



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

# **Executive Annual Report 2007/08**

**April 2008**



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<b>Foreword from the Leader of the Council and Chairman of Cabinet</b>
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I am pleased to present the Executive Annual Report for 2007/08.

Executive Member accountability is a key part of the Cabinet system. Lancaster City Council takes this very seriously and has a number of mechanisms to hold the Executive to account. As well as the procedures involving the Overview and Scrutiny Committee such as pre-scrutiny of decisions and call-in, Cabinet members answer both written and oral questions in Council and as Leader, I present to each full Council on behalf of the Cabinet a report on decisions that have been made. I also answer oral questions in Council from non-executive members on this report.

Each Cabinet Member has one or more areas of special responsibility and the following reports show the progress and achievement of goals in each of these individual portfolio areas.

The reports for the past year cover a range of topics: the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment being raised from 'Fair' to 'Good', the opening of the new Customer Service Centres at both Town Halls, and much more.

**Councillor Roger Mace**  
**Leader of the Council and Chairman of Cabinet**

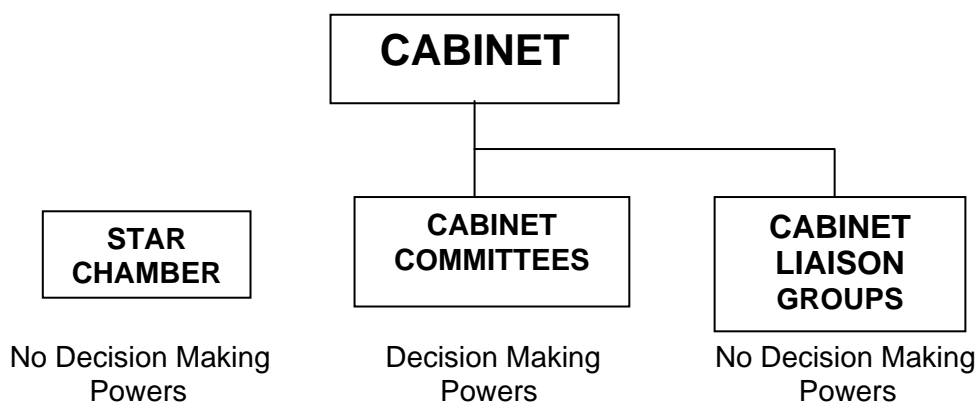
<b>Decision Making Arrangements</b>
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The Cabinet is responsible for initiating and developing policy and taking policy decisions within the budget and policy framework set by the Council for all functions which are not specified as the responsibility of the Council, the Licensing Regulatory Committee, the Planning and Highways Regulatory Committee, the Personnel Committee, the Appeals Committee, the Audit Committee and the Standards Committee.

Up to 10 Executive Councillors each have an area of responsibility as set out below: -

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Portfolio</b>
Roger Mace	Leader, Relationship with other Councils, Neighbourhood Management in this District, Community Planning, Revenues and Benefits and Finance.
Evelyn Archer	Property Services, Joint Portfolio Regeneration – Coastal Works and Special Interest in Morecambe.
June Ashworth	Joint Portfolio for City Contract (Direct) Services with Special Interest in Enforcement, joint Economic Environment Portfolio with Special Interest in Employment Opportunities and Tourism in Morecambe and Licensing (including enforcement).
Jon Barry	Joint Portfolio for City Contract (Direct) Services and Democratic and Legal Services.
Eileen Blamire	Community Safety, Emergency Planning, Planning Policy, Cycling and Travel Plans.
Abbott Bryning	Joint Economic Environment Portfolio with Special Interest in Employment Opportunities and Tourism in Lancaster and joint Portfolio for Regeneration with Special Interest in Lancaster.
John Gilbert	Joint Portfolio for Housing, Parking Policy and its implementation, overview of any new input required in respect of the M6 Link and Information Technology and Customer Services.
Val Histed/Tony Johnson	Social Environment – Rural Area Portfolio and Performance Management.
David Kerr	Joint Portfolio for Housing with Special Interest in Morecambe, Housing Regeneration in Morecambe, Environmental Health and Social Environment and Support for the Voluntary Sector.
Maia Whitelegg	Culture, Leisure, Sport and Young People and Personnel.

The following Cabinet structure was adopted by the City Council for dealing with matters within its delegated powers: -



### **CABINET COMMITTEES**

Where the Cabinet is responsible for an Executive function, they may, with the exception of Key Decisions, collectively delegate further to an individual Cabinet Member, a Committee of Cabinet, an Area Committee, joint arrangements or an Officer, unless the Council directs otherwise.

Unless the Cabinet directs otherwise, a Committee of the Cabinet to whom functions have been delegated by the Cabinet may delegate further to an Officer.

Even where Executive functions have been delegated the fact does not prevent the discharge of these delegated functions by the Cabinet or Committee of the Cabinet who delegated, if appropriate.

There is only one Cabinet Committee at present and this is the Lancaster and Morecambe Markets Committee. The terms of reference for this Committee is to consider strategic issues regarding all Markets by the City Council, in particular issues raised as part of the Best Value Review of Assets and Facilities Action Plan.

### **CABINET LIAISON GROUPS**

The purpose of these Groups is purely consultative and not decision making. They are generally chaired by a member of Cabinet and there is no restriction on size although the group must be limited to what is manageable and effective for their purpose. They may be time limited or of longer standing, again depending on their purpose.

This provides an opportunity for Cabinet Members and non executive Members working closer together for the greater good of the community, along with people from outside the Council.

## **STAR CHAMBER**

The Star Chamber, which is an informal group of Members, is to assist Cabinet in bringing forward recommendations in respect of the Policy and Budget Framework. It is not a decision making body but will generate recommendations for decision takers. It meets every week and consists of a core membership of Cabinet Members and is supported by the Management Team and Head of Financial Services. It is not a formal body and is not subject to Access to Information rules.

## AGENDA

From 1<sup>st</sup> May 2007 until 31<sup>st</sup> April 2008 146 Executive Decisions have been taken. Of these 56 were Key Decisions. 1 decision was 'called-in' for further examination by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The table below shows the number of decisions each Member was consulted on: -

Portfolio Holder Area of Responsibility Councillor	CABINET, CABINET COMMITTEES AND URGENT BUSINESS DECISION PROCEDURE			
	KEY DECISION (KD)	NKD TAKEN BY CABINET	INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISION (ICMD)	URGENT BUSINESS DECISION (UBD)
Roger Mace	11	28	5	6
Evelyn Archer	11	7	3	-
June Ashworth	1	-	-	-
Jon Barry	3	2	4	1
Eileen Blamire	3	2	5	-
Abbott Bryning	4	-	-	-
John Gilbert	6	2	4	1
Val Histed	-	2	-	-
Tony Johnson	1	-	-	-
David Kerr	5	3	5	1
Maia Whitelegg	11	2	5	2

### KEY:

Key Decisions	KD
Non Key Decisions	NKD
Decisions Called-In	DCI
Individual Cabinet Member Decision	ICMD
Urgent Business Decision	UBD

The above figures include decisions where a Member had been involved in the decision jointly with another Member or, in the case of urgent business, where the Member had been consulted by the Chief Executive.



## EXECUTIVE MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT

### COUNCILLOR ROGER MACE, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR RELATIONSHIPS WITH COUNCILS, NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT, REVENUES AND BENEFITS, FINANCE AND COMMUNITY PLANNING



#### ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08

##### 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 I am pleased to present my report as Leader of the Council for 2007-8.

1.2 A major success during the past year followed the reinspection last autumn by the Audit Commission, when the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment [CPA] rating was raised from "Fair" to "Good". I shall say more about this later [see section 4.9 below].

1.3 An important milestone in the economic development of the District was the announcement in February of the outcome of the [Summer 2007] Public Inquiry into the Heysham-M6 Link Road, namely that the road has been granted Planning Approval. Construction is expected to commence in 2010.

1.4 A decision of importance taken by Council early in the year was that the City would retain the Town Halls in Lancaster and Morecambe. The detailed financial implications of this decision have still to be incorporated into the Council's budgets, but it is already known that Home Working and Hot Desking will be a feature of a new way of working for a number of Council Staff as plans unfold.

1.5 This year has also seen the opening of Customer Service Centres at both Town Halls, following investment decisions made during the administration of my predecessor, and a continuing of the commitment to the Storey Institute Creative Industries Centre.

##### 2 EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP:

- Chairman of Cabinet
- Chair of Star Chamber
- Local Governance Committee
- Access to Services Project Board
- Cleanliness Project Board
- Chair of Economic Strategy Board
- Lead Member Lancaster and Morecambe Markets Committee
- Lead Member Canal Corridor Cabinet Liaison Group
- Lead Member Transport Cabinet Liaison Group
- Lead Member Morecambe Chamber, Hoteliers and Tourism Cabinet Liaison Group

- Lancaster and District Chamber Liaison Group
- Appraisal Panel

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

- Court of Lancaster University
- ERDF Programme Monitoring Committee – sub regional representative
- Regional Transport Group – sub regional representative
- Lancashire Leaders Group
- Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership Executive [Vice Chairman]
- LSP Equality and Diversity Building Block
- LSP Community Leaders Group
- North West Regional Assembly
- North West Regional European Partnership – sub regional representative
- English Historic Towns Forum
- LSP Lancaster Vision Board [Vice Chairman]
- Lancaster Vision Board Transport Steering Group

### **4 OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES: PROGRESS DURING 2007/08**

#### **4.1 LEADER OF CABINET**

4.1.2 At the start of the municipal year, I drew up a protocol for Members of a Cabinet based on proportional representation. This protocol was accepted by cabinet members as a basis for their acceptance of their portfolio responsibilities, and there have been no significant breaches.

4.1.3 Only one cabinet decision [to date in 2007-8] was called in by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Cabinet's original decision was approved and supplementary recommendations on the same issue from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were subsequently agreed by Cabinet – a sign that the activities of Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny have complemented one another well in the past year.

4.1.4 As last year, Cabinet again consulted the public on the Cabinet Priorities. Unanimous agreement had been reached in Cabinet on the draft that went out to consultation, and a number of presentational and other improvements have since been provisionally agreed.

4.1.5 The Council has continued the performance management arrangements adopted in 2006-07. Performance Management Teams [PRT] look at the indicators in the Council's Corporate Plan on a quarterly basis, and initiate action if targets are not being met. These meetings involve Cabinet members, Corporate Directors and Service Heads. A Corporate PRT also meets, and I report to the Budget and Performance Panel.

4.1.6 The Cabinet's budget proposals for 2008-9 were accepted by Budget Council on 27 February without successful amendment.

#### **4.2 RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER COUNCILS**

4.2.1 Following last year's decision by central government not to allow our bid for unitary status to go forward to the next round, the Council has moved its attention to

seeking ways to improve two-tier government in Lancashire. My personal contribution to this process has been to seek to rebuild the relationship between the Leaders of City and County Councils that had been weakened during the unitary bid process.

4.2.2 The decision of central government on the petition for the creation of a Morecambe Town Council is currently awaited. Electoral arrangements have been proposed, and important work that remains to be done includes the task of determining equitable and acceptable financial arrangements for the new council that are equally fair to areas within the new Morecambe as to areas of the District that are excluded from the new Morecambe.

### 4.3 FINANCE

4.3.1 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 Council Tax rise was 4.5%, in the urban core, including special expenses.

4.3.2 We were able to fund some significant elements of growth in the budget for 2008-9 in addition to meeting our self imposed constraints on increases in Council Tax. All this was contributed to by the work of Star Chamber throughout the past year in reviewing ongoing activities and all proposals for capital and revenue growth in order to identify savings and value for money for the general body of council tax payers. I extended the membership of Star Chamber on a trial basis to include all members of the Cabinet as the Budget Council approached, and this innovation was welcomed by other members as an improvement to the dissemination of information about budget options and to the consistency of approach to the issues raised.

4.3.3 During the year, the Finance Service:-

- Implemented a new suite of Financial Systems, which support improved financial management and more efficient procurement and associated processing etc.
- Retained a level 3 (performing well - consistently above minimum requirements) in "Use of Resources" assessment by the Audit Commission. (Other services also contribute to this, but the biggest input is from Finance).
- Closed the accounts, on which once again an unqualified audit opinion was obtained, and supported the Council throughout the year in budgeting / achieving Council Tax targets.
- Helped to implement LAMP (Lancaster's approach to managing projects), - and assisted the Corporate Strategy team who now have responsibility for it.
- Successfully incorporated financial monitoring and reporting into the Council's performance management framework.

#### 4.4 REVENUES AND BENEFITS

##### Achievements 2007/8

- Restructured the Service to produce efficiency savings which contributed to the council's achievement of its target for limiting the rise in Council Tax for 2008-9.
- Maintained a high performing benefits service with fewer resources than in 2006/7, demonstrating value for money improvements and cashable savings.
- Benefits service rated as "excellent" against self assessment of DWP Performance Standards.
- Continued to improve partnership working with other agencies and stakeholders.
- Introduced improvements to customer experience by the provision of shortened claim forms, and a range of easy to read Information Sheets.
- Prepared effectively for the introduction of the Local Housing Allowance on 7 April 2008.
- Improved collection rates for both NNDR & Council Tax and initiated more stringent recovery procedures for non payers.
- Worked with Citizens Advice Bureaux locally to provide money advice to debtors with debt problems that affect their ability to pay Council Tax.
- Introduced paperless Direct Debit enabling further automation and resulting efficiencies from the BACS processes.
- Prepared effectively for the changes to Empty Property Rates from 1 April 2008.
- Led the procurement of a corporate document management system implemented in Revenue Services on time and within budget utilising the LAMP methodology.
- Successfully and seamlessly integrated Revenues staff into Customer Service Centres at Lancaster and Morecambe Town Halls.

#### 4.5 NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT IN THIS DISTRICT

The objective here has been to continue to develop neighbourhood management within the district based on ongoing experience in the urban areas of Poulton and the West End of Morecambe. Following consultation with councillors representing rural wards, a pilot of neighbourhood management in the rural Parish of Ellel is taking place. Evaluation of this pilot project will be used to determine how neighbourhood management techniques might be applied in future to other communities in the district.

#### 4.6 COMMUNITY PLANNING

##### **Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership (henceforth LDLSP) and the Sustainable Community Strategy**

##### **4.6.1 Local Strategic Partnership**

The LDLSP brings together the public, voluntary, community and private sectors to co-ordinate the contribution that each can make to delivering the Community Strategy. Members of the City Council and the County Council are represented on the LDLSP. I have represented Lancaster City Council on the LDLSP Executive

group, and am currently the Vice Chairman of the LDLSP Executive, a post which is scheduled to disappear when the new constitution of the LDLSP comes into effect on 1 June.

Partnership working in local authorities has been given increasing emphasis in recent years. At the national level this can partly be seen in the roll out of Local Area Agreements, revisions to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) framework, the evolving 'Place Shaping' agenda, the move toward Comprehensive Area Assessments and the proposed changes to LSP working arrangements outlined in the recent Local Government White Paper.

In this environment the LDLSP commissioned a Peer Review to help determine how 'fit for purpose' it was and to help it develop an action plan to facilitate effective planning and a responsive mechanism for joint delivery of services to address local concerns.

The peer challenge was carried out against a quality benchmark, set out under four main headings:

- Vision and Strategy
- Leadership and Relationships
- Governance and Performance
- Achievement and Impact.

A detailed Action Plan was produced and work packages were assigned to a number of time limited groups to implement the actions identified in the Peer Review report.

I chaired the working group which reviewed the LDLSP constitution and the LDLSP (supported by the City Council) has now adopted a new Constitution which determines the way it is structured, its procedure rules, code of conduct, terms of reference and financial procedures.

In adopting this new constitution the LDLSP has agreed to discontinue its existing structures and operating procedures and to move toward a new way of working designed to ensure effective delivery and performance management of its new Sustainable Community Strategy.

At Cabinet on 18 March, I was appointed to represent the City Council on the Board of the LDLSP – a position which will be reviewed at the first Cabinet meeting after the Business Council in May.

#### **4.6.2 Sustainable Community Strategy**

The Sustainable Community Strategy sets out the strategic vision for the district. It provides a framework for partnership working to address the many difficult cross cutting issues which the district faces.

