the second largest population in Lancashire after Preston. 18% of residents (24,500 people) are aged between 18 and 24, well above the national average of 13% and reflecting the number of students at the two local universities. Another 18% are over 65, which is again a little higher than the national average. There are high concentrations of retired people in Morecambe and Silverdale.

Spread

Lancaster district covers 576 square kilometres, making it the second largest district in Lancashire. Its population density is the second lowest in Lancashire after Ribble Valley (ii). Centres of population are shown in Diagram 1 below. Around 40,000 people live outside urban areas.

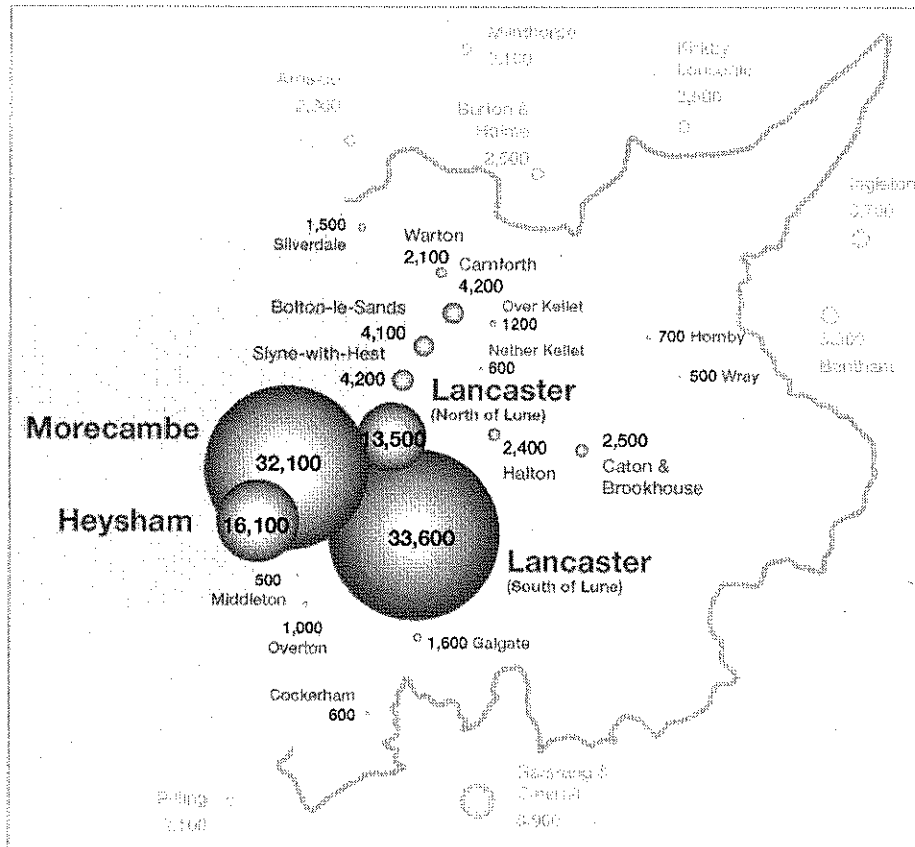


Diagram 1: District Population centres in 2001 (source: Lancaster District Core Strategy (adopted 2008)(iii))

Age

The district's population is projected^{iv}(iv) to increase by 15.8% over the next 25 years (pre-census figures), above the Lancashire figure of 12.8% but below the UK-wide estimate of 18.9%. Around four fifths of that increase will be in people over the age of 65. With Lancaster's above-average population of older people this will equate to an extra 15,000 people over the age of 65 by 2035.

Sexuality

Based on national research the estimated Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) population of Lancaster District is between 5-7% of the population, which roughly equates to around 7,000 to 9,500 people^(v). The estimated Transgender/Transsexual population of the district, again based on national research, is around 1% or 1,400 people^(vi).

Religion

As of the 2001 UK census^{vii}, **(vii)** 76.3% of Lancaster's population reported themselves as Christian (UK average 71.7%), 0.6% Muslim (UK average 3.1%), 0.3% Buddhist, 0.1% Hindu, 0.1% Jewish, and 0.1% Sikh. 13.6% had no religion. The city is covered by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lancaster and the Church of England Diocese of Blackburn.

Households

The number of households in England is projected to grow to 27.5 million in 2033, an increase of 18% over the 2008 estimate. Over the same period, growth rates in this district are projected to be 26.7%, the highest in Lancashire^{viii}. **(viii)** To meet this need, it is estimated that over 900 new market and affordable homes are required annually over the next 10 years.

In terms of social housing, Lancaster City Council manages 3800 properties, as of October 2012 there are 1878 people on the housing register – down from 2565 in October 2011.

Children, Young People and Education

*The following information comes from a general overview of Children and Young People's issues is produced for each district by Lancashire Children's Trust. [Click here to view](#) or see link **(2)** in the references.*

There are around 32,700 children and young people aged 0-19 in the district. Approximately 1,500 children born in the district every year, and around 4,400 children and young people live in poverty (19.4% of the total, versus 21.9% nationally).

As of June 2012, 116 children are looked after, and 59 are in foster care.

The district has high levels of educational qualification with 66.2% of pupils obtaining five GCSE at grades A-C (58.4% nationally). Of the 63 schools in the district, as of August 2011 19 were rated as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, none were in special measures and only one required special improvements.

There are also high numbers of people with degrees in Silverdale and Central Lancaster. Conversely Morecambe, Heysham and North Lancaster perform more poorly.

In 2011 there were 13,352 school children educated by Lancashire County Council (9.33% of the total) whose first language wasn't English.

Safety

Lancaster has slightly below average crime compared to the rest of Lancashire. Between October 2010 and September 2011, the district had a rate of 64 crimes per thousand population, a reduction from 70 in the previous twelve month period.**(ix)**^{ix}

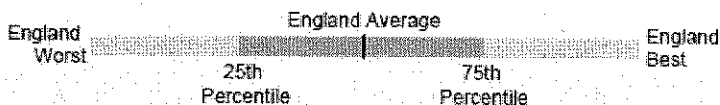
Health

A health profile for Lancaster District is produced by the North West Public Health Observatory. [Click here](#) to view or see link (3) in the references Diagram 2 below is reproduced from that profile.

The health of local people is mixed. Although life expectancy is improving it is lower on average than the rest of England – for local men it's 77 and for women it's 81, compared to the national average of 78 and 82. The difference is more pronounced between rich and poor areas in the district, with a difference of 6 years for women and 11 years for men.

This is in part caused by the relatively high levels of smoking, with 287 smoking-related deaths per year compared to the UK average of 211. On the positive side, physical activity and levels of obesity for both adults and children are better than the rest of Britain. The table below, reproduced from the Health Profile 2012 for Lancaster District, gives further comparison between Lancaster District and other areas of England.

- Significantly worse than England average
- Not significantly different from England average
- Significantly better than England average



Domain	Indicator	Local No. Per Year	Local Value	Eng Avg	Eng Worst	England Range	Eng Best
Our communities	1 Deprivation	27782	20.0	19.8	83.0	○	0.0
	2 Proportion of children in poverty ‡	4420	19.4	21.9	80.9	●	8.4
	3 Statutory homelessness ‡	114	1.9	2.0	10.4	○	0.0
	4 GCSE achieved (5A*-C inc. Eng & Maths)	899	68.2	58.4	40.1	●	78.8
	5 Violent crime	2091	16.0	14.8	35.1	○	4.5
	6 Long term unemployment	314	3.4	5.7	19.8	●	0.9
Children and young people's health	7 Smoking in pregnancy ‡	301	20.8	13.7	32.7	●	3.1
	8 Breast feeding initiation ‡	1017	69.6	74.5	39.0	○	94.7
	9 Obese Children (Year 6) ‡	185	16.2	19.0	26.5	●	9.8
	10 Alcohol-specific hospital stays (under 18)	25	89.8	61.8	154.9	○	12.5
	11 Teenage pregnancy (under 18) ‡	94	35.0	38.1	64.9	○	11.1
Adult health and lifestyle	12 Adults smoking ‡	n/a	23.3	20.7	33.5	○	8.8
	13 Increasing and higher risk drinking	n/a	23.8	22.3	25.1	○	15.7
	14 Healthy eating adults	n/a	28.8	29.7	19.3	○	47.8
	15 Physically active adults ‡	n/a	13.8	11.2	5.7	●	18.2
	16 Obese adults ‡	n/a	28.8	24.2	30.7	●	13.8
Disease and poor health	17 Incidence of malignant melanoma	22	16.7	13.6	28.8	○	2.7
	18 Hospital stays for self-harm ‡	418	300.4	212.0	509.8	○	49.8
	19 Hospital stays for alcohol related harm ‡	3171	1920	1895	3276	○	810
	20 Drug misuse	698	7.5	8.9	30.2	○	1.3
	21 People diagnosed with diabetes ‡	6336	5.5	5.5	8.1	○	3.3
	22 New cases of tuberculosis	1	0.7	15.3	124.4	○	0.0
	23 Acute sexually transmitted infections	1152	817	775	2378	○	152
	24 Hip fracture in 65s and over ‡	142	408	452	856	○	324
Life expectancy and causes of death	25 Excess winter deaths ‡	83	18.1	19.7	35.0	○	4.4
	26 Life expectancy – male	n/a	77.4	78.8	73.8	○	85.1
	27 Life expectancy – female	n/a	81.3	82.8	79.1	○	89.8
	28 Infant deaths ‡	7	4.5	4.8	9.3	○	1.2
	29 Smoking related deaths	287	269	211	372	○	125
	30 Early deaths: heart disease and stroke ‡	131	84.5	87.3	123.2	○	35.5
	31 Early deaths: cancer ‡	192	123.8	110.1	159.1	○	77.9
	32 Road injuries and deaths ‡	98	69.9	44.3	128.8	○	14.1

‡ Substantially similar to indicator proposed in the Public Health Outcomes Framework published January 2012

Diagram 2: Health Profile for Lancaster District (Source: NHS Observatory Health Profile)

If reading in black and white, the green dots are 2, 4, 6, 9, 15, 16, 20 and 22.

