



**LANCASTER**  
**CITY COUNCIL**

*Promoting City, Coast & Countryside*

# **COUNCIL MEETING**

**Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> April 2009**  
**2.00 p.m.**  
**Morecambe Town Hall**

Mark Cullinan  
Chief Executive  
Town Hall  
LANCASTER





# LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL

*Promoting City, Coast & Countryside*

Sir/Madam,

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Lancaster City Council to be held in the Town Hall, Morecambe on Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> April 2009 commencing at 2.00 p.m. for the following purposes:

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2. **MINUTES**

To receive as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the City Council held on 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2009 (previously circulated).

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

4. **ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

5. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

To receive any announcements which may be submitted by the Mayor or Chief Executive.

6. **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 11**

To receive questions in accordance with the provisions of Council Procedure Rules 11.1 and 11.3 which require members of the public to give at least 3 days' notice in writing of questions to a Member of Cabinet or Committee Chairman.

7. **QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12.2**

To receive questions in accordance with the provisions of Council Procedure Rules 12.2 and 12.4 which require a Member to give at least 3 working days notice, in writing, of the question to the Chief Executive.

8. **LEADER'S REPORT** (Pages 1 - 4)

To receive the Cabinet Leader's report on proceedings since the last meeting of Council.

9. **MAYOR'S ANNUAL REPORT** (Pages 5 - 8)

To receive the Annual Report from the Mayor.

10. **EXECUTIVE ANNUAL REPORT** (Pages 9 - 58)

To receive the Executive Annual Report containing the Business Progress Reports of the Leader and each Cabinet Member in accordance with Article 7.06 (j).

Whilst the Executive Report will be published as a separate document in due course the individual reports are included in the agenda and will be presented by the relevant Cabinet Member at the meeting.

11. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT**

To receive the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report presented by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in accordance with Article 6.03 (c).

***The Overview and Scrutiny Annual report has been published separately. Please bring your copy to the meeting.***

12. **AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2008/09** (Pages 59 - 65)

To receive the Annual Report of the Audit Committee presented by the Chairman in accordance with Section 8.13 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

13. **STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT** (Pages 66 - 67)

To receive the Annual Report of the Standards Committee, presented by the Independent Chairman, Mr. Stephen Lamley.

**MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

14. **CANAL CORRIDOR NORTH - PLANNING INQUIRY** (Pages 68 - 69)

To consider the following Motion, notice of which has been received from Councillors John Whitelegg, Morgwn Trolinger, Maia Whitelegg and Jon Barry:

"That in the light of the decision by the developer "not to appear" at the forthcoming public inquiry into its proposals for the canal corridor [letter of 12<sup>th</sup> March 2009 from Montagu Evans to the Planning Inspectorate informing the Inspectorate "We write on behalf of our client, Centros, to confirm that Centros will not be appearing at the above Inquiry which will consider the above applications."]

Lancaster City Council resolves:

- (1) To co-operate with the inquiry in handing over documents, explaining relevant local planning policy and answering questions about local planning policy and its own documentation presented to planning committee in October 2008.
- (2) To identify one or more appropriate senior officers of the planning department and make them available for the duration of the inquiry to be present at the inquiry and to be of assistance to the Inspector.
- (3) To inform Centros that in the view of the Lancaster City Council the requirements of the Secretary of State in calling this inquiry are best served by Centros itself presenting evidence to that inquiry and answering questions from all parties on that evidence.

- (4) Not to commission, engage or consult with external legal advisers, barristers, consultants or any other external person, company or organisation and thus incur expenditure on the part of this Council.'

***An Officer Briefing Note is attached.***

15. **INTERNATIONAL YOUTH GAMES** (Pages 70 - 71)

To consider the following Motion, notice of which has been received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18.1, since the motion proposes the reversal of a decision taken within the last six months (Minute No. 119 refers).

The Notice of Motion has been signed by Councillors Mace, Blamire, Bray, Brown, Bryning, Charles, Denwood, Fishwick, Gilbert, Hanson, Helme, Histed, Johnson, Redfern, Roe, Rogerson, Sands, Sherlock, Sowden, Thomas and Williamson.

'The decision to withdraw funding from the International Youth Games in 2009-10 was taken reluctantly by Cabinet last December, due to the severe constraints then affecting the City Council's budget. This decision was taken at an early stage in the 2009-10 budget process as Lancaster was to have been the host in 2009, and detailed plans needed to be finalised to send to our participating twin Cities.

There was no debate or discussion at the Budget Council meeting on 4 March on the decision to withdraw support from the International Youth Games in the years 2010-11 and 2011-12, and Council now affirms its long term commitment to the International Youth Games, and asks Cabinet in the forthcoming budget process to propose restoring funding for the years 2010-11 and 2011-12.'

***An Officer Briefing Note is attached.***

16. **MINUTES OF CABINET** (Pages 72 - 86)

To receive the Minutes of Meetings of Cabinet held on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2009.

*(Note: The Appendix to the Minutes of 17<sup>th</sup> March has not been included on the agenda. A copy can be obtained from Democratic Services on request.)*



.....  
Chief Executive

Town Hall,  
Dalton Square,  
LANCASTER,  
LA1 1PJ

Published on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009





## Leader's Report

8<sup>th</sup> April 2009

### 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 on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> March 2009, later in this agenda.

##### 2,0 Decisions required to be taken urgently

2.1 As required by Access to Information Procedure Rule 17.03, set out below is a matter which required immediate implementation and in respect of which call-in was waived in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 17.

##### **Employee Establishment – Vacancy Authorisation**

At its meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2009, Cabinet endorsed an urgent business decision in respect of Post no PL0096, Forward Planning Administrator:

- (a) That the Conditions of Employment of the temporary holder of post PL0096 in Planning Services be amended to extend the fixed term contract on a reduction in hours to 18.5 on a temporary basis to accommodate a request from the substantive post holder to work half time for a period of 12 months following maternity leave, under the Family Leave Scheme policy.
- (b) That the call in be waived in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 17 to allow immediate implementation.

The urgency for this decision was to allow the main holder of the post to return to work half time, under the Council's Family Leave Scheme Policy, without any loss of service.

## **3.0 Other**

### **3.1 Regional Matters**

- The NW Regional Funding Advice submitted to Government sets out the long term priorities in a Single Regional Strategy including investment priorities from 2009 onwards. It reaffirms existing priorities already in the process of being delivered and states a clear vision for the future of the Region.
- Specified local items include "Completion of the Heysham to M6 Link Road is the most advanced in terms of DFTs approvals process following the granting of Programme Entry in January 2009. This scheme already has planning permission and subject to successful completion of the remaining statutory processes, construction could start early in 2010".
- Elsewhere, there is reference to developing growth "nodes" including Lancaster "as an historic City with a University centre of excellence in research in regional growth business sectors" and Lancaster Bailrigg Science Park – which has been retained as a Strategic Regional major site following a review of sites (seven of which have now been deleted).
- I continue to represent the City Council as a member of the Lancashire Economic Forum and also attended.

### **3.2 Important Press Releases by the City Council**

I draw attention to two of particular importance:

- A joint statement from the City Council and Centros (issued on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2009 PR2103).
- Audit Commission report on Councils' Investments in Icelandic Banks (Issued on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2009 PR 2102).

There is also an article in the LGO's magazine "FIRST" of 28<sup>th</sup> March 2009 which is critical of the Commission's own report.

### **3.3 Council Housing Rents Increasing**

The Government's policy of raising council house rents on average by 5% or more per annum to be closer to housing association rents is to change in recognition of changing economic conditions to a 3.1% guideline rent level increase. Details are still awaited and will be considered by the districtwide Tenants Forum and I anticipate that this will lead to a mid-term review of rents.

### **3.4 Prospects for Tourism**

In my Budget speech, I said that I believed "the prospects for Morecambe are better than some Jeremiahs predict. In recession families spend less on



holidays by trading down. More will holiday in the UK being faced with falling income, weakness of sterling and so on – what economists call the import substitution effect – so seaside resorts should gain. Pontins and Butlins elsewhere are investing heavily.” I am told that visitor footfall in the district is rising. There has been significant public investment in Morecambe and more is expected. I was present recently at the opening of the new VIC hub at The Storey, an important new venture in an imaginatively redesigned and renovated building. As referred to above, the NW Regional Strategy also sees Lancaster’s historic centre, heritage and quality of place, as one of the five towns in the region to be singled out for public investments.

### **3.5 Staff, Pay and Personnel**

Two events dominate circumstances –

- The National Pay offer of 2.75% was increased by 0.3% following ACAS arbitration of the 2008 award. The extra 0.3% will add approximately £65,000 to expenditure implemented last October.
- The Fair Pay procedure following job evaluation and individual interviews was followed by letters to employees delivered on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2009. There is a two stage appeals process in place. The new pay structure is expected to come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009.
- At its last meeting, Council decided to ask Personnel Committee to review its Redeployment and Early Termination of Employment Policy.

### **3.6 Morecambe Parish Council**

The introduction of this new Council on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 creates an extra tier of local government for part of the old Borough of Morecambe and Heysham. After the elections there could be members with dual and possibly even a tripartite representative role to play. Not least will be the need to sort out the details of service responsibilities and financial complexities to achieve mutually acceptable and co-operative operations.

### **3.7 The Storey Creative Industries Centre (SCIC)**

Known as “The Storey” the building has been handed over by the contractors and City to the Board who intend to have a launch event in June. SCIC Board have entered into a 30-year full repairing and maintaining lease with the Council and also a SLA which formalises the short-term revenue subsidy agreed last September.

Originally a gift to the City, this remodelled building had been for 130 years a much loved centre for the city’s artistic, technical and scientific endeavours. It has seen various tenants and users such as an Art College, Polytechnic Outreach, Secondary School, University Continuation department, a Further Education College, night schools and apprentice training, a venue for different learned societies and as an exhibition gallery and much more. It replaced an earlier Mechanics Institute where the Post Office is now sited. How much better its new life and the new opportunities it offers than to be offered for sale perhaps to be converted into flats!!

**3.8 Morecambe Bay Regional Park**

A number of Councillors attended the Annual Meeting of the Morecambe Bay Partnership in Barrow in February 2009. Regional Parks are the latest areas designated for public and private development and conservation. The attendance in Barrow was wide ranging with presentations which were received with enthusiasm. Responsibility for further involvement will initially be part of Councillor Archer's Cabinet portfolio.

**3.9 The NW Charter for Member Development**

The Charter is awarded by the North West Employers Organisation. At a ceremony at the Lowry in Salford, the City Council was awarded the Charter having signed its commitment way back in 2002 but only really began to chase the Charter two years ago as preparations for the District elections were in progress. The Business Committee has updated and rejuvenated progress and, at the second submission, were successful and the Charter was granted, topped up with a Municipal Journal Award.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Cabinet agenda and minutes of the meetings on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> March 2009.

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR OF  
LANCASTER FOR 2008/2009 - COUNCILLOR KEITH BUDDEN**

Being elected Mayor of Lancaster was a proud moment and a milestone in my career as an Elected Member. This year has enabled my team and I to be part of and support a number of functions and organisations in a variety of ways, and I shall try to mention some from a long but not conclusive list!

Early in the year we were lucky to be given the chance to experience the Royal Garden Party in London. We also had the chance later that same month to be part of the delegation attending the Youth Games in Rendsburg, Germany. Our young people did us proud in both their sporting and personal achievements, and we were pleased to be able to welcome them to the Town Hall on their return to commend them for their efforts.

Although we have enjoyed all of the functions we have attended, the visits to local schools have been an absolute joy. We met children of all ages across primary and secondary education, and have been to support their events and to give the children the chance to ask questions. I am now very good at replying to the questions, "Are you rich? Do you live in a big house or the Town Hall? Is the chain heavy? Can you keep it?". We have also been fortunate to be able to attend the Awards Ceremonies at both Lancaster University and the University of Central Lancashire. We have attended presentation events at local schools and are pleased that these awards do not only recognise the high achievers, but they also provide equal recognition of those children who have tried and improved during their time at school.

Being involved in Local Democracy Week as Mayor has also been a highlight of the year. I have been involved in this event in the past as a Councillor and have enjoyed working with all the children on the theme of Democracy. Who knows, we may have inspired politicians of the future!

We have also had the opportunity to meet with and support a vast number of voluntary organisations. Special mention must go to the YMCA, at whose event I was privileged to learn of the adversity that has been overcome by young people with the help and support of this organisation. This too applies to the work being undertaken by the Princes Trust with the full support of the Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service at Morecambe Fire Station. The young people are given an opportunity to work on the teams and this allows them to complete a project to benefit the local community, but also provides an opportunity for recognition - boosting their confidence and ability to spur them on to a life with aspirations. We have also had the chance to visit Galloways Society for the Blind on Balmoral Road in Morecambe, whose work is extremely important for those who are blind or who have visual impairments. We were also fortunate to be at the launch of the street pastors scheme and I have received an update from them which indicates that the scheme is a great success and is continuing to go from strength to strength.

We have had the opportunity to learn a lot about the cultures of others during the course of the year. We have been delighted to take part in celebrations for Chinese New Year, where I was asked to wake the dragon by painting in its eyes in Market Square,

Lancaster. We also enjoyed a lunch to celebrate the event at Mr Jones' restaurant in Lancaster where I was quickly taught five phrases in Chinese. Luckily I was able to pull off the impression that I was fluent in the language and my efforts received rapturous applause! We have also been part of local celebrations for the Hindu festivals of Diwali and Holi. We have always been so well received and have been fortunate to be able to learn more about the variety of cultures of people who live and work in our district.

We attended for the first time this year the Community Festival in Williamson Park in June. The festival was a great success and has grown in stature and numbers over recent years. We were able to visit over 50 stalls from organisations who were exhibiting on the day and successfully managed to raise the profile of the Mayoralty amongst them. We have since received requests for support from people we met at this event and I have been delighted to support them all.

Being Mayor also offers you the opportunity to meet and work alongside other Mayors in the County, and also the High Sherriff. Our roles are similar in some ways and different in others, but by coming together we have had the opportunity to learn about each others roles and responsibilities.

We have been able to be very supportive of the arts in the district. We have attended a variety of events at the Grand Theatre in Lancaster, where a number of local theatre and amateur dramatics groups have put on their performances. We have also been able to attend a number of events at The Dukes. We have two contrasting theatre spaces but their audiences are widespread throughout the district and beyond. It has to be said that one of the most amusing of these performances was the After Dark performance of the Adult Pantomime Aladdin in December. Although I was the subject of many of the jokes and innuendo, Heather and myself have not laughed as much for a long time and I was delighted to join in!

We have also been pleased to be able to support some of our local dance groups. We have watched shows which include dancers of all ages, and those of all abilities, but one of the most enjoyable was a show put on by a group of dance students who had physical and mental disabilities. I have been pleased to have had a number of visits from a local man, Chris, who is a volunteer at Animal Care in Lancaster. Chris is an ambassador for the work he undertakes at Animal Care but because of his special needs he has also kept me informed of the activities he is able to enjoy with a variety of clubs and organisations in the district, whose support he is able to enjoy with the help of his carers.

We have been very privileged to have been able to meet a number of local centenarians this year, including a visit to the late Honorary Alderman Arthur Briggs prior to his 101<sup>st</sup> birthday. I have to say that I was visiting a lady of 105 in Morecambe and remarked how I had never met anyone as old as her – and she told me to go and speak to the lady in the corner who was 106! I visited the same lady last month and helped her celebrate her 107<sup>th</sup> Birthday – an absolute joy!

The Court for the Admission of Freemen in July was a very special and very select gathering where I was pleased to be able to play my part in the continuation of this very longstanding tradition. Of 10 applicants in the first Court sitting, 8 were admitted as the sons of Freemen, proving that this ancient rite is still cherished amongst some

longstanding Lancaster families. We also held a second court to be able to immediately admit two men as the Sons of Freemen, their father having just been admitted himself. It is a quirky ceremony but one which will hopefully strengthen and find a purpose in these changing times.

Our connection with The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment has again continued this year and we were lucky to be able to attend the handing over of the new Regimental Colours by Her Majesty the Queen in Preston. It was a very moving ceremony and we were proud to be part of such a big event on behalf of "our" Regiment. We will be maintaining this strong link later this month when I take the old Regimental Colours from the Regiment, so that they can be kept safe until they can be displayed in the Regimental Chapel at The Priory Church. I shall be honoured to undertake this duty on behalf of the brave men and women who are risking their lives for all of us.

The launch of the Poppy Appeal and attending the Service of Remembrance at Lancaster Town Hall will provide one of the most moving memories of my year. I have never attended the event at Lancaster as I attend an event in my own Parish, but the number attending and the solemnity of the event was as I had expected. What was moving for me was to see the parents of a young local soldier laying a wreath in his memory. They lost their son only two years ago and they clearly found comfort in this event, but they also provide us all with a thought provoking image which our young people can associate with and appreciate. It is also very touching to be stood on the steps of the Town Hall to take the salute from the ever decreasing number of First and Second World War Veterans. The applause they receive is very, very much deserved.

Attending the open day at Torrisholme Cemetery was an absolute pleasure and I was delighted to be there to support the work of our Officers in recognition of the presentation of the Blue Flag award to this flagship project for the district. Long may they continue and inspire others to take pride in their communities.

I have been asked to support a number of local businesses to help raise the profile of their new enterprise or support the continuation of a successful business – something which we should be shouting about in the current economic climate. Amongst these I shall mention that I was asked to open the newly refurbished Wagon and Horses pub on St George's Quay, and also the newly refurbished Co-Operative Funeral Home in Lancaster. There is no connection of course!! Two very diverse businesses, but I have been pleased to support all of those who asked me to visit them.

We enjoyed the switch on of the Christmas lights in Morecambe and in Lancaster. At Lancaster we had the pleasure of meeting the other man in the red "suit" and his live reindeer. Another experience not to be forgotten. As well as being ridiculed at the adult panto I have also been upstaged by Bob the Builder at Busy Bees Nursery, not everyone can say that!

We supported, by our presence, the Lancaster Guardian Toy Appeal at Christmas. I attended the launch at Big Storage on White Lund and Heather and I were lucky enough to be able to go to the shop unit in Marketgate to help bag up the toys for distribution. Some of those toys were destined for the children and their families at Derian House in Chorley. A lot of money is raised in the Lancaster District for Derian House and one of

the local volunteers invited Heather and myself to pay a “joyous” visit to Derian House to see the work that is done there. Although I was not sure whether I would be able to cope with what I would see, I was assured that it was a happy place – and that it was. We were taken to see the sensory rooms, the soft play areas, we were able to chat with some of the older clients there – two teenage girls off into town in their wheelchairs! I had always assumed that Derian House was a place for terminally ill babies and toddlers – but the advances in medicine mean that Derian House can support a child and their family through their childhood and sometimes into adulthood. Their fundraising efforts will continue and we can now support our local volunteers in the full knowledge of the work that the centre undertakes.

I have had a few tough jobs but one in particular - well someone had to do it! It was to open the annual Round Table beer festival at Lancaster Town Hall. A fantastically well supported event and I was lucky to go on what they claim is their quietest night– opening night. The place was packed to the rafters and they will have raised a huge sum of money for Charity.

Before closing, I must add my sincere thanks to June and to Alex for their support in carrying of the duties of Deputies which they have carried out with grace and dignity. My biggest thank you however must go to my wife Heather, who has been at my side without question. I am and will always be grateful for her support, especially this year.

The whole year has been a privilege. We have enjoyed everything. Some of the events have been serious or poignant and others have been great fun, but they are all part of the tapestry of the year. I really hope that the next Mayor enjoys every moment of the year because it really does go in the blink of an eye!

Councillor Keith Budden  
The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Lancaster  
2008/2009

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT – 2008/09**

**COUNCILLOR ABBOTT BRYNING, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL (from 4<sup>th</sup> February 2009) AND CABINET MEMBER WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR**

- **RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER COUNCILS**
- **FINANCE**
- **TRANSPORT INCLUDING PARKING POLICY**

**From 19<sup>th</sup> May 2008-4<sup>th</sup> February 2009 Councillor Abbott Bryning's responsibilities were:**

**CABINET MEMBER WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR**

- **JOINT ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO – EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND REGENERATION IN THE LANCASTER PART OF LANCASTER AND WYRE CONSTITUENCY**



**1 EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP:**

- Cabinet
- Canal Corridor Cabinet Liaison Group
- Lancaster and District Chamber Liaison Group
- Lancaster and Morecambe Markets Committee
- Transport Cabinet Liaison Group

**From 4<sup>th</sup> February 2009**

- Cabinet (Chairman)
- Morecambe Retail, Tourism and Commercial Cabinet Liaison Group (Chairman)
- Lancaster and District Chamber Liaison Group (Chairman)
- Lancaster and Morecambe Markets Committee (Chairman)

**2 EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES etc:**

- Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership Management Group
- Historic Towns Forum (formerly English Historic Towns Forum)
- Lancashire Economic Partnership Forum
- Lancaster Regeneration Partnership
- LSP Economy Thematic Group
- LSP Education, Skills and Opportunities Thematic Group
- North and West Lancs Priority 1 Action Plan Partnership Board
- Storey Centre for Creative Industries

**3 OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Until 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2009	From 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2009
Joint Economic Environment Portfolio – Employment Opportunities and Regeneration in the Lancaster part of Lancaster and Wyre Constituency	Relationships with other Councils Finance Transport – including Parking Policy

**CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITY OUTCOMES:**

19 <sup>th</sup> May 2008 – 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2009	From 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2009
Improve economic prosperity throughout the Lancaster District: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Deliver a district wide sustainable regeneration programme based on the economic vision and strategy.</i></li> <li>• <i>Launch revised business development grant scheme for 12 months and work with Storey CIC to provide targeted support to creative industries.</i></li> </ul>	Keep the City Council element of Council Tax increase to acceptable levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Keep annual Council Tax increases to a minimum in 2009/10 and 2010/11</i></li> </ul>

**4 PROGRESS MADE DURING 2008/9****Lancaster Regeneration****Lancaster & Morecambe Vision**

The City Council has continued to support the work of Lancaster & Morecambe Vision Board throughout the past year, and the Vision has provided the basis for development of a new strategic economic framework. There has also been an important review of the Vision Board's role and clarification of future roles. In essence, the Vision Board have agreed that they wish to continue to operate but to focus on "blue sky" thinking and exploratory work. This can complement the work of the LDLSP, City Council, and other key partners who will focus on delivery of the agreed economic framework and action plan.

**Lancaster & Morecambe Economic Development Zone**

December 2008 was an important milestone in the Council's regeneration activity. It marked the completion of the Lancaster & Morecambe Economic Development Zone regeneration programme, which has successfully drawn in almost £8 million of European funding for major regeneration projects. This is the largest single regeneration programme ever handled by the City Council, and it has been a significant achievement in itself that the Council has succeeded in drawing down and



managing almost the full amount of EU funding despite some difficult and challenging circumstances.

Projects supported under the EDZ included:

- City Lab
- Luneside East
- Storey Institute
- Port of Heysham Industrial Park
- Heysham Industrial Estate access improvements
- Important elements of the cycle and walking network which have in turn helped secure Cycle Demonstration Town designation.

It is pleasing to see that City Lab has continued to prove popular as a home for rapidly expanding local ICT businesses, and over the past year has achieved an 80% occupancy level, accommodating 10 businesses who between them have created or safeguarded 76 jobs.

## **Luneside East**

Luneside East regeneration was the lead project initiative as part of the EDZ. This is a massively challenging long term project to transform a swathe of derelict, vacant and underused former industrial land into a vibrant new mixed use neighbourhood. The Council has worked on this over several years, supported by its funding partners, and early in 2008 it completed the first public sector stage involving the complex land assembly (including compulsory purchase) and removal of the gasholder. Since then though the project has been stalled because the credit crunch has removed the ability of the Council's developer (CTP Ltd / Development Securities plc) to proceed as planned.

This developer is ready to proceed, it has prepared for the major site remediation (clearance and clean up works) needed and has secured a planning permission for a large first phase of development. The obstacles now are the facts that banks are not lending for ventures such as this and almost all house builders have cut down their activities meaning the developer can't find a house builder to contract with. To get the project moving again the Council has decided to submit a further funding application to the NorthWest Development Agency (NWDA) for a grant to undertake the remediation works. If these can be undertaken and perhaps completed next year the development opportunity here should be very much more attractive to house builders and the developer should be able to commence construction. The developer is working closely with the Council on all this. In March Cabinet resolved that the Council should undertake the remediation works itself if this proves necessary

## **Storey Institute**

The capital construction project to restore the Storey Institute as a centre for creative industries is also now completed, and the building has been handed over to an independent, not for profit company, Storey CIC, to operate.

The completed building provides a mixture of commercial business floorspace for creative industries, new and improved galleries including a purpose designed auditorium for use by Lancaster Litfest and conferences, a bar and restaurant, and a new home for the Lancaster Tourist Information Centre.

The capital construction project has been complex and very challenging, working to a very tight budget, and I am pleased to be able to say that it has been completed exactly on its target cost. This has been despite a number of unforeseen problems which arose during the building works. This is the first major capital project that the Council has implemented using its new project management approach, LAMP, and this has undoubtedly contributed to the successful completion of the project, together with the benefits of using a modern “partnering” construction contract. The involvement of members of Storey CIC board on the project board has also been very beneficial.

Storey CIC have taken occupation of the Storey Institute under a 30 year full repairing lease. The Council has agreed to provide some revenue support for the initial two years operation of the new centre, and it needs to be noted that the current economic climate will make it more challenging for the project to break even than was originally envisaged.

### **Lancaster Science Park**

Lancaster Science Park remains a high strategic priority for not just the City Council but also the Vision Board, LSP, Lancaster University, and Northwest Development Agency

The City Council’s economic development service is leading on this project, and over recent months has been working towards submission of a new outline planning application for the Science Park. This is a critical next step in terms of completing the acquisition of the site and also in preparing the way for recruitment of a private sector development partner.

The most significant problem to overcome has been highways issues associated with peak hour queues between Galgate and the motorway junction. Specialist highways consultants have been appointed to address this issue and agree appropriate solutions with County Highways and Highways Agency.

Public consultation over the science park plans took place in early March, and it is anticipated that the planning application will be submitted on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

### **Support for Local Businesses**

#### **Business Development Grant Scheme**

The Council’s Economic Development Service has been providing direct financial assistance to support new jobs in small local businesses over many years, drawing external funding from European and UK sources. Changes in external funding saw the end of the main scheme in December 2008. The final outcome of the scheme was that, since 2000, it has supported 58 businesses, the creation of 244 new jobs and the safeguarding of 60 jobs. Total expenditure on the Scheme, excluding staff time and marketing, was £231,000 of which City Council funding amounted to £49,000 (21% of the total). As noted in the Q2 PRT, the ERDF funded element of the Scheme had already exceeded its output targets on jobs created (123) and safeguarded (34) and on increased sales and safeguarded sales.