When the district's first Community Strategy was published in 2003, it was intended that the document would be reviewed at regular intervals. Since 2003, changes have occurred in the wider policy context that mean that the City Council (through the LDLSP) now needs to ensure that any review takes into account the requirements of the 2006 Local Government White Paper, 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' and the requirement to 're-shape' Community Strategies into Sustainable Community Strategies.

The LDLSP has spent the last nine months managing the review of its Community Strategy and is expected to publish a Sustainable Community Strategy for the Lancaster District by June 2008.

In August 2007 the LDLSP Executive met to establish a 'provisional' set of priority outcomes and objectives for this new Sustainable Community Strategy. The purpose of the exercise was to produce evidence-based indicative priorities for the district which would form the basis of a two month long consultation period. A State of the District Report was prepared which put together key facts and data relating to the Lancaster district to help the LDLSP to identify local priorities.

The consultation was launched on 11th September at the LDLSP Annual Conference and ended 16th November.

The original timetable for this work indicated that the Sustainable Community Strategy would be delivered by December 2007 /January 2008, but the finishing date was deferred to take account of the changing structure and membership of the Children & Young People's Building Block which came into being in January 2008, and the development of the Lancashire Local Area Agreement which the LDLSP was required to consider in developing its Sustainable Community Strategy.

Six themes and a list of twenty priorities forming the framework for the Sustainable Community Strategy were agreed by the LDLSP Executive in February.

The completed Sustainable Community Strategy for the Lancaster District is expected to include:

- A 'Core' document setting the shared vision and strategic priorities for the Lancaster District (attached as Appendix A);
- A Performance Monitoring Framework (PMF) (currently under development) which will be refreshed annually and fully reviewed every three years. The PMF will include;
  - Priority Based targets which meet SMART requirements (Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic, and Timely)
  - An identified lead for each action
  - Identified Resources for each action where appropriate

The Process for delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy has four key components:

- A 'long-term' vision for the area, focusing on 'adding value' in achieving the shared outcomes that are agreed.
- An action plan identifying shorter-term objectives that will contribute to the achievement of long-term outcomes.
- A shared commitment to implement the action plan and proposals for doing so.

- Arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the action plan, for periodically reviewing the Strategy, and for reporting progress to local communities.

#### 4.6.3 **Second Homes Funding**

During the past year, the LDLSP has managed and distributed a second homes fund of £358,500 so called because it is income that is generated from the aggregate council tax levied by the City Council and the County Council upon people who own second homes within the district.

The City Council has an agreement with Lancashire County Council that this fund should be allocated to the LDLSP to deliver the priorities identified within the Community Strategy.

#### **Projects funded by the LSP during 2007/08 include;**

- Voluntary and Community Sector Engagement Project
- Lancaster Climate Change Advice Centre
- Alcohol Related Harm Reduction Project
- Parenting and Parent Support Project
- Territorial Tensions Amongst Young People
- Changing Lives/Engaging Employers
- Accident Prevention Project

In addition £25,000 was made available for a new fund called the Community Grants Fund. These grants were administered on behalf of the LDLSP by the Lancaster District Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) and can be used to assist groups in the district to undertake small projects (up to a value of £2,000) that enable people to take part in community activities. Some of the groups who have benefited from grants this year include;

- Over Kellet Playgroup
- Bridge Road Allotment Association
- Hindu Society
- Bolton Le Sands Village Hall
- Lonsdale District Scout Group
- Torrisholme Cricket Club
- Marsh Community Centre

### 4.7 **COMMUNICATIONS**

#### 4.7.1 **Media**

##### *Positive coverage*

Council generated publicity achieved an equivalent advertising rate, in the local papers alone, of almost £272,545.80, up £22,000 on the previous year. The number of media enquiries responded to, and press releases issued, remained similar to last

year's figures of 1,288 and 420 respectively. The team has recently absorbed responsibility for issuing Platform and Dome releases and managing media enquiries. In addition the team negated a number of potentially negative press articles.

#### *Media survey results*

A survey of the media has been carried out and reveals the city council press office is highly efficient, being rated more highly than any other public sector press office in the district, and media satisfaction with the quality of council news and response rates is also high.

#### *Website*

The news provision via the council website also continues to be one of the most popular website sections with the public and has once again has received maximum points in an independent assessment carried out via the annual SOCITIM survey. The communications manager also forms part of the editorial group responsible for the overall development of the entire site and its achievements.

#### *Media training*

Services are now being offered bespoke training courses to raise awareness of the media and how to promote their activities. Elected Members and officers have taken part in media training this year, with another course taking place in the near future. In addition, the Communications Officer has run media awareness training with Democratic Services and will be running a similar session with other services over the coming year.

### **4.7.2 Campaigns**

2007/8 has seen the Communications Team continue to support City Contract (Direct) Services and Environmental Health with the "Putting Litter in its Place" Campaign. Notable successes have included:

- Tens of thousands of pounds worth of free publicity
- The "Putting Litter in its Place" survey found that the majority of respondents know about the penalties for dropping litter.
- A competition to promote a reduction in smoking-related litter following the introduction of the ban on smoking in public places. The competition, which embraced the use of new technology, attracted nearly 300 entries.
- A relaunched programme of deep cleans known as 'Street Pride'. The first took place in Heysham in the first week in April and I am particularly pleased that with ward member support, a further 20 have been programmed for the coming year. The Communications Team has worked closely with CC(D)S to promote the scheme.

### **4.7.3 Council Magazine**

The findings of a reader survey conducted last spring reinforce the positive feedback the council receives about YOUR District Council MATTERS [YDCM]

- 95% of respondent believe YDCM is value for money
- 87% rate it as good or excellent, 8% rate it as fair, 2% as poor
- 81% believe the frequency of publication is about right, with 14% stating it is not frequent enough



- Most popular articles/topics were: Environmental Issues (73.1%), followed by what's on and where to go (68.5%), planning issues (54%) crime reduction (50.3%) and sport & leisure (43.1%)
- Least popular articles/topics were: Housing benefit advice (10.2%) and business news (19.3%)

The editorial team have reflected these views in the past two issues. Demand for articles in the magazine from services and partners continues to outstrip the space available and in addition, the latest issue featured a competition which received the highest ever response rate.

In the coming year, the Council has made budgetary provision for one page in each issue of YDCM to be devoted to giving public information about the Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership.

#### **4.7.4 Externally funded project work**

The team is required to find funding for one of its posts (approximately £23,000 per annum) and this is done by providing a range of public relations and marketing support to council projects in receipt of external funding. Projects supported this year include:

Cycling Demonstration Town (CDT)  
Economic Development Zone  
Luneside East  
Sustainability Partnership

This work provides an income to the council and also means that these projects are promoted in accordance with the council's own communications policies, ensuring the council is involved and gets the credit for the work it is doing.

#### **4.7.5 Consultation**

One of council's key objectives is to improve the way it consults with those who live and work within the district, particularly those groups and individuals who are described as 'hard to reach'.

To support this aim the council has recently appointed a Consultation Officer, whose overarching role is to co-ordinate the council's approach to this activity, in turn delivering a more consistent and joined-up approach.

As well as leading on the development and delivery of corporate consultations, such as on the corporate priorities, she has also:

- developed a new consultation section on the council's website (to be launched in April)
- developed an in-house help guide and provided in-house training in the new consultation system (to be launched in April)
- updated the list of people registered for consultations
- begun development of an annual corporate consultation plan which will publicly list all the council's planned consultations.
- re-established a county-wide group of consultation officers to share best practice and related information

In addition she is working with services, offering a range of support, including advice, guidance and training in planning consultations; support with the new consultation

software and web page; sharing information including national consultations, best practice and contacts and identifying opportunities for joint/partnership working across the council and with other organisations. To help achieve this more joined-up approach to consultation, she has also established a Consultation group who will champion consultation in their service areas.

#### **4.7.6 Print, Design and Distribution**

The Communications Team recommended a review of the council's approach to print, design and distribution. This has resulted in the introduction of a new print and design policy which will ensure the council receives better value for money for its printed materials. The new approach is being closely monitored.

In addition the review of council-wide distribution methods, recommended and supported by the Communications team, has resulted in a change of postal delivery supplier following a tendering process.

#### **4.7.7 Corporate identity**

Council policies regarding corporate identity have been strengthened, resulting in increased use of and appearance of the council's identity, in turn making it clearer to customers who the provider is, and raising the council's profile still further.

#### **4.7.8 Internal Communications**

The Communications Team leads on all internal communications issues.

This year it has given particular support and focus to two major issues - Fair Pay and Access to Services - ensuring staff are kept informed and where appropriate, are involved in the process.

The results of the recent Employee Survey demonstrate that these internal communications channels are working well. Despite being a time of great uncertainty for staff, overall stress levels have fallen over the past two years and are well below the national average.

The council's intranet has been identified as the staff's preferred internal communications channel. It is also cost effective. Internal audit has recommended the intranet be re-developed. Work on this project is already under way, and will be further progressed in the coming year.

#### **4.7.9 *Conclusion on the work of the Communications Team***

The corporate communications team continues to deliver high quality customer-focussed and value for money services. This year's achievements reflect this focus and with a review of council-wide communications and marketing activities on the agenda for the coming year, the team expects to identify yet more opportunities for the council to deliver in affordable and cost effective ways the communication services its customers require.

#### 4.8 THE LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE VISION BOARD

4.8.1 As Leader of the Council, I have represented the Council on the Lancaster and Morecambe Vision Board [The Vision Board] as its Vice Chairman, and have chaired meetings of the Board in the absence of the Chairman. This has helped me to take an overview of several aspects of the City Council's role in the regeneration of the District.

4.8.2 In particular, the past year has witnessed the creation of a new Economic Strategy Board under my Chairmanship which brings together officers of the Economic Development Service in meetings with the Chief Executive, the Corporate Director for Regeneration and the holders of the Regeneration Portfolios for Lancaster and for Morecambe.

4.8.3 The Vision Board itself has extended its membership following public advertisement, has overseen the development of a major transport investigation by consultants Faber Maunsell, has progressed a number of the projects identified in the published "Vision" document as subsequently adopted as one of the City Council's strategy documents, and through meetings with Council members and by press releases, it has made its role and activities more widely known to Councillors and to the public. Member involvement in the activities of the Vision Board has risen during the year, and I can report that the Transport Steering Group [responsible for monitoring the Faber Maunsell project] has extended its membership to include one member from each political group.

#### 4.9 COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (CPA) SUCCESS

The objective here is that the Council continues to improve - and external assessment has validated that improvement.

4.9.1 Lancaster City Council's continued improvement and achievements have been recognised by The Audit Commission which has rated the council as a '**good**' authority – the second best category out of five. The inspection took place in October 2007 with the inspection report and score made public in February 2008.

4.9.2 The report recognised that the council has made impressive progress since it was last inspected in 2003, (when it was rated as 'fair'), and that it can be proud of its "significant achievements" including leading the physical, social and economic regeneration of the district.

4.9.3 The report also highlighted the council's "clear and challenging vision for its communities". Inspectors took the view that our plans and ambitions to regenerate the district are "impressive" and are helping to narrow the gap between the district's most deprived communities and its areas of affluence.

4.9.4 The council's strengthened financial capacity and improved financial position was also praised, with inspectors reporting that the council is well managed financially, maximises funding opportunities, exceeds efficiency targets and delivers adequate value for money. This has seen the council well placed to support the delivery of our future priorities.

4.9.5 The report also recognises that there are areas where the council can improve and the recommendations will be taken forward in the development of service business plans to ensure continued improvement.

4.9.6 Among the achievements noted by the report are:

- Regeneration of the district with the attraction of £54 million in external funding
- A strong focus on preserving the district's heritage by working with partners to refurbish buildings including the Midland Hotel and the Storey Institute
- The success of Neighbourhood Management in Poulton and the West End of Morecambe, where the Council engages well with residents.
- Improvement in recycling rates
- Use of leisure facilities to encourage exercise and healthy eating
- Good use of the Cycling Demonstration Town project to enhance cycling facilities and encourage more people to go by bike
- Impressive Service Performance improvement
- A significant contribution to reducing crime and fear of crime through work with partners on the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
- Significant improvements to housing services with tenant satisfaction increasing from 63.5 per cent to 79.6 per cent.
- The success of the anti-litter action plan, 'Putting Litter in Its Place', which has had a positive impact on the overall cleanliness of the district.
- Strong improvement in the benefits service, resulting in improved user satisfaction.

4.9.7 The CPA reassessment occurred during my tenure as Leader of the Council, but in view of the visit by the inspectors from the Audit Commission having taken place at a time when the new Cabinet was just beginning to find its feet, it is fair to say that the successful outcome is a reflection of the work carried out by the Administration led by my predecessor, former Councillor Ian Barker, rather than an achievement I can claim as my own.

## **5 CONCLUSION**

Finally, I would like to record my thanks to my Cabinet colleagues and to the Council's officers for their support during the occasionally difficult period since the election in May 2007. Despite the doubts held by many that a PR Cabinet containing five political Groups could ever achieve enough harmony to reach decisions, I am pleased to place on record my view that during the past year, the groups have worked well together, and cabinet members have successfully grown into their portfolios despite initial uncertainties.

## **EXECUTIVE MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT**

### **COUNCILLOR EVELYN ARCHER, CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROPERTY SERVICES AND JOINT PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR REGENERATION**



#### **ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08**

#### **EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP:**

- Cabinet
- Lancaster and Morecambe Markets Committee
- Morecambe Retail, Commercial and Tourism Cabinet Liaison Group
- Planning Policy Cabinet Liaison Group
- Transport Cabinet Liaison Group

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

- LGA Coastal Issues Special Interest Group
- Morecambe Bay Partnership
- Winning Back the West End Steering Group

#### **OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Property Services and joint Portfolio Regeneration – Coastal Works and Special Interest in Morecambe.

#### **CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITY OUTCOMES:**

To regenerate the West End of Morecambe.  
Reduce the risk of flooding from the sea.

#### **PROGRESS DURING 2007/08**

#### **PROPERTY SERVICES**

#### **EXECUTIVE REPORT ON PROPERTY MATTERS AS AT MARCH 2008**

- An increase in the Repair and Maintenance budget for 2007/08 from £501k to £571k enables management of R&M more efficiently and reduces future backlog repairs.

- The Customer Service Centres to both Morecambe and Lancaster Town Halls were successfully completed within 2007/8. A major scheme was also undertaken to install air conditioning in the computer annexe, and both schemes used the Councils own LAMP procedure for planning control and co-ordination. Both projects were successfully completed within time quality and budget to the Client's satisfaction.
- The Accommodation Review has been approved by the Council. This review identifies the total number of staff to be housed within both Morecambe and Lancaster Town Halls in the most effective way using modern office techniques.
- Backlog repairs: From a backlog repairs survey completed in 2005, a five year repairs programme has been compiled. Although the first year spend on backlog repairs is valued at £1.756m, due to lack of funding only £300k has been released towards the works – this is a concern in due of the urgent nature of the works, particularly electrical works in some buildings.
- Much work has also taken place regarding energy efficiency and the replacement of the boilers at Morecambe Town hall has seen significant reductions in consumption of energy. This should be continued as the review of accommodation takes place.
- 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 2008/09. Conversely, the Charter Market has been particularly successful in expanding and becoming a much improved draw for shoppers in Lancaster.
- Capital receipts have proved difficult to achieve during the past year and this has become a problem for funding the capital programme. As the Council's valuable assets are reduced in number the use of capital receipts in the future will become even more difficult. Development opportunities need to be considered and this leads to contentious potential disposals such as the sale of land at Scotforth Road, Lancaster.
- Work has continued on major schemes such as the Lancaster's Canal Corridor and Morecambe's Promenade development schemes and planning applications will need to be considered for both during the coming year.
- A further major scheme has arisen with the potential development of new stadium facilities for Morecambe Football Club following their successful promotion to the Football League. This could provide needed capital receipts whilst adding considerably to the provision of sports facilities in the district.

## **MORECAMBE – REGENERATION ACTIVITY.**

### **The renovation of the Grade II\* listed Midland Hotel.**

Leading project of the Morecambe Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)  
 'Conservation-led regeneration' focus.