The red dots are 7, 8, 10, 18, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31 and 32

The district has high levels of disability or limiting long-term illness, particularly in Morecambe and Heysham. It is estimated that 23.6% of households in the area contain somebody with a disability, slightly higher than the UK average of 20%.^{x(x)}

Ethnicity and Country of origin

Over 90% of the population are estimated to be White British, with around 8500 people from a black and minority ethnic background (6.1%) and 4500 (3.2%) from an 'other white' background (including Irish and Eastern European).^{xi(xi)} Around 3000 long-term residents (here for longer than a year) are estimated to be non-UK nationals. These minority populations are concentrated, with locally significant numbers of people of Indian and Pakistani origin in Central Lancaster, and from a Chinese and Eastern Europe background in Morecambe.

In 2010 National Insurance Numbers were issued to Lancaster-resident non-UK nationals from 23 countries including Poland, India, Bulgaria, China (and Pakistan, and foreign students from over 100 different countries attending the two Universities.^{xii(xii)}

Around 3,310 short-term migrants (staying for less than 12 months) arrived in Lancaster in 2007, of which 360 were workers. There were estimated to be 2,650 overseas students studying in Lancaster in 2009/10 from over 100 different countries, of which 1,365 were undergraduates, and 1,285 were postgraduates.^{xiii(xiii)}

Gypsies and travellers have a long-established presence in Lancaster District, and many families live on privately owned sites in Heaton-with-Oxcliffe and South Heysham. The Council also manages a social site at Mellishaw Lane on behalf of Lancashire County Council.

Migration

Lancaster has experienced low net migration in recent years but figures are rising. The current estimated net inflow of long-term (i.e. staying longer than one year) international migrants of 648, which is due to around increase to around 800 in 2015/16, and remain stable after that (see Diagram 3 below).^(xii)

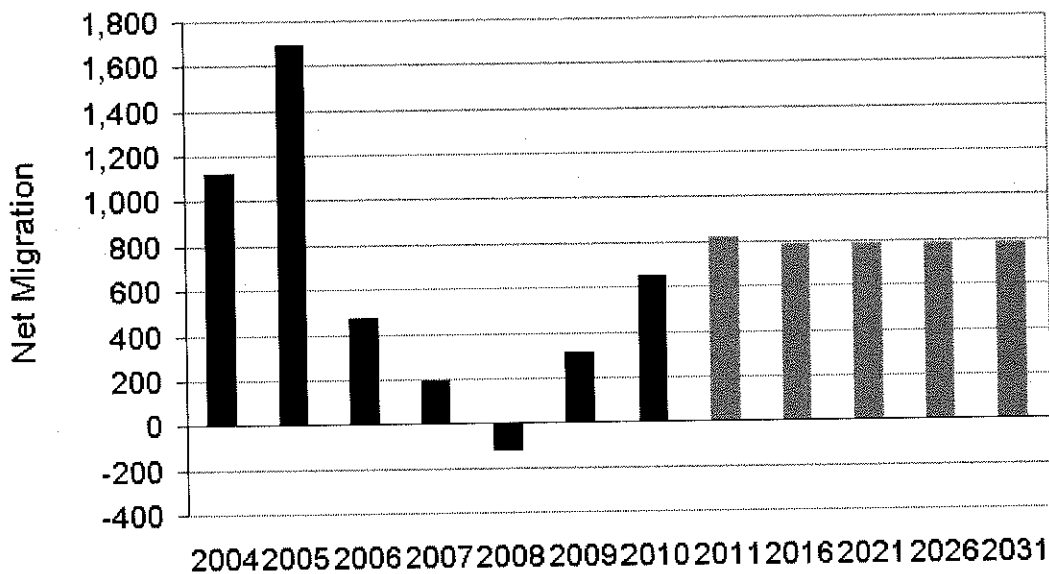


Diagram 3: Net long-term migration in Lancaster District

2. The Economic Picture

Recession

The UK is currently in recession, with GDP shrinking by 0.7% in the second quarter of 2012, the third successive quarter with negative growth^{xiv} (xiv) (see Diagram 4 below courtesy of www.economicshelp.org). The construction sector was hardest hit, with a 5.2% drop from quarter one. Manufacturing fell by 1.3% and service sector output by 0.1%. The Office for Budget Responsibility predicts that overall growth for 2012/13 will be 0.9%, but other economic forecasts are not so positive. For example, the IMF recently downgraded expected UK growth for 2012 to 0.2%.^{xv}(xv)

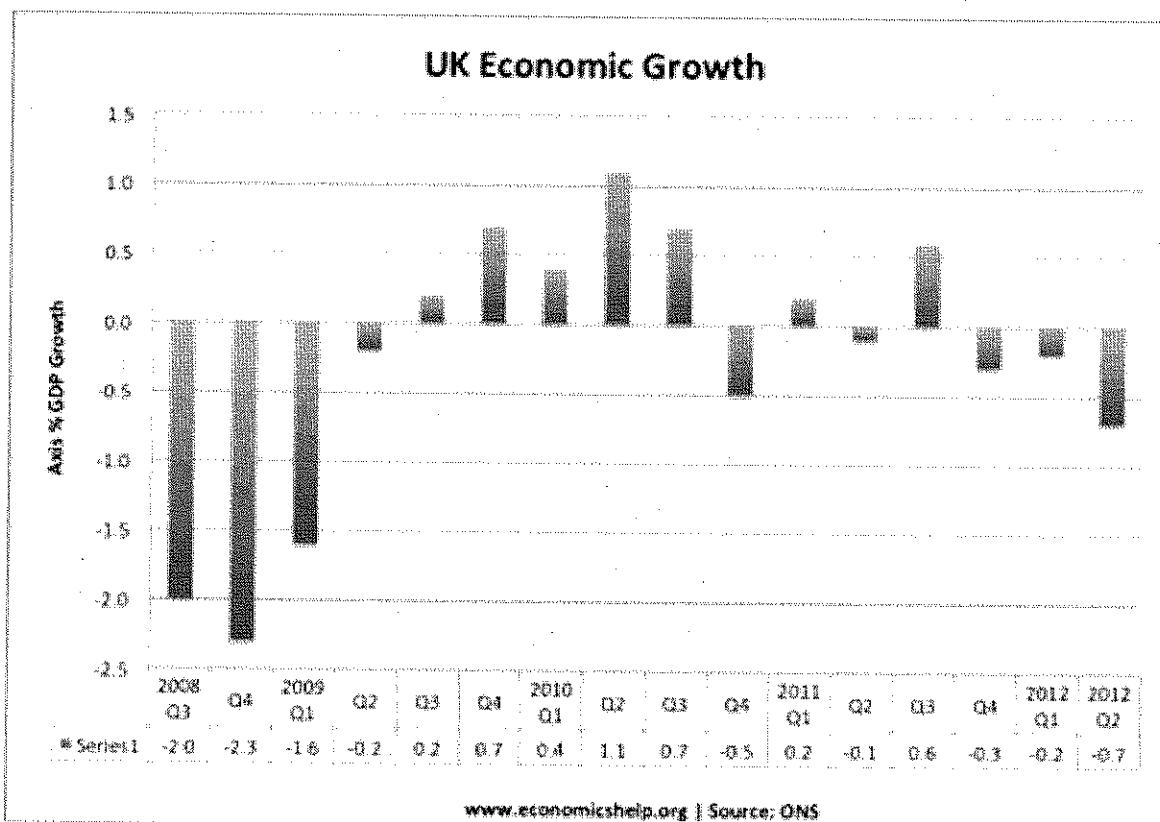


Diagram 4: UK quarterly GDP growth, 2008 to present.