#### **New Rent Grant Scheme**

In November 2007, Cabinet approved a new, smaller scale grant scheme to replace the BDS scheme, using the Council’s own resources. The new Rent Grant scheme

was launched in July 2008 and has proved very effective. It has offered grants totalling £21,255 to 13 businesses with the potential to safeguard 35 jobs and create 29 new jobs. The scheme has also been able to attract some limited additional funds through the Lancashire Local Area Agreement.

Regrettably, in view of the Council's budgetary situation it has not been possible to continue to fund the scheme in 2009/10 through the Council's own resources. Efforts are however being made to secure funds through the LSP and the outcome of a bid is currently awaited.

### **New Business Start-Up Support**

Cabinet approved proposals in January for a new partnership arrangement between the City Council and Lancashire County Council for delivery of NWDA's Business Start Up Service from April 2009. The Service provides business advice and counselling (i.e. non-financial support) to start up and early stage businesses and will be enhanced by a £50,000 contribution from the County which will be used to increase the number of businesses that can receive advice through this service and also to help target disadvantaged groups.

### **Impact of Credit Crunch – Joint Response with County Council**

The Council's economic development service has been working in partnership with Lancashire County Council to help ensure that individuals and businesses affected by the current economic downturn are able to get access to appropriate sources of advice and information. As part of this initiative, guidance notes have been issued to staff at both the City and County Councils customer contact centres, which will help them identify issues that may be related to the economic downturn and to make referrals to the appropriate advice agencies.

### **Finance**

The last year has proved a very difficult, challenging year for Financial Services, and for the Council's finances generally. The £6M of investments tied up with the collapse of the Icelandic banking sector, represents a very real low point. This, coupled with the ongoing turmoil affecting the global financial markets and the economic recession, as well as more local issues such as concessionary travel take-up, has resulted in the Council experiencing the toughest financial conditions for several years – giving rise to one of the most difficult budget setting rounds that many people remember. That said, the Council has managed these pressures and achieved its target of setting a basic Council Tax increase of no more than 4%. It has also kept this target for future years, and has updated its various financial strategies to respond to the increasing pressures it faces for activities such as treasury management, capital investment and for providing funding for the provision of day to day services generally. It has also retained its overall Use of Resources score at Level 3 – that is “consistently above minimum requirements – performing well”. The next challenge will be to maintain this level of performance, whilst still achieving the future targets for Council Tax and – just as important – managing the public and other stakeholders' expectations for service standards and delivery.

\* \* \* \* \*

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT – 2008/09**

**COUNCILLOR ROGER MACE, CABINET MEMBER WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY, FROM 4<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2009, FOR**

- **JOINT ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO – EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND REGENERATION IN THE LANCASTER PART OF LANCASTER AND WYRE CONSTITUENCY, AND COMMUNITY PLANNING.**

**Until 4<sup>th</sup> February, Councillor Mace's responsibilities were:-**

**LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBER WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR**

- **RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER COUNCILS**
- **NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT IN THE DISTRICT**
- **FINANCE**
- **COMMUNITY PLANNING**
- **TRANSPORT – INCLUDING PARKING POLICY**



## **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 One important milestone in the economic development of the District was the announcement that the Heysham-M6 Link Road has been given programme entry status. Construction is expected to commence in 2010.

1.2 Another significant event during the year was the City's decision to move forward with the creation of Morecambe Parish Council – a decision that was referred back to the City Council by Central Government, following a change in relevant legislation. Elections for the 26 places on the new Council are expected to take place on 4 June 2009.

1.3 I was a guest at a dinner on 7 July to celebrate the opening of The Midland Hotel. The renaissance of the Hotel is a powerful symbol of the regeneration of Morecambe.

1.4 In the current municipal year, I have contributed to:-

- the restructuring of the Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership (LDLSP) which has meant that the Partnership is better able than before to tackle effectively the needs of the District,
- the emergence of the Sustainable Community Strategy for the District, (launched at the Platform in Morecambe on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2008) which has meant that the needs and aspirations of the District are better articulated than before,

- the work of the LDLSP on the development of a Community Engagement Framework which will improve engagement with our communities by the key partners in the LDLSP. This project is closely linked to the City Council's own priority outcomes in the Corporate Plan for 2008-9, namely [priority outcome 16] to work to maintain a cohesive community where respect for all is valued and celebrated and [priority outcome 17] for local communities to have more influence and involvement in the way services are delivered.
- the publication of the Faber Maunsell Report offering practical ideas for the development of the transport infrastructure in the District, additional to the benefits to be provided by the construction of the Heysham-M6 Link,
- the production of the long awaited revised parking strategy for the district, and
- negotiating a future role for the Lancaster and District Vision Board in the context of the new structure of the LDLSP, and the long term economic development of the District. The Vision Board was a Building Block of the former Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), and is now represented on the Economy Thematic Group of the LDLSP, alongside representatives from the City Council and the County Council. The Vision Board also provides the representatives of the Economy Stakeholder on the LDLSP Board and on the LDLSP Management Group. I will say more about the LDLSP in section 5 below.

## **2 EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP:**

- Cabinet (Chairman\*)
- Star Chamber (Chairman\*)
- Canal Corridor Cabinet Liaison Group (Chairman\*)
- Lancaster and District Chamber Liaison Group (Chairman\*)
- Morecambe Retail, Commercial and Tourism Cabinet Liaison Group (Chairman\*)
- Lancaster and Morecambe Markets Committee (Chairman\*)
- Neighbourhood Management Cabinet Liaison Group (Chairman\*)
- Transport Cabinet Liaison Group (Chairman\*)
- Universities Cabinet Liaison Group

**\* Until 4<sup>th</sup> February 2009**

## **3 EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES etc:**

- Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership Board (Chairperson)
- Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership Management Group (Vice Chairperson)
- Lancashire Leaders Meeting \*
- Lancaster and District Vision Board (formerly LSP Regeneration Building Block) (Vice Chairman)
- North West Regional Assembly \*

**\* Until 4<sup>th</sup> February 2009**

## 4 OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES:

Until 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2009	From 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2009
Relationships with other Councils. Neighbourhood Management in the District. Finance Community Planning Transport – including Parking Policy.	Joint Economic Portfolio – Employment Opportunities and Regeneration in the Lancaster part of Lancaster and Wyre Constituency Community Planning

## CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITY OUTCOMES:

Until 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2009	From 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2009
<p>Keep the City Council Element of Council Tax increase to acceptable levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Keep annual Council Tax increases to a minimum in 2009/10 and 2010/11</i></li> </ul> <p>Work to maintain a cohesive community where respect for all is valued and celebrated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Develop and implement a Community Cohesion Strategy</i></li> <li>• <i>Deliver a Civic Programme which celebrates our local heritage and benefits our communities.</i></li> </ul> <p>Local Communities have more influence and involvement in the way services are delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Develop neighbourhood management arrangements for the district.</i></li> </ul> <p>An improved quality of life for those who live, work in and visit the Lancaster District:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with members of the LSP on joint initiatives to implement the Sustainable Community Strategy.</li> </ul>	<p>Improve economic prosperity throughout the Lancaster District:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Deliver a district wide sustainable regeneration programme based on the economic vision and strategy.</i></li> <li>• <i>Launch revised business development grant scheme for 12 months and work with Storey CIC to provide targeted support to creative industries.</i></li> </ul> <p>Work to maintain a cohesive community where respect for all is valued and celebrated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Develop and implement a Community Cohesion Strategy</i></li> </ul> <p>An improved quality of life for those who live, work in and visit the Lancaster District:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Work with members of the LSP on joint initiatives to implement the Sustainable Community Strategy.</i></li> </ul>

## 5 COMMUNITY PLANNING

### **The Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership and the Sustainable Community Strategy.**

5.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy was based on a district-wide consultation process and sets out the strategic vision for our District. It embodies the aspiration that “Working together will improve the quality of life for everyone in our district”.

Working with members of the LDLSP on joint initiatives to implement the Sustainable Community Strategy has been a major focus for me in the past year.

There are 21 Priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategy, each of which has been allocated to one of the Thematic Groups in the LDLSP. Detailed action plans for achieving these priorities are being developed by the Thematic Groups, and bids for funding these plans are being considered by the Management Group, using criteria established by the LDLSP Board.

5.2 The LDLSP structure for delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy is:-

**The LDLSP Board** – Ensures the operation, existence and guardianship of the LDLSP.

**The LDLSP Management Group** – is responsible for delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy (including performance management, resource allocation and community engagement).

**The LDLSP Thematic Groups** – Seven ‘Themed’ Groups are as follows:-

Children & Young People  
Economy  
Education, Skills & Opportunities  
Environment  
Health & Wellbeing  
Safety  
Valuing People

These Thematic Groups are responsible for delivery of the Priorities allocated to them from within the Sustainable Community Strategy under the umbrella of the LDLSP Management Group. Each Thematic Group is attended by two Cabinet members and this has contributed to raising the profile of the LDLSP within the Council.

The work of the Economic Strategy Board that was set up in 2007-8 and to which I referred in my report last year has been undertaken this year within the Economy Thematic Group of the LDLSP.

Details of all aspects of the LDLSP and the Sustainable Community Strategy are available at [www.lancaster.gov.uk/lsp](http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/lsp)

## 6 FINANCE PORTFOLIO

6.1 The major aim of the finance portfolio is to deliver the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy. This is to keep Council Tax rises at acceptable levels while

strengthening the Council's financial position and having an affordable capital programme balanced over five years. This year, the aim throughout the year was that the Council Tax in 2009-10 would not exceed the total of Council Tax and Special Expenses in the previous year by more than 4%, but a number of factors arising during the year made it seem increasingly unlikely that the target would be met.

6.2 The budget problems were for the most part not of the Council's making – for example a projected loss of interest income from the City's cash balances arose partly due to income no longer accruing on deposits in Icelandic banks, but was made worse by the decline in interest rates on the remaining cash balances – a decline determined by the interest rate policy of the Government. The Council's problems have also been caused by Government's inadequate funding of the extra activities it has forced District Councils to undertake - most significantly the concessionary travel scheme for the over 60s.

6.3 Locally, there was an increase in the rent of the premises of Lancaster Market - which was backdated to June 2005 - and was greater than had been provided for. In more normal circumstances, eliminating the deficit on Lancaster Market, amounting to about 6% of the City's Council Tax might have been sufficient to keep Council Tax within reasonable bounds, but the recent decline in economic activity meant that opportunities that may once have been available to find a different - and viable - future for the Market Building gradually faded away.

6.4 In December, Council decided to change the system of allocating City Council expenditure of Council Tax between Council Tax payers in different parts of the District. The result of this change is that Council Tax charged to most of the rural areas in the District for meeting City Council expenditure in 2009-10 has gone up by 10.5% (ten and a half per cent), while the City's demand for Council Tax from households in parts of the district in which there are no parish councils has gone up by only 1% (one per cent). I considered this change to be unfair in its failure to recognise issues of double taxation and the functional roles of Parish and Town Councils in our District. Residents in Parished areas are paying twice for some services which are provided in their areas by Parish Councils and Town Councils but are provided by the City Council in other areas. I welcome the decision of Council to tackle these problems - albeit belatedly - by undertaking in 2009-10 the Review of the Funding of Parish Councils which was first mooted several years ago.

6.5 Cabinet decided to recommend to Council the planned 4% rise in the City's Council Tax before it knew of the nature of the cuts necessary to achieve it. I was unwilling to propose this recommendation to Council and resigned on 4<sup>th</sup> February.

## **7 TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO – PARKING CHARGES**

7.1 Cabinet agreed proposals in January that charges for parking for up to two hours in the City Council's Car Parks should be held constant at £1.60. This charge is the same as in 2007-8, and for all except a short period at the start of 2008-9 - and is now being repeated in 2009-10. The decision was designed to support the customers and clients whose patronage is vital to help shops and service providers stay in business in our urban centres in the current difficult economic climate.

7.2 An innovative 24/5 parking permit has been introduced in 2009-10 in addition to the long standing 24/7 permit. Permit fees for the 24/7 permit are rising by 5% in 2009-10, but the new permit has been introduced at a discount of 5% compared with the new fee for the 24/7 permit. This new annual permit is designed for those



commuters who know they will only require parking facilities for 5 days a week and not 7 days a week. Users who elect to buy the 24/5 permit in 2009-10 will pay the same amount as they paid for last year's permit. For employees to have no increase in their commuting cost payable for using the City Council's Car Parks is a clear benefit in the current recession.

7.3 Despite the above features of the charges for 2009-10, total income from parking charges is budgeted to increase by more than the rate of inflation – and off street parking charges continue to contribute to funding the Council's general expenditures.

## **8 CONCLUSION**

8.1 Not every project was as successful as I might have hoped. It was often a matter relating to the availability of resources that caused problems. Difficulties arose in respect of completing the sales of some Council property assets, and delays in the receipt of funding – or the withdrawal of anticipated funding - caused delays in progressing capital projects, not least Chatsworth Gardens, and Luneside East. The proposed Central Park in Morecambe lost its funding: no budget was available to progress the Access to Services Project or to make inroads into the backlog of repairs to the two Town Halls, and the start of work on the Centros Development has also been delayed. The future of Neighbourhood Management also appears bleak due to the loss of ring fenced external grant funding, and the severe budgetary constraints faced by the City Council for at least the next two or three years have made it unlikely that the City Council could “mainstream” more than a token part of the activities previously funded through Neighbourhood Management.

8.2 Excluding days of illness and private holiday, I was available for Council duties on 154 weekdays during my Leadership of the Council from 19 May 2008 to 4 February 2009 inclusive. The number of meetings I have attended may come as a surprise to some. My diary shows I was away from Lancaster for political purposes for 11 full days, and that I attended 97 formal meetings and 115 informal meetings inside the District and 15 meetings outside the District – including a total of 47 evening meetings out of the total of 227. Meetings are supplemented by e-mails and phone calls - and my home computer system shows that other than those for private purposes, I sent over 3300 e-mails, and opened over 4500 incoming e-mail messages during those eight and a half months (262 days). I have no separate record to enable me to account to Council for my telephone conversations or to count the myriad of resolutions I proposed, seconded or amended.

8.3 Last year, I ended my report as Leader of the Council on the optimistic note that the groups had worked well together in Cabinet, despite the doubts held by many that a PR Cabinet containing five political Groups could ever achieve enough harmony to reach decisions. Those doubts that I dismissed last year had more truth in them than I had hoped. I was able to sustain the roles of Chairing the Cabinet, and being Leader of the Council, only for so long as I could justify the decisions being made. By February 4<sup>th</sup> as tensions rose on a number of matters, and differences between groups became progressively of greater importance than similarities, it had become apparent that to negotiate consensus at that point had become a pipe dream, and that only by resigning could I properly defend the interests of communities in my Ward against decisions made by others which I believe are to the detriment of the District as a whole.

\* \* \* \* \*

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT – 2008/09**

**COUNCILLOR EVELYN ARCHER, CABINET MEMBER WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR**

- **PROPERTY SERVICES**
- **JOINT ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO**
- **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND REGENERATION IN MORECAMBE AND LUNESDALE CONSTITUENCY**

*From 4<sup>th</sup> February the following was added to Councillor Archer's portfolio:*

- **NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT IN THE DISTRICT**



**1 EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP:**

- Cabinet
- Canal Corridor Cabinet Liaison Group
- Festivals and Events Cabinet Liaison Group
- Lancaster and Morecambe Markets Committee
- Morecambe Retail, Commercial and Tourism Cabinet Liaison Group
- Neighbourhood Management Cabinet Liaison Group
- Planning Policy Cabinet Liaison Group
- Transport Cabinet Liaison Group

**2 EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES etc:**

- LGA Coastal Issues Special Interest Group
- LSP Economy Thematic Group
- LSP Education, Skills and Opportunities Thematic Group
- Morecambe Bay Partnership
- Winning Back the West End Steering Group
- LGA Rural Commission

**3 OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES**

Property Services

Joint Economic Environment Portfolio – Employment Opportunities and Regeneration in Morecambe and Lunesdale Constituency

**From 4<sup>th</sup> February the following was added to Councillor Archer's portfolio:-**

Neighbourhood Management in the District

**CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITY OUTCOMES:**

Improve economic prosperity throughout the Lancaster District:

- *Implement Phase 2 of the Morecambe Townscape Heritage Scheme*

**From 4<sup>th</sup> February the following priorities/outcomes were added to Councillor Archer's portfolio:-**

- *Morecambe Bay Regional Park.*

Local Communities have more influence and involvement in the way services are delivered:

- *Develop Neighbourhood Management arrangements for the district.*

**4 PROGRESS MADE DURING 2008/9**

**Morecambe Regeneration**

The adoption of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy confirms that Morecambe remains as a priority location for regeneration schemes and new investments when the upturn in the economy arrives.

- 2008/09 has seen the City Council, with funding from the NWDA, clear the harbour band arena site and landscape the area which will be completed by the end of March. This along with the completion of the Hovercraft lifeboat station in June will see a greatly improved setting for the Midland Hotel.
- There is a current funding bid in place for a second Townscape Heritage Initiative and the City Council is eagerly awaiting the Heritage Lottery Funds decision.
- A review of the West End Master plan is being carried out and before going to Cabinet the Board of the West End Partnership will be given the opportunity to comment.
- During the past year the City Council has been giving support to the Winter Gardens Preservation Trust in its efforts to secure funds for the restoration of this key building. Officer support was provided to help the Trust secure an initial Heritage Lottery Project Planning Grant, and the Council has agreed to act as accountable body for a £300,000 grant contribution from the Northwest Development Agency to assist with the preparation of bids for capital funding. Cabinet also agreed to support the Winter Gardens project as a candidate for a £4 million bid to the "Sea Change" seaside resort regeneration funding scheme, and further officer support is being given to the preparation of this bid.
- We will take a leading role in the formation of a Morecambe Bay Regional Park which will, among other things coordinate all the main regeneration projects around the Bay, and demonstrate that the neighbouring local authorities can work together in a sub regional partnership. It is hoped that through this programme Morecambe could be the chosen location for a Regional Park interpretation centre.

### **Changing policy**

The past year has seen some important developments in terms of the local, national and regional policy framework for economic regeneration.

At national level we have seen the publication of the government's "Sub National Review" (SNR) of economic development. The important element of this is the move to bring together a single regional strategy for planning, economic development, and housing by 2010, officers and members have been working with other Lancashire councils and Lancashire Economic Partnership in preparation for this.

Another element of the SNR is the recommendation that Regional Development Agencies should take action towards greater delegation of funding down to local authorities.

### **Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership**

At local level, there has been a full review of the Sustainable Community Strategy by the LDLSP and the establishment of new LSP structures, including the formation of the Economy Thematic Group to take forward the relevant elements of the Community Strategy.

City Council members and officers have been working closely with the Thematic Group to review the economic vision and to translate it into an economic action plan that can be adopted by the LSP and its partners.

It was approved by Cabinet in October 2008 that the new framework for the Economic Vision, which is based on the LDLSP Action Plan, is based around five area themes:

- Reinvention of Morecambe
- Lancaster City and Riverside
- Lancaster Science Park and the Knowledge Economy
- The Heysham/M6 Employment Corridor
- Carnforth and the rural areas

The development of this local strategy, in conjunction with the proposals of the Sub National Review referred to earlier, means that there is now an important opportunity for this district to negotiate with Northwest Regional Development Agency for the establishment of a delegated regeneration programme. This would provide a greater certainty and commitment of funding from the NWDA over a number of years, and would also allow funding to be steered more closely towards locally agreed priorities.

Officers are now working on a detailed proposal to NWDA and to the new Homes and Communities Agency which seeks to develop this approach.

Whilst the formation of the LSP has been successful, and the adoption of the Regeneration Programme for the District by the Economic Thematic group has progressed, concern remains that there is no direct representation on the Economy group from the City Councils Regeneration portfolio holder for Morecambe, despite the fact that 3 of the 5 major projects lie with the remit of this portfolio. Further work will be required regarding this representation over the next few months.

**Property Services**

- Backlog repairs: the condition of the Council's building stock is a major concern. Despite a backlog repairs survey having been completed in 2005, with a five year repairs programme having been compiled, and whilst some funding has been made available, the lack of the major funds required has meant that only minimal works have been undertaken. The delays will inevitably mean that the buildings will be deteriorating further with the cost increase that this will bring about.
- Cabinet has considered the difficulties being experienced at Lancaster Market and asked for further information to determine future direction. This will continue to be an issue during 2009/10. Conversely, the Charter Market and Festival Markets have been particularly successful and are a draw for shoppers in Lancaster and Morecambe.
- The current economic climate is having a significant effect on the property market. Capital receipts have proved difficult to achieve during the past year and this has become a problem for funding the capital programme. Cabinet has considered the position on the capital receipts schedule and acknowledged that in many cases offers for surplus property are not being received or that the offers are too low to consider disposals at the present time.
- Work has however continued on major schemes such as the Lancaster's Canal Corridor where the call-in process is crucial to determining the future of the scheme. However, the scheme to develop new stadium facilities for Morecambe Football Club has resulted in a capital receipt and will in future add considerably to the provision of sports facilities in the district.

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**EXECUTIVE MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT – 2008/09**

**COUNCILLOR JON BARRY, CABINET MEMBER WITH SPECIAL  
RESPONSIBILITY FOR CITY COUNCIL (DIRECT) SERVICES INCLUDING  
ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT**



**1 INTRODUCTION**

I think that CCDS has performed well this year. I am also pleased that the Climate Change group is beginning to have an impact and I look forward to further progress this year – both in terms of reducing energy useage by the Council and in bidding for money to help residents do the same. My main disappointment is that we have not introduced free schools recycling in schools. Sadly, this was a last minute victim of the budget process.

**2 EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP:**

- Cabinet
- Climate Change Cabinet Liaison Group (Chairman)
- Lancaster and Morecambe Markets Committee
- Recycling Cabinet Liaison Group (Chairperson)

**3 EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES etc:**

- LSP Environment Thematic Group
- Waste Management Strategy Steering Group (Lancashire Waste Partnership)

**4 OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES**

City Contract (Direct) Services

**CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITY OUTCOMES:**

Cleaner streets and public open spaces:

- *Improve the cleanliness of our streets and public spaces*
- *Reduce dog fouling incidents*

Reduce waste in the district by recycling and re-use:

- *Complete the recycling and waste management programme*
- *Continue to develop the recycling of commercial waste*

Reduce the impact of climate change within the district:

- *Develop local responses to mitigate and adapt to climate change.*

## **5      PROGRESS MADE DURING 2008/9**

### **CCDS – Highlights**

#### **Waste / Recycling**

- Completed roll out of new waste collection arrangements
- Expect to achieve a recycling figure of 33+% at 08/09 outturn and be a top quartile performer for low overall amount of waste collected.
- First District in Lancashire to agree district wide food waste collection arrangements from 2010/11
- Bulky Matters has reused / recycled around 60% of bulky items collected.
- Plans to roll out Bulky Matters to other Councils (eg Blackpool)
- Trade waste recycling service introduced and wider roll out due to start April 2009
- Elected as Vice Chair of Lancashire Waste Partnership

#### **Grounds Maintenance**

- Won award at Tatton show and now planning this year's entry
- Supported various 'in Bloom' entries
- Ongoing playground refurbishment programme (as funds allow!)

#### **Cleansing**

- Noticeable improvement in standards of street cleansing and response to reports of flytipping, littering etc. Targets for NI 195 (levels of graffiti, litter, detritus and fly posting) agreed and likely to be achieved.
- ENCAMS independent survey of cleanliness shows standards compare favourably with other Lancashire Districts.
- 2008/9 'Street Pride' scheme has worked well and 2009/10 programme is being planned
- Worked with other local agencies on 'clean sweep'
- Two new waste and cleansing enforcement officers recruited. Targeted enforcement combined with education and improved service delivery is having an impact.

#### **Highways Maintenance**

- Continued successful delivery of Highways Maintenance as a sub contractor to the County Council. Performance targets consistently achieved.

#### **General**

- Major reductions in sickness absence
- Ongoing training for frontline staff (customer care, manual handling, service specific training etc)
- Ongoing driver training programme in place
- Major efficiencies generated (eg improved management of the Council's fleet)
- Introduced new traffic management arrangements to the depot- which will improve safety and reduce traffic within the depot.

**Climate Change Liaison Group**

The Climate Change Cabinet Liaison Group have achieved a great deal throughout the 2008/09 municipal year. The majority of their time and resources have been committed to ensuring the year one actions of the In-House Climate Change Strategy have been effectively carried out.

Successes this year include:

- Managing the implementation of recommendations laid out by the Carbon Trust in their Energy Audit of Lancaster City Council's corporate buildings

This has resulted in the instigation of an energy efficiency programme at Salt Ayre Sports Centre, which will result in significant financial and carbon savings.

- The approval and installation of *powerPerfector*, a voltage optimiser, at Lancaster Town Hall, which should increase energy efficiency in this building.

The Group have also played a key role in a range of initiatives to address sustainability and climate change at Lancaster City Council. This includes encouraging action aimed at achieving relevant National Indicators and supporting the partnership between the Council and the Energy Saving Trust. As a result, Lancaster City Council has now been accepted onto the EST's Green Fleet Review and their One-to-One Support Programme, which provides advice, consultation, assistance with action planning and improved access to funding.

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**EXECUTIVE MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT – 2008/09**

**COUNCILLOR EILEEN BLAMIRE, CABINET MEMBER WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR**

- **COMMUNITY SAFETY**
- **EMERGENCY PLANNING**
- **STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PLANNING ENFORCEMENT**
- **CYCLING DEMONSTRATION TOWN**



**1 INTRODUCTION**

This has been a successful year in which all departments have achieved a great deal. My thanks go to all the officers and staff who have worked so hard and achieved so much. Many challenges lie ahead but with such dedicated staff I am sure they will be dealt with.

**2 EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP:**

- Cabinet
- Lancaster and District Chamber Liaison Group
- Neighbourhood Management Cabinet Liaison Group
- Planning Policy Cabinet Liaison Group (Chairman)
- Transport Cabinet Liaison Group

**3 EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES etc:**

- Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership Management Group
- Cycling Demonstration Town Board
- Lancashire Police Authority Partnerships Forum
- Lancaster District Community Safety Strategy Group, Executive Member
- LSP Safety Thematic Group

**4 OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES**

Community Safety  
Emergency Planning  
Strategic Planning and planning enforcement  
Cycling Demonstration Town

**CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITY OUTCOMES:**

Reduce crime and the fear of crime and help residents feel safer in their communities:

- *Work with our partners in the Community Safety Partnership to deliver the partnership's crime reduction targets*
- *Work with Prevent and Deter Forum to produce joint action plans to address anti-social behaviour*

Reduce domestic violence:

- *Work in partnership in line with the Domestic Abuse Strategy*

Reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents:

- *Work with the Community Safety Partnership to influence the County Council to implement a continuing programme of road safety improvements*

Improve economic prosperity throughout the district:

- *Prioritise the development of previously used land and restrain greenfield development through the Local Development Framework.*

Contribute to health improvement and reduce health inequalities through both delivery of our own services and our work with partners:

- *Implement the Cycling Demonstration Town Programme.*

## **5 PROGRESS MADE DURING 2008/9:**

### **Community Safety**

The Community Safety Partnership continues to perform well against its key targets – reducing alcohol related violent crime and criminal damage. The targets for the CSP for this past year have also included Prolific and Priority Offenders scheme, domestic violence, assault with injury and domestic burglary. The CSP will need to ensure that it continues to have the capacity to deliver against this wide range of targets and that performance management systems are in place.