Urban Splash (developers) are receiving nearly £5m of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (through the THI) and the North West Development Agency.

'Urban Splash Hotels' has been set up to operate the hotel.  
Due to re-open its doors on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2008.

[www.lancaster.gov.uk/morecambethi](http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/morecambethi) / [www.midlandhotelmorcambe.co.uk](http://www.midlandhotelmorcambe.co.uk)

### **Morecambe Townscape Heritage Initiative 2: A View for Eric**

The Council is bidding for a second phase of THI for the town.

The proposal focuses on the Western end of the Morecambe Conservation Area, concentrating on the renovation of properties along the seafront and just behind.

The Council received a Stage One pass in October 2007 and is currently developing the Stage 2 proposal for submission October 2008. Full HLF approval for the project is anticipated in early 2009. The five year scheme should therefore hopefully commence in April 2009 and finish in March 2014.

[www.lancaster.gov.uk/viewforeric](http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/viewforeric)

### **Central Promenade Site Re-development**

The proposal for the 7.5ha City Council owned site adjacent to the Midland Hotel follows Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 17: Morecambe Central Promenade Development Brief (2005).

Urban Splash are the Council's preferred developer to bring the site forward. The proposal is for a mixed-use development of the site which will include a number of high quality public realm spaces, including 'Seaside Square' which is proposed to be delivered in advance of the development to support the opening of the Midland. An outline planning application and a full application for the first phase of works is currently being finalised. The site is anticipated to be delivered in four phases, completing in 2015. Urban Splash currently anticipate the cost of such development to be in the region of £70m and are working in partnership with the City Council and the North West Development Agency to find funding solutions for the scheme.

Small amount of additional information available at:

[www.lancaster.gov.uk/midlandhotel](http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/midlandhotel)

### **Town and Country Planning Act (1990) Section 215**

In November 2006, after an officer interview with 'The Visitor' on the back of THI 1, the newspaper ran a public vote to ask whether people thought that the Council should force property owners to tidy up their properties in Morecambe. 95% answered in favour of this route of action.

To continue the good work of the THI and to keep the momentum of property improvements going (to hopefully be picked up again by THI2) planning compliance officers have been investigating properties in central Morecambe, with Marine Road Central the first group of properties targeted. Officers are looking into both whether the property or land is deemed to adversely affect the amenity of the surrounding area or where there has been a breach of planning eg. non-authorized works implemented.

This is the first time the Council will have used its planning powers under Section 215 in a pro-active manner.

It is anticipated that should this be successful, the process will be rolled out for other streets / areas in central Morecambe.

### **Fisherman's Square, Poulton**

This brownfield site is currently being turned into an attractive square reflecting the site's maritime links to provide some much needed open space in the heart of Poulton.

The Square will enhance other regeneration activity in the area, including the renovation of the seven terraced townhouses to the top of the Square delivered as part of the THI 1 programme and the re-development of the Grade II listed Art and Technical College into residential apartments.

The project is complementary to the award-winning 'Homezone' initiative.

Funding for the scheme has been gained from the City Council, the NWDA's Single Regeneration Budget, Section 106 (Planning Gain) monies from the re-development of the Former Art and Technical College and Poulton Neighbourhood Management. The works are due to be completed in Summer 2008.

### **Mixed use re-development of the former Frontierland amusement park (Marine Road West)**

Phase One – retail development including Next, Homebase and JJB Sports. The first two units opened in March 2008.

Phase Two – still in pre-application stage. Current proposal includes 210 2-bed apartments, 47 3-bed houses, 80 bed hotel and a pub/restaurant. Timescales as yet unknown.

### **West End Promenade (proposed)**

This 1,150m stretch of promenade lies between the Battery and the Midland Hotel. The upgrading of this important area of public realm would both create improved links between the West End and central Morecambe / Poulton and support the recently improved West End Gardens and the soon to be opened Midland Hotel.

External funding is currently being sought for this project which will determine whether it can be delivered and when.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION**

### **Lancaster & Morecambe Economic Development Zone (EDZ)**

The Lancaster & Morecambe Economic Development Zone is the largest single regeneration programme run by the City Council, and is now in its final year, due for completion in December 2008.

By that date, it will have drawn in over £16 million of external funding, including £8 million from the Europe Union, for major regeneration projects in this district. It will have been a major achievement for a District Council of Lancaster's size to have successfully developed and managed a regeneration programme of this scale and it



has required considerable dedication and ingenuity by officers to deal with changes in external funding and other unforeseen circumstances to keep the programme on track and bring forward contingency schemes where necessary

Port of Heysham. Through the EDZ programme, the Council was able to construct an access road and services to open up a 2.5 Ha industrial site at the Port for development. Plots were sold off in two phases, and the high level of demand demonstrated that the scheme was meeting an urgent need by local businesses wanting to purchase land for their own expansion. Plots were sold via development agreements, which imposed a requirement that the purchasers must complete construction works within a specified period. This has ensured that the sites have all been developed quickly, and the last year has seen the completion of construction works by all of the five businesses that have located there. The completed scheme will support over 200 new and safeguarded jobs.

### **West End ERDF Action Plan – West End Gardens**

The City Council has also been managing a smaller European (ERDF) funding programme in the West End of Morecambe. This is now nearing completion and is due to formally end in June 2008. The programme has drawn in around £900,000 of European and other external funding into the District's most deprived area. The most significant achievement during this last year has been the completion of the West End Promenade Gardens project, which has engaged local schools in designing public artworks and produced a highly successful new facility for residents and visitors alongside Morecambe's promenade.

### **Lancaster & Morecambe Vision**

In 2006 and following an extensive period of consultation, the Council agreed to adopt Lancaster & Morecambe Vision, produced by the Vision Board, as its economic strategy.

Following on from this, a wide range of project ideas have been worked up and were submitted in autumn 2007 to Lancashire Economic Partnership for incorporation into their "refresh" of the Lancashire Economic Strategy Action Plan. This is a key part of the process to secure additional NWDA funding for 2008/09 onwards.

The total funding sought for the three year period 2008 to 2011 is over £40 million although the final funding available is likely to be less than this and may be phased over a longer period.

Specific projects being developed under the Vision include:

- Central Park (Morecambe West End)
- Strengthening the West End Retail Core
- Co-op building (Morecambe West End)
- West End promenade improvements
- Seaside Square public realm project (adjacent to Midland Hotel)
- Winter Gardens project development
- Development of a visitor attractions strategy to support future funding bids in central Morecambe
- Dukes Theatre Capital Development (phase 1)
- Market Square public realm improvements (Lancaster)
- Development of a heritage investment strategy to support future funding bids in Lancaster

- Middleton Re-use/Re-cycle Park feasibility study

In addition, a key piece of work commissioned by the Vision Board is now nearing completion. This is the transportation study undertaken by consultants Faber Maunsell. The findings of this work are expected in spring 2008 and will provide recommendations on a suite of integrated transport solutions for the District to ease congestion, improve access and movement, and enhance public transport.

The Council's management arrangements to support its role as accountable body for the vision programme are also now in place. A cross-service approach to risk assessment and project appraisal has been established and is working well.

### **Business Development Scheme**

The Business Development Scheme provides grant support for job creation by local businesses. During 2007/08 the scheme has supported six businesses with grants totaling £21,533 and 14 jobs have been created or safeguarded in the nine months to end of December 2007.

A review of the Scheme was conducted in October 2007 and its findings showed that a total of 54 businesses had been assisted under the Scheme since April 2000, and that 271 jobs had been created or safeguarded. Of total grant expenditure of £193,000, 84% had been met from external funders.

### **COASTAL DEFENSES**

Construction of Phases 6 of Morecambe Coastal Works and the introduction of sand and cobbles beaches along Morecambe frontage mark the end of the comprehensive improvements to Morecambe Coastal Protection started in 1989.

Phase 6 provides protection for a mile of promenade from of the Battery to Whynnysty Lane with rock armour protection to the sea wall and the construction of two large breakwaters each with individual features. One incorporates a fishing jetty and the other has an innovative scheme to create bird feeding habitat on its seaward side. Additional features have been added to the promenade to provide interest including a climbing traverse at Sunny slopes and a water feature for the summer months at the Battery.

85 thousand tonnes of sand and 20 thousand tonnes of cobbles have been place on beaches to improve the coastal defences from Scalestones point to the Battery creating 15 acres of beach.

The cost of the latest works at £13.77m brings the total for all the works to nearly £30m.

### **Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2)**

Work is about to commence on the consultation stage of the revised SMP which will determine future policy for the management of the coastal strip along our frontage. DEFRA is funding the work but only as part of a comprehensive contract from Llandudno to the Scottish border.

Blackpool Council is managing the contract on behalf of all the coastal authorities and SMP2 is planned to be completed by 2010.

The SMP2 is non statutory but is expected by central government to be adopted by local authorities and used to assist planning policies.

**CONCLUSION:**

The portfolios I am responsible for have seen lots of positive achievements in the last year.

The Customer Service Centres to both Morecambe and Lancaster Town Halls were successfully completed.

There is evidence all round the Poulton and West End areas' that the regeneration of Morecambe is well underway. Shops of quality are beginning to re-establish themselves along the Promenade, and with the success of a further THI bid it will give us the opportunity to carry out further renovation of properties along the seafront in the Western End of the Conservation Area.

Other exciting achievement during this last year has been the opening of the new West End Promenade Gardens and completion of Phases 6 of Morecambe Coastal Works with the introduction of sand and cobbles beaches along Morecambe frontage.

I am looking forward to the continuing regeneration of the town including the re-opening of the Midland Hotel, which is so important for Morecambe

I want to take this opportunity to thank Officers whose help has been invaluable to me in my first year as Cabinet Member.

## **EXECUTIVE MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT**

### **COUNCILLOR JUNE ASHWORTH, CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CITY COUNCIL (DIRECT) SERVICES, ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT AND LICENSING**



#### **ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08**

#### **EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP:**

- Cabinet
- Climate Change Cabinet Liaison Group
- Morecambe Retail, Commercial and Tourism Cabinet Liaison Group
- Recycling Cabinet Liaison Group

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

- British Resorts Association
- LGA Tourism Forum
- LSP Sustainability Partnership

#### **OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Joint Portfolio for City Contract (Direct) Services with Special Interest in Enforcement  
Joint Economic Environment Portfolio with Special Interest in Employment Opportunities and Tourism in Morecambe  
Licensing (including enforcement)

#### **CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITY OUTCOMES**

Cleaner streets and public open spaces.  
Reduce waste in the district by recycling and re-use.

#### **PROGRESS DURING 2007/08**

This report covers the 3 main areas of activity within my Cabinet responsibilities, namely, Employment and Tourism in Morecambe, Licensing, and Enforcement. Each of these has a separate section which outlines achievements in the year and also gives a flavour of what you can expect in the near future. Wherever possible, I have tried to avoid any overlap with my Cabinet colleagues but fear on occasions this might have happened.

## **Tourism/Economic Development**

### **Promotion & Marketing**

The last year did not see any growth in local tourism, probably due to poor summer weather, low cost flights to overseas destinations, and no new attractions opening locally. In order to improve the marketing of the resort, in addition to the usual holiday brochure, a concerted campaign to increase electronic marketing and use of the internet was undertaken. A new Website, [www.citycoastcountryside.co.uk](http://www.citycoastcountryside.co.uk) was launched in 2007 and this has averaged 12,000 unique visits per month during the year. This website was “Highly Commended” at the Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board’s Excellence in Tourism awards and the tourism team was again nominated in the LETS awards in the Tourism Team of the Year category. A student placement, funded by the LRTI, has been very beneficial for the team and he assisted with the website and with research. In addition, a CD entitled “Morecambe – Changing Times” has just been launched which is a fantastic advert for the resort and sets out how it has changed over recent years to become a key visitor destination and excellent place to live.

The tourism team continues to provide an effective promotion and marketing function. They have attended two travel trade shows and been involved in national and regional tourism meetings through membership of the Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board, the British Resorts and Destinations Association, Destination Performance UK and have been involved in Tourism Together (the new national public sector tourism umbrella body). The team has also been involved in discussions about a Regional Park for Morecambe Bay, has had input to the Lancashire and Cumbria Rail Utilisation Strategy and has been involved with the Vision Board’s working groups, particularly the heritage marketing group and the transport group.

The direct mail marketing campaigns have been successful, with over 10,000 responses over the first 12 months, and business support has been given to local hotels including the Midland Hotel. Marketing conversion research is being undertaken to look at the proportion of enquiries that are turned into bookings.

### **Performance and Achievements**

Destination Benchmarking research, undertaken every 2 years, was received in 2007 and trends have been identified. Trends were also reported from the annual STEAM (value and volume of tourism) research and this showed that the value of tourism to the district in 2006 was £224.75 million (-1%), the volume was 4.62 million visitors (-3%) and supported over 4,000 local jobs. Figures for 2007 are expected by late spring in 2008.

The redesigned Morecambe Visitor Information Centre was officially reopened by the Mayor in January, 2007 and handled some 69,000 visitors and a total of 99,000 enquiries throughout the year. New, more accurate people counters have been installed. In total, the two TICs handled 210,000 enquiries in 2007 and had a gross income of £293,000 (+16% over 2006). The experience of refurbishing the Morecambe VIC has proved to be very valuable for the tendering process for the new Lancaster VIC which is due to open at the beginning of 2009. A contribution of 50% of the costs of the new Lancaster VIC has been secured from the LBTB and NWDA.

Recent investments in Morecambe have seen improvements that are starting to bear the fruits of increased visitors into Morecambe and the District, in particular: -

- **Coastal Defences**  
The completion of Phases 6 and 7 of the coastal defence works and the restructured Sandylands Promenade provide an extension to the landscaped promenade walkways.
- **Festivals & Events**  
The high quality and varied range of events promoted and supported by the council through the Festivals Innovation Fund continues to provide entertainment for visitors and residents alike. (Heritage Gala Weekend, Kite Festival and Tutti Frutti to name a few)
- **West End Gardens**  
This new development, managed by the council and financed from European funds, includes a performance plaza, a viewing platform, 3 separate play areas, interactive water fountains, public art works, picnic areas, and landscaped areas. These are soon to be enhanced by the provision of a quality café and new public toilets in 2008. And ... as a first for the district, an outdoor Ice Rink facility available to the public free of charge over Xmas !
- **Employment Developments**  
The area around Morrisons in particular, continues to develop providing welcome job opportunities. Recently we have seen Next and Sainsbury's Homebase open. Shortly there will be a new JJB presence on the site. These, coupled with the Midland Hotel opening in the summer, and the redevelopment of Yorkshire Street, will revitalise the seafront and promenade retail areas.

## **The Future**

The message that Morecambe is changing and leading the transformation of coastal resorts is clearly getting around. To maintain this momentum further, there are plans and £7m funding in place through the Lancaster and Morecambe Vision Board regeneration strategy to create a new Central Park for Morecambe's West End, redevelopment of the Retail Core, and the renovation of the old Co-op building. In addition the Council has been awarded and allocated funds for the further development of Regent Park, more work on the Morecambe Shop Front improvements and other play area improvements.

Other plans to renovate and reopen the Winter Gardens, the second phase of the Morecambe Townscape Heritage programme – "A view for Eric", and the Central Promenade Redevelopment site adjacent to the Midland, all offer further encouragement that Morecambe is becoming a revitalised coastal resort with good job prospects and new visitor destinations.

## **Licensing**

### **Gambling Act 2005**

The Gambling Act 2005 came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2007. Under this legislation the Council is now responsible for the licensing of various types of gambling premises including betting shops, adult gaming centres, family entertainment centres, bingo establishments along with betting held at tracks. The Act has introduced a number of complex regulations that have caused difficulties for officers in their interpretation. For example, there are new rules regarding the sub-division of gambling premises where defined non-gambling areas must be shown. As this piece of legislation is relatively new, there is little to report at this stage.