Household Spending

Even if UK households have retained their employment they are still squeezed financially, with their 'real' spending power at its lowest since 2005 due to inflation rising faster than wages.(xiv)

House Prices

House prices are a key indicator of economic activity. Based on sales and valuations over the last three months the average house price in the District is £159,500, compared to a regional average of £169,800.

Sales in the District have decreased by 35.2% between 2007 and 2010.^{xvi} (xvi)

Employment

The most common socio-economic classification in the district is 'lower managerial and professional occupations', and those in this bracket represent around 16% of households. Gross weekly pay in stands at £512 per week, up from £422 in 2004, according to the latest data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. This compares to a regional average of £473 per week. (xvii)^{xvii}

The District's key economic assets are Lancaster University, Port of Heysham and Heysham Nuclear Power Station. There is also an aspiration to deliver the Lancaster University Science Park, which will generate significant growth in knowledge based jobs in the District.

Jobs are clustered at Lancaster University, in Central Lancaster, at the White Lund industrial estate and Heysham's port and power stations. The district is relatively self-contained with 16% of working age residents commuting out whilst around 13% of employees commute in. (iii)

Further development has been granted planning approval which will generate further job growth - for instance Carnforth Business Park at Junction 35 of the M6; and the delivery of the Heysham - M6 link road will significantly improve accessibility to the Heysham Peninsula and Morecambe, which will increase the attractiveness of employment sites to both local and inward investment. 78% of the District's population is classed as economically active, and 74% are employed. Of around 54,000 employee jobs, 85% are in service industries and only 7% in manufacturing.

The low vacancy rates in the District's existing employment areas (White Lund, Caton Road, White Cross) signals that the local economy remains strong. Over the last 3 years 8% of in-migration was for employment purposes.

Unemployment

A key consequence of recession is unemployment. Although Lancaster District's unemployment rate of 8.1% is identical to the national average and below the Lancashire average of 9.5%, the number of people claiming jobseeker's allowance has risen by 200 (7.9%) over the last year and now stands at 2768. Whilst far below the count in the early 90s, when over 11% of the population were claiming unemployment benefit, this figure is likely to rise as the effect of public sector job cuts is felt.

With a larger number of skilled applicants seeking available jobs, the difficulties for those who are long-term unemployed are increased. The city council's worklessness pilot project, which targeted this group to help them back into work is no longer running. However, schemes such as the Work Programme and the Youth Contract aim to address these needs.

3% of the population are claiming jobseekers allowance, again close to the national average of 3.1% and below the Lancashire average of 3.6%. However, parts of both Morecambe and Lancaster suffer particularly high levels, including the wards of Harbour (6.6%), Heysham North (6.6%) and Poulton (6.4%).^{xviii} (xviii)

Cuts to the Public Sector and Welfare State

Public Spending and government cuts

Public sector net debt was £1,038 billion at the end of June 2012, equivalent to 66.1% of GDP. This is relatively low in comparison to historical levels. However, public sector net borrowing (PSNB – annual deficit) was £126 billion for 2011/12, or around 11% of GDP, which is very high. The equivalent Office of Budget Responsibility forecast for 2012/13 is £92 billion.(xvii)

In 2010 the government initiated a five-year programme of cuts to public services in order to reduce this deficit. This has recently been extended to 7 years, and both the Prime Minister and the Chancellor has suggested it may be extended again to 2018 or beyond, due to a slower than expected financial recovery.

Benefits

36.1% of households were in receipt of some form of financial support during 2011/12, the highest being Council Tax Benefit with around 18% of households in the district benefitting from it. (xvi)

The Welfare Reform Act (2012) will make a significant change to the welfare and benefits system, replacing a raft of current support (including housing benefit, income support and tax credits) with a single 'Universal Credit' payment to each household. The system is scheduled to be rolled out from October 2013 with expected completion by 2017. There will also be a move towards managing more and more claims online.

There will be a cap on benefits set at the average net earnings for a working household, currently projected to be £500 per week (£26,000 per annum) for lone parents and couples with or without children, and £350 per week for single people without children.

The Act also puts in place more stringent conditions for receipt of the benefit (including around the search for work and staying in jobs) and more sanctions should the 'claimant commitment' be broken.

Other changes include replacing central government support for council tax benefit with a localised support mechanism in 2013 – this will include a 10% cut in the current council tax benefit bill.

A number of organisations have highlighted the expected consequences of these changes:

- Citizens Advice have noted an increase in requests for advice on benefits and tax credits, making it the issue most frequently asked about and accounting for one third of all requests made^{xix}. Issues around debt are very close behind (31%), with employment (8%), housing (7%) and relationships (5%) the next main concerns.
- The Red Cross have produced a report on the adverse effect of cuts to home-based care for elderly people: <http://www.redcross.org.uk/About-us/News/2012/June/Dangerous-cuts-are-putting-vulnerable-people-at-risk>
- Local authorities and other organisations have expressed concerns that the change in council tax benefit will result in a severe cut in council tax benefit for some vulnerable people. Whilst a 10% cut in the overall budget is expected, some groups such as pensioners will have their benefits protected, meaning that the cut for other vulnerable but non-protected groups will be much higher.

Poverty

Recession, unemployment and cuts all have an impact on poverty and there is a question as to whether in these difficult times people's basic needs are being met.

In simple terms a household in poverty is defined by the UK government as in receipt of less than 60% of the median (average) UK household income after tax and housing costs. This equates to around £124 a week for a single person, or £300 for a couple with two children under 14. This is a relative indicator as opposed to a 'fixed' assessment, but over time the cost of living and what is accepted as a minimum standard of living has also changed, making a fixed line difficult.

The latest review of poverty and social exclusion in the UK by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the New Policy Institute^{xx}(**xx**) shows that nationally 22% of the population were in poverty, a figure unchanged for four years. 29% of children live in poverty, and around 16% of pensioners. One in five households were in arrears for at least one bill.

Indices of Deprivation

In the government's indices of deprivation (2010) Lancaster district is placed 8th worst out of the 14 areas in Lancashire (12 districts plus 2 unitaries) in terms of the average of the seven deprivation categories. Nationally it is ranked 133rd out of 326 areas. This is virtually unchanged from the 2007 survey. The average score masks both areas of low deprivation and high deprivation – a handful of wards in Morecambe and Lancaster, particularly Skerton, Poulton and Heysham North, have areas amongst the most deprived in the country.^{xxi} (**xxi**)

Homelessness

Lancaster City Council accepted 114 households as homeless with priority need in 2010/11, by far the largest number across Lancashire districts and ranking the district 106 out of 329 across the country where 1 has the highest level of homelessness. This figure is only priority households and so the true figure, which would include non-priority cases, will be much higher. The figure of 114 is, however, a decrease of 66% of 2004/05 levels (the year a strong downward trend in homelessness began).^{xxii}

Food

Feedback from local groups suggests that some local families are unable to feed themselves and are now reliant on charity food provision. The Trussell Trust, which runs a UK's network of food banks, fed almost 129,000 people in 2011. There is one local bank run by a religious group, and efforts are being made by other groups to encourage local food growing and better food sufficiency within the local area.

Other Effects of Recession

A report by the Young Foundation^{xxiii} (**xxiii**) argues that the greatest unmet needs during this recession are psychological - for self-esteem, autonomy, significant relationships and competence – which have a pivotal role to play in wellbeing. Current systems in place to meet need are better at identifying and satisfying material needs (e.g. housing, transport), whereas psychological needs are harder to identify and satisfy.

3. The Community Picture

What local people have said to us

The last large scale survey on perceived need across the district was the 2008 Place Survey (Link 4 in the references). Every local authority in the country asked their citizens a series of questions about their perceptions of their area and of local public services. Around 80% of Lancaster District respondents were satisfied with their area as a place to live, close to the national average, although this varied between 88% in rural areas and 70% in Morecambe.

Respondents noted the most important issues in making somewhere a good place to live were the level of crime, clean streets and health services. However, in terms of what they felt needed addressing locally they chose:

- road maintenance (50% chose it as one of their top 3 priorities)
- traffic congestion (47%)
- activities for teenagers (46%)

More recently the 'Living in Lancashire' survey run by the county council has sought to understand residents' views. This is sent to a panel of several thousand residents across the county, several hundred of whom are in Lancaster District.

In December 2011 the panel was asked similar questions to the place survey on local priorities. Again, levels of crime, clean streets and health services were voted the most important things in making somewhere a good place to live.^{xxiv} Road repairs and activities for teenagers were still part of the top three issues to be addressed, but 'job prospects' replaced traffic congestion with 41% rating it a priority (xxiv)

As part of the ongoing work by the council to prepare for a new Commissioning Framework, a number of engagement events have been held with voluntary sector organisations to get their feedback on their priorities and what they see the key issues facing the district are.

Support for those with a disability – both physical and mental

In the recent Housing Needs Survey (x) 53% of respondents indicated a need for care or support, with 18% reporting outstanding support needs – extrapolated across the district that is around 1,550 households.