The Partnership has continued to work within a changing landscape over the past year and further changes are sure to come. The Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership has now published its Sustainable Community Strategy and restructured itself with a Board, Management Group and seven Thematic Groups. Safety is one of these groups and I continue to be its Chair.

Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) continue to patrol the district, helping to reduce antisocial behaviour and enhance the feeling of community safety. Four of the environmental PCSOs which are totally funded by the City Council will cease in 2009 as a result of budget decisions taken by council.

The Multi Agency Problem Solving (MAPs) team is based in offices on Caton Road. The City Council's Community Safety Officer and assistant are based in these offices. Other agencies involved are Police, Fire and Rescue, Youth Offending Team, and Youth and Community Services.

City Council Officer have linked to the MAPs team with particular issues to find multi-agency solutions through the Joint Tasking Group and continue to be involved in initiatives such as Clean Sweep.

The lease on the MAPs building expires shortly and plans are being put in place to relocate the MAPs team to another location in the district.

The Domestic Violence Co-ordinator post is currently vacant and there are no plans to replace the post.

Spend for the financial year 2008-2009 is on track with no under-spend anticipated. There is a great deal of uncertainty regarding future funding arrangements for the CSP and this is hampering medium term planning.

### **Civil Contingencies**

There have been a number of matters to report in the Civil Contingencies work area during 2008/2009.

### **Emergency Planning**

- Two new emergency plans were published. Firstly a Coastal Pollution plan covering the Council's response to any oil or chemical pollution on the beaches of the District. Secondly, in conjunction with the local residents, a Community Emergency Plan has been produced to deal with incidents at Sunderland Point, particularly flooding and weather related emergencies but also events that occur when the access road is covered by the tide. Both plans were externally quality assured by the County Council Emergency Planning Service. As a result of the second plan being published two residents were invited to speak at a Cabinet Office Community Resilience Seminar in Manchester in January.
- The Council has also published a Community Recover Plan, based on national best practice guidelines. This plan covers how the Council will lead any post major incident recovery process and many Council Services were involved in its production. We are the first Council in Lancashire to publish such a plan.
- The Council has participated in several emergency exercises during the year. These test our plans and also give Council officers the chance to develop new skills in realistic but safe situations. Exercises in 2008/09 included.
  - Exercise Act Now – July – Terrorist Incident exercise aimed at local community groups – approximately 30 people participated including the Chief Executive and members of the Community Leaders Group.
  - Exercise Cerberus – December – table top exercise held in Lancaster dealing with a 'cross border' Cumbria/Lancaster rabies incident – 3 Lancaster City Council officers attended.
  - Exercise Eskrigge – January – Seminar Exercise held at White Lund Depot, where 14 Council staff participated, and the new Coastal Pollution Plan was tested.
  - Exercise Vulcan – test of Lancashire Pipeline Plan at The Red Rose Hub – 2 Lancaster City Council officers participated.
- The Duty Emergency Incident Officer scheme has continued to give the Council a trained officer 24/7/365 to respond to emergencies where a Council presence is requested by the 'blue light' services. The eleven volunteer officers (eight plus three reserves) have all attended a variety of training and exercise opportunities during the year. They have also begun to participate in some live Fire Service exercises that have proved very beneficial in subsequent live emergencies. The officers are equipped with Airwave radio, computer, plans and PPE and have greatly enhanced the Council's resilience and ability to deal with these incidents. Good feedback has been received from the local Fire and Police services about the Council's recent response to incidents in the district.

- Incidents attended during the past year have included flooding and severe weather incidents, chemical incidents (transporting and fly-tipping), building collapses and the sinking of the dredger in Heysham Harbour.
- Several senior Council officers have participated in familiarisation training at the Strategic Coordinating Centre at Police Headquarters, where the Council would be expected to send a senior representative should the facility be opened for a major incident in the Lancaster area. In a similar vein, further volunteers from within the Council have been trained to operate the District Emergency Control Centre at Lancaster Town Hall.

### **Business Continuity**

- Business Continuity plans have been activated on several occasions for IT and Telephony failures and also following the discovery of possible asbestos contamination in Morecambe Town Hall basement.
- The Council has purchased a software system known as Battle Baton that will enhance the ability to store up to date plans and to contact members of staff in an emergency. This includes the ability to send and receive text messages from the Battle Baton system, which is expected to have a number of 'spin off' benefits.

### **Strategic Planning and Planning Enforcement**

2008/09 has seen the City Council adopt the very first Local Development Framework Core Strategy in North West England. This places us in a strong position to direct investment into the best locations when an upturn in the economy comes. The City Council is also taking a further step towards refining sub regional strategy by taking a further championing role towards the formation of a Morecambe Bay Regional Park, one of the objectives of which could be the alignment of Local Development Frameworks to form a single set of complimentary objectives around Morecambe Bay. Further progress on the Local Development Framework will be affected by the need for the City Council to make reductions in services whilst it faces its current financial challenges. It hopes, however, to continue to make progress with its Land Allocations document despite cuts in other areas. Activity on planning applications has reduced, but is counter balanced by the significant workload currently emerging to handle the major call in public inquiry for the Canal Corridor North development.

### **Cycling Demonstration Town Project (CDT)**

In October 2008 we completed the first phase of our three year Cycling Demonstration Town Project. Outputs included the completion of links in our off-road cycle routes, extensive training programmes, promotion and publicity to encourage more people to choose to cycle and working with major employers to encourage staff to cycle to work. The outcome is an average increase in uptake of cycling of about 7% each year. The full evaluation of the initial three year project is still being finalised by Sustrans.

The further good news is that the City Council has been successful in bidding for a further three years CDT funding with an approved work programme focussing on access into and around Lancaster City Centre.

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**EXECUTIVE MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT – 2008/09**

**COUNCILLOR SHIRLEY BURNS, CABINET MEMBER WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR TOURISM AND EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT**



**1 INTRODUCTION**

I have enjoyed my year on the Cabinet and I would like to thank all the staff who have gone out of their way to give me all the help and support possible in these difficult financial times.

**2 EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP:**

- Cabinet
- Festivals and Events Cabinet Liaison Group (Chairman)
- Morecambe Retail, Commercial and Tourism Cabinet Liaison Group

**3 EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES etc:**

- British Resorts Association
- Lancaster District Sustainability Partnership
- LGA Tourism Forum
- LSP Children and Young People Thematic Group
- LSP Valuing People Thematic Group

**4 OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES**

Tourism and Events throughout the District

**CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITY OUTCOMES:**

Improve the district's competitiveness as a visitor destination:

- *Implement the Council's Tourism Strategy*
- *Attract visitors to the district by promotion of cultural events*

**From 4<sup>th</sup> February 2009 the following was added to Councillor Burns' portfolio:-**

- *Deliver a Civic Programme which celebrates our local heritage and benefits our communities and civic pride. Including pending Centenary celebrations (100 years Town Hall and Ashton Memorial).*

## **5 PROGRESS MADE DURING 2008/9**

### **Tourism**

#### **Tourism Strategy Update**

In December 2008, Cabinet was presented with an update of the district-wide Tourism Strategy. The document included a review of the very significant progress that has been made over the two year period since the strategy was first produced, and it is worth highlighting some of these achievements here:

- Restoration work on the Midland Hotel in the centre of Morecambe, costing about £11 million, has been completed and the Midland re-opened at the beginning of June 2008. The refurbished hotel is already attracting more high spending visitors to the district and, together with plans for further redevelopment of the adjacent central promenade area, can act as a catalyst for the further regeneration of Morecambe as a significant visitor destination. The restoration and reopening of the hotel has attracted high levels of national media attention for Morecambe.
- Following the opening of the Midland Hotel, a new brochure aimed at the niche market likely to be attracted by the four and five star market has been produced. It covers the whole of the district plus some destinations just outside. This brochure has the title "Away" and was funded through the Vision Board.
- Sandy beaches – such an essential component of the British seaside experience – have returned to Morecambe. For many years the main beaches have had very little sand but following completion of the seventh phase of the coastal defence works, there is now sand on the two amenity beaches and better public access to them.
- Work to coastal defences has also brought improvements to the Sandylands section of the promenade between The Battery and Heysham, including new lighting, activity areas and improved beaches.
- The West End Gardens in Morecambe have also been completed, including a new café, and have greatly enhanced the western end of the seafront. The scheme was designed in close consultation with the local community, including schools.
- Both Tourist Information Centres have now been extensively refurbished and have re-opened as modern Visitor Information Centres in both Lancaster and Morecambe. Morecambe's Tourist Information Centre, located in the Old Station Buildings, was refurbished and re-opened in 2007. In Lancaster, the new VIC has been created as part of the Storey Institute Creative Industries Centre, with the help of external funding from Northwest Development Agency and Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board. This new VIC will be promoting the wider region as well as the local district.
- The reopening of the Storey Institute, with its improved galleries and performance space, as well as the new VIC, also provides an important new visitor attraction in Lancaster
- 60 Kilometres of cycle routes have been developed across the district. The Lune Millennium Park in Lancaster to Caton has 15 kilometres of traffic free cycle ways and paths.

The Tourism Strategy also highlights the potential to build on the District's cultural heritage offer, particularly in Lancaster, and a bid has been made to Northwest Development Agency to seek funding for development of a 10 year cultural heritage strategy for the District. It is hoped that this will help secure additional funding to

upgrade and improve some of the city's main heritage attractions and also its public realm.

## **Economic Impact of Tourism**

The value of tourism for the local economy is assessed annually through an economic impact modelling system shared with the Tourist Board and with other local authorities throughout Lancashire, known as STEAM. The STEAM data for 2007 shows that the district had 6.71 million visitor days (staying and day visitors) and this generated £267 million for the local economy. Total tourists to the district in 2007 are reported as 4.62 million, up by 3% on 2006. An estimated 4,542 jobs (direct and indirect) are supported by tourism.

A breakdown of STEAM data for the sub areas of Lancaster, Morecambe, and rural areas showed that in 2007 total tourism revenue had increased in all parts of the District, with the highest growth (6%) in Lancaster, and 2% growth for each of Morecambe and the rural areas.

The 2008 destination benchmarking report has been received and this now gives us valuable data on tourists' perceptions of the district for every two years since 2002.

## **Tourism Marketing**

Tourism marketing activity has included significant partnership working with Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board (LBTB), including participation in the 2008 and 2009 Taste Lancashire, Night Time Buzz, Family Fun and Country Escapes thematic marketing campaigns (print and e-media).

Contacts have been maintained with national, regional and local tourism stakeholders and strategic work done with national sector bodies including the British Resorts and Destinations Association, Tourism Management Institute and the Tourism Society. Continued involvement with DP:UK Coastal group and the Historic Towns Forum (formerly EHTF) resulted in the Historic Towns Forum's annual seminar and the North West Coastal Forum being hosted in Morecambe.

A redesigned Holiday Guide for 2009 has been produced, featuring the Midland Hotel on the front cover and using the existing City, Coast & Countryside branding. Other print has included the reprint and distribution of the Cycling for All leaflets in partnership with the Cycle Demonstration Team.

The service has also participated in a number of Direct Mailing campaigns to generate interest and visits from targeted markets, as well as attended the Great Outdoor Show and the BBC Good Food Exhibition. Familiarisation trips have organised with staff and local tourism businesses.

A new, well qualified, Tourism & Marketing Officer, Rachael Dyer, has been appointed (January 2009) to replace Jane Silvester who took up a new post at Lancaster University half way through the financial year (October 2009).

Recent marketing activity has included:

- Reviewing the strategic approach for visitor marketing and production of a Visitor Marketing Plan drawing upon previously commissioned research (STEAM, Destination Benchmarking).

- Launch of the 2009 Groups campaign including the production, print and distribution of a completely new District groups travel guide; Media coverage of the launch; Creation of new graphical exhibition equipment to promote the District to external markets; Attendance at the Great Days Out Exhibition (targeting the groups market).
- Launch of the 2009 welcome information (Easter) including new Visitor Attractions Leaflet and Visitor Information maps (Lancaster, Morecambe and NW versions).
- Review and cleansing of the Destination Management System (DMS), the District database (part of the wider LBTB database) containing all visitor product data for the Lancaster District (accommodation; attractions; events; retail; food and drink; activities). This data is then used as the principal source of information for all print and visitor information (VIC operating systems, visitor information websites).
- Review and design of the new visitor facing website for the Lancaster District (a microsite of the LBTB visitor website launching at Easter).

Other work has included supporting a number of ongoing development projects including:

- The creation of a private sector led umbrella organisation to represent and engage existing sector related organisations (such as Lancaster and District Tourist Association, Morecambe Hoteliers Association);
- The creation of an Eric Morecambe RHS award winning garden to be sited in Morecambe;
- The launch of a leisure hovercraft service in Morecambe Bay;
- Support of Travelodge Hotel Planning application (Morecambe).

### **Tourism website**

During 2007 there were 124,595 unique visitors to the official visitor website ([www.citycoastcountryside.co.uk](http://www.citycoastcountryside.co.uk)) and this grew to 181,149 for 2008, an increase of 46%. Over this same period, the number of hits on the visitor website almost doubled from 7.8 million in 2007 to 15.3 million in 2008.

### **Overseas students' reception**

Following discussions between Council's economic development service and Lancaster & Cumbria Universities about the economic potential of their overseas links, the Council's Overseas Students reception was reinstated this year (on a trial basis) with a new format. This was designed to maximise the impact of the "civic" welcome to the city, combined with a strong sell on the tourism offer. The revised event was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October and was very successful, with over 150 students attending. It is hoped that the event will encourage increasing numbers of overseas students to bring friends and family for visits to the District during and after their studies at the two Universities.



## **Events throughout the district**

### **Festivals and Events**

The year started with great expectation, Councillors John Barnes and Roger Dennison brought forward the idea of a spectacular event provisionally named 'Look Out to Sea', which would have been held all over the district during April. They had contacted the Navy, Army, Royal Air Force, Coastguard, R.N.L.I., Cadets, Veterans, Schools, Fishermen and others, who all seemed eager to be involved.

It would have been:

- Entertainment - for tourists and residents;
- Education - i.e. lectures in schools;
- Employment – recruitment to the forces.

Unfortunately as the Credit Crunch began to bite, promises started to be retracted, and reluctantly the event had to be disbanded for the present time.

I was delighted to see so many people enjoying the festivals, the Promenade was packed with tourists and locals enjoying these events, and it was a great relief when Council agreed to once again finance the Kite and Sandcastle Festivals.

The Lancaster Firework Spectacular was as popular as ever, and encourages families to watch this event rather than risk the dangers of small individual fires.

### **Future**

We feel confident more tourists will be spending holidays in the U.K., therefore we are anticipating sharing our Historic City, fantastic views across the bay, walking along our fabulous promenade and enjoying our beautiful countryside with a record number of tourists during 2009.

Another up and coming holiday trend around here is numerous permanent static caravan sites, all these people spend money in our area.

The Winter Gardens, due to a few dedicated people has begun to see the light at the end of the tunnel and hopes to open in the not too distant future.

## **Lancaster Town Hall Centenary Celebrations**

2009 is the Centenary year for Lancaster Town Hall and the Ashton Memorial and I am pleased to report that, towards the end of 2009, there are events planned which will mark these important anniversaries. Something to look forward to, these will include an Edwardian Themed Fireworks festival and a Choral Concert in the Ashton Hall.

\* \* \* \*

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT – 2008/09**

**COUNCILLORS TONY JOHNSON AND SUSIE CHARLES, CABINET MEMBER  
WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR**

- **RURAL AREA PORTFOLIO**
- **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT and EFFICIENCY**

*(Councillor Johnson held this Cabinet portfolio from 19<sup>th</sup> May to 17<sup>th</sup> June,  
Councillor Charles from 17<sup>th</sup> June to end of 2008/9)*



**1 EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP:**

**Councillor Johnson**

- Cabinet
- Climate Change Cabinet Liaison Group

**Councillor Charles**

- Cabinet
- Lancaster and District Chamber Liaison Group

**2 EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES etc:**

- Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB Unit
- Forest of Bowland AONB Advisory Committee
- Lancashire Rural Affairs Forum
- Lancashire Rural Partnership
- Lancaster Canal Restoration Partnership (formerly Northern Reaches Steering Group)
- LGA Rural Commission
- LSP Management Group
- North West Rural Affairs Forum

**3 OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES - PROGRESS DURING  
2008/9:**

**Rural Areas**

**Arnsdale/Silverdale and Forest of Bowland AONBs**

2008/9 has seen considerable activity in the main areas of rural land management. Both the Arnsdale/Silverdale AONB and the Forest of Bowland AONB have reviewed their Management Plans and this work has involved the consideration of significant

new impacts such as climate change and sustainability testing. The City Council has appointed a new manager for the Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB and the post holder is now making considerable progress in adapting the operation the Natural England's new strategic agenda. The adoption of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy will advocate urban concentration, but the City Council is taking appropriate policy steps to ensure that an economic upturn does not undermine this by leaving "green field" sites vulnerable to development as the rush for new house building occurs.

### **Carnforth Market Town Initiative**

September 2008 saw the completion of the three and a half year Carnforth Market Town Initiative [MTI]. The programme closed at the end of September and succeeded in drawing down almost the full amount of the £1 million funding allocated for it by Northwest Development Agency.

Although most projects had been completed in the previous financial year, the programme had been granted a 6 month extension into 2008 to allow two projects to complete:

- **Carnforth Resource Centre** -Opened in December 2008 and provides a shared facility for use by the local community, school, youth and early years services, plus hot-desking business workspace.
- **Carnforth Fire Station** – An options study and design for potential redevelopment of the fire station site was completed at the end of July 2008. Due to the need for further negotiations with the Fire Service it has not been possible for the project to be taken further forward during the MTI timescale, but the project is still being pursued by CARP Ltd, the successor body to the MTI Partnership.

Carnforth MTI Partnership held its final meeting at the opening of the Resource Centre in December 2008. However, the MTI programme has left a positive legacy in the form of CARP Ltd, a not-for-profit social enterprise company which continues to operate a number of former MTI projects including Carnforth Connect, and the canal "waterbus".

### **Possible Future Support for Rural Service Centres**

It is worth noting that Northwest Development Agency is currently looking to develop a County-wide investment strategy for Lancashire's rural key service centres, including Carnforth, with an emphasis on identifying the barriers to maximising their role in developing the rural economy. In response to a request for priority projects for inclusion in the strategy, two linked submissions are being made – one for Carnforth Fire Station site redevelopment to create high quality office and retail space in the centre of Carnforth and one for Carnforth Public Realm Improvements focusing on Carnforth Town Square adjacent to the fire station site. It is understood that NWDA will take project funding decisions based on the investment strategy during 2009/10.

### **Rural Development Programme for England**

During the past year the City Council has taken the lead in submitting the North Lancashire Local Development Strategy for delivery of part of the Rural Development Programme for England across the Districts of Lancaster, Fylde and Wyre. The submission has now been approved by a Regional Panel through NWDA, subject to

addressing a number of points raised in feedback from the Panel. RDPE funding in the submission totalled £2.5m over the period to 2013.

The Rural Development Programme for England is the national framework for delivery of the European Union's European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development in the period 2007-2013. The main mechanism for the delivery of the socio-economic priorities of the RDPE in the North West is the Leader approach which is based on community-led and locally based programmes. In implementing this approach, the Northwest Development Agency (NWDA) introduced a process to establish Local Action Groups (LAGs), comprising a range of organisations representing a wide cross-section of rural community interests. These LAGs would take decisions on those projects and proposals from a range of delivery bodies that best contribute to the improvement of the local rural economy and which offer innovative solutions to identified local needs.

Within Lancashire three LAGs will be established including one covering the North Lancashire area and comprising the rural areas within Lancaster, Fylde and Wyre Districts. Lancaster City Council has acted as Lead Authority in developing the North Lancashire Local Development Strategy, supported by Lancashire Economic Partnership. The Strategy was approved by NWDA in December 2008. Total RDPE funding of £2.53m to 2013 will be available for North Lancashire, split between seven measures:

- Vocational training and information actions - £141,505
- Adding value to agricultural and forestry products - £660,358
- Co-operation for the development of new products - £141,505
- Diversification into non-agricultural activities - £308,393
- Support creation and development of micro enterprises - £411,191
- Encouragement of tourism - £102,798
- Basic services - £205,596

20% of the overall funding is allocated to management and administration costs, including a full-time, dedicated Rural Development Officer to support implementation of the programme. This officer will be employed by Lancashire Economic Partnership but the City Council's Economic Development Service have offered office space for the officer to use as a base, to ensure that close links are developed. The City Council is also taking the lead in establishing the North Lancashire Local Action Group and LAG Executive Group which will make decisions on project funding proposals. It is anticipated that the City Council would be represented on the LAG Executive Group. Lancashire Economic Partnership will be the accountable body for the programme and will also provide certain centralised functions.

### **Performance Management and Efficiency**

The Planning Service has seen a significant reduction in income from fees for planning applications and building regulation submissions. To compensate for this vacant posts have been frozen in Building Control and the whole of last year's Planning Delivery Grant has been provided to offset income losses. The Service will continue to look for efficiencies in staffing levels where it can without prejudicing its ability to respond to the economic upturn when it arrives.

## **Managing Performance**

Having achieved a 'Good' rating in the last ever round of CPA inspections, the emphasis in 2008/09 has been to consolidate and strengthen the significant improvements we have made in managing performance over recent years. All our processes and systems are regularly reviewed and in summer 2008 it was the turn of our Performance Management Framework (PMF). The aim of the review was to ensure that we continue to monitor the delivery of all strategic and operational priorities in the most effective way.

The PMF had been praised in the 2007 CPA inspection and was working well, so the outcome was a number of small improvements to what was already a solid and functional process. Recommendations included the streamlining of paperwork and the establishment of a convention of Plain English in all monitoring reports. The PMF continues to deliver effective monitoring and a consistent focus on priorities.

The change associated with corporate improvement requires processes to manage it well. Our systems continue to be robust, well embedded and consistently applied. 'Escendency', our web based performance management tool, provides a 'picture' of performance in relation to priorities in using the most up to date available information and highlighting both under and over performance.

## **Managing Projects**

Our bespoke corporate project management methodology is well embedded across the Council. Lancaster's Approach to Managing Projects (LAMP) was introduced in April 2007. Adoption of a standard method has developed a pool of trained and experienced project staff who can apply the method to any type or size of project proportionate to its significance to the success of the Council, its complexity and degree of risk. Through LAMP, we ensure that all intended project benefits are realised and that individual projects are delivered to time, cost and quality. Evaluation to date shows that the LAMP project is achieving its objectives. Our recent emphasis has been on improving Programme Management and this activity will continue in the coming financial year.

## **Partnership Performance**

Increasingly, the council delivers its ambition for our communities through partnership working, so we seek to share our performance management expertise with all our partners. This was an area for future development/improvement identified in the CPA report and the coming year will see the council's ever more active engagement in the Local Strategic Partnership's (LSP) PMF.

In 2008/09 the council was actively involved in the negotiation of the latest county-wide Local Area Agreement (LAA). The Council plays an active role in the performance monitoring arrangements which are now in place with the County LSP to monitor local progress in achieving targets in the LAA. Data Sharing Protocols are now in place across partnerships; the MADE (multi-agency data exchange) database is a specific example of this – which helps determine priorities and improvement planning in the Community Safety Partnership.

## **Ensuring Data Quality**

Consistent, high-quality, timely and comprehensive information is vital to delivering improved service outcomes. In the most recent audit we again scored 3 out of 4 which means 'performing well'. This tells us that KPMG, the Council's auditors, believe the measures we have put in place over recent years are robust. This

ensures that the data upon which Members rely to make decisions is accurate and fit for external scrutiny.

The Council had set a target to score Level 4 for data quality by 2008. Achievement of this target was dependent upon rolling out best practice across all our partnerships, particularly the LSP. The LSP was comprehensively restructured over the last year and the partnership's performance management arrangements were only recently agreed. This means that the earliest possible date for achieving Level 4 is 2009 and the target has been deferred accordingly.

### **Comparison & Value for Money**

The Council continues to benchmark its activity with comparable authorities, in particular through strong links with our family group, the Exeter Benchmarking Group. This enables an exchange of knowledge and ideas to support many of the Council's improvements. We are also a corporate member of the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE). Specific professional and countywide officer groups also meet regularly to discuss performance and opportunities to share best practice and efficiency options.

Other practical examples of using comparative performance data include using the Audit Commission's VFM tool, Direction of Travel and visiting other Councils to learn from best practice. These tools are used by services in both their PRT reports and also in the Star Chamber's annual VFM challenge. Value for money is central to our performance management framework and continues to drive our efficiency agenda.

### **Corporate Plan Priority Outcomes:**

Continue to evaluate our services to ensure they are delivered in the most efficient and cost effective way.

- *Deliver service improvement targets through business plans and achieve the efficiency targets in the Corporate Improvement and Efficiency Plan, Medium Term Financial Strategy and in the Comprehensive Spending Review*

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**EXECUTIVE MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT – 2008/09**

**COUNCILLOR JANE FLETCHER, CABINET MEMBER WITH SPECIAL  
RESPONSIBILITY FOR ARTS, MUSEUMS, LEISURE, SPORT AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE**



**1 EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP:**

- Cabinet
- Children and Young People Cabinet Liaison Group

**2 EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES etc:**

- Groundwork Lancashire West and Wigan
- Lancaster University Public Arts Strategy Committee
- LSP Children and Young People Thematic Group
- Museums Advisory Panel
- Cycling Demonstration Town Board

**3 OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES**

Arts  
Museums  
Leisure  
Sport  
Young People

**CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITY OUTCOMES:**

Contribute to health improvement and reduce health inequalities through both delivery of our own services and our work with partners:

- *Improve the quality of activity for children and young people and raise the standards of delivery of PE and out of hours opportunities across the district.*

Work to maintain a cohesive community where respect for all is valued and celebrated:

- *Implement the Children and Young People Strategic Plan.*

#### **4 PROGRESS MADE DURING 2008/9**

##### **Headline Issues for Cultural Services**

###### **Quarter 1:-**

- Completion of pool changing rooms refurbishment
- Appointment of 2 new Play Rangers
- Successful school holidays arts and leisure activity programmes
- Alan Dix of "509 Arts" appointed to assist in the production of a new district wide Arts Strategy

###### **Quarter 2:-**

- Successful summer playscheme programme
- Volunteer "gardener" initiative launched for Happy Mount Park
- Dome, Platform and Key Cultural Partners (Dukes, Litfest, Storey, More Music and LUDUS) all record successful spring/summer programmes, whilst the Festivals & Events section enjoy a successful Festival and Events Programme – including "We do like to be beside the Seaside" festival , as well as assisted events such as the Sandcastle Festival and the Kite Festival.

