

EXECUTIVE MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT – 2008/09

COUNCILLOR EILEEN BLAMIRE, CABINET MEMBER WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR

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



1 INTRODUCTION

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

2 EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP:

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

3 EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES etc:

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

4 OVERVIEW OF PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES

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

CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITY OUTCOMES:

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

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

Reduce domestic violence:

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

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

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

Improve economic prosperity throughout the district:

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

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

- *Implement the Cycling Demonstration Town Programme.*

5 PROGRESS MADE DURING 2008/9:

Community Safety

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Civil Contingencies

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

Emergency Planning

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

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

Business Continuity

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

Strategic Planning and Planning Enforcement

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

Cycling Demonstration Town Project (CDT)

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

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

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