Those with an outstanding care or support need were asked what types of support they felt they needed – the top requests were for personal care (23%), help claiming welfare benefit / managing finances (20%) and looking after the home (14%).

Those who currently receive sufficient care and support services were asked who (formal or informal) provided their support. In around 73% of cases support was provided informally by family / neighbour / friend, and in 27% of cases support was provided formally by social services / a voluntary body. 10% of households received both formal & informal support.

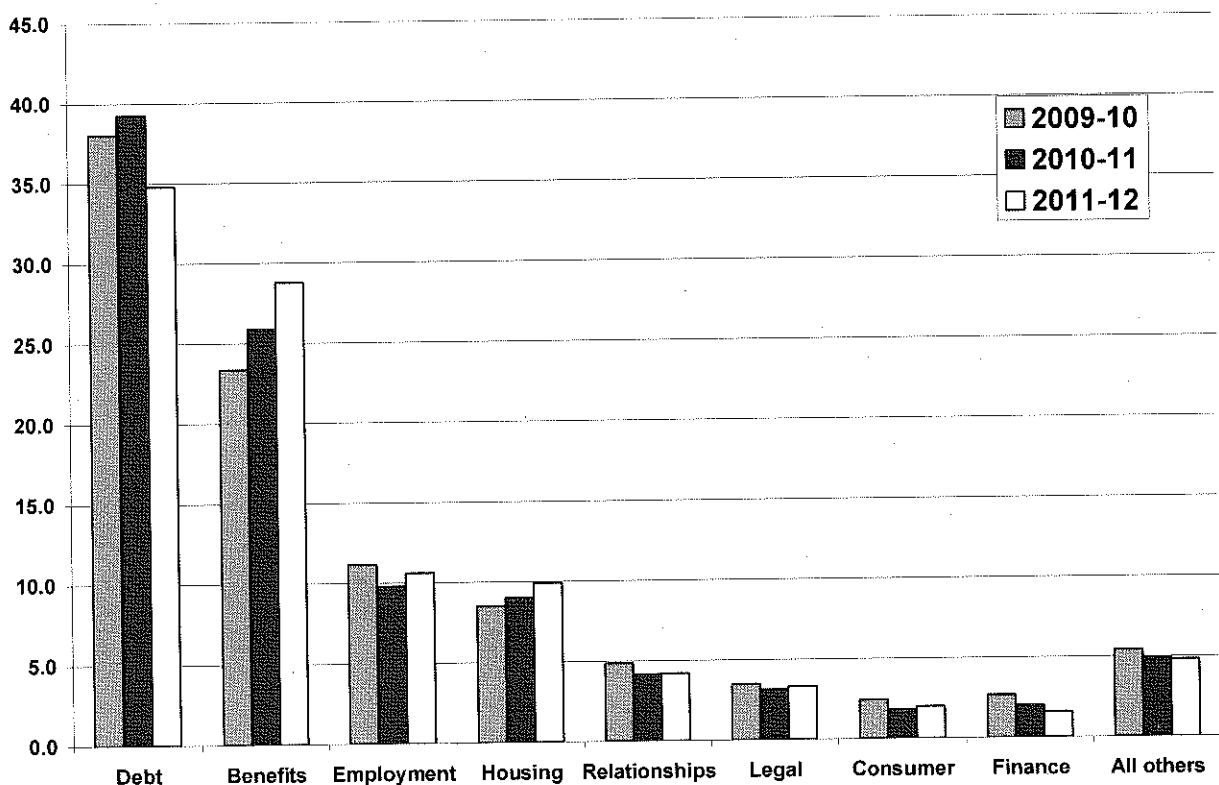
What local people have said to the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector

Lancaster and Morecambe Citizens Advice provides free advice to local people and keeps records of every enquiry received (20,243 in 2011-12) and these are categorised in Chart 1 below. The key issues are debt and then welfare/benefit issues – this is a reversal from the normal trend across the country where benefits come first and then debt, and CAB believe this reflects the relatively low wages in the area coupled with the proliferation of high interest lenders.

There has also been an increase in queries related to welfare and benefits for specific groups, such as disabled people (One Voice and Disability Online) and elderly people (Age UK), who are also very concerned about the changes being made to the welfare system, even if it is not currently affecting them.

As Personal Independence Payments (PIP) are piloted and rolled in through 2013 and Universal Credit is rolled out from October 2013 the demand for advice on social welfare benefits and services is likely to increase, so local people will need access to appropriate advice and information in order to minimise the negative impact on their lives.

Chart 1: Enquires to North Lancashire Citizens Advice by category, 2009-2012^{xxv}
(Vertical axis is average daily enquiries)



4. Trends and Opportunities

This section attempts to cover some of the trends in the district that are particularly relevant to Lancaster City Council and the opportunities to be aware of. This information can then be used to inform decisions on the commissioning of services from the VCF and Arts Sectors.

There are obviously a number of other public sector agencies concerned with improving the life of local people, and collectively their budget dwarfs the funding available to the City Council.

In particular, the ongoing trends of need of local people across Lancashire are continually assessed by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), which is undertaken by the top-tier local authorities and NHS partners. Amongst other things the JSNA includes district-level information on:

- Needs and outcomes for children and young people
- Community Safety Priorities
- Public Health and Social Care information
- Needs and outcomes for older people

[Click here](#) to view the dedicated JSNA website or see link (5) in the references.

a. Support for the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS)

The voluntary, community and faith sector provides a wide variety of services to local people and helps to meet the need arising from the changing demographics of the district's population and the current economic downturn.

Over 220 VCFS organisations are registered with Lancaster District CVS, although the total number operating within the district is thought to be much higher – especially in terms of small community groups. Around a third of those organisations employ paid staff - between them they have the equivalent of nearly 400 full-time paid posts^{xxvi} (xxvii). The number of voluntary staff is much higher (see below).

Supporting those organisations are a small number of local and regional 'infrastructure' organisations that offer advice, training, assistance with funding bids, improving professional standards, and so on. This support is of increasing importance as funding for the sector has reduced thanks to public sector budget cuts and a reduction in charitable giving.^{xxvii} (xviii)

Some of the income for infrastructure support comes from subscriptions or the sale of services but the nature of the sector being supported means that VCFS infrastructure organisations must rely at least partially on grant funding and commissioned contracts from the public sector and funding bodies. At the current time a national infrastructure-building initiative is underway, which has provided around £650,000 funding to this county to ensure sustainable and effective infrastructure support. Known as One Lancashire, the project is being coordinated by SELNET, but tight timescales and a limited amount of funding mean that achieving all the aims of the project will be difficult.

b. Volunteering and Community Involvement

Earlier in the year, Lancaster District CVS and Help Direct undertook a review of the state of volunteering in the district. It noted that around a quarter of adults in the district participate formally in some form of volunteering activity at least once a month. It's estimated there are over 867,000 person hours formally volunteered per year, which if valued at the national minimum wage equals over £5.2 million. The level of informal volunteering, such as caring for a friend or relative, is impossible to measure but is likely to be substantially higher.^{xxviii} (xxviii).

Government both nationally and locally recognises the contribution that volunteers make to their communities and in various ways have promoted local people and communities taking more responsibility in service design and delivery. In Lancaster District this is embodied in the Take Pride initiative currently being promoted by public services.

Unfortunately funding for a district volunteer bureau ran out in spring 2012, leaving no single route for someone interested in volunteering to find out about opportunities. Between 2008 and 2012 the bureau placed over 1300 volunteers with placements, many of them unemployed or from 'hard to reach' groups, over 85% of which were with the VCFS. Likewise, local organisations have not single straightforward way of advertising volunteer placements to everyone within the district.

c. IT and Technology

Advances in technology, especially broadband access to the internet, make many activities easier and cheaper for local people – for example, better value shopping and less unnecessary travel. They are also making it easier and cheaper for public services and voluntary groups to provide some of their services.

The increase in social media and internet-enabled mobile phones in particular is staggering. Worldwide there are now 340 million 'tweets' per day on Twitter and by 2015 it is expected that 1.5 billion smartphones will be sold worldwide, up from 300 million in 2010 and only 10 million in 2005.

There are a number of Lancashire projects dedicated to ensuring hard to reach groups are able to access these benefits – such as rural broadband through the B4RN Project and prototype technologies to allow homeless people better access to health services through the Patchworks project (part of the CATALYST Programme run by Lancaster University).

The One Lancashire project (see above) is also intending to introduce better online access and support for information on VCFS organisations and events.

5. Conclusions

Demographically Lancaster District mirrors the UK in many respects with the overall picture masking particular pockets and trends. Of particular note are the larger than average, and growing, number of both students and older people. Ethnicity is less varied than across the county or the country, but the number of international migrants and students is expected to increase over the coming years.