###### **Quarter 3:-**

- Lancaster identified as the only district in Lancashire to record "significant" increase in sports and physical activity participation – Sport England "Active People 2" survey
  - Adult participation in sport – increased by 6.2%
  - Club Membership – increased by 5.1%
  - Organised Competition – increased by 5.2%
- Council adopt the free swimming for the over 60's from April 2009 at Salt Ayre Sports Centre and the 3 Community Pools

##### **Children and Young People**

This is the first year of working to the Children and Young People Strategic Plan that was approved by Cabinet in January 2008. The Action Plan for 2008/09 focuses on developing priorities specified in the Strategic Plan, described and monitored by working to the following 5 aims:

#### **1. To Ensure that Lancaster City Council Fulfils its Duty to Co-Operate Under The Children Act 2004**

The Children and Young People Manager has participated in district, county and regional groups in order to be able to advise and inform services and members of new developments and requirement; ensuring that local perspectives are included in county work and that improvements are made in council run/funded provision.



- **Every Child Matters (ECM) Leads Group** – representatives from the 12 District/Borough Councils in Lancashire meet to ensure that tier 2 councils are working coherently within the new Children's Trusts, are all aware of new developments/legislation, have the opportunity of offering support by sharing information and best practice examples.
- **Involving Children and Young People Steering Group** – a relatively new countywide group set up to embed the Lancashire Children and Young People's Charter in all organisations across the county. (More information regarding this later in Youth Engagement section) The Children and Young People Manager represents the council and also the other district councils on this group.
- The C&YP Manager sits in the **Lancaster District Children's Trust** and was involved in organising the launch of the Trust in January 2009 and led a task and finish group on assessing the levels of engagement/participation across the district. The council is the lead organisation for priority '*To increase the number of cultural and leisure opportunities for children and young people in order to increase their participation in positive activities*'

The **Children and Young People Officer Group** is a cross service group that has been made up from the 'old' ECM officer group and safeguarding group in the council. It was decided that it was more effective to have one group rather than duplicating some issues and having more than one representative from services. It has been further agreed that there will be an 'executive group' made up of service representatives who have the most contact or involvement with children and young people.

All services have a Children and Young People officer who has the responsibility of cascading information to their services and bringing issues back to the group and/or the Children and Young People team.

Work is continuing to ensure that services acknowledge the work they do with children and young people in their service business plans.

In order to monitor and bench mark the amount of work and the variety of work that different services do it is hoped to introduce a basic 'monitoring form'. This will provide the council with consistency and a comprehensive set of data.

In addition to the information to services through the officer group there has been an article in News 'n' Views in October 2008 about the work done on the Local Democracy Campaign, an article in First Brief and information sessions delivered to the Consultation Champions group and Council Housing staff and a training session for members.

The Children and Young People page on the intranet has been reviewed and renewed with links to minutes and external websites included. The page on the council's website has also been revamped to include more information. This is regularly up-dated.

## **2. To Ensure the Council Fulfils its Duty in Safeguarding and Contributing to the Wellbeing of Children and Young People**

Safeguarding children and young people continues to be a priority for the council. Child protection training sessions have been offered, but there has been a low uptake to the corporate training. A reminder will go to services for this EDPA round.

The summer play-schemes had information packs and leaflets at each venue (funded by C&YP budget) alongside internal training for the play leaders

The council's current Child Protection Policy was used as an example of good practice through a presentation made to the ECM Leads group by the Children and Young People Manager. It was subsequently used to form the basis of Hyndburn's policy.

Under current legislation 'safeguarding' includes more than 'child protection'. It has a wider remit in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, and using preventative measures as well as interventions. Nationally there is a new framework that all organisations need to sign up to – **Common Assessment Framework (CAF)**. The council was the first district council in county to sign up to the CAF.

The CAF uses Lancashire Continuum of Need to indicate the level of support a child and/or family will require. Using the CAF referral system has replaced the system that staff have been using for a long time. Therefore training sessions have been organised by the Children and Young People Team for all relevant services delivered by the locality CAF Support Officer

A new **Safeguarding Children Policy and Guidance** document has been drafted and sent to all council services and external colleagues for consultation. This new policy will safeguard staff as well as children and young people by giving clear guidance on behaviour and code of conduct, training and recruitment and selection guidance. Children and young people will benefit from the addition of an anti-bullying and positive behaviour guidance.

The council has not had consistency in processes or procedures for young people who are short work experience placements. This new policy provides clear guidance on how to organise and operate a safe experience for young people.

The new child protection and CAF processes are clearly laid out for staff to follow. The processes have changed considerably since the previous Child Protection Policy was written, so it was important that this new policy reflected the most up to date systems.

### **3. To Develop Local Democracy Activities**

The Children and Young People Manager has taken the responsibility for co-ordinating the Local Democracy activities that take place during October. A group of officers from services who deliver the activities met to discuss and plan activities for 2008. Evaluation forms for participants are now used for each event with the results collated and used to inform improvements to the activities.

It was agreed that in future years the council would provide activities throughout the year rather than just during the National Democracy Week, having a **Local Democracy Campaign**. A 'menu' of activities and opportunities will be devised and go to Business Committee.

New banners for displays have been bought, giving a corporate feel to all Local Democracy publicity and information.

The 'Mock Council' event at Morecambe Town Hall was enjoyed by 28 year 7 pupils from Morecambe High School and 28 pupils from Heysham High School. This is the first year that secondary age pupils have participated.

There were two days of activities based on 'environment' and the roles of council services attended by year 6 pupils from four primary schools in the district – 29 from

Moorside Primary, 42 from Bolton-le-Sands Primary, 16 from St Bernadette's Catholic primary and 7 from Stepping Stones School.

New this year was a 'Working for the Council' session where 11 year 10 pupils from Skerton High School learnt about application forms, interview techniques and the variety of opportunities in the council.

#### **4. To Develop a Youth Engagement Strategy (YES)**

Children and young people's involvement in the planning, design and delivery of services is not only expected but essential in ensuring that services meet their needs and expectations and those of their families

Currently we do not have any guidelines, protocols or cohesion in how or if we involve children and young people in any of our services. There are a number of factors that need consideration when deciding what is needed, hence a comprehensive 'Youth Engagement Strategy' will provide clarity in the who, why, what and how of involving children and young people.

As a council we need to have a consistency and quality in our approaches to involving children and young people meaningfully. This is not to say that everyone/every service has to do everything the same way, quite the opposite. By developing a shared understanding of what 'engagement', 'involvement', 'participation' means we can then move onto developing a menu of opportunities for children and young people's involvement.

**Special Council** in October 2008 provided the platform for starting the process of developing such a strategy.

There were 37 young people from 12 secondary schools, colleges and organisations participating in the day which was based on 'localising' the '**Lancashire Children and Young People's Charter**' a document written by young people describing how services should engage with children and young people to make it possible for them to have meaningful participation.

The aim of the day was '*To provide a forum for dialogue between elected members and young people from across the district. It is envisaged that this will be the beginning of regular exchanges of views and ideas.*'

The evaluations of young people, facilitators and members will provide the framework for the YES. This will be going to consultation in April 2009.

A DVD of the day's events will be available for organisations, schools, participants, services and members before the end of March 2009.

#### **5. To Improve Access and Take up of Positive Activities, Including Sports, Cultural and Leisure Activities**

Please see information from Cultural Services.

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**EXECUTIVE MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT – 2008/09**

**COUNCILLOR JOHN GILBERT, CABINET MEMBER WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR**

- **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND CUSTOMER SERVICES**
- **REVENUES AND BENEFITS**
- **HOMELESSNESS**
- **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**
- **LEGAL AND LICENSING SERVICES**
- **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION**



**1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES**

This portfolio contains a large range of unconnected responsibilities. Some of the reports consist simply of a list of achievements, but others need more in the way of explanation, so that it is difficult to present in an entirely coherent manner. All areas except Information Technology and Customer Services and Homelessness are new to me and it has needed a lot of hard work to get up to speed on the new topics.

This is the first time I have been involved in the LDLSP, for which I became chairman of the Valuing People Thematic Group (VPTG). The first year of the new organisation has been quite frenetic, with the need to plan projects and get bids for finance in before the end of the financial year. VTPG has been part of an application by the Lancashire Community Cohesion Group for The Resilient and Cohesive Communities theme, which has gained Beacon Partner status for the City Council.

**2 CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITIES**

Provide customer focused accessible services:

- *Progress the Access to Services programme by moving the customer facing element of more services into the new face to face centres.*
- *Reduce avoidable contact from citizens.*
- *Improve score against Equality Standard for Local Government.*

Develop a service culture that embraces transformational change:

- *Publish consistent, measurable service standards.*
- *Provide training for all customer facing staff.*
- *Co-locating staff from partner and voluntary organisations in our Customer Service Centres.*

Local communities have more influence and involvement in the way services are delivered:

- *Increase the Council's responsiveness to local concerns by improving consultation and communication procedures.*

**3 EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP:**

- Cabinet
- Canal Corridor Cabinet Liaison Group
- District Wide Tenants Cabinet Liaison Group
- Transport Cabinet Liaison Group
- Universities Cabinet Liaison Group (Chairman)

**4 EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES etc:**

- Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership Management Group
- Lancaster and District YMCA Management Board
- LSP Health and Wellbeing Thematic Group
- LSP Valuing People Thematic Group (Chairman)

**5 PROGRESS MADE IN 2008/9:**

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND CUSTOMER SERVICES**

During the year Information and Customer Services have played a valuable role co-ordinating, planning and implementing IT and telephony systems for the benefit of all Council services and members. They have:

1. Expanded the services available in the face to face Customer Service Centres in Morecambe and Lancaster Town Halls. All types of homelessness and housing standard queries are now dealt with initially within the customer service centre in Morecambe, allowing a far better environment for those requiring the standard services. The new facilities provide a more efficient and comfortable experience for visitors, with the availability of private interview rooms for those wanting a more confidential discussion. The queue management system helps to ensure that customers have as short a wait as possible. The changes mean that staff from Health and Strategic Housing also have been moved into a more suitable and secure environment following a number of years in inadequate accommodation at Euston Road.
2. Answered over one hundred and thirty thousand phone calls for the Council's main switchboard (582000) and Streetscene phone numbers.
3. Procured, configured and installed a new way of staff accessing computer systems which will enable staff to hot desk efficiently from any Council site. Initially this system has been installed across Morecambe Town Hall and has allowed far more staff to be accommodated within the office space of Morecambe town Hall than was possible previously. The previous offices at Euston Road can now potentially be disposed of adding to the Council's capital receipts.
4. Procured, tested and installed a new modern telephone system currently rolled out to the whole of Morecambe Town Hall, White Lund etc This system allows officers to hot desk from any telephone extension and will support further homeworking and hot desking initiatives across the Council. Over one hundred staff been trained in the use of the new telephone system and the new hot desking system.
5. Replaced over a hundred and forty desktop computers and continued to upgrade the Council's infrastructure including upgrades of the network to allow faster

access to information for anywhere within the Council's buildings, expanded our investment in advanced storage and recovery systems, etc. Any redundant equipment is sent to be reused and recycled for community use by a not-for-profit organisation, our partners Furniture Matters.

6. Protected the City Council's computer network from over one million computer virus attacks and eight million spam emails - providing a high level of security for the Council's corporate systems despite ever increasing and more sophisticated attacks.
7. Developed further the Council website, usage of which continues to grow strongly – unique users have grown by more than 13% over the last twelve months and in the last twelve months there were 1.72 million page views.
8. Changed and strengthened computer security for every user of the Council network to allow the Council to join the secure national infrastructure. This will allow to Council to work with many national and regional organisations sharing sensitive information in a secure and managed manner.

### **REVENUES AND BENEFITS**

1. Implemented a restructure of the Service that delivered efficiency savings which contributed to the council's achievement of its target for limiting the rise in Council Tax for 2008/9 to 4%.
2. Maintained a high performing benefits service with fewer resources than in 2007/8, demonstrating value for money improvements and cashable savings.
3. Benefits service retained its rating as "excellent" against self assessment of DWP Performance Standards and the new National Performance Indicators for payment of benefit claims and processing changes of circumstances.
4. Continued to improve partnership working with other agencies and stakeholders. CAB now have a presence in the City Council's customer services centres one day a week.
5. Continued to improve the customer experience by the provision of shortened claim forms and a range of easy to read Information Sheets; and developed literature in alternative languages.
6. Effectively implemented the introduction of the Local Housing Allowance and Empty Property Rate legislation.
7. Maintained improved collection rates from previous year for both NNDR & Council Tax and implemented more stringent recovery procedures for non payers.
8. Managed the procurement and implementation of a corporate document management system in Revenue Services, Planning Services, Council Housing, and Creditors.

### **HOMELESSNESS**

1. The Homelessness service has exceeded the corporate plan, national indicator and business plan targets this year. The continued focus on prevention and partnership with voluntary sector organisations seems to be working well. However, we cannot be complacent as the current recession is already starting to have an impact on the workload of the homeless team. We are expecting a difficult

year for homelessness and targets will need to be set to take account of the current economic climate.

2. The Homelessness service has successfully established the Sanctuary Scheme, which aims to make it possible for victims and potential victims of domestic abuse to remain in their home and feel safe.
3. The Homelessness Strategy was approved in July 2008 following extensive consultation. DCLG have congratulated the Council on its strategic approach to homelessness including Member commitment and links with the LSP. However, they questioned whether the Council could deliver the Strategy based on its current level of resources allocated to homelessness. In response, a Senior Housing Advisory Officer post is to be created within that team from existing budgets.
4. A new contract for homeless prevention services has just replaced the old service level agreements with voluntary organisations. The Homeless Review identified a need for a more streamlined and targeted service and this resulted in a tender process for one single contract. YMCA/Signposts were awarded the contract and the Council is now looking forward to a productive relationship with them and improved outcomes for homeless and potentially homeless people in our district.

### **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

1. With no elections in 2008, the opportunity was taken to review and consolidate some of the new practices introduced for the 2007 elections, particularly around postal vote checking – improved ways of working should be in place for 2009 when the Service will be put to the test running 3 elections on 4th June – the European, County Council and the new Morecambe Parish across a large area of the District. The ‘threat’ of a General Election remains although not for 4th June it is hoped.
2. A new duty was placed on Local Authorities to promote elections and electoral registration; not only were additional promotional methods used but the Elections Officer was able to take full advantage of all grants available from central government for this purpose.
3. Time and effort has been put into the development of recording systems to provide the necessary evidence demanded to meet a range of new Electoral Commission performance indicators. Work has already begun to prepare for the 2009 elections which will impact on the capacity of the Service in other areas of work.
4. The Service and the Elections Officer in particular has been working with the Office of National Statistics to prepare for a census rehearsal in Lancaster which will take place in October 2009.
5. In Members Services, the review of civic events has continued, constantly striving to improve the impact of each event at the same time as reducing costs. Minor cuts have been made to the budget and Council has taken the decision to bring to an end its involvement in twinning and the international youth games.
6. A review of distribution and the supply of printed documents to Councillors is ongoing and this has resulted in a reduction in the working hours of the Mayoral attendant without affecting the service provided to the Mayor.
7. In Democratic Support there have been some staff changes in 2008, resulting in a few changes in responsibilities. Staff in this section and in Members Services

concentrated their efforts on moving Member Development a step further forward this year and successfully achieved *North West Charter Status* for the Council.

8. In conjunction with Information Services a review of laptop provision to Councillors has also been undertaken and should be completed shortly.
9. There has been continued progress with the use of technology in committee management. All Councillors now have computer access to committee documents and other information and work is ongoing to help Members make best use of this system. It will include encouraging Councillors and Officers to attend meetings with agenda downloaded onto their laptop rather than using a paper copy, hopefully with the result eventually that paper and printing costs can be even further reduced.
10. Development of the committee management system for internal administration has also continued and is now being used to monitor the implementation of decisions.
11. The process to reach a decision on the Morecambe Town Council petition was passed to the City Council by the Department of Local Government and the Communities during 2008 and a conclusion was finally reached. The Order has now been made and the elections to the new Council will be held on 4th June. Support from the service will continue up to and including their first Annual Council in the middle of June.

#### **LEGAL AND LICENSING SERVICES**

The Legal team has been at full strength and unchanged since November 2007. This has enabled the solicitors to develop good working relationships with the client services allocated to them. The routine day to day work includes debt collection, recovery of rent arrears, Council house sales and other property transactions, including sales and leases. Advice is routinely provided for Cabinet reports and Licensing, Planning and Appeals committees.

1. There have been a number of successful prosecutions throughout the course of the year, relating to a range of issues including smoking, dangerous dogs, failure to comply with a housing notice and breach of health and safety regulations. An appeal against the revocation of a taxi driver's licence was also successfully defended.
2. Legal advice has been given on all major regeneration and property projects, including the Canal Corridor, Chatsworth Gardens, Luneside East and Morecambe Football Club, as well as the Town Green Application in Lancaster South.
3. Local land charges have continued to maintain a high standard of services, returning most searches within five working days. However, the number of searches has reduced dramatically as a result of the current economic climate and the state of the housing market.
4. In Licensing, the Gambling Act 2005, implemented in 2007 has bedded in, but has raised some complex and difficult issues with regard to amusement and bingo halls, which have required significant input from the Licensing Manager.
5. Problem premises under the Licensing Act 2003 continue to be dealt with by a Multi Agency Licensing Team.



6. Taxi Liaison Groups have been developed to improve discussion between the main taxi companies, the police, the highway authority and the Council's licensing officers on matters of common interest.
7. A requirement has been introduced for all new applicants for driver licences to attend a training course at Lancaster and Morecambe College, and it is hoped that this will improve the level of service provided to the public.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION**

1. Review of communications and marketing has led to the agreed principle of centralising all communications and marketing activity giving a budget target reduction of £41,000 for 2009/10.
2. Council generated publicity achieved an equivalent advertising rate, in the local papers alone, of almost £280,000, up £8,000 on the previous year. In total, 405 press releases were issued and 1,232 press enquiries were dealt with by the press office function. As well as contact from the local media the press office continues to be contacted by a range of other national newspapers, radio stations, periodicals and on-line news networks.
3. Already rated more highly than any other public sector press office in the district, this year's annual media survey saw a rise in satisfaction with the service.
4. Staff required to provide information to the media have been provided with bespoke training courses by the communications officer.
5. Members and officers have also taken part in media training this year.
6. Photography training has also been provided to increase coverage of council activities via the media and provide a source of quality images for use across all council marketing materials.
7. One of the most popular features of the City Council's website for the public is its provision of news.
8. A page has been designed for the council's website dedicated to students and has so far received 404 hits.
9. The *My Council* campaign was launched in October, with the specific aim of increasing customer awareness of what their council does and the value for money it provides for the, on average, £3.56, households pay per week. This has been particularly pertinent in these difficult financial times when budget cuts mean customers, more than ever, need to be aware of what they are getting for their money. Response has been positive and the campaign will be developed during 2009/10.
10. Three issues of *Your District Council Matters* go to every household in the district drawing in an income of approximately £6,000. This helped to bring the overall cost of the magazine to approximately 13p per household. The latest issue included recession busting advice and promoted a range of council services which would otherwise have had to be advertised via alternative routes. Demand for articles in the magazine from services and partners continues to outstrip the space available.

11. A new Council Tax leaflet, which incorporates an A-Z of Council services, has been produced this year.
12. The consultation officer has just completed her first year in post. As well as leading on the development and delivery of corporate consultations, such as the Employee Survey, the Place Survey and corporate priorities, she has also provided expert advice and support to over 25 council consultations, developed a new consultation policy and procedure, trained staff in use of the online consultation system and played an active role in the County Research Network Group.
13. A new approach to print and design is paying dividends with a more consistent standard of design, print and branding. Council policies regarding corporate identity have been strengthened, resulting in increased use of and appearance of the council's identity, making it clearer to customers who the provider is and raising the council's profile.
14. A change in postal delivery supplier has generated significant savings.
15. Internal communications have been very important for keeping staff informed about Fair Pay and Access to Services, with the intranet being the most efficient, as well as the staffs' preferred, medium.

## **6 CONCLUSION**

Despite the difficult national economic situation and the need to make an even huger budgetary saving than usual, the services in my portfolio have still managed to make some improvements in their provision to members and the public. This is in no small measure due to the dedicated and enthusiastic contributions from all the officers, to whom I give my grateful thanks.

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**EXECUTIVE MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT – 2008/09**

**COUNCILLOR DAVID KERR, CABINET MEMBER WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR**

- **HOUSING STRATEGY AND PROVISION - EXCLUDING HOMELESSNESS**
- **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**
- **HUMAN RESOURCES**
- **SUPPORT FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR**



**1 EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP:**

- Cabinet
- Canal Corridor Cabinet Liaison Group
- Children and Young People Cabinet Liaison Group
- District Wide Tenants Cabinet Liaison Group (Chairman)
- Neighbourhood Management Cabinet Liaison Group

**2 EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES etc:**

- Lancaster District Community Safety Strategy Group
- LSP Environment Thematic Group
- LSP Health and Wellbeing Thematic Group
- LSP Safety Thematic Group
- Morecambe Bay Tobacco Control Alliance

**3 OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing Strategy and Provision – excluding homelessness

Environmental health

Human Resources

Support for the Voluntary Sector

**CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITY OUTCOMES:**

Contribute to health improvement and reduce health inequalities through both delivery of our own services and our work with partners:

- *Use the baseline year of Place Survey to track 10% difference in life expectancy between our most deprived ward and the least deprived ward.*

Reduce alcohol related violence and harm; reduce alcohol related anti-social behaviour:

- *Work with the Police, Primary Care Trust and other agencies within the Community Safety Partnership to address issues around alcohol related violence and harm in line with the Alcohol Related Harm Strategy*

Increase the provision of affordable housing:

- *Provide affordable housing in accordance with the Housing and Homelessness Strategies*

Reduce sickness absence

#### **4 PROGRESS MADE DURING 2008/9**

##### **Human Resources**

The major task for Human Resources (HR) during this year has once again been the Fair Pay project. Following the job evaluation process, moderation was completed, and the Service worked closely with Financial Services to develop a new pay and grading structure. Many possible structures were considered, resulting in possible options being considered by the Single Status Working Group, Joint Consultative Committee, and Personnel Committee and Cabinet. Once the preferred structure had been approved, employees were notified on the 26th February 2009 of their job evaluation results and proposed new pay and grading. The notification process involved a substantial amount of work for HR staff. The next stage in the process is to deal, internally, with any appeals. An appeals procedure has been agreed with the trade unions and approved by Personnel Committee.

In addition to the considerable workload demands of the Fair Pay project, the Service has continued to provide routine operational HR advice. In particular the Service has continued to support Services in reducing sickness absence, and the improvement made in previous years has been maintained. The Service has also provided HR support and advice for Williamson Park, and has provided a great deal of support for the proposed Regeneration restructuring.

The Service is also responsible for the corporate training plan, and the priority this year has been customer care training, which is being delivered to all staff throughout the Council. This has received excellent feedback.

##### **Health and Strategic Housing**

###### **Environmental Health**

The 3 year headstone safety project in Lancaster Cemetery has been completed successfully on target and within budget. The Headstones within this cemetery are now safe. The memorial safety team is to be continued (on a reduced staffing level) to undertake the testing and repair of memorials in all the other Council cemeteries and closed churchyards. Several improvements have taken place at Torrisholme Cemetery with the help of the friends group and our efforts have been rewarded with gaining a green flag award.

The service has taken part in the citizenship classes at 2 local schools concentrating on the environmental aspects of the Council's work. We have also taken part in several environment days giving pupils an opportunity to learn about subjects ranging from recycling and fly tipping to food and health and safety. These links with schools are a key part of our services contribution to the children and young people's agenda and build on our already successful home safety quiz and mission possible initiative.

New work in Carnforth and Galgate has provided a more detailed understanding of local air quality. Work has begun to prepare an air quality action plan for central Carnforth. A new air quality management area must be declared in Galgate and this

will lead to further assessment. Meanwhile work with other agencies to identify scope for tackling air quality in central Lancaster is continuing. Here it will be necessary to carry out feasibility studies on some of the medium and long-term transport solutions identified in the Faber Maunsell report. Proposals for a new air quality action plan for Lancaster are being considered by the Local Strategic Partnership, which has confirmed its support for a Local Air Quality Forum.

The food and health and safety activity achieved an award of “substantial” reassurance in a recent internal audit. This is the first time internal audit have been able to award any Council service this level of reassurance. The food safety service was also successful in obtaining grant monies to assist catering businesses comply with new regulations.

With the closure of Strategic Housing offices at Euston Road, a system of hot desking was introduced at Morecambe Town Hall. This project was completed relatively smoothly within 5 weeks thanks to the professionalism and hard work of our staff. The service is seeing the benefits of having all staff together in one building and the improved reception and interview areas at MTH provide excellent facilities for our customers.

The Gypsy and Traveller Cabinet Liaison group formed this year and has already started to provoke useful discussions on future provision for Gypsy and Travellers and has heard evidence from a national body about problems experienced by people living on private caravan sites.

All targets in the business plan have been met. The corporate plan target relating to dog related enforcement activities has been achieved this year.

### **Strategic Housing**

Staff in Strategic Housing relocated from unsatisfactory office accommodation at Euston Road, Morecambe to Morecambe Town Hall in July 2008. The move was completed without any problems and whilst maintaining essential housing services for our customers – again only possible due to the efforts of dedicated staff. So far, we have not received any complaints from customers about moving away from the town centre location and in fact most customers report that the reception facilities and telephone answering service are much improved.

The targeted HMO project funded by the West end partnership ended on 31 March 2009. This was an immensely successful project targeting rogue landlords and improving some of the worst properties in the district. The Council worked with the police, the fire service and the local community on this project.

The housing standards team has failed to meet some of the business plan targets on improving the standards of accommodation due to a lack of capacity within this team. This problem will be exacerbated next year as the temporary funded west end HMO project came to an end in March 2009 and the funding for one post in this team is no longer available. In the absence of any funding to increase this team, a realignment of priorities has begun to match which statutory duties we can deliver with the resources available.

The disabled facilities grant service continues to face challenging times this year with the demand for this mandatory grant exceeding the available resources.

### **West End and Poulton Housing**

The Council has been implementing its Housing Strategy by joining up a wide range of activities through its neighbourhood management, regeneration, and planning operations. It has continued to implement a capital programme in partnership with Housing Associations which overhaul and renew low quality accommodation in Poulton and the West End of Morecambe.