### **Hackney Carriage and Private Licensing**

A new Taxi Liaison Group (TLG) has been formed which consists of representation from the main taxi companies, the police, the highways authority and the council's licensing officers. The aims of the TLG are to develop and maintain an effective liaison between these groups in order to improve service amongst all the partners in the group. An example of the benefits of the TLG is the proposed implementation of a structured training scheme for new taxi drivers. A pilot training scheme is being run in March/April 2008, and in the coming months it is planned to implement such training for all new drivers. Also, through the workings of the TLG, effective lines of communications have been established. For example, the highways authority now circulates the taxi trade representatives with regular information regarding traffic hazards and road closures etc.

### **Performance**

The Licensing group is striving to continue to improve its efficiency and standard of services to customers. New performance indicators are being introduced to cover the number and frequency of inspections carried on licensed premises and taxis. The group is also responding to customer needs through the use of customer satisfaction surveys.

### **Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy 2007-10**

The Licensing group is a member of the Lancaster Alcohol Harm Reduction Partnership, and through its work in regulating licensed premises, the group has positively assisted in the delivery of certain action plans contained within the 3 year strategy.

### **Enforcement**

#### **Performance & Achievements**

If the Council is to make improvements in the standards of cleanliness throughout the area, then it must have an enforcement deterrent. Previously, the Council has had limited success in this area, but recently there have been significant improvements.

Noticeable improvements have been achieved in standards of street cleansing and the response times to reports of fly tipping, littering etc. Targets are being achieved with performance improving from 18 per cent of land with significant deposits of litter (2005/6) to 12.77% per cent in 2006/7. (It was 28% in 2004/5). Recorded incidents of fly tipping have reduced (by 40% from 2006/7) and responses to reported fly tipping have improved with removal taking place within one working day.

The Council's approach to tackling the national problem of fly tipping is based on a combination of enforcement, education and service delivery. The successful prosecution of a rogue trader took place this year. Over 80% of the fly tipping reported in this District consists of single black bags dumped in back streets in these cases it is often very difficult to find sufficient evidence to take formal enforcement action, generally because people are extremely conscious these days of issues like identity theft. To illustrate the efforts that Council officers and PCSOs are taking to tackle this problem, from July to December we sent out 365 warning letters to households that were suspected of dumping black bags or creating other environmental problems. We also gave face to face warnings to another 20 people suspected of fly tipping. Targeted enforcement, within existing capacity, combined with improved response times to remove fly tipping, provision of wheeled bins to householders, willingness of people to come forward and provide information, and campaigns to raise awareness of the problem, have led to a 40% decrease in the number of fly tipping incidents recorded in the district in 2006/7.

The Council contributes towards the cost of PCSOs in this District. All PCSOs are trained by the Council to deal with environmental offences such as fly tipping and littering.

When deterrents are ineffective, then action is needed and the statistics below show that the Council is strengthening its resolve to take action when offences take place, and fines and prosecutions have resulted when warnings have not been heeded.

To summarise, during 2007/8, there have been:

- 620 warning letters
- 2 section 47 Notices served to businesses in respect of trade waste
- 25 section 46 Notices served to householders in respect of litter bins/boxes
- 13 Fixed Penalty Notices issued for litter offences (Section 87 offences)
- 2 Fixed Penalty Notices issued for litter bins/boxes offences (Section 46 offences)
- 1 successful prosecution and another pending

## **The Future**

Whilst the above improvements are pleasing, there is still room for further improvements. I'm happy therefore, that the Council was able to agree proposals to increase the number of enforcement officers from 2008/9 onwards. Next year will see an additional 2 enforcement officers recruited to add to the one already in place. This positive action will undoubtedly ensure that the council is in a strong position to prosecute offenders wherever appropriate.



## **CONCLUSION**

Overall, I'm pleased that in my first year of Cabinet, discernable improvements have been made in the areas outlined above, and plans in place to continue that improvement. These achievements are largely due to the skill, energy, professionalism, and enthusiasm of the staff with whom I have worked with since May. To all those staff, I say a big thank you.

## EXECUTIVE MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT

### COUNCILLOR JON BARRY, CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CITY COUNCIL (DIRECT) SERVICES AND DEMOCRATIC AND LEGAL SERVICES

#### 1 INTRODUCTION



#### 2 EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP 2007/08

- Cabinet
- Lancaster and Morecambe Markets Committee
- Climate Change Cabinet Liaison Group
- Recycling Cabinet Liaison Group

#### 3 EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES etc

- Waste Management Strategy Steering Group

#### 4 OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES

Joint Portfolio for City Council (Direct) Services  
Democratic and Legal Services

##### **CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITY OUTCOMES:**

Cleaner streets and public open spaces.

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

To reduce the amount of energy used by both the Council and households across the district.

Reduce impact of climate change within the district.

To increase the awareness of equal opportunities and diversity issues.

**Cabinet Member end of year report- CCDS- highlights  
Waste / Recycling**

- Entered into new cost sharing arrangements
- Rolled out phase 5 of new waste collection arrangements. 55,000 households now on scheme. Remaining 6,000 will commence Sept 2009.
- Commenced collection of plastics as a recyclable item from 55,000 households.
- Expect to achieve a recycling figure of 30+% at 07/08 outturn and be a top quartile performer for low overall amount of waste collected.
- Starting to assess implications of collection of food waste as a separate item when new waste disposal facilities open in 2011
- Bulky Matters has reused / recycled over 50% of all bulky items collected

**Grounds Maintenance**

- Won Gold at Tatton show and now planning this year's entry
- Supported various 'in Bloom' entries
- Commenced playground refurbishment programme

**Cleansing**

- Completed review of street cleansing- efficiencies used to fund additional cleansing activity
- Noticeable improvement in standards of street cleansing and response to reports of flytipping, littering etc. Targets are being achieved with performance improving from 18 per cent of land with significant deposits of litter (2005/6) to 12.77% per cent in 2006/7. (It was 28% in 2004/5). Recorded incidents of fly tipping have reduced (by 40% in 2006/7) and responses to reported fly tipping have improved with removal within one working day.
- Introduction of different methods of street cleansing for different areas
- Carried out 20 deep cleans
- Worked with other local agencies on 'clean sweep'
- Launched schools competition
- Launched 'Street Pride' for 2008/9 to replace deep cleans
- Additional investment in enforcement for 2008/9
- Improved performance is reflected in resident satisfaction which has improved significantly in the last year (although it is still below average when compared with other councils).

**Public conveniences**

- In the calendar year of 2007 a total of 34,600 visitors paid to use the new Clock Tower and Arndale car park toilets
- Clock tower toilets open longer hours after requests from Poulton Neighbourhood Management to cater for night time economy
- Process to refurbish Happy Mount Park and Heysham toilets underway
- Improvements made to a number of existing toilets

## **General**

- Major reductions in sickness absence
- Customer service training for frontline staff
- New driver training programme in place
- Acknowledgement of improvement in CPA report
- The Council has improved its environmental services with 60 per cent of comparable performance indicators improving in the last three years. Access to street scene services is clear, through a single point of telephone contact. Service standards and information about street cleansing, sustainability and waste management is available to the public. (CPA report)

## **Legal Achievements**

The consolidation of the Licensing Section with Legal Services as one cohesive unit within Palatine Hall has benefited the provision of Legal Services for the Authority. Apart from legal advice being readily available to Licensing staff, the Planning Service have also benefited from having an "in house" solicitor accessible to them.

A recent Planning enforcement prosecution undertaken by the Service resulting in a substantial fine being imposed upon a national construction company.

The legal team continues to advise on all major projects encompassing such diverse schemes as the Canal Corridor Development, Chatsworth Gardens Housing Exemplar Scheme and the proposed relocation of Morecambe Football Club.

Local Land Charges continue to maintain their high standard of service and provide a 5 day turnaround for 99% of the applications presented to them"

## **Climate Change Cabinet Liaison Group**

The Climate Change Cabinet Liaison Group was set up in August 2006 to progress the Key Performance Indicators relating to Climate Change issues as set out in the City Council's Corporate Plan. The Liaison Group currently meets bi-monthly with extraordinary meetings where necessary.

In the municipal year 2007/08 the Climate Change Cabinet Liaison Group has committed its time and resources to the creation of an In-House Climate Change Strategy. This has involved meeting with Officers to discuss approaches to energy saving within corporate buildings and reducing the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of the vehicle fleet, amongst other issues.

## **Democratic Services – Achievements and Challenges in 2007/08**

A major event for the Service in 2007 was the District and Parish Elections in May. For the Elections office the implications of new legislation were still being addressed nationally right up to the event and whilst successful elections were achieved, it is clear that improvements to the administrative arrangements can be made. A rapid review of the arrangements took place in the summer/autumn of 2007 when it appeared that a General Election may be announced, but once that 'threat' was over and with some respite in 2008 when there are no scheduled elections in this District, a more considered review is now being pursued to put in place the necessary improvements to ensure that the Council is prepared for the next elections in 2009

and beyond, taking into account continued legislative changes. This is further complicated by the announcement that the Returning Officer at Lancaster will be responsible for running both the Morecambe and Lancaster Constituencies following the boundary changes to come into force at the next General Election.

The review of polling district required by the new Act was a substantial piece of work over the summer and through the autumn culminating in the publication of the new Register in December 2007. Other consultation exercises were also carried out during the year with a view to proposing the creation of a Heysham Parish Council. In the event the support from the public was insufficient to move forward with this at the present time, but it does seem as if progress is being made by the Department of Local Government and the Communities with the petition for a Morecambe Town Council and the Service is preparing itself for running the elections to this and for the preparatory work required in the run up to those elections.

Following the District elections in May the impact was felt in other parts of the Service too with efforts concentrated in particular on ensuring a comprehensive induction programme for new Councillors and opportunities for the further development of other Councillors. A Member Development Strategy has been adopted and in September the Service prepared the Council to apply for the North West Member Development Charter. Unfortunately this was not successful but this is not to say that the culture of Member Development in Lancaster has not made great strides forward. Many Councillors now have personal development plans and more recently the Elected Member page on the intranet has been expanded to provide a source of information to Councillors which is accessible at any time. A second attempt is to be made to gain Charter Status but whether or not this is successful the Service will continue to broaden the support available to Members and to address their needs whenever possible.

Also moving ahead has been the continued progress with the use of technology in committee management. All Councillors now have computer access to committee documents and other information and providing support to assist Members in making the best use of this system continues to be a major objective of the Service. Development of the committee management system for internal administration has also continued with the electronic publication of the Forward Plan and experimentation with using the system to monitor the implementation of decisions has also commenced. The Council Business Committee has also supported this progress by experimenting with 'paperless' meetings. These have proved successful so far and further trials will be undertaken in the drive to reduce the amount of paper used unnecessarily.

Members Services have continued with the programme of improving traditional civic events following the recommendations of the Civic Task Group and many of the proposals have now been implemented.

## EXECUTIVE MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT

### COUNCILLOR EILEEN BLAMIRE, CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, EMERGENCY PLANNING, PLANNING POLICY, CYCLING AND TRAVEL PLANS

#### INTRODUCTION



This has been an interesting year with different responsibilities. All the departments have worked well although there have been many challenges. I would like to thank all the people involved who have given me so much help and support.

#### EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP:

- Cabinet
- Lancaster and District Chamber Cabinet Liaison Group
- Planning Policy Cabinet Liaison Group
- Transport Cabinet Liaison Group

#### EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES etc:

- Lancashire Police Authority Partnerships Forum
- LSP Community Safety Strategy Executive
- LSP Community Safety Strategy Group

#### OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES:

##### PROGRESS DURING 2007/08

##### Community Safety

Government has placed upon the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) a stringent target to reduce crime by 16-19%. The key areas for the Lancaster District are alcohol related violent crime and criminal damage. Although the Partnership initially was not able to meet this target it is now in a position where it is on track to meet the target. The Partnership has received congratulations from Government on its ability to meet the target.

The Partnership has worked within a changing landscape over the past year and further changes are to come. Whilst the Partnership has been successful in meeting

the targets mentioned above from April 2008 a new Community Safety Plan should be in existence and new targets will be in place.

A number of projects have assisted in meeting the targets. Clean Sweeps where agencies have targeted key staff over a four week period have delivered co-ordinated action into prioritised areas.

Twenty new Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) have patrolled the district, helping to reduce antisocial behaviour and enhance the feeling of community safety. Ten of these have been part funded by the City Council.

A Multi Agency Problem Solving (MAPS) team is based in offices on Caton Road. The City Council's Community Safety Officer, Domestic Violence Co-ordinator and assistant are based in these offices. Other agencies involved are; Fire and Rescue, Youth Offending Team, Youth and Community Services.

City Council Officers 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 Clean Sweep. Revenues Services have found their link to Clean Sweeps particularly useful in reducing opportunities for benefit fraud.

Spend for the financial year 2007-2008 is on track with no underspend anticipated. The Partnership faces a further cut of 25% for the next financial year (further to this year's cut of 15%) through changes to funding systems.

The Domestic Violence Co-ordinator is on track to achieve good reductions against the Best Value targets around domestic violence. Information Sharing Protocols, a training and information pack, and directory of services are being produced. The Domestic Violence Co-ordinator will now move to enhancing City Council services around domestic abuse.

The district benefited from extra street lighting of over £66,000 (twice as much as last year) due to a successful bid from the CSP.

City Council Licensing continue to work on the Multi-Agency Licensing Team (MALT).

### **Civil Contingencies**

There have been a number of significant developments in the Civil Contingencies work area during the past year.

### **Emergency Planning**

- The Council's District Emergency Plan was fully revised and reissued in November 2007 and a new Flooding and Severe Weather plan introduced. Both were externally quality assured by the County Council Emergency Planning Service and Environment Agency respectively.
- The Council has participated in many 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 2007/08 included:
  - Exercise Argus – July – Terrorist Incident exercise aimed at local businesses – 64 people attended including 6 Council officers

- Exercise Denny – September – practical exercise on cleaning up after oil pollution conducted at Hest Bank – 4 Lancaster officers attended.
  - Exercise Conder – November – live Rest Centre exercise held at Salt Ayre sports centre, where 73 local residents volunteered to be ‘evacuees’. Over 20 Council staff participated.
  - Exercise Salvus – test of off site plan for SRM chemicals, Heysham. 4 Council officers participated.
  - Exercise Kent – test of off site plans for Heysham Power Station – 41 Council officers took part and the Council’s Emergency Control Centre in Lancaster Town Hall was opened and realistically operated.
  - Exercise Argent – coastal flooding exercise – 4 Council officers
- The Duty Emergency Incident Officer scheme started in November giving the Council a trained officer 24/7/365 to respond to emergencies where a Council presence is required. There are eight volunteer officers and three reserves and all have attended a two day Major Incident Management Course. They have also participated in many of the exercises above. 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.

### **Business Continuity:**

- All Council Services produced Business Continuity plans to meet an Audit Commission deadline in March 2007. These plans were tested at Exercise Brantbeck in Lancaster Town Hall in September and the learning from that exercise and the recent IT and Telephony breakdown is being incorporated in a revision of the plans.
- A Business Continuity software system has been purchased to assist the maintenance of Emergency Contact details for staff and the rapid activation of plans. This will be gradually introduced from April onwards.
- The Civil Contingencies Officer has been working with Wyre Borough Council for one day per month (costs recovered) to assist their production of Business Continuity plans. There have been spin off benefits in that some of Wyre’s plans have assisted the revision of Lancaster’s.

### **Cycling**

Some facts regarding our Cycling Demonstration Town (CDT) project:

- Over 430 children have received national standard training (to date)
- 15 km of new/improved cycle routes
- Over 300 new cycle parking spaces installed
- Over 280 adults have taken part in some form of training session
- 2007 – average 4,750 individual visits to celebratingcycling.org every month
- Opening up of the Promenade, Morecambe to cycling and associated works to link Greenway and Heysham
- A 7.2% increase in cycle trips year on year 2006 to 2007.

### **Planning**

The City Council’s Local Development Framework has recently undergone the Examination in Public of its Core Strategy, and was the first in the North West Region to do so.



A bid for a second Townscape Heritage Initiative for Morecambe got through to the second stage this year. This, together with proactive enforcement will make a further successful contribution to regenerate improvements on the central Promenade in Morecambe.

Performance in determining planning applications has remained constantly above the Government's targets which reflect the Government's new intentions to relate Planning Delivery Grant in future to the Council's plan making activities.