An increasingly elderly and disabled population also means more people are isolated and unable to function effectively in local society without support. In the majority of cases this is provided informally by friends, family and neighbours, or by statutory care services, but more formal befriending, timebank and caring schemes are also available to older people.

The recession and public sector cuts are having an impact on almost every household and organisation in the district but a small minority are suffering extreme levels of disruption and poverty. Historically Lancaster has had the highest level of priority homeless need in Lancashire, and voluntary organisations are also reporting increasing need for basic needs such as food.

Changes in legislation and a rise in financial hardship have meant an increase in the demand for impartial advice services. These changes are also having an impact on people's mental wellbeing – this is often a 'hidden' increased stress and pressure can lead to depression and relationship breakdown.

Not all the trends are negative. Technology continues to improve, offering individuals and communities more opportunities to communicate, organise and make decisions without the need to meet face to face. This particularly helps those with transport issues, including those in rural areas, and people who have issues with mobility. Public services and voluntary organisations are also taking advantage of these opportunities to develop new ways for people to access services and information more cheaply and at a time that suits them.

Volunteering and community involvement also seem to be remaining at pre-recession levels, although without a volunteering brokerage service in the district there is no holistic way of increasing the quality or numbers of volunteers or volunteer opportunities for local people.

The voluntary, community and faith sector as a whole continues to provide an enormous variety of services and support for local people. Whilst many local needs are the statutory responsibility of local and national public bodies, many others fall to the VCFS to provide. Whilst local government involvement in supporting the sector is discretionary, it has been vital so far in ensuring the continuation of infrastructure support to these local groups.

An important issue for dealing with these needs and trends will be the level of current and future resource available to address them. Whilst some needs may be greater than others, these may already have a large amount of public funding allocated to deal with them – therefore, what are perceived as lesser needs may actually be the ones where a district local authority can add most value. There is also an issue about perception – as evidenced by the place survey and subsequent Living in Lancashire surveys, what people feel is most important in their area may not be the ones they think most need improving. And what the majority need they may not take into account the urgent but more specialised need that a minority of people may have.

The information available in making an assessment of our district is overwhelming, although not all of it is easily accessible or straightforward to interpret. Other public sector agencies, such as Lancashire County Council and the NHS, have devoted a high level of resource in undertaking needs assessments, but they will inevitably focus on areas that are relevant to the services they wish to provide, and it is hoped that this assessment offers something more focused to Lancaster District and to the issues related to the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sectors.

6. A Summary in Numbers

Our Demographics

138,400 – our latest population estimate (Census 2011)

1500 – The number of children born every year in this district

8500 - people are from a black and minority ethnic background

8,500 to 11,000 – are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (LGBT)

77 & 81 – the life expectancy for local men & women (English average is 78 and 82)

13,283 – the estimated number of households where at least one occupant has a disability

64 – the number of crimes per thousand population (down from 70 last year)

Population Increase and Ageing

15.8% - expected increase in the district's population over the next 25 years – nearly 22,000 people

15,000 – the increase in the number of over 65s in the district by 2035

648 – the net inflow of long-term international migrants per year; likely to rise to **800** by 2015

Recession, Unemployment and Poverty

36.1% of existing households were in receipt of some form of financial support

8.1% - the unemployment rate, identical to the national average

4,400 – the estimated number of children living in poverty

8 – the district's rank in Lancashire in the 2010 indices of deprivation (out of 14)

Cuts to the public sector and welfare state

£1.038 trillion – net public sector debt – it rose **£126 billion** in 2011/12

£34 Billion – estimated reduction in yearly welfare budget from 2016

28% - the average cut in local authority budgets over the lifetime of this parliament

Volunteering and Involvement

One in four - the number of adults volunteering formally at least once a month

867, 301 – the number of volunteer hours given in the district during 2011/12

£5.2 million – the estimated value of those hours at the national minimum wage

7. References and Resources

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- ii) **Area and Population Density:** Lancashire County Council.
<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/web/?siteid=6120&pageid=37235&e=e>
- iii) **Lancaster District Core Strategy:** Part of the Local Development Framework: outlines spatial development http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/ldf-html/section_c256.html
- iv) **Population projections** – Lancashire County Council
<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/web/?siteid=6120&pageid=35464&e=e>
- v) **Estimate of LGBT population (Report 37, 2009)** – Equality & Human Rights Commission
http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/research/research_37_estimatinglgbpop.pdf
- vi) **Prevalance of Transexual/Transgender population** - Gender Identity Research & Education Soc
<http://www.gires.org.uk/Prevalence2011.pdf>
- vii) **Census 2001 - data on religion** - Office for National Statistics
<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/census-2001/data-and-products/index.html>
- viii) **Household Projections** –DCLG
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/2033household1110>
- ix) **Crime Statistics for Lancaster District** – Office for National Statistics
<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk> (enter Lancaster District)
- x) **Lancaster District Housing Needs Survey** – David Coultie Associates
<http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/housing-policy/housing-needs-demand-survey/>
- xi) **2009 Population: Ethnicity Estimates** – ONS
<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/index.html?nscl=Population+Estimates+by+Ethnic+Group>
- xii) **Lancaster District Local Migration Profile Winter 12** – NW Regional Strategic Migration Pship
<http://www.northwestrsm.org.uk/index.php/migration-statistics>
- xiii) **International Student Information:** Lancaster University
<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/study/international-students/>
- xiv) **UK Economic Activity** – Office for National Statistics
<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/index.html?nscl=Economy>
- xv) **UK Quarter 2 growth estimates** – Economics Help
<http://econ.economicshelp.org/2012/07/uk-growth-downgraded-to-02.html>
- xvi) **Property Analytics** - Hometrack
<http://www.hometrack.co.uk/> (subscription access only)
- xvii) **Public Sector Finances - June 2012** – Office for National Statistics
<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/psa/public-sector-finances/june-2012/stb---june-2012.html>
- xviii) **Lancashire Unemployment statistics** – Lancashire County Council
http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/office_of_the_chief_executive/lancashireprofile/unemployment/index.asp
- xix) **To be confirmed**
- xx) **Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2011** – Joseph Rowntree Foundation/New Policy Institute <http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/monitoring-poverty-2011>
- xxi) **Indices of Deprivation 2010** – Communities and Local Government
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/research/indicesdeprivation/deprivation10/>

- xxii) **Lancashire Homeless statistics by LA Area** – Lancashire County Council
http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/office_of_the_chief_executive/lancashireprofile/main/homelessness.asp
- xxiii) **The Receding Tide** – The Young Foundation
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- xxiv) **Living in Lancashire Surveys** – Lancashire County Council
<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/web/?siteid=6339&pageid=37422&e=e>
- xxv) **To be confirmed**
- xxvi) **Advice Trends 2011/12** – Citizens Advice
https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/index/advice_trends
- xxvii) **The Sector Counts** – Lancaster District CVS
<http://www.lancastercvs.org.uk/theselectorcounts.pdf>
- xxviii) **Economic Crisis, need & voluntary organisations in Lancaster** - Lancaster University
(2011-12 report yet to be published online).
- xxix) **The State of Volunteering in Lancaster District** – Alan Chapman Consulting
<http://www.lancastercvs.org.uk/publications/volunteering2012.pdf>

Further Useful Information

- 1) **Lancaster District Profile** produced by Lancashire County Council:
<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/web/?siteid=6233&pageid=39632&e=e>
- 2) **Lancaster CYP Key Facts** – produced by Lancashire Children's Trust
<http://www.lancashirechildrenstrust.org.uk/web/viewdoc.aspx?id=91144>
- 3) **Lancaster Health Profile** produced by the North West Public Health Observatory
http://www.apho.org.uk/default.aspx?QN=HP_METADATA&ArealD=50498
- 4) **Place Survey 2008**. The last nationwide survey of local people's attitudes to public services and the place they live. Results at <http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/news/2009/oct/place-survey-results/>
- 5) **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment**. Produced by top-tier local authority and health service following 2007 legislation. Provides a comprehensive picture of the health of the population including unmet needs and inequalities. www.lancashire.gov.uk/jsna

Community Safety Strategic Assessment produced by Lancaster District CSP
<http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/community-safety/>

NEF interim research into vulnerable communities
http://www.neweconomics.org/sites/neweconomics.org/files/New_Austerity_and_Big_Society_Media_Report_-_WEB.pdf

VCFS Commissioning Workshop at MIG, Wednesday 19 September 2012 at Furniture Matters

<p>Numbers agreeing</p>	<p>Role and purpose of VCFS – what does it need to be doing – will it be doing anything different or differently to what it is doing now?</p>	<p>To work towards this, what can we do to make this possible?</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Centralise database for volunteers in the district – volunteer bureau</p>	<p>Lots of co-ordinating and talking Constant updates + communication Be honest about what we can share! Have a “skills bank” of those with expertise in certain areas so we can actually help each other Simple, assemble leaflet of basic info about the support and networking structures available for small organisations that may not even realise there is a “sector” they belong to! Each organisation to compile a list of voluntary opportunities within their organisation with job description (roles) and disseminate to other agencies or to one database for all to access</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Resource Sharing (rooms, vehicle use)</p>	<p>Information sharing between services. Lessen the divide between Lancaster and Morecambe Map of the current voluntary sector – what they do – what they have – what they share Communicate – more effective communication Communication with other agencies – find out what funding/information is out there More forums – relevant and focussed!</p>