Through its regeneration activities, it has been dealing with the built environment which, when poor, exacerbates the effects of problem housing, and it has continued to work with the Homes and Communities Agency to bring forward a viable scheme for a housing exemplar in the West End. These activities have been supported by the emergence of the newly adopted Local Development Framework for the district which sets the scene for new housing growth and will steer investment into the most sustainable locations, and towards meeting the right needs for the district when the economic upturn occurs.

### **Council Housing Services**

2008/2009 has been a challenging but productive year for Council Housing Services.

#### **Asset Management Including Repairs and Maintenance**

The independent stock condition survey has confirmed that we remain a high performer in relation to the Government's standards for Decent Homes. Since the previous stock condition survey the "decency" bar has been raised, and it is against these new higher standards that the latest stock condition survey has highlighted that only 1% of our housing stock does not meet the new Decency standard. Any necessary adjustments to our capital and planned maintenance programmes will be made to bring all the housing stock back into decency.

Approximately £3.5 million was committed to this years capital programme. All projects within the 2008/2009 programme have been let, and are scheduled for completion within the year.

The Service is seeking a partner to improve the delivery of the capital and planned maintenance programme. The exercise to identify a partner has had to be deferred, and the partnership working arrangements is to be re-tendered with a view to establishing the partnership from April 2010.

We continue to achieve good performance on responsive repairs but performance is not as good as we had hoped for. The Service had set challenging targets for 2008/2009 based on a very good performance out-turn in 2007/2008 but we have seen increasing demands for repairs, and also increasing volumes of work having to be undertaken prior to being able to relet properties.

The procurement of a maintenance partner will enable us to address some of these resource issues.

Tenant satisfaction with the repairs service has remained high. 98% of tenants who have had a repair undertaken have been satisfied with the completed repair.

#### **Income Management**

The current economic climate is having an effect on rent collection. The percentage of tenants getting into serious arrears has increased from 2.88% to 3.3%. However the overall collection rate remains high with the proportion of rent collected being 97.8% at the end of period Q3. This collection rate gives us a current ranking of 4<sup>th</sup> amongst 20 other housing providers in the NW.

To tackle the issue of increasing serious rent arrears the Service, alongside the CABs held three “Credit Crunch Roadshows” earlier in the year targeting the estates with the highest levels of rent arrears. The feedback from these “Roadshows” was very positive and further ones are planned. In addition the CABs have also expressed an interest in establishing a surgery within the council housing office at Cable Street.

The Service has also now signed up to “Possession Claims Online”. This means that we can make and manage our court applications online. This brings efficiency and savings in both time and money.

### **Allocation & Lettings**

We currently have 1583 active application for housing on the housing register, and 491 tenants requesting a transfer. This year to date we have housed 300 households from the both the housing register and the transfer register. We are currently receiving approximately 40 new housing applications a month which is an increase on the situation last year. One of the things we are finding is that we a housing increasing numbers of vulnerable people with support needs.

### **Tenancy & Estate Management**

This year saw the introduction of a new tenancy agreement. We wanted to make sure that the tenancy agreement is easy to read and to understand. We also wanted to make sure that the tenancy agreement clearly illustrates the rights and responsibilities of both tenants and those of the council. The agreement was introduced following extensive consultation and has been well received.

Tenancy and estate management work remains challenging and we have found that we have to take increasing action to tackle serious issues around breach of tenancies using the full toolkit of options open to us. Our Legal Services have been very supportive of us enabling us to find solutions to some very difficult situations. The Service is fully engaged with other agencies and plays a full part in the Community Safety Partnership including the Multi-Agency Partnership Team (MAPs), Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (the main aim of the MARAC is to support the highest risk victims of domestic abuse in their area) and the Prolific and other Priority Offenders Group (PPO).

### **Supported Housing**

Through the changes brought about through Supporting People we are a provider of housing support and the support is commissioned by Lancashire Supporting People.

This year saw the Service being awarded a steady state contract to provide housing related support in our sheltered housing schemes, and also community alarms. We are also Lancashire County Council's preferred partner for providing telecare services within the district – telecare is an extended form of the community alarm service we already provide.

As part of a response to Supporting People and to provide a higher level of service to sheltered housing scheme tenants we have established a pilot where we have grouped three sheltered housing schemes where the scheme managers support each other and provide mutual cover when on leave providing a higher level of contact with tenants than we could previously support. Approval has been given to role out this concept across our sheltered housing schemes.

### **Tenant Involvement**

2009 has seen the establishment by the Government of a new regulatory regime for social housing with the creation of the Tenant Services Agency (TSA). The TSA has been created to regulate the whole of the social housing sector and to ensure that tenants are at the heart of setting service standards. As part of the establishment of the TSA we have been chosen as a “path finding” authority in tenant involvement. This work will form part of something that is called a “National Conversation” that the TSA is undertaking to establish the new regulatory regime and standards for social housing.

Throughout this last year we have continued to improve the opportunities for involvement with tenants. August 2008 saw an event called the “Tenant’s Den” where we visited all our estates across the district to seek ideas for environmental improvements and small local projects. Shelter housing tenants were assisted in making a successful bid to Tesco and were awarded £1300 to purchase laptops for their schemes. This was done through an online grant finding package called “Grantfinder” which is being used to help all our tenant groups access funding. Other events that have been organised this year include a very successful tenants’ conference, we have had our annual garden competition which continues to attract a high number of entries, and we have also had two “chipping and neutering” events held jointly with Health & Strategic Housing and the RSPCA to promote responsible dog ownership.

### **Democratic Services – Grants to Voluntary Organisations – Activity In 2008/09**

A total of 37 voluntary organisations were helped by the Council in 2008 with small grants from £100 to £500 which were used for a wide range of things – renovation of musical instruments for a Youth Band, a Christmas Party for pensioners, cricket equipment, training for helpers at a swimming club and monthly coffee mornings for the over 60’s to name but a few.

With regard to the larger grants, progress has been made during 2008 with identifying the relevant Service Heads to provide closer links with voluntary organisations funded by the City Council in an effort to improve the monitoring of Service Level Agreements and to ensure that SLAs are more closely aligned to the Council’s priority needs. The requirement to find last minute savings as part of this year’s budget exercise will be carried forward into a more considered review of funding levels and SLAs for the future.

## **5 CONCLUSION**

Finally, in presenting my annual report, I wish to thank all employees in the service areas within my portfolio who have provided me with support throughout the year and who provide such a good service on behalf of the Council.

\* \* \* \*





**LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL**  
*Promoting City, Coast & Countryside*

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2008/09**

*March 2009*



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**Foreword from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Over the last year the focus for Scrutiny has been on improving how we monitor and engage with the Cabinet. At the start of the year we developed a programme that would allow Overview and Scrutiny Committee to interview Cabinet members about their portfolios and their aims for the year. Each member of the Cabinet has attended the committee – usually during the same meeting as we have been discussing something else which is part of their portfolio and we are grateful for their attendance. The discussions have always been interesting and informative. Our focus has been on how Cabinet members are using the Corporate plan and what concerns they have for the future in their areas. These discussions have been productive in that they have led to further areas of scrutiny. The positive approach that all members have to these meetings has aided the development of this ‘critical friend’ relationship. It does not mean that where Scrutiny finds fault we will not say so – and a quick glance at our recommendations will highlight some of our concerns over the year.

Scrutiny of our partners continues to develop. We have been successful, where many authorities fail, in engaging with a wide range of outside bodies. Our autumn meeting on Health issues was particularly interesting. We must make sure that the positive relationship with North Lancashire PCT and University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay Acute Trust. We all share aims of reducing the health inequalities in the district. It was sad to see the closure of Hornby High School appear before the committee again; this issue has led to a desire to develop how we do partnership scrutiny with Lancashire County Council.

Encouraging interesting task groups and meetings for non-executive members has been a desire of the Scrutiny. Task Groups are always well attended and it is always good to see that most of our recommendations are accepted by Cabinet. We have had several packed meetings at Morecambe Town Hall, not just for the few call-ins we have had; this suggests that we are successfully engaging public (and councillor!) interest in our work. It has also been good to receive reports on the successful implementation of former task groups – to see the progress in the cemeteries was a joy.

Finally I must thank all those who have been involved in Overview and Scrutiny, Budget and Performance Panel, Task Groups and Working Groups over the past year; without your hard work and commitment to this process it would not work. Particular thanks must go to Liz Bateson and Stephen Metcalfe in Democratic Services for their support, advice and patience!

I hope you enjoy reading our report on the past year.

***Councillor Stuart Langhorn***  
***Chairman Overview and Scrutiny Committee***

<b>Statistics and Overview</b>
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This report sets out the work undertaken by Lancaster City Council under the Scrutiny powers (as set out in the Local Government Act 2000) during the municipal year 2008/09. The Act also places a duty on local authorities' Overview and Scrutiny functions to produce an Annual Report which this document represents. This Annual Report has been produced on behalf of the whole Overview and Scrutiny process at Lancaster City Council and maps the work of Overview and Scrutiny against the Council's objectives and core values, and highlights where work has been carried out to underpin and support each of these elements.

**Key Achievements**

Maintaining a reduced number of Call-ins	Reduction in response times to Overview and Scrutiny requests
Attendance of stakeholders / external witnesses	Continued public involvement in Overview and Scrutiny
Further development of pre-decision scrutiny	Greater support from Services for the Overview and Scrutiny work programme.

**Key Areas for Improvement**

Scrutiny of Partnership working.	Improved response time to enquiries regarding pre-decision Scrutiny.
Further development of scrutiny web page	Maintaining public and media interest

**Statistics 2008/09**

<b>STATISTIC</b>	<b>TOTAL 2004/5</b>	<b>TOTAL 2005/6</b>	<b>TOTAL 2006/7</b>	<b>TOTAL 2007/8</b>	<b>TOTAL 2008/9</b>
No. of Meetings (incl. Budget and Performance Panel and Task Groups)	<b>31</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>37</b>
No. of Site Visits	<b>NC</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>
No. of Call-ins (Cabinet decisions)	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4*</b>
No. of Issues for Pre-Decision Scrutiny	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>NC</b>	<b>17</b>
No. of Referrals from Cabinet/Council	<b>NC</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
No. of Referrals to Cabinet/Council	<b>22</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>
No. of Cabinet Members held to account	<b>NC</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>
% Recommendations adopted from Scrutiny Reviews and Task Groups	<b>91%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>86%</b>

- In addition 9 referrals made to individual Cabinet Members
- \* In addition 1 officer delegated decision was called in
- NC – Not Collected

**Pre-Decision Scrutiny**

Pre-decision scrutiny is the process where, based primarily on study of the Forward Plan (the Council's published plan of all 'Key Decisions' for the year, updated monthly) and information provided by Cabinet Liaison Councillors, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee selects issues that it would like to consider before a decision is taken.

There are many benefits to this process, particularly that it can help to add value to decisions at the pre-decision stage, can widen consultation to include Non-Executive Councillors and it can also help to minimise the use of Call-in (a last resort). The Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomes the opportunity for the Committee to submit a response during the consultation phase of a decision, and would encourage this approach where appropriate.

Throughout the year Councillor Bray, Pre-decision Scrutiny Champion, has met with officers from Democratic Support to determine whether any further clarification should be sought following on from revisions to the Forward Plan and this has been subsequently reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

An outline of the issues and services requested to provide further details on items submitted to the Forward Plan were:

- ❑ Free Swimming – Cultural Services
- ❑ Chatsworth Gardens, OPUS Housing, YMCA Places of change, Participatory Budgeting - Neighbourhood Task Force
- ❑ Civil Parking Enforcement, Disposal of land, Review of Parking Fees - Property Services
- ❑ Luneside East - Planning
- ❑ Municipal Waste - City Council (Direct) Services
- ❑ Pay & Grading - HR & Legal Services
- ❑ Fees & Charges – Health & Strategic Housing



← Lancaster Market

Following on from officer responses on these issues the Committee agreed to request a briefing note and officer attendance at a later meeting with regard to Lancaster Market.

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**



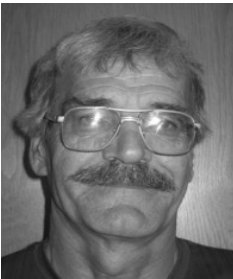
**Cllr Stuart Langhorn  
(Chairman)**



**Cllr Emily Heath  
(Vice Chairman)**



**Cllr Susan Bray**



**Cllr Mike Greenall**



**Cllr Karen Leytham**



**Cllr Jude Towers**



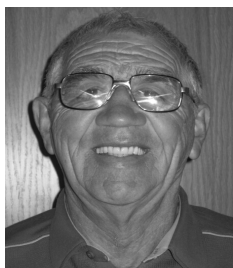
**Cllr Roger Plumb**



**Cllr Val Histed  
(from Sept 2008)**



**Cllr Roger Sherlock  
(from Nov 2008)**



**Cllr Ken Brown  
(until Sept 2008)**



**Cllr Rebekah Gerrard  
Until Nov 2008)**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has overall responsibility for the performance of all Overview and Scrutiny functions (under Local Government Act 2000) on behalf of the Council. The Committee has the power to scrutinise all Council functions and decisions that are not within the Terms of Reference of the Budget and Performance Panel. It also has the power to call-in any decisions that Members feel have not been made in accordance with the Council's decision-making principles as set out in Article 13 of Lancaster City Council's Constitution.

**Other major functions of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee include:**

- ❑ Consideration of Cabinet decisions after they have been put into effect.
- ❑ Consideration of the Forward Plan and commenting on Key Decisions.
- ❑ Conduct of reviews of policies, services and aspects of services where there is an identifiable need, by itself or through setting a Task Group.
- ❑ Working with other local authorities and organisations to carry out joint scrutiny.
- ❑ Assisting the Cabinet in the development of the Budget and Policy Framework.
- ❑ Creating Task Groups and setting their Terms of Reference.
- ❑ Reviewing and scrutinising the performance of the Cabinet, Cabinet Committees and appropriate Officers and receiving reports and updates.

The Overview and Scrutiny web page provides an insight into Overview and Scrutiny at Lancaster with quick links to agendas, minutes and scrutiny reports including previous annual and task group reports together with the latest Scrutiny Handbook. The scrutiny web site can be accessed at the following address: [www.lancaster.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/scrutiny)

During 2008/09 the Committee has called-in 4 Cabinet decisions, 1 Officer delegated decision, scrutinised a number of Council decisions and issues, and has established 2 Task Groups. More information with regard to the task groups can be found on page 22, whilst Appendix A provides an indication of how the Scrutiny function in the district has contributed to the Council's Medium Term Objectives 2008/2009 as set out in the Corporate Plan.

The Call-ins considered by the Committee are listed in the 'Call-in' section of the report on page 11. An indication of the Committee's Work Programme for 2008/09 is set out below and further information can be found in the Overview and Scrutiny minutes available on the Council's website.

**Presentation regarding Protected Species and Planning Applications**

The Secretary of the North Lancashire Bat Group delivered a presentation which explained how the presence of bats was indicative of a healthy environment and how the local authority had an important role with regard to biodiversity and conservation. The presentation referred to current legislation relating to protected species and guidance available with regard to effective implementation. A representative from the Planning Service was invited and attended the meeting. Following on from this informative presentation the Committee requested a briefing note from Planning Services to explain how the Local Development Framework encouraged new habitation for protected species.

**Review of Parking Strategy**

The Head of Property Services presented the draft Parking Strategy to the Committee and it was noted that the strategy needed to be revised to take account of the transfer of responsibility for highways issues to Lancashire County Council. As a result of these discussions it was agreed to invite representatives from the County Council to a future



meeting to discuss issues within the parking strategy for which they were now responsible including residents' parking.

### **Demonstration regarding Elected Member Information**

All Councillors were invited to a demonstration of the examples of information which could be accessed through the dedicated Elected Members page. This included details of road works, crime statistics, census fact sheets, consultations and neighbourhood profiles. Members were requested to notify Democratic Services if they had suggestions as to what further links could be incorporated or required a further demonstration from officers.

### **Festivals and Events**

Following on from an Urgent Business Cabinet Decision for additional funding to support the Maritime Festival, the Head of Cultural Services was invited to July's meeting to provide the Committee with further details. As a result of these discussions the Committee agreed



various recommendations with regard to the revision of the Festivals and Events programme arrangements in addition to suggesting the establishment of a task group to address this issue. In response, Cabinet established a Cabinet Liaison Group. The Committee subsequently requested a briefing note regarding the revised criteria and timetable for next year's Festivals and Innovation Fund.

←Seaside Festival 2008

### **Allotments**

Following on from the Allotments Review presentation reported in the Annual Report 2007/08 Officers from Corporate Strategy were invited to provide a further update. As a result of these discussions it was agreed to establish a formal Allotments Task Group to consider future allotment management. (See Allotments Task Group page 22).

### **Discussions with Lancashire County Council regarding Parking**

The County Council Cabinet Member with responsibility for Highways and Planning and the Area Manager (North) from the County Council's Highways and Environmental Management team attended September's meeting to discuss parking issues which were now within the County Council's responsibility including residents' parking schemes. As a result of these discussions the County Council agreed to come to a future meeting to provide an update on progress on this issue and the Committee agreed to request the Cabinet Member with responsibility to write to the County Council with regard to the implementation of the 4 identified priority schemes.

**Discussions with Network Rail regarding Fly Tipping and Littering**

The need for clarification as to how incidents of fly tipping and littering were addressed on non-council land and improving communications with stakeholders was highlighted during the work of the Fly Tipping Task Group. To address this, the Community Relations Manager North West together with the Maintenance Protection Co-ordinator from Network Rail attended September's meeting and both the Head of City Council (Direct) Services and the Cabinet Member with responsibility were also present. Recommendations agreed as a result of these discussions included a briefing note on the incidents of fly tipping on Network Rail land reported to the Council.

**Discussions with the Head of City Council (Direct) Services**

The Head of City Council (Direct) Services was invited to provide the Committee with an update on the progress of the implementation of the recommendations of the Fly Tipping Task Group and it was noted that there had been notable progress in the areas of education, enforcement and service delivery. The possibility of extending recycling within municipal opportunities was also discussed along with kerbside recycling.

**Health and Well-Being**

Following on from a presentation by the Director of Public Health in March 2008 the Committee agreed to devote a future meeting to discussing Health and Well Being in the district and the contributions made by various City Council's services to this issue. This meeting took place in October and representatives from the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Trust, Lancashire Care NHS and Lancashire County Council Adult Social Care & Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee were invited to discuss concerns and developments in these areas. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Health & Strategic Housing was invited to listen to the discussions, an outline of which is provided below:

**(1) Discussions regarding the impact of the transfer of services from Westmorland General to the Royal Lancaster Infirmary**

The Director and Deputy Director of Operations and Performance from the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Trust were invited to October's meeting in view of concerns with regard to the transfer of services from Westmorland General to the Royal Lancaster Infirmary. Questions were asked with regard to bed occupancy rates, implications of the expected population increase, the affect of extended transport times, visitor access problems and parking, supporting the discharge process and return of equipment. The Committee were advised that an analysis of the impact of the closures was being undertaken and would be reported back to Lancashire County Council's Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their November meeting. It was agreed that this report would also be forwarded to members of the City Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and was circulated to Members in due course.

**(2) Re-provision of Inpatient Mental Health Services**

The Assistant Director of Estates & Facilities, the Service Transformation Programme Director (Lancashire Care NHS Trust) and the Integrated Commissioning Manager (Fylde PCT) provided an update on progress with regard to the re-provision of inpatients mental health provision following on from an earlier presentation to the Committee in December 2007. Questions were raised with regard to the commissioning of secure services, the future of Ridge Lea, cross

border issues following on from the dissolution of the Morecambe Bay PCT, likely revision of bed numbers and timetabling. Reference was made to the report of the Lancashire Preferred Site Selection Task Group, which had been established by Lancashire County Council following concern expressed by local residents with regard to the consultation process. As a result of these discussions it was agreed that a copy of the Lancashire Care NHS Trust response to the task group report be circulated to the City Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee when available.

**(3) Discussions with the Director of Public Health, North Lancashire PCT**

Dr Atherton discussed the Healthier Horizons report and Fluoridation of public water following discussions on the latter issued by the Primary Care Trust and the Council's earlier resolution on this. The Committee noted that fluoridation of the public water supply could only be implemented after careful consultation and asked to be kept informed of developments. The Committee agreed to make a request to the Chief Executive that in matters where the PCT consulted with the Council, Dr Atherton be requested to offer his professional advice.

**(4) Contribution to Health and Well-Being : Licensing, Air Quality & Planning**

The Licensing Manager, Head of Health & Strategic Housing, Environmental Protection Manager and Development Control Manager provided briefing notes for the Committee's consideration and responded to questions in relation to how their areas contributed to health, safety and well being of the public. As a result of these discussions the Committee recommended that the Planning Service considers the possibility of conducting health impact assessments as part of the general Environmental Assessment for major developments.

**Presentation on the City Council's Consultation Processes**

The Head of Corporate Strategy and the Communications Manager accompanied the Consultation Officer to November's meeting where Members received a presentation outlining the background and legislation which led to the decision to allocate resources to consultations together with an indication of the role and duties of the Consultation Officer. Following on from this the Committee agreed to recommend that the presentation be delivered to a future Cabinet briefing. Budget and Performance Panel Members were invited to the meeting to obtain details regarding the ongoing work to improve the Council's engagement with local residents.

**Discussions with Lancashire County Council regarding Highways Issues**

The County Council Cabinet Member with responsibility for Highways and Planning and the Area Manager (North) from the County Council's Highways and Environmental Management team attended December's meeting to discuss general highways maintenance issues. Discussions included 20mph zones, zebra crossings, maintenance of drainage in rural areas, grass and verge cutting in parished areas and the County's gritting policy.

**Ellel Neighbourhood Management Pilot**

The Corporate Director (Regeneration) presented a report on the Ellel Neighbourhood Management Pilot and the Committee were advised that the pilot had been useful in connecting the needs of the community and service providers. The Committee resolved to monitor the recommendations emerging from the Neighbourhood Management Cabinet Liaison Group.

**Discussions with County Council regarding Hornby High School**

Following Lancashire County Council's decision to consult on a proposal to close Hornby High School representatives were invited to January's meeting. Stephen Mercer from the School Policy and Operations Team and Helen Denton, Executive Director for Children and Young People answered questions from the Committee and members of the public. Following on from these discussions the Committee made a number of recommendations which were forwarded to the Chairman of the Council Business Committee for submission as the City Council's response to the consultation. Among the recommendations agreed by the Committee was to request Lancashire County Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee look at the consultation and consider whether procedures and best practice had been followed.

**Lancaster Market**

The Head of Property Services provided a briefing note and clarification on a number of issues with regard to Lancaster Market including why the item had been removed from the Forward Plan and contingency plans regarding lease renewal.

**Call-in and Holding Cabinet to Account**

Call-in is only one of a number of ways in which Overview and Scrutiny can hold the Executive to account.

The choice to 'Call-in' a Cabinet decision is used sparingly at Lancaster City Council, and with care. The procedure ensures that, if necessary, decisions or proposals made by the Cabinet, a Cabinet Member, a Cabinet Committee, an Officer with delegated authority, or under joint arrangements can be thoroughly examined, amendments proposed, and full debate entered into by all Members.

It is the view of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that Call-ins are only used in **exceptional circumstances**. 'Exceptional circumstances' are where Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have evidence which suggests that the decision in question has not been made in accordance with the principles set out in Article 13 'Decision Making' of the Council's Constitution.

This year there have been 4 requests to Call-in a Cabinet decision. These are detailed below. 1 officer delegated decision has also been called-in.

**Call-ins 2008/09**

**Community Cohesion – Call-in held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

Members called in a Cabinet decision in relation to Community Cohesion on the grounds that the decision had not been made in accordance with all of the principles set out in Article 13 (Decision Making) of the Constitution, in particular:

- (b) Due consultation and the taking of professional advice from Officers
- (e) Aims and desired outcomes will be clearly expressed
- (f) Options that were considered and the reasons for arriving at the decision will be explained.

After some discussion the following recommendations were agreed and referred to the Cabinet for consideration:

- (1) That Cabinet do not appoint a Community Cohesion officer at the present time.
- (2) That Cabinet consider alternative ways of achieving the aims of the Corporate Plan on cohesive communities, including working with the universities. Overview and Scrutiny draws the attention of Cabinet to priority outcome 16 and highlights that:
  - The Community Cohesion Strategy could be achieved through working with the LSP and voluntary sector. A future programme of spending on Community Cohesion should be based upon this strategy.
  - Area Based Grant money could be used to implement the Children and Young People Strategic Plan.
  - Area Based Grant money could be used to achieve the aim of a civic programme that celebrates our heritage and benefits our communities.
- (3) That Cabinet reconsiders the issue of achieving Level 2 of the Equality Standard as an issue separate from the spending of the Community Cohesion Area Based Grant monies.

Cabinet's response to the referral is detailed as follows:

- That Cabinet does not appoint a Community Cohesion officer at the present time.
- That recommendation 2 of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.
- That Cabinet reconsiders the way the ABG be spent in November 2008, by which time the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) should have options ready for consideration.

There has been a delay in bringing back options on this matter from the LSP but a report is to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2009.

**Implications of the Lancashire Municipal Waste Strategy and PFI Funded Waste Disposal Arrangements – Food Waste – Call-in held on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2008**

Members called in a decision in relation to the Implications of the Lancashire Municipal Waste Strategy and PFI Funded Waste Disposal Arrangements – Food Waste on the grounds that the decision had not been made in accordance with the following:

- (a) Proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome)
- (e) Aims and desired outcomes will be clearly expressed
- (f) Options that were considered and the reasons for arriving at the decision will be explained

After some discussion the following recommendation was referred to the Cabinet for consideration:

“That Cabinet should reconsider its decision to adopt Options 1 and 2 in the light of lack of detailed information from County Waste Management, and that they should look again at the most cost effective and efficient schemes including option 3 and other schemes not yet discussed, for example home composting and using green bins instead of the caddy. Before proceeding with any system it is vital that a rigorous cost benefit analysis be undertaken.”

Cabinet's response to the referral is detailed below:

- (1) Cabinet notes the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- (2) Cabinet notes the objective of diverting food waste from the residual waste stream, so as to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill.
- (3) Cabinet notes the unacceptable extent of cuts in services likely to be necessary to achieve targets for the maximum increase in Council Tax in the medium term if options 1 or 2 are selected.
- (4) Cabinet recommends that the costs outlined in the report for the collection of food waste (Option 3) are built into the forthcoming review of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for subsequent referral on to Council.
- (5) That, subject to the outcome of the above, a service for the collection of food waste, as outlined in Option 3 of the report is implemented in April 2010.
- (6) That the City Council works with the Lancashire Waste Partnership locally to promote waste minimisation and home composting.

### **Dome Options – Call-in held on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2009**

Members called in a decision in relation to the Dome Options on the basis that the decision had not been made in accordance with:

- (a) Proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome)
- (b) Due consultation and the taking of professional advice from Officers
- (d) A presumption in favour of openness
- (e) Aims and desired outcomes will be clearly expressed
- (f) Options that were considered and the reasons for arriving at the decision will be explained.