The Service will deal with a number of major planning applications and pre-application negotiations this year. These relate to –

- The Canal Corridor North
- Central Promenade, Morecambe
- Frontierland
- Bailrigg Science Park

These will present an exciting challenge for Members and Officers alike.

The Building Control section will be restructured this year to adapt to its changing business environment and address the issues of reducing income which slowed down from last year as a reaction to the change in interest rate rises.

## **EXECUTIVE MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT**

### **COUNCILLOR ABBOTT BRYNING, CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR EMPLOYMENT, OPPORTUNITIES AND TOURISM IN LANCASTER AND REGENERATION**

#### **INTRODUCTION**



#### **EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP:**

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

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

- Groundwork Trust, Lancashire West
- Lancashire Economic Partnership
- Lancaster Regeneration Partnership
- North and West Lancs Priority 1 Action Plan Partnership Board
- Storey Centre for Creative Industries

#### **OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Joint Economic Environment Portfolio with Special Interest in Employment Opportunities and Tourism in Lancaster

Joint Portfolio for Regeneration with Special Interest in Lancaster

#### **CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITY OUTCOMES:**

To make best use of European ERDF and other funding within the Economic Development Zone to provide new and refurbished individual and commercial space.

#### **ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2007/08**

##### **Tourism Matters**

The direct mail marketing campaigns have been successful, with over 10,000 responses over the first 12 months, and business support has been given to local hotels/restaurants including The Borough and the Penny Street Bridge in Lancaster.

It has been pleasing to see the refurbishment and opening of hotels in Lancaster city centre over the past 12 months.

The existing TIC in Lancaster received 81,000 visitors in 2007 and handled 111,000 total enquiries. New, more accurate people-counters have been installed in both TICs. In total, they handled 210,000 enquiries in 2007 and had a gross income of £293,000 (+16% over 2006). The experience of refurbishing the Morecambe Visitor Information Centre (VIC) has proved to be very valuable for preparing the brief and during the tendering process for the new Lancaster VIC which is due to open at the beginning of 2009. A contribution of 50% of the costs of the new Lancaster VIC has been secured from the LBTB and NWDA. There has been close co-operation with the Storey Board and with the Storey Arts group. A contract for the final design and fit-out of the new Lancaster VIC is expected to be signed in April 2008.

### **Planning Matters**

The City Council's Local Development Framework has recently (March) undergone the Examination in Public of its Core Strategy and is the first Authority in the North West Region to do so.

It was anticipated that the regeneration scheme of Luneside East would pass into the hands of the private sector development partner this year, but there are delays due to land transaction problems. There will be challenges associated with balancing the requirements of the reserved matters applications, the development agreement and current market forces.

The Service has been dealing with major planning applications relating to the Canal Corridor North proposals by Centros. This will be a scheme of major significance to the Council. New proposals are also emerging for Kingsway South and the Service was involved in pre-master-planning negotiations.

The Service has been working closely with Cultural Services and Economic Development and Tourism Services to derive the greatest benefit from funding opportunities to exploit Lancaster's Heritage Tourism potential. This might also dovetail with emerging demands to introduce a scheme of city centre management.

The Lancaster Science Park at Bailrigg will also be the subject of revised planning proposals in the new year with a view to overcoming the current highway constraints.

### **Economic Development and Regeneration**

Regeneration projects for the whole district have been principally dependent upon external capital funds sourced by intensive and successful bidding to Government, Europe, SRB, NWDA, national lotteries and specialist agencies, together with City contributions when available.

#### **Lancaster and Morecambe Economic Development Zone (EDZ)**

The Lancaster and Morecambe Economic Development Zone is the largest single regeneration programme run by the City Council and is now in its final year, due for completion in December 2008.

By that date, it will have drawn in over £16 million of external funding, including £8 million from the European Union, for major regeneration projects in this district. It will have been a major achievement for a District Council of Lancaster's size to have successfully developed and managed a regeneration programme of this scale and it has required considerable dedication and ingenuity by officers to deal with changes in external funding and other unforeseen circumstances to keep the programme on track and bring forward contingency schemes where necessary.

Progress with the individual projects in the EDZ over the last year is as follows:

**Luneside East** - this is the "flagship" scheme of the EDZ and will provide over 330 new houses and 8,000 sq m of new workspace in an exciting mixed use development on Lancaster's historic riverside. The last year has seen the Council complete acquisition of the whole site, following the successful conclusion of a Compulsory Purchase inquiry. Enabling works, including demolition of the gasholder, have been completed. The site is now ready for transfer to our developer partner, CTP/Development Securities, who are expected to commence remediation works and Phase 1 development in spring/summer 2008.

**CityLab, Dalton Square, Lancaster** - CityLab has now been open for around 18 months and, after a difficult period on the commercial property market, has recently been attracting significant interest from prospective tenants. Terms are currently being negotiated with a number of high growth/technology companies which will see the amount of space let in the building increase to almost 11,000 sq ft out of a total of 14,000. This level of occupancy is well ahead of the original projections in the project's business plan. The interest has followed in part from the marketing campaign instigated by the Economic Development team and shows the value of the investment in specifically targeted and professional marketing material.

CityLab was recently chosen as the site for a demonstration of new technology, the innovative 'Firefly' display of 3,000 individually computerised eye-catching LED multi-patterned applications which only uses 300w to power in total.

**Storey Creative Industries Centre** - Work has now commenced on the £4 million conversion of the Storey Institute to create a new centre for creative industries. This will provide 28,000 sq ft of creative industries workspace, together with a bar, restaurant, refurbished galleries, and new tourist information centre. Contractors moved on site in October 2007 and works should be completed by December 2008. Over the last year, the Council has also supported the development of the new not-for-profit company, Storey CIC, which will operate and manage the building.

**Port of Heysham** - Through the EDZ programme, the Council was able to construct an access road and services to open up a 2.5 Ha industrial site at the Port for development. Plots were sold off in two phases, and the high level of demand demonstrated that the scheme was meeting an urgent need by local businesses wanting to purchase land for their own expansion. Plots were sold via development agreements, which imposed a requirement that the purchasers

must complete construction works by all of the five businesses that have located there. The completed scheme will support over 200 new and safeguarded jobs.

**Lune Business Park** - European funding has also been offered under the EDZ to the new owners of the Lune Industrial Estate (now Lune Business Park) to support plans for the upgrading of the estate and provision of improved workspace. This is expected to support a first phase of new workspace to be constructed during 2008.

### **Lancaster Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) Programme**

The Lancaster SRB programme finally ended in September 2007, after running for eight years.

An independent end of scheme evaluation has been conducted by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES). The findings of the evaluation report were very favourable and highlight, amongst other things, that:

- the programme has levered in £10.7 million of public and private funding, in addition to the £5 million SRB funds
- overall performance has been good, achieving 70% its output targets
- the programme has contributed towards a physical transformation of the city with large areas that had been neglected and contaminated before the SRB programme now recovered and attracting new investment
- levels of dependency on work-related benefits have dropped faster in the six wards targeted by the SRB programme than elsewhere in the district and county
- it will have left a legacy of new and improved business workspace which will continue to support economic growth at CityLab, Storey Institute, Luneside East, and Lancaster Business Park
- it has also contributed to a wide range of social and community projects, including Pedal Power, Green Ayre Skatepark, Marsh Community Centre, Ridge Learning Centre, and multi-use games areas
- it has helped the Council develop the skills and expertise to implement other major regeneration programmes that have followed, notably the EDZ programme and Lancaster and Morecambe Vision.

## **Lancaster Science Park**

During 2007/08, the Economic Development Service has been working intensively, in partnership with Lancaster University and the North West Development Agency, to make progress with plans for Lancaster Science Park.

Negotiations have been completed with the landowners for purchase of the site at Bailrigg. The land purchase is conditional on obtaining planning consent for the Science Park, and it is regrettable that this has been delayed due to off-site highways issues concerning traffic congestion at Galgate. The problem has been raised at the highest levels with Lancashire County Council, Highways Agency, NWDA, and the University, and there is now a strong commitment from all parties to work together and identify possible solutions.

In the meantime, the Council's project team has conducted the first stage of a developer procurement exercise, Although this has had to be suspended due to delays with the planning application, it has demonstrated strong interest in the project from leading developers experienced in similar science park developments.

Other work on the Science Park has included the recruitment of a team of specialist design consultants to work up details of the proposed Phase 1 development, which would comprise a 3,000 sq m Innovation Centre.

It is now expected that Lancaster University will take the lead on this scheme, as a joint project with the City Council. The current target date for completion of the Innovation Centre is 2011.

## **Lancaster and Morecambe Vision**

In 2006 and following an extensive period of consultation, the Council agreed to adopt Lancaster and Morecambe Vision, produced by the Vision Board, as its economic strategy.

Following on from this, a wide range of project ideas have been worked up and were submitted in autumn 2007 to Lancashire Economic Partnership for incorporation into their "refresh" of the Lancashire Economic Strategy Action Plan. This is a key part of the process to secure additional NWDA funding for 2008/09 onwards.

The total funding sought for the three year period 2008 to 2011 is over £40 million, although the final funding available is likely to be less than this and may be phased over a longer period.

## **Revised European Regional Development Funding for 2007/2013**

The NW Operational Programme (NWOP) was formally launched by the NWDA in Liverpool on 15 February. I attended, together with Councillors Archer and Ashworth, and Anne Marie Harrison, our European Officer.

Over 2007-2013, the NW Region will receive £521 million of ERDF of which 40% is a ring-fenced allocation to Merseyside. NWDA will administer the programme.

Expressions of interest have been called for, with our bids to be submitted via the Lancashire Economic Partnership (LEP) in line with its economic strategy and our Sub-Regional Action Plan (SRAP).

At its meeting this March, Cabinet agreed upon our district's priority submissions.

A North West ERDF Operational Monitoring Committee will oversee and advise on the delivery of agreed projects developed by the NWDA acting with executive authority. Councillor Mace attends the Monitoring Committee.

### **Lancashire Economic Partnership (LEP) and Forum (LEF)**

The LEP is one of five sub-regional bodies (including Cumbria Vision) within the regional NWDA area. The LEP Board includes Mr Cullinan as a Board member. Amongst its duties is to report to the Forum (LEF) which I attend as the City's appointed member. Since last May, I have attended Forum meetings throughout Lancashire. It next meets in July in St Annes.

### **LEP Policy Programme Update – some current activity**

The Lancashire Local Area Agreement (LAA) which includes improving economic prosperity for our sub-region mirrors the four drivers identified within the Lancashire Economic Strategy. They are Higher Value Activity and Investment, Investing in People, Employment Generation and Entrepreneurship and Investment in Quality of Place.

Green Infrastructure Strategy development is ongoing and sub-regional mapping plus a website commissioned in partnership with County is being developed.

Early groundwork is being laid for the creation of a Morecambe Bay Regional Park. The East Lancs Regional Park will host a regional event on such Parks in July.

The NWDA has approved £200,000 to set up a framework to deliver the Lancashire Skills Strategy through a Lancashire Skills Board.

LEP has been allocated £1.78 million to help tackle worklessness in our sub-region through a Worklessness Programme and Board.

LEP has circulated a draft discussion document on social enterprise.

In late summer 2008, the Lancashire Climate Change Strategy will be launched following consultations. The County leads on this.

Appointment, NWDA Board. Despite excellent nominations, no Lancashire-based applicant was elected to the new NWDA Board. The Chair of the New East Manchester URC was appointed.

The NWDA supports the developing of Strategic Regional Sites "of high quality and of regional importance". Of seven sites identified for Lancashire, four were recommended, including the now titled Lancashire Science Park, Bailrigg. It meets a range of criteria and, not least, an ability to be delivered within the timeframe of NWOP 2007/13 (see above). However, it is subject to the resolving of off-site highways issues in the vicinity which currently constrain the timescale of delivery.

### **North and Western Lancashire Priority 1 Action Plan Partnership Board**

I attend this Board, which meets at different Lancashire venues, usually quarterly. Its purpose is to consider bids for projects for ERDF funding, delivering monitoring and evaluation relating to the 2007-13 scheme including applications for approval. This investment framework sets out what outputs and results are expected to be delivered, including sustainable growth and in line with regional and sub-regional economic strategies.

### **CONCLUSION:**

As I emphasised last year, it is imperative that if this Lancaster District of City, Coast and Countryside is to emerge as a city of style, ambition, opportunity and social cohesion then a developing economy that all can contribute to and share in will itself depend on the success of a public and private regeneration programme.

Finally, I would like to thank all members of the Economic Development and Tourism Service and Directorate for their help, support and enthusiasm in advancing Corporate Plan Priorities during a busy and productive year.



## **EXECUTIVE MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT**

### **COUNCILLOR JOHN GILBERT, CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOUSING, PARKING POLICY, M6 LINK, INFORMATION AND CUSTOMER SERVICES**

#### **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES:**



This portfolio consists of several distinct parts, the first of which, Housing, is shared with Councillor Kerr, who has the main responsibility for Morecambe matters. Parking has acquired transport problems, including the Concessionary Travel Scheme. Information and Customer Services works for all customers, internal as well as external, and consequently deals with a large number of projects.

#### **EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP:**

- Cabinet
- District Wide Tenants Cabinet Liaison Group
- Transport Cabinet Liaison Group
- Universities Cabinet Liaison Group

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

- Lancaster and District YMCA Management Board

#### **ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2007/08**

##### **COUNCIL HOUSING**

- As a result of the District Auditor's report, we commissioned KPMG to examine our options for the procurement of repairs and maintenance. We were delighted to be told that our costs for responsive repairs were lower than almost anyone else's, and as the scale of work is too small for an outside contractor to be interested, we will keep them in house (RMS). As far as planned maintenance (the capital programme) is concerned, we will establish an ongoing comparison of our costs by entering a long term partnering arrangement involving RMS plus one other contractor, yet to be selected.
- We have recently completed our five yearly Independent Stock Condition Survey using Michael Howard Associates. The results will be used to help formulate our long term requirements for maintaining the Decent Homes/Lancaster Standard and for updating the 30 Year HRA Business Plan.

- There have been continued improvements across the majority of performance indicators. Last year there were concerns regarding average relet times (which were 38 days). This year a challenging target of 35 days was set, and performance is currently just 32 days. The average time taken to undertake routine repairs is also continuing to reduce and now stands at just 10 days (compared with 18 days immediately prior to the Amalgamation of Services in 2004).
- As one of the pilots for Electronic Document Image Management, Council Housing Services is about to go live. In preparation for this, all property and housing application files have been scanned (around 500,000 documents) and are now stored and retrieved electronically.

## **STRATEGIC HOUSING**

### **Homelessness**

- The re-structuring of the Housing Advice Team to focus on preventative initiatives has been consolidated throughout the year and a tremendous amount of work has been done with regard to formalising the new service provision. It is now considered that around 60% of staff time is devoted to prevention work.
- 'Drop in' advice services in order to raise awareness of homeless issues have once again increased in number and school presentations are now provided (this was a recommendation of the Homeless Task Group). There continues to be a reduction in the numbers of homeless applications and acceptances and further reductions in spend against the B&B budget. However, the numbers of temporary dispersed housing (RSL managed) have been reduced in line with Government requirements.
- January 2008 saw the publication of the final report of the Internal Audit Review undertaken on the Homeless function. This document provides a very positive and encouraging picture of the Homeless Service. Furthermore, the six BVPI returns relevant to Homelessness were well received by the Audit Commission.
- Good progress has been made with regard to launching the Sanctuary Scheme. Multi-Agency meetings have been convened, relevant leaflets drafted and a contract established with City Contract Services relating to the essential security works required to clients' homes. It is hoped that the scheme will become fully operational early in 2008/09.
- The Young Persons Supported Hostel located at Portland Street, Lancaster, a partnership initiative with the YMCA, opened in January 2008. The City Council initially funded the staffing costs but Supporting People have now confirmed that they will finance the staffing in future.
- The Council, in partnership with the Adactus Housing Association and the YMCA made a successful bid for Places of Change funding of £1.5M from central government (CLG) for the development of the YMCA's existing premises on New Road to provide more training facilities and support services for single homeless people, as part of a scheme to provide stage

one accommodation (8 beds) as well as move on flats (11). We are awaiting the outcome of a dual Housing Corporation bid for a further £1.5M – the decision is due in May 2008. Running costs will be met by Supporting People.