2	Reduce costs for services to rent rooms etc	Empty offices buildings identified and negotiate reduced rents – better than being empty Council could make a list of suitable properties that are empty (possibly at reduced rent to VCFS)
0	VCFS do a brilliant job – they are inspiring – they fill gaps	
0	They need to co-ordinate more	
0	Monitor and promote	Disseminate info about local services/service changes to other agencies (Help Direct)
13	To fill/replace the gaps left by other services closures	<p>Research and identify needs ID needs Talk to other services and work together Clear direction – not too many leads etc... Better partnership working to identify service gaps and/or needs – tell Help Direct Feed back service gaps to Lancashire County Council service commissioners whether they want them or not! Work together as a community to keep services provided in the voluntary sector funded FEAR – don't expect VCFS to pick up all the work of the frontline services without £ (The obvious) Funding Support and develop good work already being done</p>

0	Pick up the pieces	
4	Smaller/specialised support rather than wide ranging – due to lack of funding	
1	Chase ever diverse/changing funding streams	
1	Need to be more cost effective and possibly streamlined	Do yourself out of a job
0	Info sharing	
2	Encourage involvement and independence/personal responsibility	
10	To get more people in the community involved, with less funding more help is needed	Raising more awareness about where people can help – promote these areas
0	Supporting those who are falling through the “net” (safety net and welfare state)	
1	Provide opportunities for all	
2	Maintain communication between those who feel increasingly disempowered → hope	Invest time in meetings like MIG so that we build relationships which can become a basis for networking, cross referral, joint enterprise etc
2	Young people	Give more opportunities to young people – use their thoughts, ideas – future service users

5	Leading role in innovating and initiating social solutions eg local currency, food banks	Links with Lanc Uni initiatives eg Catalyst project, Chris May work
1	More professional	Define more professional
3	Will be attempting to fill an increasingly wide gap between need and provision as centralised services decrease	
0	Still exists	Capacity support VCFS to do some income generation to then provide services rather than always relying on grants Politicise
1	Possibly diversified to include social enterprise! etc in structure	
3	Organise! Agitate! Campaign!	
1	Will it/can it maintain it's independence? Still needs to challenge/campaign	Organise
0	Less direct work, more paperwork?	Be transparent with each other Joint bids/tendering
0	Compete! (limited funds, many agencies...)	Don't work in isolation Avoid localism (1 spot) Level playing field
1	To help people from reaching crisis point	
6	Campaigning/awareness raising	Communication – listen to people's needs and what they want Ensure VCFS is independent enough to challenge policies/statutory bodies

Organisations represented (numbers of people if more than one)

- Morecambe Interagency Group:
- Barnardo's Lancashire Young Carers (x2)
- Catalyst, Lancaster University
- Community Fire Safety Practitioner
- CVS (x2)
- Furniture Matters
- Galloway Society
- Health Trainers
- Help Direct (x2)
- Home Start
- i 2 i, Lancaster
- Lancashire Link
- Lancaster District Homeless Action
- Ludus Dance
- Morecambe Bay Food Bank
- Morecambe Churches Forum
- North Lancs CAB
- Olive Branch (x2)
- Peer Support (x2)
- Phoenix and Butterfly Projects
- Red Rose Recovery, CVS
- Youngaddaction North Lancs.

VCFS Commissioning Workshop at Lancaster, Wednesday 06 September 2012 at CVS

Over the next three years, what do you think the needs of the people of the district will be?

Good Health

Good nutrition/food

Meaningful relationships

Statutory changes have produced gaps in provision, and pressure on voluntary services e.g. mental health needs rising.

Housing – quality as well as type/quantity

Employment – paid and unpaid

Volunteers – more to do more

Meaningful livelihoods – use of peoples time gives meaning/offers a good service to the community/caring e.g. childcare

Isolation & dementia particularly within ageing population/impact on families

Transport – getting to places – young and old

Access to services

Information and advice, consistency of message e.g. benefits, jobseekers

Joined up services – avoiding unnecessary duplication, talking to each other, proper links – not in Boxes

Social Support – voluntary sector – frontline e.g. around housing

Changing priorities of statutory sector – voluntary sector having to pick up

Icing on cake → fire-fighting

Welfare Reform Act – changes that could half peoples income i.e. much greater impact than changes before hitting the same people more than once

Crisis support as rules change – Crisis international 25-60% up

Regulations change but need remains, who picks this up?

Geography – funding between Kendal/Preston Lancaster/Morecambe consortiums?
– coming together locally likely to increase Family Relationship Support

Domestic Abuse – different set up for U18s Always been a gap

Knock on effects (cycle) e.g. unemployment trigger/early intervention

Fact portfolio to assist with funding bids e.g. save time/effort/duplication

Information – even about what exists now – awareness of changes – though same higher expectation of service

Are there any gaps in provision?

Housing- affordable housing for young people and older people, points system is difficult, relies on IT – what about people non-IT-literate?
 Statutory changes/closures puts pressure on voluntary services
 More resources and finding to allow change and support, with more flexibility
 Benefits/jobseekers restructure has impacts in different areas especially disability and families
 Funders too project orientated – not long term. Funders need to look at sustainability of work. Sometimes projects take longer because staff are part time and/or voluntary
 Access to IT – lots of jobs only available online – not everyone is comfortable with IT
 Mental health support – need for service user lead peer support, these people are lost, not seen, seem to have no voice – drug users not getting correct support – severe and enduring mental health needs gaps due to recent decisions
 Access to IT – library not suitable for everyone
 Basic literacy, basic skills
 Welfare Reform Act – changes that could half peoples income i.e. much greater impact than changes before hitting the same people more than once
 Future Gap - Legal Services Act – less provision in whole of W Lancs – debt – housing – legal aid awareness/support
 Domestic Abuse – different set up for U18s Always been a gap
 Employment – so much unemployment, employers are not employing people with muddles backgrounds because so many ‘easier’ applicants. Especially young men under 30 – risk of dropping out of society – subculture – need appropriate support to avoid this
 Older pool of volunteers – increasing age of retirement – a need for voluntary organisations to find ways of linking in to retirement schemes, leaving work for retirement eg hospitals, university – also childcare responsibilities
 Need to cover organisations which no longer around e.g. adult mental health, CHIPS; or may exist in much diminished form
 Funding structure where everyone fits e.g. if not quite health, not quite education round peg/square holes
 Age profile of volunteers (students) – volunteer bureau
 Information – even about what exists now – awareness of changes – though same higher expectation of service
 – what does it still provide?

Does this provide any opportunities to work together in a different way?

Developing communications so more people know about what resources are out there

Volunteering – personalised service esp for higher skills e.g. pathways for skilled volunteers

Expansion of some current VCFS services – doing more of what works

Better use of public buildings e.g. schools during evenings, weekends and holidays, land for allotments, orchards, etc, St Leonards House

Moving from a centralised, hierarchical structure to a networked, web, evolving, equal, organisations working together and listening to and trusting each other

Sharing resources

Local currency + time banking to break cycles of unemployment

Need to trust statutory organisations – need more understanding that what is promised will be delivered. E.g. it would be good for statutory officer to spend a day with VCFS worker

Large organisations cannot force this change

Move away from protectionism, parochial attitudes (this often comes from the passion people have about their area of work/concern)

Increase revenue funding available

How many partners can we get together in a bid (i.e. value for money) added value of joint bids – more scope – broader client base, broader benefits

Collective working relationship – recognising expertise

Partnership approach

Work experience – County as corporate parent.

Progression route e.g. Strawberry Fields/Stewards

Volunteering – appropriate roles, volunteer support

Training for group on how to work collaboratively – skills, legal implications

Strong agencies – currently not talking together – duplication of errors/ideas – some sense of co-ordination – by ‘theme’ rather than just a high level one?

Share a story about a recent time when your organisation did some of its best work and made a real difference. What have you learnt about the best ways for the voluntary sector to work?