After discussions the Committee agreed to uphold Cabinet's decision in relation to the Dome but also recommended:

"That it be recommended to Cabinet that the further report requested with regard to the Dome (Cabinet Minute 97 (3) refers) contains details of the urgent works and financial implications of running the Dome until 1<sup>st</sup> June 2009."

Cabinet agreed to the recommendation.

However, at a subsequent decision of full Council the 'in principle' decision to close the Dome on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2009 was not supported and funding was agreed for 2009/10 to allow the Dome to remain open for an additional period of time.

### **Public Toilet Review – Call- in held 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2009**

Members called in a decision with regard to the Public Toilet Review on the basis that the decision had not been made in accordance with:

- (a) Proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome)
- (b) Due consultation and the taking of professional advice from Officers
- (c) Respect for human rights.

When invited to outline the reasons for the Cabinet's decision, the Leader informed the meeting that if the decision was referred back to Cabinet it was his intention to propose that the public toilets remain open with the exception of those at Regent Road and those adjacent to the Dome as there were alternative facilities in those areas. In light of this the Committee agreed to go straight to a proposal.

The following recommendations were agreed unanimously by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and endorsed by a specially convened Cabinet meeting:

- (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend to Cabinet that the toilets remain open with the exception of Regent Road and those adjacent to the Dome.
- (2) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend to Cabinet that the Parish Councils be consulted as to whether they would be prepared to take over the toilets in the long term.”

<b>Holding Cabinet Members to Account</b>
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The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has continued to hold Cabinet Members to account. This has taken place both in the course of Call-in and considering items of business at Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Budget and Performance Panel and Task Groups, but also through arranging for Cabinet Members to come to a meeting to discuss issues and developments within their portfolios.

Additionally Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee continue to undertake the role of Cabinet Liaison Member. This helps to keep the Committee informed of issues within individual Cabinet portfolios. Cabinet Members with corresponding Cabinet Liaison Members for 2008/09 are set out below:

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Cabinet Liaison Member</b>
Councillor Mace	Councillor Langhorn
Councillor Gilbert	Councillor Plumb
Councillor Blamire	Councillor Heath
Councillor Bryning	Councillor Towers
Councillor Fletcher	Councillor Mike Greenall
Councillor Archer	Councillor Gerrard (until Nov 2008)
	Councillor Sherlock (from Dec 2008)
Councillor Burns	Councillor Leytham
Councillor Barry	Councillor Bray
Councillor Kerr	Councillor Brown (until Sept 2008)
	Councillor Histed (from Sept 2008)
Councillor Johnson (until June 2008)	Councillor Langhorn
Councillor Charles (from July 2008)	

The Committee values the opportunity to discuss portfolio issues with Cabinet Members and in developing this year’s work programme every attempt was made to ensure that Cabinet Members were invited to meetings where items for discussion related to their portfolio areas. This is illustrated by Councillor Barry’s attendance at September’s meeting which included discussions regarding fly tipping with Network Rail and discussions with the Head of City Council (Direct) Services. Councillor Barry discussed developments within his portfolio and with regard to corporate recycling agreed along with his Cabinet Liaison Member, Councillor Bray, to assist in the scoping of a possible future task group with regard to recycling in municipal buildings.

Similarly Councillor Burns was invited to July’s meeting when the report on Festivals and Events was considered and again to December’s meeting to discuss the direction of the Festivals and Events Cabinet Liaison Group, Councillor Mace attended the June and December meetings which considered the Draft Parking Strategy and the Ellel Neighbourhood Management Pilot respectively. As rural portfolio holder Councillor Charles was also invited to December’s meeting for that item having also attended September’s meeting to discuss her performance management portfolio.

Following on from discussions with Cabinet Members the Committee have made a number of recommendations to the Leader and/or particular Cabinet Members including:

- ❑ That the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Parking be asked to note the progress or lack of progress with regard to residents' parking schemes and ask the County Council to complete the implementation of the 4 identified priority schemes at the earliest opportunity.
- ❑ That the Cabinet Member with responsibility for flytipping/littering be requested to note the discussions with Network Rail and their willingness to work with the City Council.
- ❑ That the Cabinet Member with responsibility for CC(D)S be requested to note the outstanding recommendations from the Fly Tipping task group report.
- ❑ That the Leader of the Council be notified of the recommendations which remained outstanding in relation to the Grants Task Group report.
- ❑ That the relevant Cabinet Member be requested to raise transport issues, including car parking surrounding the Royal Lancaster Infirmary at the relevant LSP meeting.
- ❑ That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend that the Leader should impress upon Cabinet Members their responsibilities within the Corporate Plan, and if it is not clear which Cabinet Member is responsible for a certain component that consideration be given to either adjusting the Corporate Plan or adjusting Cabinet portfolios.
- ❑ That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee express its concern to the Leader of the Council that the decision to establish the Festivals and Events Cabinet Liaison Group has delayed the process rather than adding value.

**Urgent Business**

The Call-in procedure does not apply where the decision being taken is urgent. A decision is considered urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the Call-in process would seriously jeopardise the Council's or public interest. The Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee must agree that the decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances, and to it being treated as a matter of urgency.

Since the last annual report and the writing of this report, the procedure of waiving the right to Call-in decisions as a matter of Urgent Business by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny has been utilised on 7 occasions:

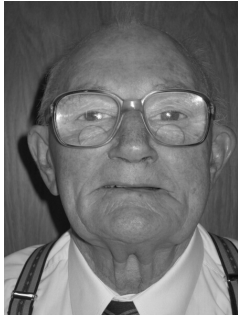


- ❑ Luneside East Regeneration Project
- ❑ Williamson Park
- ❑ YPO Electricity Contract
- ❑ Filling of Vacant Posts in Financial Services
- ❑ Extension of Temporary Contract – Property Services
- ❑ ICON Card Payment Services
- ❑ Heysham Mossgate

The Ashton Memorial at Williamson's Park – Interim operational management support to the Park was agreed as a matter of urgent business following a request by the Williamson Park Board.



**Budget and Performance Panel**



**Cllr Roger Sherlock (Chairman)**



**Cllr John Whitelegg  
(Vice-Chairman)**



**Cllr Mike Greenall**



**Cllr Tina Clifford**



**Cllr Jean Dent**



**Cllr Sarah Fishwick**



**Cllr Ian McCulloch**



**Cllr Keran Farrow**



**Cllr Keith Sowden  
(from Nov 2008)**



**Cllr Peter Williamson  
(until August 2008)**



**Cllr Stuart Langhorn  
(from August 2008 until  
Sept 2008)**

The Budget and Performance Panel have responsibility for carrying out Overview and Scrutiny in respect of the Council's Budget and Performance at both the Strategic and Service level. In accordance with the Council's objectives and core values, the Panel helps to ensure that the management of financial affairs is efficient, prudent, and works best for the residents of the District and that there is effective monitoring of Council performance that leads to continuous improvement in services.

An indication of the role of the Panel is provided below:

- (1) To scrutinise the Council's arrangements and performance in relation to financial planning, including budget/target setting, e.g. items within the Budget Framework including:
  - Reviewing the effectiveness of the budget setting process
  - Role of Star Chamber
  - Content of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and
  - Capital Investment Strategy and
  - Financial targets in the Corporate Plan
  
- (2) To review the management of resources by scrutinising the Council's financial performance in year against agreed budgets or other targets, e.g.
  - Capital and revenue spending against approved budgets
  - Specific activities including treasury management, generation of revenue and capital income targets and
  - Monitoring of financial savings/efficiency targets (MTFS/Gershon)
  
- (3) To monitor and review by exception reporting within the PRTs the performance of the Council's services and contractual arrangements in delivering specific strategic and operational objectives and outcomes, e.g.
  - Receive Performance Review Team reports
  - Monitor the delivery and effectiveness of Service Level Agreement targets
  - Assess performance against key performance indicators and benchmarks
  - Assess whether services are delivering their expected outcomes

The Panel's Terms of Reference have been revised further this year with regard to partnership monitoring as follows:

- To review the effectiveness of the Council's overall performance management arrangements in relation to partnership working and to scrutinise the performance of the Council's major partnerships.

An indication of some of the issues considered by the Panel is provided below:

### Performance Management

As a requirement of the Local Government Act 2000 the Council has had a duty to seek to continuously improve its services to the local community by managing its performance through ongoing review. Informed comparison is the basis of performance management and Local Authorities are required to set targets against all national and local indicators, known as Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which allow for comparison work.

Revisions continue to be made to the format of reports to ensure that Members receive relevant and concise information, with an emphasis being placed on drawing Members' attention to areas deemed to be underperforming and outlining the actions being taken to address them. Panel Members can then request additional information on how such matters are being dealt with or suggest additional measures for service improvement.

### Outturn Reports 2007/08

This year additional meetings of the Budget and Performance Panel were convened to consider the Outturn Reports with the Panel making a number of recommendations to Cabinet prior to their consideration of this issue, and making further recommendations following a subsequent meeting of the Panel where clarification on variances was provided by a number of Service Heads.

Services requested to explain variances and lessons learnt included Council Housing, Legal & Human Resources, Health & Strategic Housing, Information & Customer Services, City Council (Direct) Services, Property Services, Cultural Services, Planning, and Economic Development & Tourism. Cabinet Members with responsibility for these services were also invited to this meeting.



The adverse variance with regard to Salt Ayre was attributed to a substantial increase in utility charges together with a loss of income due to the renovations to the bar/café taking longer than anticipated. The outcome of the outturn meeting was reported to Cabinet including a resolution that the Panel considered the actions to address adverse variances in relation to Salt Ayre to be inadequate and in need of revision to include improvements to project management and an energy efficiency programme.

### Partnership Scrutiny

In order to address a deficiency with regard to performance management in relation to key partnerships noted in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) judgment in 2007, a Partnership Assessment Scorecard (PAS) had been developed by Internal Audit to provide a scoring mechanism based on a high-level assessment of eight fundamental characteristics of partnership working, including consideration of service provision and reputational and financial matters. PAS was designed to establish 'major' partnerships that would be initially subjected to further evaluation. In addition a Partnership Development and Evaluation toolkit has been developed by Internal Audit in consultation with other Services to enable existing partnerships to take stock of how effective their partnership working arrangements are and identify areas where remedial action may be required.

As mentioned earlier in this report the Budget and Performance Panel has now assumed responsibility for overview and scrutiny of partnerships in line with revised terms of reference. The Community Safety Partnership and Museums Partnership have been piloting the evaluation toolkit and the results of these pilots will be considered by the Panel shortly.

Other issues considered by the Budget and Performance Panel this year have included:

- ❑ The Local Environmental Quality Report 2007/08
- ❑ Customer Service Centres Update
- ❑ BVPI Comparison – Exeter Benchmarking
- ❑ Scrutiny of Funding to the Museums Partnership
- ❑ Annual Report (formerly known as Corporate Performance Plan)
- ❑ 2007/08 Annual Efficiency Statement
- ❑ North Lancashire Teaching Primary Care Trust – 5 Year Strategic Plan
- ❑ Scrutiny of Funding to the Dukes Theatre
- ❑ Evaluation of demographic data – Dukes Theatre
- ❑ Results of the Mystery Shopper Exercise
- ❑ MTFs Review & Star Chamber
- ❑ Treasury Management Training by Butlers Treasury Advisers
- ❑ Report to Audit Committee – Review of Investments in Icelandic Institutions
- ❑ Treasury Management Framework
- ❑ Budget and Policy Framework Proposals

An indication of the briefing notes requested by the Panel this year is provided on page 23.



←The Duke's Theatre –

Following on from discussions with the Chief Executive of the Duke's in April 2008 regarding the funding allocated to this theatre, the Panel requested a further report with regard to demographic data of the users of the Duke's. This additional information was reported to the Panel in November 2008.

### Budget and Policy Framework

Following consideration of the draft Budget and Policy Framework proposals 2009/10 on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2009, the Panel requested the opportunity to consider the budget proposals agreed by Cabinet (17<sup>th</sup> February 2009) at their meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> February and made the following recommendation to Budget Council:

“That, in consideration of the Panel's recommendation at its meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2009 that the budget process fully recognises the need to protect the vulnerable and disadvantaged and those groups most likely to suffer from the credit crunch and recession, the Panel recommend to council that the proposed cut of £20,000 to the funding of the two Citizens Advice Bureaux be withdrawn.”

Note – in agreeing the budget for 2009/10, Council at its meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2009 deleted the proposed cut in funding to the CABx for 2009/10 and reduced the cut to £10,000 in future years.

### Task Groups

Task Groups are established to undertake specific project work, policy development, a specific task, consultation, review, investigation or similar activity.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee decides whether a Task Group should be formal and report directly to the Cabinet or Council such as the Allotments Task Group or informal and report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Task Groups normally consist of nine Councillors on a Proportional Representation basis.

In last year's Annual Report reference was made to the emerging recommendations of the Canals Task Group, Council Assets Task Group and the Anti-Social Behaviour Task Group. The final reports of these three task groups were considered by Cabinet during this municipal year.

### Canals Task Group

**Members:** *Councillors Tina Clifford (Chairman), Shirley Burns, Chris Coates, Jane Fletcher, Mike Greenall, Tony Johnson (until December 2007), Karen Leytham, Joyce Pritchard and Malcolm Thomas.*



The task group was established to develop an understanding of issues surrounding the Lancaster canal and to explore its usage as a community asset. The task group generated a great deal of media interest and representatives from British Waterways, the Inland Waterways Association, Carnforth Area Regeneration

Partnership and Lancaster Canal Trust participated in the meetings. The report was well received and Cabinet agreed that all the recommendations as far as they are capable of being taken forward within the current budget, be approved and that a report be brought to a future meeting identifying possible funding for other recommendations within the Canals Task Group report.

Following on from publication of the Canals Task Group final report on the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) website a request was received from the Scrutiny Officer at Hyndburn Borough Council to meet with former task group members to assist with evidence gathering for their own review on canals. Councillors Clifford and Thomas together with an officer met with three Hyndburn councillors and an officer in early December and in a letter of appreciation Councillor Doug Hayes, Chairman of the Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee referred to the 'interesting and informative discussion.'

**Council Assets Task Group**

**Members:** Councillor Rebekah Gerrard (Chairman), Susan Bray, Janice Hanson, Geoff Knight, Janie Kirkman, Geoff Marsland, Ian McCulloch, Sylvia Rogerson, and Catriona Stamp.

This task group was established following concerns regarding the maintenance/condition of the Council's fixed historic assets (eg. the Grade II\* Queen Victoria Statue) and non-fixed historical assets (eg. City Charters).



A number of recommendations were made by the task group with regard to relocating the City's historic Charters, records management and future maintenance of the Council's assets. Resolutions agreed by the Cabinet included prioritising the works identified in the conditions survey within the Capital Programme and requesting a report setting out the resource implications of taking forward a number of the recommendations.

*The Council Assets Task Group highlighted the importance of maintaining, protecting and promoting the district's assets for all to enjoy and to safeguard them for future generations.*

*Cll Rebekah Gerrard - Council Assets Task Group Chair*

**Antisocial Behaviour Task Group**



**Members:** Councillors Joyce Pritchard (Chairman), Roger Plumb, Mike Greenall, Catriona Stamp, Morgwn Trolinger, Robert Redfern, Janice Hanson, Peter Williamson and Val Histed.

Established to highlight the main themes surrounding antisocial behaviour and produce a report with recommendations to improve the Council's internal approach to this issue, the task group held public

meetings at various locations within the district including the Visitor Centre at Carnforth Station. The Reverend Tim Horrobin chaired the public meetings. Among the recommendations of the task group, considered by Cabinet at their January meeting, were investigations into the possibility of providing PCSOs with the powers to issue parking tickets in particular with regard to areas outside schools and the development of a policy for locating areas for young people (over 14 yrs) to frequent in agreeable locations, in light of their exclusion from local playing areas.

"I think task groups work well because they give an opportunity for us to look at the way we do things now, and see if it can be done better, and sometimes at no extra cost to the Council, it just means we alter the way we do something. I enjoyed the Anti-Social Behaviour Task Group and felt it gave the residents of our district a chance to bring their views and concerns to the Council and to be fed into the report, it also gave our own officers a chance to have some input into the report, going out into the community to have public meetings was a good idea,"

*Cllr Joyce Pritchard - Anti Social Behaviour Task Group Chair*

#### Allotments Task Group

**Members:** *Councillors Emily Heath (Chairman), Jim Blakely, Ken Brown, John Day, Roger Dennison, Karen Leytham, Ian McCulloch, Bob Roe & Malcolm Thomas*

The terms of reference of this formal task group include the identification of a preferred future management model for the City Council's allotments, to investigate current and future demand for allotments within the district and make recommendations on how the City Council can respond to requests for allotments as a consequence of the Allotment Act.

#### Older People's Task Group

**Members:** *Councillors Jude Towers, John Barnes, Mike Greenall, Janie Kirkman, Ken Brown, Sylvia Rogerson, Anne Chapman, Ron Sands & 1 other Labour*

The idea for this task group stemmed from a presentation on Older People's Concerns in December 2007 when it was agreed to scope a task group to commence when capacity permitted. The views of the Older People's Partnership Board and the Valuing People Thematic Group have been sought in producing the terms of reference which were agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2008. Terms of Reference include the development of an Older People's Strategy for the Lancaster District in partnership with the private, statutory, voluntary and faith organisations as well as older people themselves, including the Forum for the Older Person and at the time of writing arrangements are underway for the first meeting.

Capacity issues have limited the number of task groups that it has been possible to establish this year although a number of possible future task groups have been scoped including Barriers to becoming a Councillor and a Review and Audit of Parish Council Funding, the latter being a request from Full Council.

Cabinet's response to the recommendations of the task groups which have reported this year have highlighted the financial implications of a number of the recommendations and the Committee recognise that the current financial climate is likely to have an adverse effect on implementing task group recommendations with significant financial implications.

<b>Briefing Notes</b>
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This year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Budget and Performance Panel have requested a number of briefing notes. An indication of the topics covered by these briefing notes is outlined below:

Requested on	Topic	Requested from
O/S 5.3.08	Health benefits of town and county planning decisions	Head of Planning
O/S 5.3.08	Licensing and public health & test purchasing	Head of Legal & HR
O/S 5.3.08	Air quality and public well being	Head of Health & Strategic Housing
O/S 4.6.08	LDF & encouragement of habitation for protected species	Head of Planning
O/S 4.6.08	Capacity within Corporate strategy to Support allotments task group	Head of Corporate Strategy
O/S 4.6.08	Equality Standard Level 2	Head of Legal & HR
O/S 9.7.08	Surface Water Flooding	CD(CS)
O/S 5.11.08	Update on Lancaster Market	CD(Reg)
O/S 5.11.08	West End Regeneration Programme	Head of Planning
O/S 5.11.08	Targets for commercial developments	Head of Planning
O/S 5.11.08	Economy Thematic Group	CD(F&P)
O/S 10.12.08	Revised criteria and timetable for Festivals and Innovation Fund	CD (Reg)
B&P 15.7.08	Household paying council tax by direct debit	Head of Revenues
B&P 15.7.08	Increase in planning appeals	Head of Planning
B&P 29.4.08	Non priority repairs in Council housing	Head of Council Housing
B&P 29.4.08	Provision of social rented housing	Housing Policy Officer
B&P 29.4.08	West End Conversions	
B&P 29.4.08	Response to questions with regard to land contamination, pollution, noise complaints, air quality	Head of Environmental Health & Strategic Housing
B&P 15.7.08	Poor performance of local indicators ED01 & ED02 physical & financial performance of Economic Development Zone - also forwarded to O/S (3.9.08)	Head of Economic Development & Tourism
B&P 16.9.08	Terms of reference regarding mystery shopper exercise	Head IS & CS



<b>Media and Public Relations</b>
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Over the year, approximately £2974 worth of free publicity has been generated through the use of Press Releases circulated by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Press Releases itemised below were issued to the *Morecambe Visitor*, *Lancaster Guardian*, *Lancaster and Morecambe Citizen*, LEP, *Bay Radio*, *Radio Lancashire* and a local news website, *Virtual Lancaster*. However, it should be noted that the value does not take into account the cost of air time given by the two local radio stations and the space taken up by the website Virtual Lancaster.

Furthermore the figures do not take account of additional coverage given to these issues in subsequent follow up articles with the Council Assets and the Canals Task Group both generating considerable coverage in the local press. Moreover the Communications section have confirmed that there were 10 media enquiries generated from the closure of the Dome for which EAV was not received.

The figures have been generated by 'Newsflash' which is a media monitoring software operated by Council's Communications Section and relate to the period 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008 to 10<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

Date	Title	Local Media Take up	Equivalent Advertising Value (EAV)	Website hits
18/03/2008	Antisocial behaviour task group to hold public meetings	6	£992	Not collected
02/04/2008	Carnforth the next stop for antisocial behaviour group	2	£230	Not collected
02/04/2008	Lancaster City Council disappointed at Post Office closures	2	£260	Not collected
16/04/2008	Heysham the next stop for antisocial behaviour group	0	-	Not collected
16/09/2008	Call-in of 'food waste' decision	4	£712	162
25/11/2008	Highways on the agenda for next meeting of Overview and Scrutiny	2	£188	56
30/12/2008	Call-in Dome Options		£144	136
14/01/2009	Allotments Task group	1	£ 96	Not collected
10/01/2009	Hornby High Consultation	3	£352	Not collected
			<b>£ 2974</b>	

- Between 15 January 2008 and 14<sup>th</sup> January 2009, 348 'hits' on the Overview and Scrutiny web page were recorded.

### **Public Relations**

It was reported in last year's report that a number of topics discussed by the Committee generated considerable public interest and this trend has continued. This is illustrated by the attendance of a large number of members of the public at the meetings of the

Allotments Task Group, the Call-in with regard to the Dome and discussions with the County Council regarding highways issues and the consultation on the future of Hornby High School. The Budget and Performance Panel meeting which considered the budget policy and framework was also well attended by interested parties.

### **Training and Development**

Lancaster City Council continues to contribute its scrutiny reports to the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) database where they can be accessed and downloaded by others. Councillor Stuart Langhorn and Liz Bateson (Senior Democratic Support Officer) attended the CfPS Member Development and Officer Development Day respectively, following on from the Annual Scrutiny Conference in London in June.

The Principal Democratic Support Officer attended an Inlogov seminar on Scrutiny Principles and Practices in June with the Senior Democratic Support Officer attending a subsequent Inlogov seminar in Birmingham entitled Scrutiny and the New Legislation which focused on local area agreements, calls for action and joint working.

This year officers have again been successful in securing a place on the CfPS Parliamentary Seminar Series which included a presentation on the workings of Select Committees and a presentation on effective questioning techniques. Arrangements are also in hand to provide a Questioning Skills training session for Members. Councillor Trolinger attended an Overview and Scrutiny Chairing Skills training course at Blackpool in October.

Treasury Management Training from Butlers Treasury Advisers was provided to Budget & Performance Panel members in September and Cabinet and Audit Committee Members were also invited to attend.

In addition Councillor Sherlock attended the Lancashire Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (Team Lancashire) event in July whilst Councillors Fishwick and Greenall from the Budget and Performance Panel attended the North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership roadshow.

This year the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Budget & Performance Panel have met with supporting officers to discuss issues/developments and it is anticipated that such meetings will continue on a more regular basis in the new municipal year.

### **Networking**

This year a request was received from Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council to observe December's Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting as they were in the process of reviewing their scrutiny structure and were interested in how scrutiny was undertaken at Lancaster. Councillors and Officers met prior to the meeting and following on from the visit the scrutiny officer wrote to express the chair's 'heartfelt thanks' for the 'hospitality, time and sharing of ideas.'

### **Health Scrutiny**

It was reported in last year's Annual Report that in view of difficulties in appointing a representative to the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee from within the Overview and Scrutiny Committee due to the timing and location of the meetings it had been agreed to ask full Council to appoint a non-executive Member to this position. Councillor Keran Farrow (a Member of the Budget and Performance Panel) was appointed to this post and has provided feedback to the Committee throughout the year.

### **Lancashire Scrutiny Network**

Lancaster representatives have been regular attendees at the Lancashire Scrutiny Network. The network was founded in 2004 to aid the development of Overview and Scrutiny in Lancashire authorities. These meetings provide a networking opportunity and help clarify the role of Councillor and Officer. Providing an opportunity to share best practice, the partnership exists to share work programmes and highlight where joint working could take place, the meetings improve links between District and County Council. Among the issues discussed this year has been 'What is Good Scrutiny?' and 'Scrutiny of Partnerships', with an extended session held at Preston in February relating to the new guidance on the scrutiny of LAAs and the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Bill presented by Andrew Coulson from Inlogov. The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee accompanied officers to this extended session.

### **Northwest Scrutiny Officer Network**

This group comprises of officers who support the Overview and Scrutiny function (representing all the local authorities in the North West of England). The group exists to share best practice issues, to avoid duplication and maximise the resources available to assist in the development of Scrutiny and meets on a quarterly basis. Membership of the group includes authorities such as Tameside, Stockport, Liverpool, Cumbria and Lancashire and thus has access to significant expertise and knowledge. This year Lancaster hosted the February meeting which included discussions with Ed Hammond from the CfPS who was invited to talk about the Good Practice Guide he is preparing for the Councillor Call for Action.

### **Appointments to Other Bodies**

At its meeting in June 2008 the Committee agreed that in view of the widening scrutiny powers of the Council, it was no longer appropriate for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to make appointments to the restructured LSP and thematic groups but noted that the LSP constitution allowed for the Partnerships to be approached to issue an invitation to Overview and Scrutiny Members to attend in the capacity as 'observer.'

At the request of Council, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee continues to make the following appointments to other bodies.

- Homelessness Forum – Councillor Ken Brown (until September 2008)
- Homelessness Forum – Councillor Val Histed (from September 2008)
- Lancaster, Morecambe and District Fairtrade Steering Group – Councillor Stuart Langhorn
- Museums Advisory Panel – Councillor Susan Bray

### **Joint Scrutiny**

Following the decision of Lancashire County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to establish a task group to look at the issue of Extra Care Housing in Lancashire, the City Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee were invited to participate in this joint review. The decision to establish a joint task group stemmed from concern about the level of provision of Extra Care Housing in Lancashire as a number of proposed schemes have failed due to lack of support from the Housing Corporation or as a result of the planning process. Councillor Robinson, a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee until September 2007 and former Chairman of the Homelessness Task Group

agreed to represent the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in this project and provided regular feedback to the Committee with regard to the site visits and meetings which he attended. The final report of the Extra Care Housing Task Group was published in August 2008.

### **Performance Review**

Progress with regard to the key areas for improvement outlined in last year's Annual Report is detailed below:

#### **Scrutiny of Partnership working**

This has progressed and the results of the pilots undertaken with the Museums Partnership and Community Safety Partnership will be reflected in next year's Annual Scrutiny Report.

#### **Reducing the response times to Overview and Scrutiny requests**

In general response times to requests for briefing notes and reports continues to improve.