### **Affordable Housing**

- In 2007/8, the Council has worked with Adactus Housing to complete 31 shared ownership properties in Morecambe, and 8 shared ownership properties in rural areas. Four properties for outright sale have also been produced in Morecambe. We have also seen the start on site of an Adactus scheme for social rented housing off Willow Lane in Lancaster – this will produce 16 properties for social rent, with completion expected in March 2009.
- Staff in both the Neighbourhood Task Force and Planning Services continue to work closely with developers to agree affordable housing contributions through S106 agreements. This has delivered 7 completed properties this year – 3 for shared ownership and 4 for social rent. The Council has now agreed, following the production of the 2007 Housing Needs Survey update, that we will seek 40% affordable housing on new schemes above a certain size in future. We have schemes in the pipeline where from 20% to 30% has been agreed. In the future, we would expect this to deliver around 50 properties a year.

### **PARKING**

- The County Council has started a review of the current Parkwise partnership with the 12 district councils and is also considering the options for providing parking enforcement after September 2009 when the existing 5-year agreement expires. Lancaster is performing well compared with the other districts in the partnership and is currently providing cost effective parking enforcement.
- The Traffic Management Act was introduced on 31<sup>st</sup> March and is aimed at providing clearer and fairer enforcement of parking regulations including applying penalty charges that will vary according to the seriousness of the contravention.
- Some progress has been made by the County Council in consultation with the City Council and ward members on the development of new resident parking schemes in the Dallas Road area in Lancaster and the Poulton area in Morecambe. The County Council has also introduced new criteria for the introduction of additional residents' parking zones following countywide consultation and a further County review is soon expected.
- Work has continued on the parking strategy and the need to develop a long term approach to the district's parking requirements has been recognised due to the likely major redevelopment in Lancaster and the construction of the M6 link that will include a park and ride site near Junction 34.
- Changes have been made to the Concessionary travel scheme so that residents of the Lancaster district aged 60 and over and the disabled holding a National Concession NoWcard were, from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008, entitled to free

off peak travel on all local buses anywhere in England. NoWcard is a joint countywide scheme managed by Lancashire County Council and administered by the Unitary and District Councils.

## **INFORMATION AND CUSTOMER SERVICES**

During the year Information and Customer Services have played a valuable role co-ordinating, planning and implementing IT systems for the benefit of the Council as a whole and further improved how the whole Council presents itself by opening face to face customer centres and working at a corporate level on issues such as standard telephone techniques etc.

This year Information and Customer Services have

- Opened brand new face to face Customer Service Centres in Morecambe and Lancaster Town Halls. The new facilities provide a more efficient and comfortable experience for all customers, who are greeted and directed to an appropriate counter. A queue management system helps to ensure that customers have as short a wait as possible and there are purpose built enquiry counters with screens and interview rooms provided for greater privacy.
- Replaced over two hundred 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.
- 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.
- Continued to build the Council website. In the 2008 SOCITM (Society of IT Management) benchmarking survey for council websites, Lancaster has just been awarded 'Transactional' status, the second highest rating (currently only four councils hold the highest 'Excellent' rating). In a related independent customer satisfaction survey, SOCITM also ranks us in the top 10 for 'likelihood of repeat visits' amongst our web users (76.87%), citing us as an example of good practice. Usage of the website continues to grow strongly – unique users have grown by 53% over the last twelve months and in the last twelve months there were 1.5 million page views.
- Worked with a national project, funded by the Department for Work and Pensions , to provide fire safety assessments for residents over 50 in their homes and on a ground breaking knowledge system which will pull together relevant information from the County and Lancaster City Council to provide a seamless service to the over 50s.
- Expanded the successful Bulky Matters project (a partnership of the City Council and Furniture Matters) which reduce the amount of bulky household waste going to landfill to cover all Council Housing estates thus saving even more tonnes of landfill per year.

- Transformational Government is now a clear priority in the Corporate Plan and Information and Customer Services are giving practical realisation to this by working with services on the latest technology to help them become more customer centred, efficient and professional, as in the following examples:

Installed and commissioned a new Council Housing Needs system – the new system is more accurate, easier to use which will reduce the need for staff training and has reduced overall costs.

Introduced a new corporate Electronic Document Management System which allows the scanning, storage and retrieval of documents electronically and enables services such as Planning and Building Control to work more efficiently and access information from any connected point.

Installed a new Authority Financials system, which allows all parts of the Council to have better access and control of financial information, thus leading to improved decision making and more accurate reporting and planning.

Rolled out the mobile working project – Task Mobile – which allows Council staff to input and update repairs information whilst they are actually in a tenant's home, thus allowing officers to work more quickly and effectively. The repairs appointments system has also been updated giving more specific times for appointments – saving officer and tenant's time.

Further expanded the existing Geographic Information Systems to enable customers to access relevant information such as refuse collection dates etc and access a host of other information and services based upon their postcode or a map location.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Housing Advice Team has been blighted by long term staff shortages, but the fact that they have managed to get through the workload is a testament to their hard work and dedication. Information Services have also had problems with staff shortages, which came to many members' attention because of the departure of the staff member responsible for maintaining their computers.

## EXECUTIVE MEMBER(S) ANNUAL REPORT

### COUNCILLORS VAL HISTED AND TONY JOHNSON, CABINET MEMBER(S) WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT - RURAL AREA PORTFOLIO AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT



#### ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08

#### EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP

##### **Councillor Histed (May – December 2007)**

- Cabinet
- Climate Change Cabinet Liaison Group

##### **Councillor Johnson (December 2007 to date)**

- Cabinet
- Climate Change Cabinet Liaison Group

#### EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES etc

##### **Councillor Histed (May – December 2007)**

- Community Safety Strategy Group
- Lancashire Rural Partnership
- Lancashire Canal Restoration Partnership
- Lancaster Local Strategic Partnership
- LGA Rural Commission
- LSP Equality and Diversity Building Block
- LSP Executive
- LSP Sustainability Partnership

##### **Councillor Johnson (December 2007 to date)**

- Community Safety Strategy Group
- Lancashire Rural Partnership
- Lancashire Canal Restoration Partnership
- LGA Rural Commission

- Arnside and Silverdale AONB (Forum, Countryside Management Service and Limestone Heritage Project SC) (*January 2008 to date*)
- Arnside and Silverdale AONB Unit (*January 2008 to date*)
- Forest of Bowland Advisory Committee (*January 2008 to date*)
- Lancashire Rural Affairs Forum
- North West Rural Affairs Forum

## OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES

- Social Environment – Rural Area Portfolio
- Performance Management

## CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITY OUTCOMES

- To regenerate Carnforth and its rural hinterland.
- To improve the council's performance monitoring, management and reporting arrangements.
- Council continues to improve; external assessment validates that improvement.

## PROGRESS DURING 2007/08

### Introduction

Although this portfolio has been split between ourselves over the year, this has not effected the achievement levels within our sphere of responsibilities. The detail below provides comprehensive evidence of the very real progress that has been made within our portfolio and this has contributed, along with other Cabinet members' achievements, to the well earned CPA increased performance rating of this Council now being a **GOOD** authority. In acknowledgement of this, we must give thanks to all the officers who have assisted us and contributed hugely to the achievements outlined below. Well done and thank you.

To regenerate Carnforth and its rural hinterland.

### Programme Activity and Performance

This year, as the final year of the programme, has seen a significant amount of activity which has brought the programme close to its projected spend for the year and made a large impact in delivering the programme outputs. Projects which have performed well during the year include:

Carnforth Connect. – The project has established a sound operational base and partnership working between private sponsors and County Council.

Carnforth Events Programme – A very successful range of events have been held over the year with the vastly improved Christmas lights celebration being the pinnacle of the calendar.

Small Project Fund – The project has provided grants to 12 local groups and allocated all its funds for the year.

Business Support Fund – The fund has proven exceptionally popular and demand outstripped supply with the project securing additional funds from Carnforth Area Regeneration Partnership (CARP) in September. The project has also delivered above its contracted outputs.

Carpediem – Skills course – The skills programme has been operating from the beginning of the academic year providing much needed intervention to the low skilled population of the area.

Community Resource Centre – The major capital project within CARP's portfolio has completed all necessary design and planning requirements and has begun on site with the project to complete September 2008.

Fire Station Redevelopment – CARP Ltd working closely with Lancashire Fire Service have negotiated a draft operational position to develop the site. CARP Ltd have secured the funds and appointed the Architects and economic consultants to bring the project to outline planning stage RIBA Stage C.

Extra projects included during this year have included:

- Community Astro Turf
- Canal Tow Path Improvements
- Canal Mooring improvements
- New Canal Boat Project

In addition to the new projects to the programme, NWDA approved 3 projects to continue into 2008/9 for a 6 month extension. These were the Community Resource Centre, Carnforth Fire Station Development Study, and an extension to the Rural Regeneration Officers role.

### **Carnforth Area Regeneration Partnership (CARP)**

During the year the CARP Executive met on 8 occasions to provide oversight of the programme and to make decisions on the allocation of resources to projects.

The Full Partnership met on 3 occasions which included a very successful AGM in May hosted by one of the CARP members, Capernwray Hall.

### **Exit strategy**

In preparation for the end of the programme and the end of the role of CARP, the partnership agreed to promote the role of CARP Ltd and to encourage members of CARP to join the new social enterprise company. The company is responsible for Carnforth Connect, New Canal Boat project, redevelopment of Carnforth Fire Station and has a role in the operation of the new community resource centre. CARP Ltd report 40 members of the company and expect to hold their first AGM in the next few weeks.

A final meeting of the main CARP partnership will be held in October 2008 to report the final outcome of the Market Town Initiative programme following the completion of the projects given the extension into 2008-09.



## **Tourism in the Rural Areas**

Ongoing tourism initiatives in the Rural Areas include support for a Farming, Interpretation and Environment Centre at Greenlands Farm at Tewitfield which is due to open to the public in May 2008. This is adjacent to the Longlands Hotel and the Tewitfield Marina which has been built during 2007/08 and is now nearing completion.

The Tourism Section has representation on the Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board's themed marketing campaign steering group for 'Country Escapes'. These campaigns include a mix of E-newsletter, pay per click and direct mail brochures sent to 30,000 contacts. The project also includes the LBTB's Outdoor Guide which includes the Lancaster district and we attend the annual Outdoor Show as part of the Lancashire and Blackpool stand to promote our Lune Valley attractions, Walking for All, and Cycling for All guides.

We are continuing to encourage rural self-catering tourism operators to explore the benefits of on-line booking for their businesses. Visits to the Lune Valley web pages on our [www.citycoastcountryside.co.uk](http://www.citycoastcountryside.co.uk) <<http://www.citycoastcountryside.co.uk/>> site are steadily increasing.

We exhibited at the annual group operators show at Bolton for the 'Great Days Out Fair' and themed it around the Taste of Lancashire theme for 2008. We also assisted the Lunesdale Studio Trail with the distribution of their flyers for their annual event in May, as a way of supporting high value but low volume rural tourism.

## **Leeds Morecambe Community Rail Partnership**

The Leeds - Morecambe Community Rail Partnership Company Ltd., (set up and launched at Carnforth in May, 2006) continues to produce promotional timetables and has supported walks leaflets produced for the line by the Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group. The Community Rail Partnership Officer (p/t) started in post at the beginning of April, 2007. The group has contributed to the Lancashire and Cumbria Rail Utilisation Strategy and a report is due in the spring of 2008. It has also contributed to the study of transport throughout the district which has been commissioned by the Lancaster & Morecambe Vision Board's Transport Group from the consultants Faber Maunsall.

## **Lancaster Canal Restoration Project**

Although meetings of the Lancaster Canal Restoration Partnership have been attended, progress has been slow, partly due to cuts in DEFRA funding to British Waterways. The steering group meets annually and the City Council is represented at meetings of the Executive Group and the PR and Fundraising group. The start date for work on phase 1 of the project, at Canal Head in Kendal, has been put back to 2009.

## **Galgate Community Rooms**

The City Council has supported the Galgate Community Rooms project, led by Ellel Parish Council, through the provision of an advance of £80,000 as part of an overall 'front funding' package of almost £200,000, the balance being met by Lancashire Economic Partnership. This funding was provided to assist the project's cash flow pending receipt of Pathfinder in Practice grant from the Northwest Regional Development Agency.

## **Leader**

The City Council has continued to support the Lancashire Leader + programme with funding towards administration and marketing during 2007/08 which is the programme's final year. The programme has supported a range of rural projects including the Carnforth Canal Boat and Hornby Village Institute.

## **Rural Policy**

The City Council has maintained its involvement in the development of rural policy through officer representation on the Lancashire Rural Practitioner Steering Group which reports to the Lancashire Rural Development Board and oversees the detailed aspects of the Lancashire Rural Strategy (Co-ordinated Actions for Rural Lancashire). It has also considered the Lancashire Implementation Plan for the Rural Development Programme for England with proposals developed for a Local Action Group covering Lancaster, Wyre and Fylde Districts. The City Council is also represented at both Cabinet Member and Officer level on the Lancashire Rural Forum and the North West Rural Affairs Forum.

## **Rural Planning**

The City Council's Local Development Framework has recently undergone the Examination in Public of its Core Strategy, and is the first in the North West Region to do so. Parish Plans have been cited as advocacy documents which have informed the preparation of the Strategy.

The Forward Planning Team have been in detailed negotiations with Strategic Housing to assist in funding the update for the District's Housing Needs Study. The findings will inform the Affordable Housing Development Plan document to be prepared next year.

Results are awaited from the resurvey of Middleton Wood by the Environment Agency to ascertain whether further remedial works will be needed to prevent this major site in the Council's ownership polluting Morecambe Bay.

The review of the Arnside/Silverdale AONB Management Plan commenced last year. The requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment has meant that climate change and coastal environments will need to be incorporated into the Plan.

The City Council has taken steps to block the installation of additional moorings at Glasson Dock Marina by insisting that the works require Environmental Impact Assessment.

The Head of Planning Services took part in the multi-agency working party examining the potential to extend the boundaries of the Yorkshire Dales and Lake District National Parks. A decision has been recently made to put the review findings on hold pending the results of a challenge to a review of other parks in the South of England.

**Priority Outcome** To improve the council's performance monitoring, management and reporting arrangements.

All recent external inspections and judgements have identified the very real improvements that the Council has made recently. Although Performance Management may not be the most exciting topic for our public, it is the focal point of every organisation's ability to deliver its promises. Set out below are some positive examples of how our performance management arrangements have improved and fulfilled our promises.

### **Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)**

Now recognised as a 'Good' council. The significant ongoing improvement we have made in our approach to managing performance underpin all other council achievements. Our re-structured and streamlined Performance Management Framework (PMF) ensures that all strategic and operational priorities have delivery targets set and responsibilities allocated to both members and officers. These are then monitored and reported on through exception reports in the Performance Review Team process. The PMF is working well and is effectively monitoring and improving performance, a view which was endorsed in the recent CPA inspection report where our internal processes were highly praised.

### **Escendency**

"There is a consistent and open approach to performance management by officers and councillors. Individual portfolio holders, directors and heads of service have good oversight of performance within their portfolio areas through good use of performance monitoring information".

**Audit Commission – Lancaster City Council Corporate Assessment February 2008**

The change associated with corporate improvement requires processes to manage it well. Our systems are robust, well embedded and consistently applied. 'Escendency', our web based performance management tool, provides a 'picture' of performance in relation to priorities in real time, highlighting both under and over performance and translating strategic priorities to operational delivery. We are able to see a single, real-time, top down picture of our success in delivering our vision for the District. The Escendency system has also streamlined our reporting processes providing instantly available, high quality performance information to a wide (and expanding) audience. All council services are now using the Escendency system.

### **LAMP**

Our bespoke corporate project management methodology is well embedded across the Council. We introduced Lancaster's Approach to Managing Projects (LAMP) in April 2007 and so far more than 150 officers have received LAMP training. 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. A corporate Projects Officer post has been established to support all services in the consistent application of LAMP, sharing best practice and lessons learned. We're so proud of LAMP that we have taken steps to have it copyrighted!

### **Data Quality**

Consistent, high-quality, timely and comprehensive information is vital to delivering improved service outcomes. The Council's response to the emerging data quality agenda has been speedy and comprehensive. Much work has already been undertaken to provide relevant information for Members, managers and external audit, especially where concerns have already been identified. Members and officers have been trained to ensure the highest possible standards throughout the data collection process, from first principles and setting up indicators, to the eventual publication of a robust set of performance data which is accurate and fit for external scrutiny. 'Information Custodians' have been established within each Service to provide a quality assurance role with regard to service data. The Council has set a target to score Level 4 for data quality by 2008 and we are on track to achieve this. The 2007 Use of Resources judgement showed that the improvements made to date now merited a score of 3, "Performing Well" and we are confident that this will improve further next 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 development of a PMF for the Local Strategic Partnership. We have existing strengths upon which we can build.

The Council and a number of its major partnerships already receive routine performance management information to help them deliver their priorities. The Neighbourhood Management Boards in Poulton and the West End of Morecambe use the Council's performance management framework to monitor delivery of targets and to inform future service improvements, these are underpinned by delivery frameworks and plans. Plan targets are set and agreed with partners (such as County Council) and are assessed to ensure that they are challenging but realistic.

Our Community Safety Partnership has in place a rigorous framework that takes a pro-active shared approach to managing performance which has proved highly effective in delivering improvements as the following quote proves:-

Having seen the December (07) figures for crime performance in Lancaster this is a note to congratulate Lancaster for a tremendous effort in turning the position round in the last four months. The really good news is that there is much going on in Lancaster that will bring further improvements in the future.

**Deputy Regional Director – GONW - Communities Group - January 2007**

Performance monitoring arrangements are in place with the County LSP to monitor local progress in achieving targets in the Local Area Agreement. Data sharing protocols are now in place across partnerships; the MADE (multi-agency data exchange) database is specific example of this that helps determine priorities and improvement planning in the CSP.

### **Comparison & Value For Money**

The Council invests a great deal in benchmarking, in particular through strong links with our family group, the Exeter Benchmarking Group, enabling 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 CPA re-categorisation profiles 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.

**Priority Outcome** - Council continues to improve; external assessment validates that improvement.

Lancaster City Council's continued improvement and achievements have been validated by external inspectors. The Audit Commission has now rated the council as a '**good**' authority – the second best category out of the five possible CPA ratings. The CPA inspection took place in October 2007 with the inspection report and score made public in February 2008. The progress made in relation to the council's performance management framework was highlighted in the report.

The annual Data Quality Audit identified significant improvements in the quality of the data upon which the council relies to make its decisions and the Best Value Performance Plan (Annual Report) was for the 8<sup>th</sup> year deemed to have been produced in line with statutory requirements.

### **CONCLUSION:**

As outlined earlier in this report's introduction, significant achievements have delivered within our portfolio over the year, which along with those from our Cabinet colleagues, have contributed to the well earned CPA increased performance rating of this Council as now being a GOOD authority. We again wish to thank all the officers who have assisted us and contributed hugely to the achievements outlined above. Thank you all.

## **EXECUTIVE MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT**

### **COUNCILLOR DAVID KERR, CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOUSING, HOUSING REGENERATION, ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT**



#### **ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08**

#### **EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP:**

- Cabinet
- District Wide Tenants Cabinet Liaison Group
- Mellishaw Park Cabinet Liaison Group

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

- LSP Health and Wellbeing Group
- Morecambe Bay Tobacco Control Alliance

#### **OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES:**

##### **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

- Improvements continue to be made within the Cemeteries Service, for example:
  - Improved grounds maintenance standards
  - Substantial path repairs and improvements
  - New signage programme
  - Increased biodiversity through active management of woodland and meadowland burial areas
  - Introduction of wildflower meadows and involvement of Friends Groups.
  - Green Flag Award applied for Torrisholme Cemetery for 2008.

The recruitment of an assistant cemeteries officer should help the service pursue further improvements including the Charter for the Bereaved and processing memorial registrations.

- The Food Safety service has managed the implementation of a major change in regulations affecting port health and has met performance targets despite having 2 key posts subject to staff turnover.

- The Smokefree regulations were introduced smoothly following an intensive period of preparation and partnership working with the PCT. Compliance levels have been generally good. The funding for the Smokefree Officer post ceases at the end of May and enforcement work will be incorporated into the Health and Safety team's workplan.
- Contaminated Land – the council's Contaminated Land Officer and contractors have carried out extensive research to identify all land within the district where potentially polluting activities have taken place. So far about 2,250 sites have been found and many will require more detailed inspection. This work, which is nearing completion, is the first operational stage in the published Inspection Strategy for Contaminated Land.
- Air Quality - working with external partners, a draft Air Quality Action Plan has been published for the Lancaster air quality management area. A second air quality management area has been declared in Carnforth and further work is being carried out at the crossroads in Galgate. Officers have reviewed the existing network of air pollution monitoring sites and extended it. This work will place the council in a good position of knowledge when approaching difficult decisions about how to reduce local air pollution in the worst affected areas, particularly in Lancaster city centre.
- **Enforcement activity:**
  - The Food Safety service also played an integral part in multi-agency enforcement operation around illegal cockling activity in Morecambe Bay. As a result, the Service was successful in securing an £11,850 grant from the Food Standards Agency for future shellfish enforcement activity.
  - The Environmental Protection service has taken enforcement action to abate neighbour noise nuisance in Middleton and successfully defended an appeal against the action taken. Costs of £12,000 were awarded to the council. This case consumed a great deal of officer time, including numerous out-of-hours visits by the Emergency Call-Out Service (ECOS) to gather evidence. When delivering its judgement, the magistrates' court complimented the council on its work and officers' professionalism.
  - 5 Fixed Penalty Notices for fouling have been issued and paid. A number of Formal Cautions have been issued, for Dogs Off Leads and 2 successful prosecutions. The most significant development in the work undertaken by the Dog Warden Service relates to Dangerous Dogs. There are now a number of very large breeds within the district, such as Mastiffs and American Bulldogs. These are complex, difficult cases to deal with and it is anticipated that this will cause increasing demands on the service in future. The Dog Warden Service has also carried out a joint campaign with the RSPCA involving free microchipping and subsidised neutering.

- **Future developments:**

- Strengthen local air quality management, developing a multi-agency specialist working group and producing a full Air Quality Action Plan for Lancaster city centre
- Drawing on work from the previous year, the Environmental Protection service will carry out risk assessments of all particularly vulnerable land uses (such as drinking water supplies and land used for growing food) where there is a possibility of previous land contamination.
- Complete the full quality assurance of Environmental Protection services including Pest Control.
- Implement a set of new Dog Control Orders and out-of-hours stray dog kennelling as required by new legislation.
- Integration into Customer Services to begin.

## **STRATEGIC HOUSING**

- **Housing Standards**

The introduction of Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) in April 2006 was a huge undertaking. The last year has been spent consolidating upon all the preparatory work involved in setting up the process and systematically inspecting and licensing relevant properties. To date 190 properties have been formally licensed.

The complexities of the 'Housing Health and Safety Rating System' (HHSRS) and the emerging case law have meant frequent policy and training reviews alongside the increased level of work required in simply implementing the system.

The new legislation has prompted a vastly increased level of activity with Student Landlords as all shared student properties are now officially classified as HMO's and, therefore, all require significant up-grading of standards and formal licensing. The Accreditation Scheme continues to effectively support this area of work.

One member of the technical team has been seconded to the Neighbourhood Task Force in order to concentrate their efforts upon improving the standards of the poorest HMO's located in the West End of Morecambe. This has been very effective so far and there has already been a reduction in the level of recorded levels of anti-social behaviour associated with HMO's.

Preparatory work has begun upon establishing a Selective Licensing scheme in the West End of Morecambe. Prior to formal implementation this scheme will require public consultation, cabinet approval and the consent of the Secretary of State.

- **Poulton Renewal Area**

As with previous years various types of funding have been available in the Poulton renewal area albeit within the "target areas" centred around the Morecambe Town Centre. The funding streams comprise of renovation grants, group repair, and face lift schemes. The majority of the renovation grants have been awarded to individual



properties e.g. reduce Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO'S) down to single family houses, or to remove redundant commercial properties i.e. ground floor shops with accommodation above back to single family homes.

The group repair and facelift schemes continue to be a success in transforming a "tired street" into looking a more vibrant area to live in. This renovation activity helps to bolster confidence within the area and also the surrounding streets. Two schemes have recently been completed. Since the completion of the Townscape Initiative Scheme a number of properties have also been nominated for various awards and these particular properties have been used as "pump primers" for private owners to emulate or copy, whilst renovating their own properties.

In general the Poulton renewal area continues to be a success and continues to reverse what was considered to be a declining housing area. The residents feel more confident and are showing pride in their area.

- **West End Regeneration**

Working with English Partnerships funds have now been secured for the Housing Exemplar Project - Chatsworth Gardens. An Outline Planning Application has recently been submitted and a Building Agreement with the developers in the final stages of negotiation to create 101 new homes for outright sale. These homes will be built to high environmental and urban design standards. 50 of the required 72 properties have been acquired through voluntary agreements with the owners and Cabinet will soon be considering the Building Agreement and updated Funding Agreement to enable the final stage of acquisitions to be completed.

In partnership with the Housing Corporation and Adactus Housing Group we have completed the remodelling of HMO's on Clarendon Road and West End Road and created 22 high quality homes for shared ownership with a further 26 now on site and planned for completion over the next 6 months. This programme is transforming which was once plagued by anti social behaviour and multiple deprivation into a desirable and sustainable community.

- **Enabling (Home Improvement Team)**

2007/08 has been an incredibly difficult year for the Enabling Team. Both technical officer posts have been temporarily vacant for about half of the year and the team manager was also absent due to sickness for a prolonged period. Notwithstanding this, the priority team targets for the year will be met. . The Housing Options Service and the District Wide Handyperson Scheme were, however, able to maintain normal operation and continue the delivery of Home Improvement Agency type services designed to help make homes decent and to promote independence.

At the core of the Home Improvement type services is the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant programme. The staff absences created a major problem with regard to both committing and spending this capital budget. However, sheer hard work during the last quarter of the year will ensure that spend against the capital budget maximises the Governments 60% contribution towards this fund. The DFG programme continues to face challenging times ahead both from the increased demand on the budget and the imminent changes to legislation expected from the Government.

Although not yet finalised, the most recent HECA (Home Energy Conservation Act) return is estimated to report an annual improvement in district wide energy efficiency of 1.1%. This will be in line with the set target for the year.

### **GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS**

An Overview & Scrutiny report was produced in July 2007 following a full review of how grants to voluntary organisations were being managed. This resulted in a large number of proposed improvements to the present arrangements which the Service is looking to implement.

With the Service Level Agreements for non-Housing voluntary organisations being due to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008, efforts have been concentrated this year on improving the monitoring of these grants and carrying out a full review of those agreements currently in place and a small number of new applications. This has resulted in a schedule of new grants which were agreed as part of the budget process. Service Level Agreements for these are now being negotiated and should be in place by the time this report is published.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Although some difficulties have been met during the year, all the Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators for 2007/08 have been met. The Quarterly Performance Review Team meetings have been particularly useful in helping to keep work programmes on target.

## **EXECUTIVE MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT**

### **COUNCILLOR MAIA WHITELEGG, CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CULTURE, LEISURE, SPORT AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND PERSONNEL**



#### **EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP:**

- Cabinet
- Morecambe Retail, Commercial and Tourism Cabinet Liaison Group (Observer)

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

- Children's Trust Partnership - Lancaster District
- Governing Body - Lancaster and Morecambe College Corporation
- Lancaster University Public Arts Strategy Committee
- LSP Children and Young People Group
- LSP North West Lancs Lifelong Partnership Group
- Museums Advisory Panel

#### **OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES:**

My special areas of responsibility on the Cabinet cover Culture, Leisure, Sports and Children & Young People in addition to Personnel. The following is a summary of key events and outputs in the last year in these areas.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work and dedication of staff and Officers across all areas of the portfolio brief. I would like to thank both the staff and Members for their support during this last year in addition to the commitment given by individuals in other organisations to this work.

#### **CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITY OUTCOMES:**

A varied programme of festivals and events throughout the district.

Develop a comprehensive corporate approach to children and young people's issues.

## **CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE - PROGRESS DURING 2007/08**

The past year has seen progress and further changes in policy and guidance relating to the Children and Young People's agenda both nationally and locally.

The Children and Young People team has continued to work in the following areas:

- **Safeguarding**
  - Basic child protection training has been well attended – 6 sessions from the corporate training budget, 15 participants per session. There have also been specific training/briefing events for Council Housing Services operatives; SASC staff; play leaders; service responsible officers; council members.
  - Evaluations from training events have resulted in addressing further learning needs, e.g. case conference training from Council Housing.
  - A cross service group of officers meets quarterly to ensure consistency in safeguarding practices throughout the council.
  - New regulations will be coming out at the end of 2008 regarding the registration of staff with the Independent Safeguarding Authority.
  - There is a statutory requirement to have in place child protection policies. It is also one of the actions identified in the Audit Commission's recent assessment of County / District Council activity in this policy area "Working in partnership to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people". As well as not complying with legislation, not having such policies and procedures in place put at risk children, young people and vulnerable adults as well as members of staff and those who work with those groups of people in any other capacity. The Council's Child Protection Policy and safeguarding measures is seen to be an example of good practice within Lancashire and we have been asked to give a presentation to representatives from district councils across the county.
  - More recently the government has published the Safeguarding and Vulnerable Groups Act which provides a legal framework for a new Independent Safeguarding Authority and scheme. The new arrangements are due to be introduced in a phased roll-out from Autumn 2008 and nearer that time the Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy will be amended in accordance with the new arrangements once regulations and guidance are in place.

- **Every Child Matters**
  - In order to try and have a coherent approach across the county for district councils, an **ECM Lead Officer Group** has been established with designated officers from each of the 12 district councils. To date work has taken place on district action plans addressing the recommendations from the Audit Commission, IDeA and others. The action plan for Lancaster has been completed and either 'reasonable' or 'good' progress has been made against most recommendations. Some further work is needed to complete/add to the objectives.
  - A cross service ECM group of officers has been meeting to share practice and to ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under ECM and the Council's commitment. Terms of reference is now being reviewed in light of progress being made.
  - The Cabinet Liaison group was re-established in June 2007. The group has received presentations from a number of sources including the YMCA and Lancashire County Council Children's Trust representatives to guide and inform decision making during the development process of the local Children's Trust. The liaison group also sought to address communication across two-tier governance with regard to services provided to children & Young People through advice from the County Council Liaison Officer. Membership on the liaison group has varied and due to the recent and ongoing restructuring of County Council Youth services (now known as Lancashire Young Peoples Service) the terms of reference now need reviewing.

The Council's first **Children and Young People's Strategic Plan** was passed through Cabinet in January 2008. This is further recognition by Council of it's commitment to the children and young people agenda. The plan lays out how the council services are currently contributing to ECM and the context the work takes place in. Perhaps more importantly there are four defined priorities to be worked towards over the next three years:

- **Children and Young People Engagement Strategy**
- **Safeguarding**
- **Promoting Positive Activities**
- **Enabling Young People to be Ready for Work**

- **The local Children's Trust Partnership**

Children Trusts are a new way of working that brings together the planning, delivery and workforce to provide a joined up service for children and young people across the county and locally in districts that will result in positive and coherent outcomes.

Lancashire has adopted a structure of one **County Trust** and **12 Local Trusts** – one for each district.

In Lancaster District the Children & Young People Building Block of the LSP has provided the basis for the Local Children's Trust. The Local Children's Trust Partnerships will:

- Set local priorities
  - Link to the children & young people's thematic element of the Local Area Agreement
  - Co-ordinate local delivery of services
  - Contribute to the Common Assessment Framework.
- 
- **CAF (Common Assessment Framework)**

Lancaster is one of the first districts in the county to have the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) rolled out in April 2008. This is one of the elements of delivery of integrated frontline services. The CAF is a shared assessment tool for use across all children's services & all local areas in England. It aims to help early identification of need and promote co-ordinated service provision. CAF is for children & young people with additional needs. Staff have been nominated from relevant services to undertake the appropriate training and the council has signed the 'declaration of acceptance' to the CAF.

## **CONCLUSION**

The past year has seen the Children and Young People agenda further embedded into the council, for both members and officers. It has also been a period of ever changing national policy and county/district re-organisations which all impact locally. The Children's Trust will be a new way of working and will take some time to be understood and integrated into work practice and planning. However, the Children and Young People plan give council services a clear direction of what is needed and how our services can fit into the broader district picture and for our contribution to be recognised.

Council, in setting its budget for 2008/09 has agreed to increase the post of Children & Young People Officer within the Corporate Strategy Service to support the ongoing development of the work outlined above. Council also contributed a positive initial commitment to engaging with young people through work-based related schemes by allocating funding to a Young Advisors scheme.

## **CULTURAL SERVICES - PROGRESS DURING 2007/08**

Cultural Services experienced another busy and varied year in 2007/2008. The “core” services align with Council’s Corporate Objectives and Cultural Services has increasingly become a key driver for health and well-being, through its contributions to regeneration, community engagement, economic impact and civic pride.

### **Key highlights for 2007/2008 include:-**

#### **The Play Strategy**

In July 2007, Council approved the Play Strategy 2007 – 2012 and associated Implementation plan. This decision allowed the district via the local authority to access £307,430 play funding, based on an adopted play strategy and the City Council acting as the accountable body.

In order to deliver this programme efficiently and successfully, to maximise the potential wider benefits, to provide a rounded programme and continue to build on the success to date in supporting local groups and leveraging other external funding, it was also considered essential that additional resources were provided to match fund lottery money to employ a full-time officer. As part of the 2008/09 Budget process, consideration was given to the allocation of £50,700 in Council revenue support over three financial years (2008/2009 – 2010/2011) to enable the opportunities of this programme to be fully maximised.

Good play opportunities are essential to children’s development. They provide enriching experiences that can help develop children’s emotional and social skills. This opportunity has been presented to the Council which allows us to look at new methods of supporting and developing play. Play issues always feature highly within communities, either for children or youths and this strategy and programme enable a coordinated approach to be provided to develop new approaches to these issues.

The Play Partnership and Play Strategy will provide a co-ordinated approach to play provision/services across the District, way beyond the life of the play lottery funding.

#### **Cultural Venues (Salt Ayre Sports Centre, 3 Swimming Pools, The Dome, The Platform)**

The City Council’s Cultural venues (Salt Ayre Sports Centre, the 3 Community Swimming Pools, the Dome, and the Platform) between them attracted more than 1,000,000 customers.

Cultural Services has also enjoyed another successful year in drawing external funding awards into the District, such as the £160,000 awarded, as part of the Cycling Demonstration Town Initiative, to improve cycling facilities at Salt Ayre Sports Centre

- **The Dome**

Due to potential developments in and around central promenade, the regeneration of the Midland hotel and financial concerns, consideration was given to the future of the Dome. Various options were considered including closure, demolition and transfer of events. In terms of the impact that shows and events make to the district, particularly high profile acts such as those undertaken in 2007/2008, including; - the “Arctic Monkeys”, “Athlete”, “Reverend & the Makers”, the ‘Kooks’ and ‘the Fratellis’ closure would have a potentially damaging impact on the reputation of the Council and district as a whole.

Despite considerable revenue savings which would be obtained through closure, it was decided that the City Council would continue to operate the Dome, until such time as the outcome of the Morecambe promenade redevelopment is determined. This option also allows for a wider debate about performance venues in Morecambe, within the context of not only the Promenade Redevelopment but also the future of the Winter Gardens.

It was also agreed to commission a Dome condition survey to in order to identify additional capital and/or revenue implications for the continued use of the Dome.

- **Parks & Open Spaces**

Following from the work undertaken as part of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, Cultural Services undertook improvement projects in a number of its parks, including Regent Park and Happy Mount Park, with the latter achieving a Green Flag Award.

The following two schemes have been progressed during 2007/2008 to provide the Council with an opportunity to test out alternative and innovative approaches to the management of parks and open spaces:

- **Happy Mount Park**

Work has been undertaken to support the enhanced “partnership” with the private sector and to encourage further private sector investment and development in Happy Mount Park. This is known as the Private model.

- **Highfield Recreation Ground**

Here, work has also been undertaken to support a community management model. This has involved working together with the Highfield Association to secure external funding (only available to community groups) that would bring the tennis courts and pavilion back into operation and under community management. Subject to final approval at a later date, there exists the possibility of a “pilot” community management model which, if successful, could be rolled out to other parks within the District.

Having received Council approval, work will continue to progress the respective “partnership” proposals in respect of Happy Mount Park (private) and Highfield



Recreation Ground (community), with a view to bringing either or both proposals forward to a future meeting of Cabinet for final consideration and approval.

### **Holiday Activity Programme**

Cultural Services Holiday Activity Programmes (rural and urban) attracted a record level of participation, with a significant number of courses having a 100% take-up rate.

The Holiday Programmes, which include the Summer Playschemes, operated throughout the District, utilising not only the Council's own sports, arts and cultural facilities, but also community based facilities in both the rural and urban locations. The programmes have an emphasis on participation and continue to target opportunities to disadvantaged people, such as those with disabilities.

### **Sports and Physical Activities Strategy**

This Strategy is a three year plan formulated by Lancaster's Sport & Physical Activity Partnership (SPAP) consisting of 18 individuals representing Lancaster City Council, the Primary Care Trust, Education, Older People Partnership, Diversity Forum, Lancashire County Council and the private and voluntary sector. The SPAP is a sub-group of the wider Health & Wellbeing Forum, which is a building block of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The partnership, which has been recommended an award of £219,000 from Sport England, is anticipating that it will gear in a total expenditure budget of £547,000 (which includes financial and in-kind contributions from a range of partners).

The above funding will underpin the delivery of four projects. The first is an extensive programme of sports and physical activities delivered across the Lancaster District working with a range of delivery partners. All of the partners identified as part of the programme currently provide opportunities for the 16+ age group and therefore all participants will have exit routes into sustainable activities.

The second project will use low to moderate sport and physical activity at targeted groups with a particular emphasis on older people over 55yrs and health referrals. The project will work across the community to develop and deliver the sport and physical activity opportunities that are appropriate to the groups. This part of the scheme will hopefully be a stepping stone for older people to engage in more vigorous activities within the Sporting Activity Programme.

The project will also develop an Exercise Referral Scheme for the district and will target via GPs and Practice Nurses adults who are at risk of coronary heart disease and people who are obese. This external investment will provide funding for the new post of Exercise Referral Manager (3-year fixed term full-time post) who will be employed by Lancaster City Council and link to the Sport & Physical Activity Officers who will also support this scheme. Lancaster City Council will enter into a Service Level Agreement with the North Lancashire Primary Care Trust as they wish to commission us to deliver this element of the project.

It is envisaged that this scheme will expand in the future to allow referrals from school nurses linked to childhood obesity and offer cardiac rehabilitation etc. There is also an opportunity to draw down further funding to support this expansion.

The third project will address anti-social behaviour and juvenile nuisance as this has been highlighted as a priority through the Lancaster Community Safety Partnership and more specifically is set out as a key objective within the Community Safety Strategy.

Lancaster's Sport & Physical Activity Strategy and the Sport and Physical Activity Partnership has been identified as the key delivery mechanism for supporting this objective. This project has been developed to respond to that challenge.

The project will be to design and deliver appropriate diversionary activities at times when the juvenile nuisance is at its highest e.g. evening and weekends in the 'hot spots'. The project will be delivered in partnership with key agencies such as, Police, Youth Offending Teams and GRIP, etc. The project will allow for young people to be specifically referred on to the programme via these agencies. The project will target young people in the age range of 11-19yrs.

This project will provide up to 2 hours of activity per week over a 2-year period in up to 5 locations. The project will create partnerships with such organisations as Youth & Community Services, YMCA, Signposts and Morecambe's Neighbourhood Management Areas, Marsh Community Centre, Ridge Community Centre, Skerton Community, Ludus Dance, the Dukes, More Music, Regent Park Studios, Morecambe Football Club and a number of secondary schools.

Information and advice on exit routes and further opportunities, will be provided and young people will be supported and encouraged to take up regular activities.

The fourth project 'Hit for Six' will build upon the strong infrastructure of local cricket, to provide an alternative activity and will particularly target adults and young people who considered themselves to have a limiting disability and adults and young people from black and minority ethnic groups. The sport will also be used to try and engage girls (alternative sports) into community sport. The project will appoint a full-time cricket coach (Employed by Lancashire Cricket Board (LCB) but based with Lancaster City Council) who will work in a school and community setting and work closely with the Lancaster District Cricket Development Forum. Lancaster City Council will enter into a Service Level Agreement with the Lancashire Cricket Board, as they will be delivering this project.

Hit for Six will also seek to increase the number of volunteers volunteering in community settings and the number of coaches delivering cricket across the district of Lancaster. Indeed the long-term sustainability of this piece of work will rely on an increase in volunteer support and improved club structures/coaching opportunities,

not just within cricket clubs but opportunities to play cricket at youth clubs, community centres etc

### **The Dukes Theatre**

Much consideration has been given to the continued support of the Dukes Theatre's transition to a Revised Business Model.

The Dukes is regarded as a theatre of local and regional significance and is supported by the Arts Council England (ACE), Lancashire County Council and Lancaster City Council. The Dukes Theatre is an integral part of the District's Cultural offer to residents and visitors, through its youth and school work – Dukes Youth Theatre (known as DT3), and its Promenade Productions at Williamson's Park, etc.

Subjected to an Arts Council grant cut of £250,000, The Dukes Board, via its Change Project Team, has made significant progress in difficult circumstances to achieve the outcomes of its revised business model. To see that process through to a successful conclusion the Dukes requires the continued support of its key strategic partners (ACE, Lancashire County Council and Lancaster City Council).

A reduction or withdrawal of the City Council's funding support to the Dukes Theatre would not only jeopardise its revised business model but also threaten its existence. It would likely produce a domino effect in respect of support funding that the other partners (Arts Council England and Lancashire County Council) make, not only to the Dukes, but to the whole arts offer and other arts revenue clients within the Lancaster District.

### **Consideration of a cultural services – Trust (NPDO)**

This year has seen plans to develop an appraisal of the allocation of Cultural Services under a Cultural Trust rejected almost unanimously by Cabinet. The context for undertaking an appraisal of a Cultural Services NPDO/Trust took into account factors such as the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), the Government's Agenda of Improved and Innovative Service Delivery Models and the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA).

The decision as to whether Officers should investigate and evaluate a Not for Profit Distributing Organisation (NPDO/Trust) option for the whole of Cultural Services was for Cabinet to determine initially, subject to the budget and planning process. The principle of establishing a Not for Profit Distributing Organisation (NPDO/Trust) for Cultural Services was not adopted. Having rejected the principle of a Cultural Trust for Cultural Services, a future challenge for the Council will be to ensure value for money is being achieved under current arrangements, addressing the Audit Commission's agenda of continual improvement, and respond to the need to evaluate alternative delivery models.

### **Williamson Park Company Ltd**

Williamson Park continues to attract large numbers of visitors per year and won the Green Flag award in Summer 2007. However, the park continues to present certain difficulties regarding the future management arrangements of the Company.

With Council support, Williamson Park retained its existing company status but with support arrangements formalised through service level agreements.

### **Festivals & Events**

Cultural Services has continued their involvement in delivering in a range of Festival and Events, such as the Lancaster Jazz Festival, the Morecambe Heritage Gala, Glasson Maritime Weekend and the Firework Spectacular, etc. Working in partnership, via the Festivals Innovation Fund (FIF), the Service has supported a number of other festivals, such as;- the Kite Festival, Hurdy Gurdy, Tuti-Frutti, One Planet, and Nice 'N' Sleazy, etc.

### **Joint meeting between Lancaster City Council and Lancashire County Council re; - the 'Youth Offer'**

As Lancaster City Council's Portfolio Holder for Cultural Services and Children and Young People, in February 2008, I arranged for Head of Cultural Services and myself to meet with our counterparts in Lancashire County Council (County Councillor Marcus Johnson, and the County's Head of Youth & Community Services) to discuss the opportunities for more effective work within two-tier authorities, specifically in relation to the "Youth Offer".

The rationale for the meeting was two fold;-

- The County Council's decision to reorganise the Youth & Community Services into the Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS) amalgamated with the Connexions Service.
- A view that the former Youth and Community Services within two-tier authority arrangement was not effective and should be more closely aligned with the City Council's objectives via Cultural Services.

Although there will not be any immediate changes Lancashire County Council responded by suggesting that the appropriate mechanisms to advance such proposals was through the emerging Local Children's Trust and the Local Area Agreements (LAA).

### **Diversionsary Activities and Partnership working**

Recent developments have taken place to encourage a coordinated approach to the provision of diversionary activities and youth work deployment carried out in partnership with the Police, County Council and Cultural services. As a result of this, a forum will be set up to bring together key partners working in youth provision with the aim to help to address anti-social behaviour issues across the district.

### **Existing partnership arrangements with Lancashire County Council**

The partnership arrangements between Lancaster City Council and Lancashire County Council in respect of Swimming Services and Museums Services have continued over 2007/2008. Lancaster City Council manages the swimming services on behalf of the County Council to all the schools within the district, whilst Lancashire County Council manages Museums services on behalf of the City Council. It is proposed that the 2008/2009 Business Plan for Cultural Services should include a review of the partnership arrangements.

### **CONCLUSION**

The development of a Play Strategy and a Sports and Physical Activity Strategy have resulted in the award of more than £500,000 external funding to the District. The Sports and Physical Activity Strategy will lead to further increases in participation via a GP Exercise Referral Scheme, and a Sports & Arts Diversionary Activities Programme. As well as the above contributions, the Service continues to play a key role in raising the profile and reputation of the District in staging a series of music concerts, including; the Arctic Monkeys, Athlete, Reverend & the Makers, the Kooks, and the Fratellis.

This annual report acknowledges the increasing role and influence that Cultural Services has on the wider social and economic agendas, in terms of health and well-being, regeneration, community engagement, economic impact and civic pride.

Subject to the City Council continuing to demonstrate its commitment and support for Cultural Services then indications are that further partnership opportunities, involving other major strategic stakeholders such as the PCT and the LAA, etc., should see Cultural Services continue to successfully lever in significant additional external funding to the benefit of the whole District.

## **PERSONNEL – PROGRESS DURING 2007/08**

**Key highlights for 2007/2008 include;-**

- **People Strategy and Workforce Development Plan**

During 2007/08 the Service has produced a People Strategy and Workforce Development Plan which included a review of the HR Strategy. The People Strategy and Workforce Development Plan is an overarching document which brings together these plans together with plans for the delivery of a number of the council's key priorities which have significant people management or development issues.

- **Fair Pay Process**

The major task for HR during the year has been the continued implementation of the Fair Pay process. Job evaluation briefings and interviews have been completed in all services and the results have been through a rigorous and time-consuming moderation process. The next stage is to develop the new pay and grading structure and to negotiate this with the Trade Unions with a view to implementation in November 2008.

- **Sickness Absence**

The Service has worked hard to provide support to Services in order to reduce sickness absence. The improvement made in previous years has been maintained and it is anticipated that the overall outcome for the year will be an improvement on last year.

- **LiP Accreditation**

Following the achievement last year of liP recognition for CC(D)S, the whole Council has been assessed in February and we are now awaiting the outcome.

- **Customer Care Training**

A significant Customer Care Training Programme has commenced with front line staff. Eventually this will be delivered to all staff throughout the Council.

- **Child Care measures**

The Service has selected a company to provide child care vouchers for staff. These will be available from April.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this area of the brief, full acknowledgement must be given to all those who have been involved and have given their time and commitment to the Fair Pay process. For a large organisation such as the City Council, this process has been extensive and time-consuming and the dedication of both staff and Officers across all Services throughout this continuing process has been highly commendable.

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