Providing a safe place – haven
 Having paid volunteer co-ordinators
 Volunteers willing to give time and resources
 Access to professional services
 Because we're volunteering, people appreciate that we're doing this because we care
 Being able to give flexible responses according to individual needs – service-led
 Being welcoming/approachable/non-threatening/accessible/independent
 Up-skilling workers and volunteers
 Giving volunteers high quality training
 Minimal bureaucracy
 Having the time to befriend and really understand people
 Identifying real needs – by being embedded in the community we serve
 Individual help on a one to one basis to assist people struggling with health problems etc when crisis support didn't work
 Getting together – like-minded groups to play card etc and look after themselves
 People who live in squalor can be a problem to help – volunteers could be in danger from cleanliness issues
 People who are in total isolation allowing volunteers to take them out of their living space and giving change of outlook and new connections
 Making connections for groups bringing different contact together made a "big difference"
 Barton Road CC no support fort community work so member volunteered to set up a sewing group – inspirational – bringing older and younger people together
 Take people out of isolation on outings and talks – relaxation and comfortable company

When asked to choose the top three most important things:

- Personal contacts + trust**
- Networking links with appropriate agencies**
- Communication vital**

Further comments:

Volunteering can change people lives. Volunteers need time to be 'nurtured'.
 Relationships can develop in an environment perceived as safer.
 Passion is fine but do those with passions need opportunity to enthuse others and share the passion
 The sector changes lives for people as 'clients' and for people as 'volunteers'.
 More shared resources. Time/time bank – practical resources.
 Volunteers + training
 Access to volunteers
 Success rate info employment from volunteering
 Short term benefits e.g. addiction rehab often ruined by financial shortfall – need for longer term commitment
 e.g. CLN had to 'chase funding' – led organisation away from 'ethos' and lose support
 People some time need 'time' opportunity to look at their issues in a 'safe' environment to see the 'bigger' picture – still 'reluctance' to access benefits

Imagine three years into the future – voluntary sector is thriving, even within limited budgets. What does it look like?
 By working together, what can we do to achieve this vision?

- Networking
- Trust
- Communications
- Funding led rather than project led – be aware!
- Passions and opportunity to share
- Service user led- experience
- Cascade of services from one contact
- Act as a link between services and public
- Communications between statutory services and VCFS
- Accessible, approachable, non-threatening
- Independent!
- Recognising expertise
- Funding needs long term being met
- Longer funding streams
- Don't want – external agencies delivering local services
- Do want local agencies – local solutions, local problems

Continued over page...

Imagine three years into the future – voluntary sector is thriving, even within limited budgets. What does it look like?
 By working together, what can we do to achieve this vision? (Continued from previous page)

Success rate voluntary into employment

Time and capacity to replace and train volunteers

Voluntary sector – not third sector

People know where to go for the help they need

Information sharing including statistics, local base

Access to good pool of volunteers

Access to good pool of volunteers

More core funding. Realistic timescales.

Diversification of income streams.

Training, skilling up – how to work collaboratively.

More volunteers taking

Flexible funding

Encourage more volunteers

Better networked and more collaborative

Supporting workers

More support to enable volunteers to take on responsibilities

Statutory services fulfilling their responsibilities not taking the easy option and just sending (dumping) people to the third sector
 Community hubs – voluntary sector groups working in the same building. The Cornerstone.

More user led organisations, expand hours, Morecambe as well as Lancaster, better funding

Real communication between statutory and voluntary sector services not tokenistic. Need action.

Appropriate access to information e.g. supplying hard copies as well as web based.

? Clearer definition between voluntary groups working on needs and those working on hobbies.

Thriving and well supported local organisations sharing expertise and aims to deliver local services.

Co-ordinated services – enable regular forums (like this) to discuss and solve issues.

Everyone can spend a day per week on a choice of volunteer opportunity (so max 4 day working week) and obtain reward in timebank/local
 currency payments – need core funding for voluntary organisations to do this.

Funder listening to voluntary sector about need and fund longer

Training and support for harder to reach 'potential' volunteers to build confidence and skills

Inform young people of career opportunities within voluntary sector who have good education – empower sector with clever people!

Organisations represented (numbers of people if more than one)

Lancaster Voluntary Sector Forum:

Barton Road Community Centre (x2)

Birchall Trust

Children's Society

CVS (x4)

North Lancs CAGB

Olive Branch

One Voice

Peer Support (x2)

Red Rose Recovery

Relate Lancashire

St Thomas's Church

Strawberry Fields Training

Transition Lancaster

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THE COMMISSIONING PLAN

GLOSSARY

INTRODUCTION

For some years the council has invested in important services delivered by the voluntary, community and faith sector and the arts sector, to improve the quality of life, the local economy and the health and well being of local people.

The council's current investment supports a wide range of activities and there are many examples of success. Overall, the council's monitoring of this investment has indicated that some very helpful, value for money services have been delivered that have made a crucial difference to the lives of local people and have helped to attract visitors to the district.

Building on this, the council wishes to re-invest via a commissioning framework in the voluntary, community and faith sector and the arts sector to help them to deliver services for the district. This will provide an opportunity to refresh priorities for investment in line with current council priorities, as expressed in the council's Corporate Plan 2012 – 2015. In the context of many changes affecting people's lives and the support they need, a commissioning framework will also allow for a re-assessment of current and anticipated needs, existing service provision and potential gaps in services. New providers or new services can be recognised and an improved understanding gained about what really works and makes a difference to people's lives. The council would like to see its commissioning arrangements providing a platform for collaboration, enabling organisations to work together to deliver services.

A significant element of commissioning relates to engagement with partners. Where procurement or grant giving identify what services are desired and provide investment, commissioning is developed by working with people and providers to gain an understanding of needs, existing services and gaps. The council would like to reinforce good communications and partnership links by working closely with partners as part of the commissioning process to ensure that investment can be used to add the most value and to make a difference in ways that matter.

The council has stated that:

"Support for voluntary, community and faith (and arts and culture) groups has continued in 2011/ 2012 and the council wants to continue to work with these sectors in the future to consider how together we can ensure important services for the district are delivered"

Lancaster City Council Corporate Plan 2012- 2015

PURPOSE AND COMMITMENTS

Core purpose

The core purpose of our commissioning arrangements is to ensure that the council's investment in VCFS and Arts services has the maximum positive impact on the lives of people in the district and the local economy.

Commissioned services will be expected to align with the council's Priorities as identified in the Corporate Plan. For 2012 – 2015 these are;

Economic Growth
Health and Well Being
Clean, Green and Safe Places
Community Leadership

The intention to protect the most vulnerable in our society is a thread that runs through all of the council's Priorities and provides an important emphasis for development of commissioned services.

The cross cutting themes of **Working Together in Partnership**, **Managing the Council's Resources** and **Environmental Sustainability** indicate clear principles for the way in which the council will undertake commissioning and are reflected in the commissioning principles and core criteria for assessment of service options.

Lancaster City Council's Corporate Plan can be viewed at:
<http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-priorities-and-key-documents/corporate-plan-2012-15/>

What is Commissioning?

At this stage, the council has developed a locality based commissioning model for its own investment in specific services at the local level. This is likely to lead to opportunities for more strategic commissioning in the future where, in some cases, the council's investment is considered as part of the overall investment in the district.

There are many definitions of commissioning but for the purposes of the council's approach to commissioning services from the VCF and arts sectors, Commissioning is:

The process of specifying, securing and monitoring services to meet people's needs at a strategic level and in an efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable way.

COMMISSIONING PRINCIPLES

CITIZEN FOCUSED

The organisations that deliver services within the district are vital because of the services they deliver and the difference they make but also because of their ideas, knowledge, experience and commitment. However, investment will be clearly focused on achieving positive outcomes for individuals, families and communities

VALUE FOCUSED

To achieve the maximum impact from its investment, the council will focus on Value, taking account of Social Return on Investment, that is, social, economic and environmental value, not just transactional value. In general, and as far as possible, administrative burdens will be reasonable and proportionate and investment will be focused on delivery of quality services that lead to positive outcomes.

WORKING TOGETHER

Given current pressures and challenges, the council is committed to Working Together in Partnership and believes that, now and in the future, joint approaches will help to provide efficient and effective ways of delivering many different kinds of services across the district. In line with this, the council is keen to encourage and support more collaboration, cooperation, joint working and sharing of resources between organisations to help to protect important services and ensure their viability in the future.

To gain maximum impact from investment, prioritisation will be around:

- Prevention and early intervention as a means of reducing demand for services in the long term.
- Investment that provides a high value return by securing benefits to many service delivery organisations and underpinning viability of a range of services
- Relevant services where joint investment, match funding or contribution of resources provide good or exceptional value
- Development of long term and sustainable services

The council's role will be proactive in this. The core criteria for commissioning includes collaboration but, in addition, the council will consider how services can work together, if there are opportunities to combine service delivery arrangements to make the most of specific expertise and also how to ensure administrative and other support functions are as efficient as possible so that most investment can be focused on service delivery.