#### **Further development of the Scrutiny Web Page**

Capacity issues within Democratic Services have hindered the development of the web page but this is now being addressed.

#### **Further development of pre-decision scrutiny**

This has been progressed with the collated responses / clarification from officers on issues identified by the Pre-decision Scrutiny Champion now circulated to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee electronically.

#### **Improved scrutiny of budget and voluntary sector grants**

At the request of Panel Members and in view of the exceptional financial difficulties this year provision was made for the Budget and Performance Panel to scrutinise the revised Budget and Policy Framework including the recommendations agreed by Cabinet.

#### **Maintaining public and media interest**

As mentioned earlier in the report, a number of topics considered by the Committee/Budget and Performance Panel have attracted public and media interest.

### **Conclusion**

This report has illustrated how the key principles of scrutiny including providing a 'critical friend,' considering the concerns of the public and communities and positively impacting on the delivery of services have been effectively implemented during the last year.

### **Future Direction**

Officers will be preparing a report on the new Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) requirement in due course. Amendments to the Constitution will be required and a procedure developed following the issue of guidance from the Secretary of State. It is anticipated that guidance regarding Councillor CCfA will be provided later in the year, most likely in September/October 2009.

Section 119, Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, provides for CCfA. This will give members the opportunity to ask for discussions at scrutiny committees on issues where local problems have arisen and where other methods of resolution have been exhausted. It is intended to help Councillors resolve issues and problems on behalf of their residents.

There will be a number of exclusions, which will be dealt with through the guidance.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) has recently provided best practice guidance. They have advised that to enable for successful operation the following broad principles should be relied on:

- ❑ transparency in decision making;
- ❑ a willingness to identify mistakes and shortcomings;
- ❑ an understanding of the role that scrutiny can play to help the Council improve services;
- ❑ an understanding and a wish to bolster and support the role that Ward Councillors play as champions and leaders in their communities.

Both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Budget and Performance Panel have begun to consider items for their Work Programmes for 2009/10.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The possible establishment of Task Groups in relation to: Municipal Recycling, Barriers to Becoming a Councillor and Review and Audit of Parish Funding.

Other areas on the future work programme relate to:

- ❑ Consultation on Corporate Priorities
- ❑ Progress on the implementation of residents parking schemes
- ❑ Update on recommendations of task groups including Canals, Council Assets and Anti-Social Behaviour
- ❑ Presentation on LINK
- ❑ Development of Cultural Services in view of budgetary cuts

### **Budget and Performance Panel**

- ❑ Partnership Scrutiny
- ❑ The effectiveness of Council's policies e.g. climate change
- ❑ Implementation of general efficiency targets
- ❑ Corporate Property Strategy – energy efficiency
- ❑ Use of Resources Judgment
- ❑ Effectiveness of Service Business Plans

<b>Acknowledgements</b>
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Overview and Scrutiny Councillors and Officers would like to thank the following for their contribution to the Scrutiny process during 2008/09:

- Cabinet Members who have appeared before Overview and Scrutiny bodies;
- All members of the Democratic Services team;

- Staff who have participated in Overview and Scrutiny reviews;
- Members of the public who have attended meetings or submitted evidence as part of the ongoing work of Scrutiny.
- Councillor Robinson for attending the Extra Care Housing Task Group
- Reverend Tim Horrobin for chairing the public meetings of the Anti-Social Behaviour Task Group;
- Jon Stark, Democratic Support Officer who left the authority in September to undertake a teacher training course.

<b>The Overview and Scrutiny Officer Support Team</b>
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To contact the Overview and Scrutiny Support team, or to make suggestions for issues you would like to see included in the Overview and Scrutiny Work programme, e-mail [scrutiny@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@lancaster.gov.uk)

Name and Position	Responsibility	Contact Details
Mark Cullinan Chief Executive	Overall responsibility for Overview and Scrutiny	(01524) 582011 <a href="mailto:chiefexecutive@lancaster.gov.uk">chiefexecutive@lancaster.gov.uk</a>
Roger Muckle Corporate Director (Finance & Performance)	Corporate Director with responsibility for Budget and Performance	(01524) 582022 <a href="mailto:rmuckle@lancaster.gov.uk">rmuckle@lancaster.gov.uk</a>
Stephen Metcalfe Principal Democratic Support Officer	Responsibility for overall management of the Overview & Scrutiny function	(01524) 582073 <a href="mailto:sjmetcalfe@lancaster.gov.uk">sjmetcalfe@lancaster.gov.uk</a>
Liz Bateson Senior Democratic Support Officer	Day-to-day management of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (including Call-in) and Task Group support	(01524) 582047 <a href="mailto:ebateson@lancaster.gov.uk">ebateson@lancaster.gov.uk</a>
Jane Glenton Democratic Support Officer	Budget and Performance Panel and Task Group support	(01524) 582068 <a href="mailto:jglenton@lancaster.gov.uk">jglenton@lancaster.gov.uk</a>

## Appendix A

<b>MEDIUM TERM OBJECTIVES 2008/09 – CORPORATE PLAN</b>
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Issues Considered	Cost effective services – good value for money	Customer focused, accessible	Make district cleaner & healthier Contribute to a safer society	Lead regeneration of the district	Support sustainable communities & action on climate	Give communities more influence & involvement in way services delivered /decisions affecting
Protected Species & Planning issues	√	√	√		√	
Parking Strategy	√	√		√	√	√
Festivals and Events	√	√		√		√
Network Rail – Fly tipping/littering	√	√	√	√	√	
Consultation processes	√	√				√
Highways	√	√	√	√	√	
Ellel Neighbourhood Management Pilot	√	√	√	√	√	√
Hornby High School - consultation	√	√			√	√
Lancaster Market	√	√		√	√	
Update Grants Task Group	√	√				
Customer Services/Mystery Shopper	√	√		√	√	√
Health and Well being	√	√	√	√		√
Star Chamber Process	√	√	√	√	√	√
Best Value Performance Plan	√	√	√	√	√	√
Performance Management	√	√	√	√	√	√
Partnership Monitoring	√	√	√	√	√	√
Business Plan Monitoring	√	√	√	√	√	√
Corporate Finance	√				√	
Budget 2009/10	√	√	√	√	√	√
Scrutiny of Funding to the Dukes	√	√		√		
Local Environmental Quality Report	√	√	√	√	√	√
Parish Council Funding Task Group	√	√			√	√
Council Assets Task Group	√	√		√		√
Canals Task Group	√	√	√	√		
Antisocial Behaviour Task Group	√	√	√	√		√
Older People's Task Group	√	√	√			√
Allotments Task Group	√	√	√		√	√

## **ANNUAL REPORT OF AUDIT COMMITTEE 2008/09 – CHAIRMAN, COUNCILLOR MALCOLM THOMAS**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

I am pleased to present my Annual Report to Council on the work of the Audit Committee during 2008/09.

The Terms of Reference of the Committee is set out in Part 3, Section 8 of the Council's Constitution, which briefly comprises:

- Reviewing all matters relating to the work of Internal and External Audit;
- Monitoring arrangements for discharging the Council's responsibilities for efficient and effective financial and operational resource management;
- Approval of the Annual Statement of Accounts;
- Monitoring Council's risk management and corporate governance arrangements including overseeing the production of the authority's Statement on Internal Control and Corporate Governance;
- Consideration of matters referred by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure;
- Consideration and approval of any amendments to the Council's Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules and the monitoring and review of the operation of the Constitution, proposing any amendments to Council;
- Liaison with the Independent Remuneration Panel on the Members' Allowances Scheme, and;
- Review of any issues referred to the Committee by the Chief Executive, Corporate Director or any other Council body.

### **OVERVIEW OF AUDIT COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES:**

### **2 AUDIT AND ASSURANCE WORK**

#### **Council Investments in Icelandic Banks**

The single most momentous issue considered by the Committee this year was clearly that presented by the collapse of the Icelandic banking system in October 2008. A special meeting of the Committee was held on 17 November 2008 to consider the Head of Financial Service's (HoFS) detailed report into the situation and to receive a presentation by the Council's treasury management consultants, Butlers.

The Committee examined these submissions in some detail to seek assurance that:

- Approved policies and procedures had been followed in placing the investments with the Icelandic Banks; and
- Everything possible was being done both to secure recovery of the money invested and to protect the Council against the possibility of similar future failures.



As the matter was so significant, and given its timing in relation to the budget process, the HoFS had arranged for formal updates to be included in the budget reports on every Cabinet agenda until March 2009 (in addition to the usual quarterly monitoring reports). This would ensure that all Members were informed of developments and the implications can be taken account of in the budget and planning process.

Having received explanations and assurances from the Head of Financial Services and Butlers, the Committee resolved that:

- A report be requested regarding any future changes in investment policy; and
- An update report be requested from Cabinet to each meeting of Full Council regarding the Icelandic investments situation.

Reports into the Icelandic Banking collapse are due to be issued soon by both the Parliamentary Select Committee (DCLG) and the Audit Commission. Given this, the ongoing financial climate and the Council's budgetary position, the Audit Committee will be seeking assurance in the forthcoming year that the associated risks continue to be managed effectively.

### **Internal Audit**

Audit Committee approved the Internal Audit Strategic and Business Plan 2008/09 to 2010/11 which sets out the strategy for the delivery and development of the Internal Audit function and how it will contribute to the achievement of the Council's organisational objectives and priorities, over the three year period.

In line with, and complementing, the strategy, Audit Committee also approved the *Internal Audit Annual Plan 2008/09* which sets out the elements of work to be delivered in providing assurance to support the annual opinion on the Council's internal control environment. The plan also sets out the Internal Audit resources to be devoted to other areas of work of an advisory/support nature aimed at helping the Council's ongoing improvement programme.

A key objective of the Internal Audit Strategy has been to further develop the focus of Internal Audit work and assurance on high risk areas. In 2008/09 this was reflected in an Annual Internal Audit Plan that set out broad areas of activity, providing greater flexibility in the subsequent selection of audits undertaken during the year. In practice, this has been demonstrated by Internal Audit undertaking significant pieces of assurance work in such diverse area as the Fair Pay project, cleansing enforcement, procurement and contract management, planning for floods, and cycling and walking strategies.

The results and effectiveness of the approach will be considered by the Audit Committee when reviewing Internal Audit's Plans for 2009/10 and the Internal Audit Manager's Annual Report.

Throughout the year, the Audit Committee has monitored the work of Internal Audit against the approved Annual Audit Plan and has received Internal Audit reports providing a specific opinion on the level of assurance that can be given on the system/arrangements reviewed. The assurance opinions used and their general meaning are set out in the table below:

Level of assurance	Definition
Substantial	The Authority can place high levels of reliance on the arrangements/controls. Best practice is demonstrated in some or all areas.
Reasonable	The Authority can place reasonable (i.e. sufficient) reliance on the arrangements/controls. Only relatively minor control weaknesses exist.
Limited	The Authority can place only limited reliance on the arrangements/controls. Significant control issues need to be resolved.
Minimal	The Authority cannot place sufficient reliance on the arrangements/controls. Substantial control weaknesses exist.

Audit Committee formally reviews the position where an audit report has resulted in a 'Limited' or 'Minimal' assurance opinion, and monitors progress made to implement agreed corrective action until such time a reasonable level of assurance can be achieved.

Audit Committee has also reviewed the results of other areas of audit work including advice, support work and special investigations. During 2008/09 Internal Audit has been involved in four investigations and has provided support and management in a number of corporate projects, developments and initiatives, most notably the mapping and evaluation of key partnerships and the review of Williamson Park's financial management arrangements.

Additional workload arising from initiatives and investigations inevitably has an impact on the level of resources devoted to assurance work. The Internal Audit Plan has been managed, in conjunction with the Committee, to ensure that acceptable levels of assurance are provided as to the effectiveness of the Council's internal control and governance arrangements. The end product of this is the Internal Audit Manager's Annual Report and Assurance Statement which will be submitted to the June 2009 meeting of the Committee.

### External Audit

In April 2008, the Audit Committee reviewed the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter produced by the Audit Commission. Drawing on the annual audit of the Council and other inspections carried out in the previous year, the report set out the Audit Commission's assessment of how well the Council had progressed in the previous year (Direction of Travel report) and how well it has managed its finances (the Use of Resources scores).

The report highlighted some very positive messages for the Council including:

- The recent corporate assessment resulting in the Council being rated as "Good";
- The majority of Council services having improved with 63 per cent of national best value performance indicators (BVPs) improving during the previous year, although the percentage of PIs where the Council was in the top performing quartile had fallen from 42 per cent to 29 per cent;
- Re-organisation of City Council Direct Services (CCDS) having resulted in significant improvements in waste management and cleanliness;

- The Council's investment in improving the cleanliness of the local environment having been reflected in a substantial rise in public satisfaction;
- The Council delivering on its priority to make services more accessible to citizens with two new customer service centres opening in Lancaster and Morecambe town halls and the main switchboard being incorporated into Customer Services;
- The Council's contribution to wider community outcomes being increasingly effective and good progress being made with physical and economic regeneration programmes;
- The City Council and its partners having helped to significantly reduce crime over the past year and were on target to meet their national target for reducing overall crime by 15 per cent by 2008.

The report also identified some key challenges and actions for the Council, including:

- Continuing to focus on those services which the Council considers a priority, in order to improve performance;
- Progressing the VFM improvement agenda and showing demonstrable outcomes from the changes implemented during 2006/07;
- Putting in place effective arrangements to achieve Level 2 of the Local Government Equality Standard;
- Developing resourced action plans to address future workforce development issues;
- Ensuring that the Council has effective arrangements in place to meet the challenge and requirements of the new performance assessment framework under the Comprehensive Area Assessment;
- Working with partners to develop a strategic and operational approach to the reduction of health inequalities in the Lancaster area;
- Reviewing the revisions to the use of resources key lines of enquiry and ensure that the City Council can demonstrate compliance against these new and revised requirements for 2008.

The Audit Commission issued an unqualified opinion on the Council's 2006/07 accounts and again awarded the Council an overall Use of Resources score of 3 out of 4 (Performing Well – consistently above minimum requirements) derived from their assessment of the following areas:

- Financial reporting including the preparation of the accounts of the Council and the way these are presented to the public (3 out of 4);
- Financial management including how financial management is integrated with strategy to support Council priorities (3 out of 4);
- Financial standing including the strength of the Council's financial position (3 out of 4);
- Internal Control including how effectively the Council maintains proper stewardship and control of its finances (3 out of 4), and;

- Value for money including an assessment of how well the Council balances the costs and quality of its services (2 out of 4).

This year has seen the transition from the Council's external audit being provided by the Audit Commission to the Council's newly appointed providers, KPMG LLP. The statutory audit of the Council's accounts for 2007/08 was undertaken by KPMG LLP.

Progress made on plans to address the key challenges and actions identified, together with the need to embed and further develop the Council's approach to value for money will be formally reported to Audit Committee in the next Annual Audit and Inspection Letter.

### **3 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT**

#### **Local Code of Corporate Governance and Annual Governance Statement**

In 2007/08 the Audit Committee approved a *Local Code of Corporate Governance* complying with legislative requirements. The legislation also requires the Council to publish an annual *Governance Statement* alongside the financial statements. The first of these annual statements was approved by the Audit Committee in June 2008.

The Statement reflects the importance and contribution of recognised systems of internal control including effective policy and decision making arrangements; strong corporate values and standards of conduct, and established and developing arrangements covering corporate governance, risk and financial management and the economic, efficient and effective use of resources.

The maintenance and review of the effectiveness of these systems of internal control and governance is a continuous process which is informed throughout the year by:-

- The work of internal audit and senior managers of the Council, who have responsibility for maintaining effective systems of internal control;
- Comments made by the Council's external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates, and;
- The role of the Audit and Overview and Scrutiny Committees and that of the Budget and Performance Panel.

A Management Group, comprising the Corporate Director (Finance & Performance), the Head of Financial Services (s151 Officer), the Head of Legal and HR (the Monitoring Officer) and the Internal Audit Manager, carries out an annual review of the Council's framework.

Last June, the Audit Committee considered the overall arrangements for the review and evaluation of evidence in support of the 2007/08 Statement, concluding that the Council has internal control and corporate governance arrangements in place that accord with proper practice and are working effectively.

#### **Risk Management**

Risk management plays an integral part in the sound governance of the Council and significant progress has been made in the Council's arrangements since they were first introduced in 2005.

As in previous years, the Risk Management Policy and Strategy has been updated to reflect developments and improvements made in risk management arrangements within the Council. The changes, approved by Audit Committee, also provide new and revised risk management reporting lines and responsibilities that integrate into the Council's existing performance management framework, providing improved governance and performance management at all levels.

The Council has in the past been assessed by the external auditor as having an under-developed approach to risk management and governance in its significant partnerships. A piece of work begun in 2007/08 on this subject working has resulted in the adoption of a Partnership Evaluation Toolkit that is now being rolled out within the Council. It is anticipated that this initiative will raise standards appreciably and address the comments made by the external auditor.

The Audit Committee has continued to receive regular reports on the effectiveness of the Risk Management Strategy. This involves Audit Committee reviewing progress made in monitoring and mitigating significant risks, which have included those associated with the Luneside East development and the making of Planning decisions.

### **Constitutional Matters**

Audit Committee have considered a number of proposals for amendments to the Council's Constitution, including:

- Recommending to Council the circumstances under which Cabinet Members who sit on the Planning and Highways Regulatory Committee should not be involved in items directly related to those which have been previously considered by Cabinet;
- Reaffirming the process for appointing Members to Cabinet Liaison Groups.
- 

In January 2009, the Audit Committee considered a wide-ranging report on "Democratic Renewal, Phase 2", the roots of which lay in an Audit Commission review of Democratic Renewal originally carried out in 2003 and included opportunities arising through the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

The Committee requested further investigation and reporting in a number of areas, including:

- Processes for amending and updating the Constitution, the Urgent Business procedure and Special Urgency;
- Constitutional amendments that would be required to reflect the changes made regarding byelaws;
- The extension of 'electronic decision making' methods;
- The streamlining of Committee meetings, reducing the length of Committee meetings and considering the timing of meetings;
- The scheme of delegation to officers.

The Committee also recommended to the Council Business Committee that:

- A change in procedure rules be made to state that petitions should be passed to Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider and carry out any inquiry work, as appropriate, before reporting back to Cabinet or the relevant decision-making body
- They consider introducing further restrictions on questions from Councillors at Full Council meetings

#### **Other Matters**

Following on from a request made in 2007/08, the Audit Committee received a presentation from the Local Government Ombudsman in April 2008 and considered a summary of those complaints for which the City Council had received a decision from the Local Government Ombudsman in 2006/07. The Ombudsman's Annual Letter for 2007/08 was subsequently considered by the Committee in September 2008. The Committee accepted these reports and resolved that the Ombudsman be invited to make a presentation to officers on how complaints are investigated and/or to discuss complaint handling in general.

#### **4 CONCLUSION**

As all Members will be aware, Lancaster City Council's continued improvements and achievements were recognised by the Audit Commission in 2007 when the Council was re-categorised as a '**good**' authority under CPA – the second highest category. The organisation and operation of the Audit Committee is assessed as part of the annual Use of Resources Assessment which feeds into the overall corporate assessment, and has consistently received a high rating. I am certain that the work of the Audit Committee, other elected Members and Council officers in providing effective systems of corporate governance and internal control have continued to make an important contribution to the standing and achievements of the Council. I would like to record my thanks for their continued support and hard work.

\* \* \* \*

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 2008/09 –  
INDEPENDENT CHAIRMAN, MR. STEPHEN LAMLEY**

Membership

For the municipal year 2008/09, the Standards Committee has comprised fifteen members – seven elected members of the Council, four independent members and four parish council representatives.

The membership was as follows:

Elected Members:

Councillors Jon Barry, Roger Dennison, Sheila Denwood, Sarah Fishwick, Janie Kirkman, Roger Sherlock and Joyce Taylor

Independent Members:

Stephen Lamley (Chairman), Tony James (Vice- Chairman), David Jordison and Sue McIntyre

Parish Council Representatives:

Margaret Davy, Paul Gardner, Susan O'Brien and Frank Senior

Meetings

The Committee has met four times during the course of the municipal year, and is scheduled to meet on the 9th April 2009. In addition, Assessment Sub-Committees and Review Sub-Committees have met as required to deal with individual complaints.

Local consideration of complaints

The main area of work for the Committee this year has been to implement the new provisions contained in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, These introduced a significant change, in that prior to May 2008, complaints of alleged breach of the Code of Conduct had to be made to the Standards Board for England, a national body based in Manchester. The Standards Board assessed each complaint, and complaints were only referred locally if the Standards Board took the view that there should be a local investigation.

Since May 2008, all complaints must be made locally to the Standards Committee, through the Monitoring Officer. On receipt, a complaint must be considered by an Assessment Sub-Committee, which decides whether to refer the matter to the Monitoring Officer for investigation or other action, or to the Standards Board for England, or whether no action should be taken. If the Assessment Sub-Committee decides that no action should be taken, the complainant has the right to request a review, and this is dealt with by a different Review Sub-Committee. If a complaint is referred for investigation, a Hearing Sub-Committee, comprising five members of the Committee, will, in appropriate cases consider, in the light of the investigating officer's report, whether there has been a breach of the Code of Conduct, and, if so, the appropriate sanction.

At its meetings in May and June 2008, the Committee considered the new Regulations and approved the complaints form, guidance for complainants, the

assessment procedure and the assessment criteria to be applied by the Assessment and Review Sub-Committees, and the investigation and hearings procedure. In addition, the Committee considered the composition of and the arrangements for convening the various sub-committees, and a Protocol on publicity for complaints made to the Standards Committee.

Since May 2008 to the time of writing this report, five allegations of breach of the Code of Conduct have been received. One of those complaints is still live at the time of writing this report. In the other four, all against city councillors, the decision of the Assessment Sub-Committee in each case was that no further action be taken. In one case, a request for review was received, and the Review Sub-Committee upheld the decision of the Assessment Sub-Committee. Two of the complaints related to alleged failure to declare interests, and two to alleged failure to treat with respect.

#### Other areas of Work

At its meeting in December, the Committee considered a government consultation on proposed changes to the Code of Conduct, and approved the Council's response to the consultation.

The Committee has received reports from the Monitoring Officer on her annual review of the registration of Members' interests, and has also approved an amended Whistleblowing Policy

The Committee has approved a work programme for the next year, which will build on this year's work, reviewing the Committee's current procedures and policies and dealing with any government changes to the Code of Conduct, and any subsequent training issues.

#### Training

The Chairman and the Deputy Monitoring Officer attended the Annual Assembly of Standards Committees, organised by the Standards Board for England, in October 2008. Whilst the event provides a useful forum for the exchange of information and views, the Committee has decided that, taking account of the cost of attendance, it is not necessary for a member of the Committee to attend the event in October 2009.

Whenever possible, a training session is held at the end of the Committee's meetings, when anonymised cases produced by the Standards Board are considered. Members have found this a useful exercise.

#### Conclusion

This year has been a year of change for the Standards Committee, in implementing the new arrangements for dealing with complaints. The size of the Committee has been increased to ensure that there are sufficient independent and parish members of the Committee to deal with the various stages of complaints against both city and parish councillors, without conflict of interests. The Committee looks forward to building on its work to date in the forthcoming year.



## **PLANNING INQUIRY FOR CANAL CORRIDOR NORTH PLANNING APPLICATIONS.**

### **OFFICER BRIEFING NOTE**

*'That in the light of the decision by the developer "not to appear" at the forthcoming public inquiry into its proposals for the canal corridor [letter of 12<sup>th</sup> March 2009 from Montagu Evans to the Planning Inspectorate informing the Inspectorate "We write on behalf of our client, Centros, to confirm that Centros will not be appearing at the above Inquiry which will consider the above applications."']*

*Lancaster City Council resolves:*

- (1) To co-operate with the inquiry in handing over documents, explaining relevant local planning policy and answering questions about local planning policy and its own documentation presented to planning committee in October 2008*
- (2) To identify one or more appropriate senior officers of the planning department and make them available for the duration of the inquiry to be present at the inquiry and to be of assistance to the Inspector*
- (3) To inform Centros that in the view of the Lancaster City Council the requirements of the Secretary of State in calling this inquiry are best served by Centros itself presenting evidence to that inquiry and answering questions from all parties on that evidence.*
- (4) Not to commission, engage or consult with external legal advisers, barristers, consultants or any other external person, company or organisation and thus incur expenditure on the part of this Council.'*

The Inquiry is being held to enable an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State to advise her on how to determine this set of planning applications and associated applications for consents. It is quite different from an Inquiry into an appeal against a refusal of planning permission in that the Planning Inspector would normally expect both the Local Planning Authority and the Applicant to appear to make the case in favour of the grant of permission.

Statutory bodies and third party objectors are able to be represented to give them the opportunity to challenge the applicants and the planning authority and to put forward their own case to try and persuade the Inspector that planning permission should not be granted.

Parties that have a principal interest can apply to be represented under what is known as 'Rule 6' of the Town and Country Planning (Inquiries Procedure) (England) Rules 2000. It is normal for such parties to have considerable legal and professional assistance. In this case, the City Council has registered as a 'Rule 6' party, as have 'It's our City' and English Heritage.

Centros have made the decision not to attend as a 'Rule 6' party, as they felt that the application that they have already submitted to the Local Planning Authority stands on its own merits. This decision by no means prevents Centros appearing at the inquiry in a less formal capacity. The time for registering as a 'Rule 6' party has now expired.

The Inquiries Procedure Rules make a clear assumption that in all cases the Local Planning Authority will be present and it is in this context that the City Council has become a Rule 6 party.

A decision on the planning applications will set a clear and precise benchmark within the context of the Local Development Framework for how the District as whole, Lancaster as a City, and the site in particular should be developed. Whilst the details of the scheme are inevitably Centros' commercial solution for the site, the principle of this form and volume of development needs to be established clearly for the site and the city's future role in the sub-region to be determined.

The development of Lancaster's role and the need to do this sustainably within the core of the urban area is an obligation for the district arising from the Regional Spatial Strategy. The City Council's intention to rise to this challenge and to deliver a planned enhancement of the city's cultural and retail offer is a clear statement in the first Local Development Framework to be adopted in the North West.

Without a clear decision from the Secretary of State on this matter the City Council would be left with a policy vacuum and unable to know how it should continue to negotiate to fulfil the aims of the Regional Spatial Strategy or even whether to continue to apply the same principles to negotiations with another developer if Centros were unable to proceed with the development.

The call-in inquiry will be run by the Inspector in accordance with the Inquiries Procedure Rules. This will include the cross examination of all parties and it is usual that this is conducted by a legal representative, experienced in the conduct of public inquiries.

It would be inappropriate to put officers in a position where they are representing the Council and being cross-examined in this way, without themselves having appropriate legal support.

### **Monitoring Officer Comments**

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and would emphasise the need for officers who are representing the Council at this inquiry to have advice and support from an appropriately qualified and experienced legal representative.

### **S151 Officer Comments**

The s151 Officer would add that a specific budget of £50,000 is included in 2009/10, for the provision of such external advice and support.

Head of Planning Services  
March 2009

## INTERNATIONAL YOUTH GAMES – 2010/11 AND BEYOND

### OFFICER BRIEFING NOTE

*'The decision to withdraw funding from the International Youth Games in 2009-10 was taken reluctantly by Cabinet last December, due to the severe constraints then affecting the City Council's budget. This decision was taken at an early stage in the 2009-10 budget process as Lancaster was to have been the host in 2009, and detailed plans needed to be finalised to send to our participating twin Cities.*

*There was no debate or discussion at the Budget Council meeting on 4 March on the decision to withdraw support from the International Youth Games in the years 2010-11 and 2011-12, and Council now affirms its long term commitment to the International Youth Games, and asks Cabinet in the forthcoming budget process to propose restoring funding for the years 2010-11 and 2011-12. '*

### Background

Funding to enable acceptance of invitations to and participation in the International Youth Games each year is contained in the Democratic Services budget. The revenue budget approved at the Council meeting of 4th March 2009 deleted (albeit without specific debate) this item from the budget for future years, the implication being that any invitation from our twin towns to attend the event in the future would be declined.

The budget has previously varied from year to year, dependant largely on the cost of travel to different countries. The contribution asked of participating young people has been kept at a consistent level, resulting in a larger subsidy by the City Council when more costly travel is involved.

The initial estimates for 2010/11 (Almere) and 2011/12 (Aalborg) were £8,000 and £12,000 respectively.

In past years, a report has been submitted to the relevant individual Cabinet Members on receipt of an invitation and at this point a more accurate estimate would be established based on the actual numbers included in the invitation and available travel options. The decision last year for example was:

*'That the invitation to participate in the 2008 Games in Rendsburg be accepted, on the basis of:*

- (a) A civic delegation comprising the Mayor and Mayoress (or consort), a Member chosen by ballot and an officer; and*
- (b) A sporting and cultural delegation to be led by the Head of Cultural Services, or his representative in conjunction with local volunteer individual sports leaders, the size of the party to be determined to a maximum of 120 subject to the net cost of travel being contained within the 2008/09 budget allocation and taking into account availability of volunteer leaders and suitable transport.'*

However other options can be considered at that time which may reduce the cost.

### **Implications**

Should Council approve the motion set out above and should, ultimately, future years' funding for the Youth Games be restored, additional savings estimated at £8,000 and £12,000 for 2010/11 and 2011/12 would need to be identified during the 2010/11 budget process in order to meet the Council's financial targets.

Members should note that the motion requests Cabinet to propose restoring the funding for 2010/11 and 2011/12 during the budget process later in the year. Should the Council receive an invitation from Almere to participate in the 2010 Games, this is likely to be forthcoming prior to the commencement of the budget exercise sometime between July and September. Any decision to attend these Games would require referral to Council, as such a decision would be outside the current Budget Framework. It would not be possible to wait until the 2010/11 budget is set in March 2010 to make a decision on whether or not to participate.

### **Monitoring Officer Comments**

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

### **Section 151 Officer Comments**

In the short time since Budget Council, nothing material has changed regarding the Council's medium term financial prospects. In short, they remain bleak, with major risks and uncertainties attached. During the budget process, the s151 Officer's advice included the following:

'With regard to options to produce a budget in line with preferred Council Tax levels, any proposals put forward .... should be considered alongside the development of ... priorities, and emphasis should be very much on achieving recurring reductions to the revenue budget...'

This advice still stands. Should Council wish, ultimately, to reinstate future years' support for the Youth Games, then more savings would be needed from other areas. Based on current approved budgets, in order to achieve 4% year on year increases in Council Tax, existing savings requirements already stand at £1.053M for 2010/11, and £1.302M for 2011/12.

**Head of Democratic Services**  
**26<sup>th</sup> March 2009**

**CABINET**

6.50 P.M.

3RD MARCH 2009

**PRESENT:-** Councillors Abbott Bryning (Chairman), Evelyn Archer, Eileen Blamire, Shirley Burns, Susie Charles, Jane Fletcher, John Gilbert, David Kerr and Roger Mace

Apologies for Absence: -

Councillor Jon Barry

Officers in attendance: -

Mark Cullinan	Chief Executive
Peter Loker	Corporate Director (Community Services)
Heather McManus	Corporate Director (Regeneration)
Roger Muckle	Corporate Director (Finance and Performance)
Mark Davies	Head of City Council (Direct) Services
Nadine Muschamp	Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer
Stephen Metcalfe	Principal Democratic Support Officer

**155 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE LEADER**

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

**156 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made at this point.

**157 PUBLIC SPEAKING**

Members were advised that there had been no requests to speak at the meeting in accordance with Cabinet's agreed procedure, as set out in Cabinet Procedure Rule 2.7.

**158 PUBLIC TOILET REVIEW - CABINET MINUTE 140**

**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Barry)**

**It was noted that the meeting had been summoned in accordance with Section 100A (6) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985. A decision was required urgently by virtue that any recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Cabinet to reconsider the decision would have budgetary implications and would need to be considered by Cabinet prior to Budget Council on 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2009.**

Cabinet considered the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held prior to the meeting of Cabinet. The Committee had requested consideration of the referral which was as a result of the Call-in of Cabinet's decision regarding the Public Toilet Review (Cabinet Minute 140 refers). Members were provided with the report and

minute of the Cabinet meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2009, when the original decision had been made.

It was moved by Councillor Bryning and seconded by Councillor Blamire:-

“(1) That the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be agreed and that savings be made from the following budgets:

£12,000 savings from the mothballing of the 2 public toilets located at Regent Road and those adjacent to the Dome, Morecambe.

£11,000 additional savings from the Communications and Marketing Review, resulting in total savings of £41,000 in Year 1 and £61,000 for Years 2 and beyond. (To be achieved by including Your District Matters in the totality of the expenditure as part of the review.).

£31,000 of growth to be removed, in relation to the recurring item for Schools Recycling of £7,000 per year, and the one-off item for undertaking a Review of Parish Financial Arrangements.

By way of amendment it was moved by Councillor Fletcher and accepted by the mover and seconder of the original proposition as a friendly amendment: -

“That with regard to the Community Toilet Scheme the Council continues to discuss proposals for the use of toilets with local businesses.”

By way of further amendment it was moved by Councillor Mace and seconded by Councillor Charles: -

“That the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny be referred to Budget Council.”

Upon being put to the vote 2 Members (Councillors Charles and Mace) voted in favour of the amendment, 3 Members (Councillors Blamire, Bryning and Fletcher) voted against and 4 Members abstained from voting (Councillors Archer, Burns, Gilbert and Kerr), whereupon the Chairman declared the amendment lost.

Members then voted on the substantive motion, as amended, as follows.

**Resolved:**

**(7 Members (Councillors Archer, Blamire, Bryning, Burns, Fletcher, Gilbert and Kerr) voted in favour and 2 Members (Charles and Mace) voted against).**

(1) That the toilets remain open with the exception of Regent Road and those adjacent to the Dome, Morecambe and that savings be made from the following budgets:

£12,000 savings from the mothballing of the 2 public toilets located at Regent Road and those adjacent to the Dome, Morecambe.

£11,000 additional savings from the Communications and Marketing Review, resulting in total savings of £41,000 in Year 1 and £61,000 for Years 2 and beyond.

(To be achieved by including Your District Matters in the totality of the expenditure as part of the review.).

£31,000 of growth to be removed, in relation to the recurring item for Schools Recycling of £7,000 per year, and the one-off item for undertaking a Review of Parish Financial Arrangements.

- (2) That the Parish and Town Councils be consulted as to whether they would be prepared to take over the toilets in the long term.
- (3) That with regard to the Community Toilet Scheme the Council continues to discuss proposals for the use of toilets with local businesses.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Corporate Director (Community Services).  
Head of City Council (Direct) Services.

**Reasons for making the decision:**

The decision was made in line with the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It enables Cabinet's revised recommendations on the schedule of Savings and Growth proposals to be considered at Budget Council on 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2009. With regard to savings it was noted that if the savings from the overall budget for Communications and Marketing Review are agreed by Council, this would be achieved by including Your District Matters in the totality of the expenditure as part of the review.

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Chairman

(The meeting ended at 7.30 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Stephen Metcalfe, Democratic Services, telephone 01524 582073 or email  
smetcalfe@lancaster.gov.uk**

**MINUTES PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, 5<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2009.**

**EFFECTIVE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE DECISIONS CONTAINED IN THESE MINUTES:  
IMMEDIATE.**

**CABINET**

**10.00 A.M.**

**17TH MARCH 2009**

**PRESENT:-** Councillors Abbott Bryning (Chairman), Evelyn Archer, Jon Barry (part), Eileen Blamire, Shirley Burns, Susie Charles, Jane Fletcher, John Gilbert, David Kerr and Roger Mace

Officers in attendance:-

Mark Cullinan	Chief Executive
Heather McManus	Corporate Director (Regeneration)
Roger Muckle	Corporate Director (Finance and Performance)
Debbie Chambers	Principal Democratic Support Officer

**159 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2009 and Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2009 were approved as correct records.

**160 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE LEADER**

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

**161 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made at this point.

**162 PUBLIC SPEAKING**

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

**163 RESPONDING TO WORKLESSNESS**

**(Cabinet Members with Special Responsibility Councillors Archer and Mace)**

The Corporate Director (Regeneration) submitted a report to outline, and seek approval for, the City Council's role in supporting employment and skills activities identified in the LDLSP Education, Skills and Opportunities Thematic Group Action Plan as a response to worklessness within the District. Specific approval is sought for a funding bid to the LDLSP for a Worklessness Pilot Project focused on outreach and engagement with hard to reach individuals and groups in the District's most deprived areas.

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



**Lancaster & Morecambe Worklessness Pilot Project**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>	<b>Risks</b>
1. Withdraw the pilot project proposal/funding bids	None	<p>Opportunity to secure 100% external funding for the project would be lost.</p> <p>Loss of existing staff would lead to inability to draw down complementary Supporting People Programme funding.</p> <p>Redundancy costs incurred for existing staff.</p>	Lancashire LAA 2006/2009 reward targets and funding would be unaffected but there would be increased likelihood that the local contribution towards LAA 2008/2011 targets would not be achieved with possible impact on reward funding
2. Endorse the project funding bid to the LDLSP (and the Supporting People funding bid) and proceed with the pilot project proposal leading to full implementation if funding is secured.	<p>Provides continuity of employment for existing staff in the Integrated Support Team.</p> <p>This would allow the project to work within the priority super output areas, the most deprived wards, to help disadvantaged households gain sustainable long term employment.</p> <p>No requirement for City Council match funding.</p> <p>Contribution to LAA target to reduce worklessness.</p> <p>Sharing of housing-led approach with other authorities.</p>	Sustainability of the project beyond the 2-year pilot phase likely to be dependent on other sources of funding (eg European Social Fund).	Risks associated with project implementation including appointment of staff, achievement of outputs

**City Council approach towards worklessness**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>	<b>Risks</b>
1. Do nothing ie do not take lead in appropriate actions identified in the ESO Thematic Group Action Plan	No impact on staff time and other priorities	ESO Thematic Group Action Plan not fully implemented  Failure to achieve draft 2009/10 Corporate Plan priority	Lancashire LAA 2006/2009 reward targets and funding not affected but local contribution towards achieving LAA 2008/2011 reward targets related to worklessness minimised
2. Take active lead in appropriate actions identified in the ESO Thematic Group Action Plan, including establishing Work Group	Draft 2009/10 Corporate Plan priority addressed  Firm base established for development of initiatives to address worklessness through joint working	Significant staff time potentially required – possibly up to half a full time equivalent post in the short/medium term.	There is a risk that insufficient staff time would be available to support the full range of actions and the Work Group. In this event administrative support could be required but it may be possible to seek appropriate resources through the LDLSP.

**Officer Preferred Option (and comments):**

Option 2 is the preferred option for the Worklessness Pilot Project as this will enable the City Council to undertake an active role in supporting some of the hardest-to-reach groups and individuals to secure employment and training opportunities, contributing towards efforts to achieve the LAA target to reduce the number of working age people claiming out of work benefits in target areas (although this target may be subject to revision in response to the economic downturn). It would also enable the City Council to maintain its work with vulnerable households with the additional Supporting People funding potentially available from Lancashire County Council.

Option 2 is also the preferred option for the City Council's approach towards worklessness as this will be in accordance with the draft 2009/10 Corporate Plan Key Action 1.3 to deliver the Council's actions in the LDLSP's Education, Skills and Opportunities Thematic Group Action Plan. It will also support local action planning to respond to LAA targets related to worklessness and skills. The development of the Employment and Skills Plan could also provide valuable input to the economic assessment process proposed under the Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration, especially in the context of emerging Government proposals to introduce Work and Skills Plans setting out how local partners can achieve their LAA targets.

The Corporate Director (Regeneration) clarified with Cabinet Members that, should Recommendation 1 in the report be accepted, Cabinet would be effectively authorising vacancies for the pilot project, since to prepare and submit vacancy forms to Cabinet following acceptance of the recommendation would create a delay with the project.

It was moved by Councillor Archer and seconded by Councillor Mace:-

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

Members then voted:-

***Resolved unanimously:***

***(Note: Councillor Barry was not present when the vote was taken.)***

- (1) That Members endorse the funding bid to the Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership (LDLSP) for the Lancaster & Morecambe Worklessness Pilot Project, approve its implementation and the updating of the revenue budget if the bid is successful and authorise the Corporate Director (Regeneration) to agree appropriate line management arrangements.
- (2) That Members endorse the Supporting People funding bid already made to Lancashire County Council and, if formally offered, approve the on-going implementation of the vulnerable households activity to complement the Worklessness Pilot Project, and the updating of the revenue budget.
- (3) That Members acknowledge the role of the City Council in employment and skills activities which complement its draft 2009/10 Corporate Plan priority to deliver the Council's actions in the LDLSP's Education, Skills and Opportunities Thematic Group Action Plan.
- (4) That appropriate officer time be committed, within existing staff resources, to support actions included within the LDLSP Education, Skills and Opportunities Thematic Group Action Plan.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Corporate Director (Regeneration)  
Head of Economic Development and Tourism

**Reasons for making the decision:**

The decision is in line with the preferred options in the report. The Worklessness Pilot Project will enable the City Council to undertake an active role in supporting some of the hardest-to-reach groups and individuals to secure employment and training opportunities, contribute towards efforts to achieve the LAA target to reduce the number of working age people claiming out of work benefits in target areas. It will also enable the City Council to maintain its work with vulnerable households with the additional Supporting People funding potentially available from Lancashire County Council.

The preferred option for the City Council's approach towards worklessness is in accordance with the draft 2009/10 Corporate Plan Key Action 1.3 to deliver the Council's

actions in the LDLSP's Education, Skills and Opportunities Thematic Group Action Plan. It will also support local action planning to respond to LAA targets related to worklessness and skills. The development of the Employment and Skills Plan could also provide valuable input to the economic assessment process proposed under the Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration, especially in the context of emerging Government proposals to introduce Work and Skills Plans setting out how local partners can achieve their LAA targets.

## 164 COMMUNITY COHESION

### (Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Gilbert)

The Chief Executive submitted a report asking Members to consider how to take forward community cohesion within Lancaster District in the context of the Area Based Grant (ABG).

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

#### Option 1

That Cabinet agrees to support the cohesion action plan developed by the Valuing People group and allocates £23K to the group for this purpose

#### Option 2

To defer making any allocations from the ABG for community cohesion at this time

#### Option 3

That Cabinet allocate Area Based Grant for some other purpose.

The preferred option is Option 1 - to support the cohesion action plan developed by the Valuing People group and allocate £23K to the group for this purpose. This is in accordance with the earlier decisions of Cabinet to take forward development of a Community Cohesion Strategy through working with the LDLSP and the voluntary sector and ring fence the 2008/9 Area Based Grant awarded for community cohesion for supporting specific actions within Corporate Plan Priority 6.1.

It was moved by Councillor Gilbert and seconded by Councillor Blamire:-

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

(Councillor Barry joined the meeting.)

Members then voted:-

### ***Resolved unanimously:***

- (1) That the remaining £16,000 balance of the Community Cohesion Reserve, together with £7,000 from the Project Implementation Reserve, be allocated to support the

Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership's (LDLSP) Valuing People Thematic Group to develop and implement a district wide Community Cohesion Strategy.

- (2) That the 2009/10 Revenue Budget be updated accordingly.
- (3) That the Head of Corporate Strategy become the Responsible Spending Officer for this £26,000 budget.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Chief Executive  
Head of Corporate Strategy

**Reasons for making the decision:**

The decision taken is in accordance with the earlier decisions of Cabinet to take forward development of a Community Cohesion Strategy through working with the LDLSP and ring fence the 2008/9 Area Based Grant awarded for community cohesion for supporting specific actions within the Corporate Plan.

**165 LUNESIDE EAST REGENERATION PROJECT**

**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Mace)**

The Corporate Director (Regeneration) submitted a report updating Cabinet on progress on this key regeneration project, explaining why this development is currently stalled and to present proposals for how the Council might facilitate a satisfactory and timely project delivery.

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

**Options:**

Market conditions severely constrain what can reasonably be done. To make progress the only option available is

Option 1 is for the NWDA to grant the Council funding for it to clear and remediate the site and undertake essential infrastructure works and thereby ready the site for development when the market starts to recover. (The Developer costs such works at some £5.2 million).

The alternative, Option 2, is to do nothing.

**Analysis:**

Officers consider that option 1 is the only one available. Doing nothing is not realistic, not least because obligations on the Council under the JFA and its contract for ERDF funding put it at substantial financial risk until it delivers or at least can assure full development delivery. In total, funding for some £5 million of expenditures already made is at stake and, in the worst-case scenario, the Council would be left with expenditure to this amount unfunded.

In addition, doing nothing would have serious implications for regeneration and planning. The full potentials of this development in terms of the environmental improvements, homes and jobs that it should deliver will not be realised. There will be no significant inward investment into the wider Luneside area for years to come. Failure to develop out this site and, because of this, prospectively other sites, will also mean the Council's total housing delivery is lowered and developers will be in a stronger position to force the Council to release Greenfield sites instead.

A related point is that terminating the involvement of the Developer is neither sensible nor reasonable at this stage. The developer has undoubted capacity, knowledge, commitment and readiness to deliver and the Council can mitigate its risks significantly by keeping the Developer with it so it can draw on its knowledge and experience. Further, the reasons the Developer cannot proceed as planned are no fault of its own.

Option 1 is also deliverable (subject to a positive funding decision). The NWDA (and also the HCA) has the discretion to grant the Council sufficient funding to undertake the works described and a variation to the JFA would be the mechanism. The Corporate Director (Regeneration) has the delegated authority to apply for such external funding. The Council owns the whole site and therefore would have full site control. It is practised as an accountable body. Planning Services' Engineering Team has the capacity and expertise to act as client for the works. This team is well versed in mechanisms for managing and mitigating risk (including cost risk) in contract management. To maximise efficiencies and minimise costs the Council should secure services from the Developer's expert consultancy team to assist with the client role, most particularly from Entec UK Ltd as consultant advisors for the remediation works and RW Gregory for servicing and utility works. The Developer has consented to this. The necessary procurements could be made under the Council's procurement rules.

Critically, the Council would need to procure an expert remediation contractor. The Council could draw from the applicable NWDA Panel of pre-validated contractors and, after clarifying capabilities, tender. The Council should also take advice from Entec's given it tendered the remediation contract on behalf of the Developer. The Council's Engineering Team consider that the procurement process will take some 6-9 months to complete with a 2-3 month mobilisation period after this before the contractor could commence. Entec, for the Developer, has planned on a nine-month period for site works.

If it is assumed that tenders for a remediation contract are advertised in late Spring 2009 then prospectively, the site works should commence in early 2010 and be completed by autumn 2010. Given that most commentators predict economic recovery to commence in 2010 this should time well with any market recovery and the need then to present the site as a compelling development opportunity.

#### Risk assessment:

Option 1 relies on the Council securing external funding to cover the costs of it undertaking site works and any grant secured would be capped. This would place the onus on the Council to manage costs and cost risks within the budget made available. Given the recession, the Council should be very well placed to secure very competitive tenders and to further mitigate out cost risk by drawing on the experience gained by Entec in its procurement for the Developer.

There are other risks including regulatory, technical and environmental risks but proper project management approaches and effective contract management should mitigate these to a satisfactory level. Again, the experience of Entec and also RW Gregory will assist. In addition, the continued involvement of the Developer itself in an advisory capacity would assist with risk management during site clearance and remediation works and enable the Council to tailor remediation standards and infrastructure provision very precisely to the first phase construction by the Developer. The Council could accommodate for this in its project management approach.

Officer preferred Option:

Option 1 is strongly preferred. A specific short-term gain is that undertaking site works bring local benefits in terms of jobs and economic activity. Resolving the problems of land contamination will remove the main constraint on development of the site. This will transform the development opportunity in the perceptions of potential investors and house builders and should significantly advance final project delivery. There are no other practicable options.

It was moved by Councillor Mace and seconded by Councillor Charles:-

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

Members then voted:-

***Resolved unanimously:***

That Cabinet:

- (1) Approve that, if the NorthWest Development Agency provide the Council with full grant funding for the purpose, the Council undertake all works necessary to clear and remediate (clean up) the site and put in place essential infrastructure in order to facilitate the subsequent development of the site by the private sector, subject to the Corporate Director (Regeneration) and the statutory officers being satisfied as to any conditions imposed by the NWDA.
- (2) Subject to Recommendation 1 being approved and the outcome of the funding bid, that the General Fund Capital programme and the General Fund Revenue Programme are updated accordingly.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Corporate Director (Regeneration)  
Head of Planning Services.

**Reasons for making the decision:**

A specific short-term gain is that undertaking site works bring local benefits in terms of jobs and economic activity. Resolving the problems of land contamination will remove the main constraint on development of the site. This will transform the development opportunity in the perceptions of potential investors and house builders and should significantly advance final project delivery. There are no other practicable options.

166 **DISPOSAL STRATEGY****(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Archer)**

The Corporate Director (Regeneration) submitted a report asking Members to consider adopting a Disposal Strategy for the Council as part of a Medium Term Corporate Property Strategy.

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

Option 1 – That the Disposal Strategy be adopted. This would build on the Corporate Property Strategy provide an improved framework for managing the Council's asset disposal process.

Option 2 - That the Disposal Strategy is not adopted. The existing guidance of the Corporate Property Strategy would be maintained although this is now out of date and does not meet the Council's current priorities.

Option 1 is the officer preferred option. The adoption of the Disposal Strategy provides an improved framework for managing the Council's asset disposal process.

It was moved by Councillor Archer and seconded by Councillor Kerr:-

“(1) That the Disposal Strategy as amended, (an amended version of the Disposal Strategy, with the amendments highlighted, was distributed by Councillor Archer at the meeting and is appended to these minutes) be approved, subject to the inclusion of a clause giving a commitment that the portfolio holder will be consulted on the disposal method to be adopted for any property disposal.”

Members then voted:-

***Resolved:***

***(9 Members (Councillors Archer, Barry, Blamire, Bryning, Burns, Charles, Gilbert, Kerr and Mace) voted in favour and 1 Member (Councillor Fletcher) abstained)***

(1) That the Disposal Strategy as amended, be approved, subject to the inclusion of a clause giving a commitment that the portfolio holder will be consulted on the disposal method to be adopted for any property disposal.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Corporate Director (Regeneration)  
Head of Property Services

**Reason for making the decision:**

Adoption of the Disposal Strategy provides an improved framework for managing the Council's asset disposal process.



**167 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Chairman asked for any further declarations of interest from Cabinet Members regarding the exempt reports.

It was moved by Councillor Kerr and seconded by Councillor Archer:-

“That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1,2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of that Act.”

Members then voted as follows:-

***Resolved unanimously:-***

- (1) That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1,2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

**168 LANCASTER MARKET****(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Archer)**

The Corporate Director (Regeneration) submitted an exempt report updating Cabinet on the information requested in line with the resolutions made at the December 2008 Cabinet meeting.

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

It was moved by Councillor Archer and seconded by Councillor Kerr:-

“(1) That options 1 and 2, as set out in the exempt report, be approved.”

Members then voted:-

***Resolved:***

***(6 Members (Councillors Archer, Blamire, Bryning, Burns, Gilbert and Kerr) voted in favour and 4 Members (Councillors Barry, Charles, Fletcher and Mace) abstained)***

- (1) That options 1 and 2, as set out in the exempt report, be approved.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Corporate Director (Regeneration)  
Head of Property Services

**Reasons for making the decision:**

The decision provides the greatest opportunity to remove some or all of the Council's deficit in the long term.

**169 EMPLOYEE ESTABLISHMENT - VACANCY AUTHORISATION****(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Bryning)**

The Chief Executive submitted a report seeking Cabinet's approval to the filling of established vacancies where recommended and to note a decision taken under the Council's urgent business procedure.

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

The information contained within each form provides details related to the risks of not filling the related vacancy. Cabinet has the option of releasing funding on either a time limited or permanent basis or withholding funding. If funding is not released, there will be an impact on Service provision. If funding is time limited, it will be more difficult and possibly more expensive to fill a post.

Officer Preferred Option (and comments):

To fill those posts as recommended by Service Heads unless Cabinet identifies the work as being of a low priority.

It was moved by Councillor Kerr and seconded by Councillor Fletcher:-

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

Members then voted:-

***Resolved:***

***(8 Members (Councillors Archer, Barry, Blamire, Bryning, Burns, Fletcher, Gilbert and Kerr) voted in favour and 2 Members (Councillors Charles and Mace) voted against)***

- (1) That Cabinet Members agree that the vacancies recommended for filling by Service Heads are filled as soon as possible.
- (2) That the action taken by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, in respect of the following vacancy, be noted:-
  - (a) That the Conditions of Employment of the temporary holder of post PL0096 in Planning Services be amended to extend the fixed term contract on a reduction in hours to 18.5 on a temporary basis to accommodate a request

from the substantive post holder to work half time for a period of 12 months following maternity leave, under the Family Leave Scheme policy.

- (b) That the call in be waived in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 17 to allow immediate implementation.
- (3) That the Revenue Budget be updated accordingly, for any deleted or deferred posts.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Chief Executive.

**Reasons for making the decision:**

The decisions enable the decision made at Cabinet on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2008, removing the delegated decision making to fill employee vacancies away from Service Heads to Cabinet, to be implemented. It was noted that, unless Cabinet decide otherwise, there will be no further reporting of employee vacancies after the April Cabinet meeting.

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Chairman

(The meeting ended at 11.20 a.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Debbie Chambers, Democratic Services, telephone 01524 582057 or email  
dchambers@lancaster.gov.uk**

**MINUTES PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, 19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2009.**

**EFFECTIVE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE DECISIONS CONTAINED IN THESE MINUTES:  
FRIDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2009.**