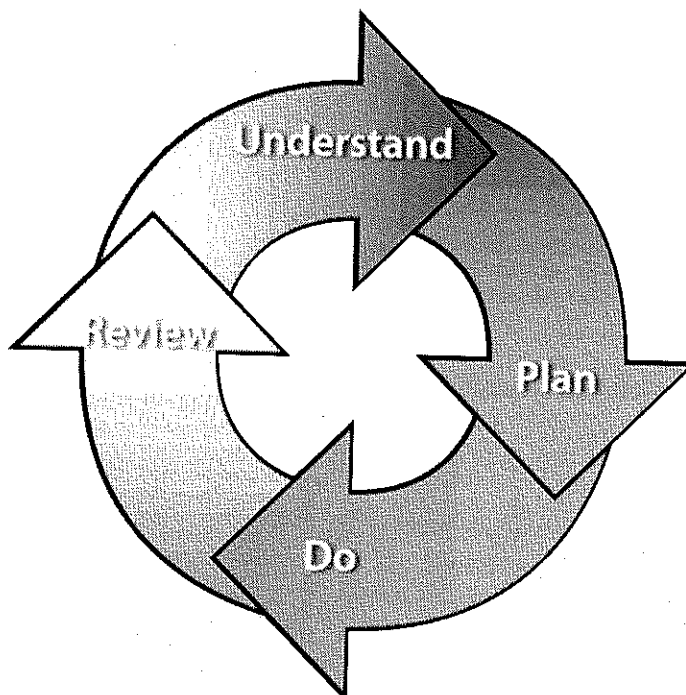
ENGAGEMENT

Understanding needs and opportunities, as well as issues affecting service providers, is crucial if the right services are to be delivered for the right people, at the right time and in the right place. Service providers are closely engaged with individuals and communities and have a detailed understanding of their needs, opportunities and the changes affecting their lives. Our dialogue with providers is an invaluable part of the commissioning process and a range of activities will ensure active engagement is an integrated part of commissioning process at all stages.

TRANSPARENCY

Commissioning decisions will be transparent, fair and lawful. The council will provide clear information on its commissioning arrangements, which will be widely and publicly available.

THE COMMISSIONING CYCLE



Commissioning is not just procurement but is a much broader recurring cycle. The key stages in the council's commissioning cycle are:

UNDERSTANDING

• Engagement

The council wishes to take many opportunities to engage with partners, service providers and individuals or their representatives, in order to ensure that there is ongoing dialogue and a genuine understanding of needs, opportunities and emerging changes. This will occur at various times through planned engagement exercises and informally via opportunities that arise day to day. As part of the commissioning cycle there will be engagement with service providers at all stages via planning delivering and monitoring arrangements.

• Local Assessment

The Needs Assessment underpinning the commissioning process has a number of elements. Desktop research is fairly high level and provides information from a range of sources to provide contextual background on the demography and economy of the district as well information as on social and environmental factors. Qualitative information is used where this is available and may include local research and information relating to user feedback on needs and existing services. The council's engagement work provides context, feedback, ideas and commentary from individuals, communities and service providers and this is seen as vital in terms of developing service specifications for the future.

• Existing Service Provision

Mapping existing services in the district is challenging for many reasons. Both demand and services change and adapt and currently some services are being lost due to financial and other pressures. However, understanding the nature of current provision, including its quality and impact, is important if the impact of any investment is to be understood. The council will seek to understand existing service provision by monitoring relevant policy and funding, via its engagement work and from its ongoing communications with service providers.

• Gap Analysis

Understanding need and existing service provision are pre-requisites in terms of understanding the gap and the opportunities to add value to what currently exists. In terms of VCFS and Arts, there are existing statutory, mainstream and funded services and the council's investment needs to add value to these. Data available from the Local Assessment and engagement work provides more narrative and a qualitative view of what is changing, is still needed most and also where there are opportunities to achieve significant impact.

PLAN

• Options Appraisal

Once needs and opportunities are identified, it is possible to identify what options are feasible to deliver the outcomes required and the levels of investment needed to achieve the desired impact. Engagement work is key to this stage of commissioning. In most circumstances, funds will be limited and it is vital that due consideration is given to achieving the best possible and most relevant outcomes for the investment that is available. Core criteria, for the council's commissioning arrangements including Value for Money, Added Value and Sustainability support this.

• Service Design

Service design needs to involve and include sector partners on a broad basis to ensure relevant expertise and knowledge is brought into the process and planned services are feasible, realistic and deliverable as well as achieving the outcomes and impact desired. The council wishes to focus on Value, that is, a return on investment that includes Social Value, not just transactional value, and Added Value, where investment complements and enhances existing provision.

Do

• Procurement

Procurement of services will be required in line with the council's normal procurement guidance and regulations and processes will be clear and transparent. Appropriate procurement underpins service standards and value for money. Whilst cost will always be a consideration, the council has established core criteria for commissioned services that include a range of quality factors that will form the basis of any assessment and appraisal process.

To ensure that the procurement process is fair, transparent and inclusive the council will publish all relevant information and will publicise tendering or bidding opportunities as widely as possible. Impartial advice and guidance will be provided and workshops will be arranged and available to all applicants to provide opportunities to gain further details on procurement arrangements, quality standards and timescales.

Core criteria for commissioned services	
Links to corporate priorities and other approved strategies	Services will assist the council in delivering its priorities and desired outcomes and support delivery of other relevant, approved strategies
Deliverability	No major barriers exist that could negatively affect delivery of services
Quality Assurance	Services can be delivered within budget, timescale and to the required quality standards
Value for Money	Services are economic, efficient and effective and the return on investment can be clearly identified. Leverage and match funding from other sources has been achieved wherever possible
Added value/ additionality	Opportunities to add value to other initiatives in the district have been sought and acted upon wherever possible and that duplication is avoided
Sustainability	Services can become more self sustaining in the future with a reducing reliance on public sector funding. Efficiencies have been achieved where possible
Collaboration	Opportunities for collaborative working and shared delivery of services have been sought and proposals/ joint submissions developed where appropriate
Service specific criteria	Quality standards or particular requirements relevant to specific services

• Service Delivery

Service delivery arrangements will be based on clear contractual arrangements that express what investment is for, the outcomes expected, communications arrangements and the information that will be needed to inform progress and achievements. The council will seek to create an honest and open dialogue, which is supportive of service deliverers but that provides scope and flexibility to adapt and develop services to meet changing needs, whilst maintaining quality.

REVIEW

• Performance monitoring

Performance monitoring will be based on working closely and constructively with delivery partners. The council wishes to maintain strong ongoing communications to help to ensure that services achieve the best possible outcomes but also so that there is a constructive approach to managing important changes, risks and to capturing good practice.

Whilst appropriate quality standards for delivery and for financial management remain, the emphasis of performance monitoring arrangements will be on Outcomes and Value.

. Evaluation

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of progress and outcomes will be used not only to assess the impact of current investment but also to inform development of future service delivery. It will capture the overall impact, the current position of delivery partners, current and emerging needs in the sector or district and also what has been learned.

The council will be working with partners to capture and review lessons from previous delivery to drive continuous improvement. The intelligence gathered through such evaluation will be invaluable in terms of designing future, high impact, services that are efficient, effective and economic that also add value to other existing provision.

THE COMMISSIONING PLAN

The Commissioning Plan is an associated document that provides much more detailed information on the council's planned investment in services. This includes outline specifications for the services the council wishes to commission, the levels of investment to be provided, expected outcomes and information relating to the procurement, contractual and performance management arrangements.

Separate Commissioning Plans will be published in relation to the services delivered by the voluntary, community and faith sector and the arts sector and, when finalised, these will be available on the council's website.

GLOSSARY

Commissioning

The process for deciding how to use the resource available for improving individual, community and economic outcomes, in the most efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable way

Commissioning Cycle

Often shown as a diagram, this is the ongoing nature of commissioning, beyond a standard procurement exercise. In the context of Lancaster City Council this means the stages of Understand, Plan, Do and Review, which run in a recurring fashion.

Commissioning Framework

The key background document outlining the approach that is being taken for a particular commissioning area, which includes the purpose for such commissioning, the principles being followed for such a process, core criteria for commissioned services and the commissioning cycle.

Commissioning Plan

A document, associated with the Commissioning Framework, that provides much more detailed details of which services the council wishes to commission, the levels of investment to be provided, outcomes to be achieved and procurement, contractual and performance management arrangements

Engagement

Commissioning is an arrangement that requires close communication with service deliverers and an understanding of needs. Engagement can be undertaken in various ways but primarily the council seeks to meet face to face in workshop style settings. These events are helpful but are part of a wider approach that includes ongoing communications with a range of sector groups and individuals on a regular basis.

Outcomes

Outcomes are end results. They can describe states of well being or they can refer to results achieved by a service or intervention over time. For example, "a cleaner, greener environment" is an outcome achieved over time as a result of a range of activities such as street cleaning, environmental improvements, maintenance of parks and open spaces.

Procurement

The process of acquiring goods, works and services from suppliers

Success Measure

Success measures are often referred to as outputs or targets and can often be reported as performance indicators. They are specific and quantifiable measurements that quantify achievement of, or progress towards, delivery of the outcomes. They could include, for example, 2 hectares of public open land improved, 25 premises refurbished or 40 training sessions provided.

VCFS

Acronym used for the 'Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector'