



**LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL**

*Promoting City, Coast & Countryside*

# **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11**

*March 2011*



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

Most members probably associate Overview and Scrutiny with cabinet decision call-ins, but as this report shows, the committee has a much wider scope. Call-in is not something to be encouraged, but it is essential for it to be available as a check by non-executive members on the executive. For most of this year there were no call-ins, but suddenly in March two came in consecutive weeks. As Chair, I received a number of requests for waiving the right of call-in; I granted most of these since they arose from the need to implement urgent administrative decisions, which otherwise would invoke extra charges, loss of grants or loss of amenities. The one I refused concerned changes in fees and charges, which although part of the budget must be decided by Cabinet, I felt that non-executive members should be allowed at least some indirect input into this and it was indeed called in.

A matter of great concern to most members was that of winter gritting, which fell considerably short of adequate provision in the severe winter of 2009-10. This is the County Council's responsibility so the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested a joint task group with County to deal with the problem. This was refused because County had planned a full review of winter gritting, in which they consulted widely with districts and which resulted in a collaborative programme.

A number of organisations were invited through the year to explain how their activities affect Council services. Of particular interest for an historic city like Lancaster was the presentation by English Heritage in which they described the criteria for listing. The Probation Service gave an interesting account of 'good news stories' achieved by the Community Payback Scheme, in which offenders, accompanied by a supervisor, carry out unpaid work on grot spots in the district.

The Parish Council Funding Task Group had produced an interim report in January in which the rationalisation of overlapping services such as allotments, CCTV, flower beds and playgrounds was proposed; Council accepted the recommendations except the last of these, which has been implemented by the Head of Environmental Services during this year. Further work to examine the practicalities of the programme is ongoing. Apart from this, a final meeting of the task group tied up the loose ends.

The 'Barriers to becoming a councillor' task group report had one interesting outcome in that a southern county council requested a copy of the proposed information pack for employers on civic roles; unfortunately there has not yet been time to produce this.

The scoping for a new task group 'Achieving affordable housing on publicly owned land has been ready for some time, but is being held back because of the expectation of new government legislation.

Finally I would like to thank the members of the committee and task groups for their support and the officers, mainly Stephen Metcalfe and Liz Bateson, who was replaced halfway through by Jenny Kay when Liz was moved to other duties, for their hard work and dedication.

***Councillor John Gilbert***  
***Chairman Overview and Scrutiny Committee***

## Statistics and Overview

This report sets out the work undertaken by Lancaster City Council under the Scrutiny powers (as set out in the Local Government Act 2000) during the municipal year 2010/11. This Annual Report has been produced on behalf of the whole Overview and Scrutiny process at Lancaster City Council and maps the work of Overview and Scrutiny against the Council's objectives and core values, and highlights where work has been carried out to underpin and support each of these elements.

### Key Achievements

Maintaining a reduced number of Call-ins	Attendance of cabinet members throughout the municipal year
Attendance of stakeholders / external witnesses at task group meetings	Continued public involvement in Overview and Scrutiny
Further development of pre-decision scrutiny	Development of new procedures/processes to deal with new legislation

### Key Areas for Improvement

Scrutiny of LDLSP/Thematic Groups	Performance Management
Crime and Disorder Scrutiny	Maintaining public and media interest

### Statistics 2010/11

STATISTIC	TOTAL 2004/5	TOTAL 2005/6	TOTAL 2006/7	TOTAL 2007/8	TOTAL 2008/9	TOTAL 2009/10	TOTAL 2010/11
No. of Meetings (incl. Budget and Performance Panel and Task Groups)	31	41	53	39	37	35	22
No. of Site Visits	NC	5	5	20	10	2	3
No. of Call-ins (Cabinet decisions)	6	2	3	1	4*	2	2
No. of Issues for Pre-Decision Scrutiny	2	2	12	NC	17	17	6
No. of Referrals from Cabinet/Council	NC	4	2	1	2	1	3
No. of Referrals to Cabinet/Council	22	15	11	12	11	11	5
No. of Cabinet Members held to account	NC	1	8	6	10	10	6#
% Recommendations adopted from Scrutiny Reviews and Task Groups	91%	86%	88%	84%	86%	82%	88%

- NC – Not Collected.
- \* 3 Cabinet decisions and 1 Officer delegated decision.
- # There have been 2 vacancies on Cabinet and 2 Cabinet Members have resigned throughout the year.

## Pre-Decision Scrutiny

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

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

Throughout the year Councillor Bray, Pre-decision Scrutiny Champion, has met with Officers in Democratic Support to determine whether any further clarification should be sought following on from revisions to the Forward Plan and the Committee have been advised of any updates/clarification at subsequent Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings.

In 2010/11 one of the issues raised was the Performance Reward Grant (PRG). The information provided in the Forward Plan advised that Cabinet was being asked to approve the Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership's (LDLSP's) intended use of Performance Reward Grant (In accordance with the agreed protocol for its use). The Pre-decision Scrutiny Champion queried what the 'intended use' of the LDLSP referred to. Officers in Democratic Support referred the issue to Community Engagement for clarification.



The Pre-decision Scrutiny Champion was happy that the detail contained within Key Decision notices in the Forward Plan.

The report to Cabinet advised that the provision of Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) in the district is currently under threat as a result of financial pressures. Cabinet was informed that it may therefore be appropriate to request that the LDLSP reviews its proposals for the

use of PRG funds in the light of the current economic situation to ensure that funding is allocated against the most current district priorities and can achieve maximum impact.

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Membership:** Councillors John Gilbert (Chairman), Susan Bray (Vice-chairman), Val Histed, Karen Leytham, Roger Plumb, Bob Roe, Roger Sherlock, Jude Towers and Morgwn Trolinger

### Introduction

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

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

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

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

During 2010/11 the Committee has called-in 2 Cabinet decisions, scrutinised a number of issues, and work has either commenced or been ongoing on 3 Task Groups. Both the Barriers to Becoming a Councillor and Parish Council Funding Task Groups were established in the previous municipal year and have now completed their work. The Older Peoples' Task Group is now in the process of producing an Interim Report. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee also requested that an Affordable Housing Task Group be created, however, so far, the Government has not issued any clear information on affordable housing therefore the Task Group cannot yet commence its work.

More information with regard to the Task Groups can be found on page 21.

The Call-ins considered by the Committee are listed in the 'Call-in' section of the report on page 12. An indication of the Committee's Work Programme for 2010/11 is set out below and further information can be found in the Overview and Scrutiny minutes available on the Council's website: [www.lancaster.gov.uk](http://www.lancaster.gov.uk)

## **Discussions with the Chief Executive**

In June the Chief Executive attended the Committee meeting. It was noted that the Chief Executive had been invited to explain a decision which he had made in relation to the procedure for obtaining external legal advice.

The Chief Executive confirmed that following on from his attendance at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2009 the Committee had requested the Monitoring Officer to report on options to revise the existing protocol on member's access to information and the Council Business Committee approved an amendment to the constitution at their meeting in March 2010.

With regard to the procedure for obtaining legal advice the Chief Executive advised that when this had arisen at a Cabinet briefing he had decided to investigate this issue further and having consulted with the Head of Legal Services subsequently produced a report for the 7 members of the Appraisal Panel.

It was noted that the procedure depended on the issues considered and the nature of legal advice required. For external expertise a written brief would generally be produced for Counsel with Counsel's opinion obtained in writing and made available to elected members taking a decision based on that advice. Reference was made to other situations where external legal advice might be obtained through conference or telephone conversations and might not need to be followed up in writing on every occasion.

## **Winter Maintenance**

All Members of Council had been invited for this presentation, the purpose of which was to recommend to Cabinet a response to inform Lancashire County Council's review of winter service provisions. The severe weather conditions last year had encouraged the county council to review their arrangements and as part of the public realm discussions this included partnership working with the districts to see how to deliver improved services.

Lancashire County Council had invited a response on six issues. These are detailed as follows together with the Committee's recommendation, or an explanation of the action(s) taken:-



- Issue 1 - Districts to identify their 'top ten' requests for additional primary routes for consideration for inclusion in 2010/11.

It was reported that these proposals had already been submitted for consideration. Of the routes suggested for inclusion Bridge Road, Lancaster was accepted and Lancaster Bus Station would also be included. The other suggested routes would be considered for provision of grit bins where not already provided. The county council would be undertaking a full route optimisation for the following year and there might be an opportunity to feed into this.

It was recommended that Cabinet request that the City Council has the opportunity to contribute at an early stage to the 2011/12 route optimisation process.



- Issue 2 - Districts invited to identify their priority secondary routes

Overview and Scrutiny recommended that Cabinet request that County's area based officers be given discretion to divert, based on local needs, resources to secondary routes if necessary.

- Issue 3 - Districts invited to identify land that they have to store a rock salt/grit mixture for use on footways / grit bins which will be supplied by the County

It was recommended that Cabinet be advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree in principle that space could be allocated at the White Lund depot for the rock salt/grit mixture supplied by county.

- Issue 4 - Districts invited to identify if they are willing to apply the material when/where required

It was recommended that Cabinet be advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee broadly support this proposal but recognise that this is the responsibility of the county council and that the involvement of the city council needs to be clearly defined with the city council deciding when and where this involvement starts and concludes.

- Issue 5 - Districts invited to indicate whether they are able to offer mutual aid to clear / treat snow/ice when services are unable to carry out district functions due to weather conditions.

It was recommended that Cabinet be advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee broadly support this proposal.

- Item 6 - Districts invited to indicate if they would become involved in handling customer calls.

Overview and Scrutiny recommended that Cabinet be advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would support the City Council's involvement in handling customer calls but would expect to be compensated if this involves additional work and resource requirements.

It was agreed that these recommendations be included in the Head of Environmental Services report on Winter Maintenance for consideration by Cabinet at their next meeting.

### **English Heritage**

Representatives from English Heritage came to the meeting in July to discuss the criteria and process for listing buildings and also detailing the English Heritage grants programme. The purpose of the discussion was to increase the Committee's knowledge of heritage rather than discussing specific local matters.



The meeting was advised of designations which included listing, related assessments and other designations. It was noted that listing was applicable to all buildings considered to be of special architectural and historic interest.

Buildings were assessed in the national context and the designation covered the whole building. Approximately 90% of listed buildings were Grade II.

Members were also advised of related assessments with reference made to the Building Preservation Notice and Certificate of Immunity. Other designations included scheduling and registration (including parks and gardens).



Clarification was then provided on the roles of English Heritage, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Local Planning Authority in the process.

English Heritage has produced a series of guidance on specific building types, available on their website including guidance on industrial, commercial, entertainment, domestic and agricultural buildings.

It was also reported that English Heritage had a statutory duty to seek the preservation of listed buildings and one way of addressing this was through offering grants. The basis for assessment included the financial need for a grant, the urgency of the work required and the long-term viability of the historic asset. Wider benefits were also taken into account including economic regeneration, training and skills development, visitor access and interpretation, social and economic benefits for the wider community etc.



An indication of the various grants was then provided. These included the Historic Buildings, Monuments and Designed Landscapes grants. This was restricted to Grade I or II\* listed building, scheduled ancient monument or a Grade I or II\* Registered Park and Garden. It was noted that both Morecambe Winter Gardens and more recently Cockersand Abbey had benefitted from this grant.

Reference was made to the Repair Grants for Places of Worship, a joint scheme with Heritage Lottery Fund and the recent grant to St John in Silverdale and the War Memorial grants for those responsible for the upkeep of war memorials.

Further information on English Heritage can be found on their website: [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

### **Progress on the Implementation of the recommendations of the Anti Social Behaviour Task Group**

The Community Safety Officer provided an update on the Implementation of the recommendations of the Anti Social Behaviour Task Group. It was suggested that the situation had changed since the report was considered by Cabinet in January 2009.

The Committee was advised of PCSO's, the community payback scheme, reporting anti-social behaviour, diversionary activities including the LDLSP-funded sports and arts project and anti-social parking.



The Committee asked for clarification on the role of the civil enforcement officers and asked for a suggestion made by a member of the public regarding the possibility of explaining the

cost and impact on other services of anti-social behaviour to school children be forwarded to the Community Safety Partnership.

### **Presentation on Lancaster Square Routes Project**

In September the Committee received a presentation on Lancaster Square Routes. This is an initiative that had been tabled two years ago as it was perceived that the city centre was under performing in both economic and social terms with the key areas quite disconnected. Cabinet approval had been sought to draw up design proposals to address a series of key routes and spaces to improve the experience of residents and visitors alike.

It was suggested that this clearly linked with the item on anti-social behaviour as there were a number of areas within the city centre where the public might feel uncomfortable at certain parts of the day.



Gillespies a leading landscape design consultancy had produced outline proposals based on three themes: Lore and Legends, Georgian Gem and City Park and reference was made to the public consultation exercise that had been undertaken to seek comments. Cabinet had agreed that Market Street should be a priority and the final proposals would be presented to Cabinet shortly. Display boards were available to be viewed at the meeting.



In response to questions as to how the proposed designs might help deter incidents of anti-social behaviour reference was made to Market Square and the current shaded, secluded seating facilities. It was anticipated that the proposed improvements would make the area more animated and attractive to residents, families and visitors would lead to the dispersal of the anti-social element and have a positive impact on both the day time and night time economy.

Economic Regeneration had been identified as a main corporate priority for 2010-13 with Lancaster Square Routes project a means towards achieving this.



The Committee welcomed the Lancaster Square Routes design proposals, noted the social and environmental benefits, the positive contribution to both the day and night time economy and the potential to provide an effective means of deterring elements of anti-social behaviour.

### **Civic Review Implementation**

The report of the Civic Task Group had been considered by Council in December 2006.

Progress in implementing the recommendations had been tracked by the Council Business Committee since the decisions of Council with general update reports keeping track of progress and specific reports on options where appropriate enabling the Committee to make

decisions where changing circumstances have required a change of direction. In some instances initial investigations identified obstacles or highlighted other opportunities and these were reported to the Council Business Committee to allow Members to provide a further steer or to consider some alternative suggestions.

The review of the civic function within the City Council provided an opportunity to update and review the practices and events, some of which have remained unchanged for many years. Some of the proposals have proved either difficult to implement or unpopular with those who wish to maintain the tradition of the Mayoralty but many of the changes made have been well received. The focus of the Mayoralty and civic events continues to be reviewed to ensure that it continues to be relevant as well as upholding traditions. In particular since this review was undertaken there has been a substantial reduction in the budget available which has meant that every event continues to be regularly evaluated to ensure that it provides value for money.



Members welcomed the comprehensive report and review of the implementation of the agreed recommendations.

### **Crime and Disorder**



As in the previous year in October the Committee met in its capacity as the Council's designated crime and disorder committee in accordance with the Police and Justice Act 2006 and Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009.

Councillor Blamire was also in attendance at the meeting in her capacity as Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Safety.

The Community Safety Officer gave a presentation to the Committee on the Lancaster District CSP, which began with an overview of the 'good news stories' which had been identified by the partnership and an overview of the CSP's current projects.

The Community Payback Practice Manager, Probation Service, had been invited to attend the meeting and advised of the National Probation Service's Community Payback Scheme. The scheme aimed to both punish and rehabilitate, as well as challenge the anti-social behaviour of offenders and make them aware of their impact both on victims and the local community. Groups of offenders accompanied by a skilled supervisor onto the worksite. The scheme aimed to teach offenders to have pride in their local area, and to take ownership of the areas in which they worked.

The sites were chosen in consultation with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), and the local community also had a say in which projects they would like tackled in the local area. Over a 12 month period 14981 hours of unpaid work had been completed in Lancaster and Morecambe, and this equated to £89,286.72 of minimum wage labour.

Through the CSP from September 2009 to September 2010, 6705 hours of unpaid work had been completed, which equated to £39,961.80 of minimum wage labour. This was far in excess of the amount of funding which the Community Safety Partnership received from the Council. All projects completed under the community payback scheme was work that would otherwise not have been undertaken.

## **Presentation on Playgrounds**

Members were reminded that the Committee had requested suggestions for the current Work Programme last summer. One of the suggestions had come from Kaitlin Wisdom, a schoolgirl, who had contacted the Council regarding the play area at Priory Close and the issues surrounding it. Kaitlin attended the January meeting, with other members of her family.

The Head of Environmental Services gave the Committee an update on the implementation of the Playground policy that had been a result of the Review and Audit of Parish Councils Task Group.



The policy was to provide quality play areas and not quantity focusing on core play areas in the district. Members were reminded that significant capital had been invested in the districts play areas over the last few years with both external and Council funding. The proposed capital budget for 2011/12 was £60,000 but would need to be agreed at Budget Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2011.

With regard to the play area on Priory Close, it was not seen as a priority in terms of the policy, but it was recognised that there would always be very specific local circumstances that residents would be best placed to identify and the Council's policy was flexible enough to deal with these. It was suggested that it would be a sensible approach to invest in such play areas that were brought to the Council's attention if there was sufficient evidence they would be used by the local children.

Members discussed the issues raised by letter regarding Priory Close and the current state of the small play area and also the larger one in the vicinity that officers had been planning to improve, but was not being used by some children because of anti social behaviour issues.

It was agreed that, subject to the Budget Council meeting allocating capital funds to the playground improvements budget, a special meeting of the Committee be arranged inviting representatives from the Police and members of the public to discuss all play areas in the district, to ascertain if there were any other such local circumstances that residents were aware of that should be considered and that the Committee would then consider making recommendations to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for play areas on the capital budget allocated to playground improvements, or any other specific issues that may arise from the special meeting.

At the special meeting in March it was recommended that officers be requested to consider the information obtained prior to and at the meeting and that this be reported back to the Committee at a future meeting on how these issues can be taken forward and that the issue of playground improvements be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for the new Municipal Year and that a similar event be held in Lancaster.

## Call-in and Holding Cabinet to Account

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

The choice to 'Call-in' a Cabinet decision is used sparingly at Lancaster City Council, and with care. The procedure ensures that, if necessary, decisions or proposals made by the Cabinet, a Cabinet Member, a Cabinet Committee, an Officer with delegated authority, or under joint arrangements can be thoroughly examined, amendments proposed, and full debate entered into by all Members. It is the view of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that Call-ins are only used in **exceptional circumstances**. 'Exceptional circumstances' are where Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have evidence which suggests that the decision in question has not been made in accordance with the principles set out in Article 13 'Decision Making' of the Council's Constitution.

### Call-ins 2010/11

This year there have been 2 requests to Call-in a Cabinet decision. Details are provided below:

#### (1) Wellbeing Fees and Charges – March 2011



Members called in a Cabinet decision with regard to Wellbeing Fees and Charges on the grounds that it had not been made in accordance with a number of the principles of Decision Making, in particular proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome), due consultation and the taking of professional advice from Officers, a presumption in favour of openness, aims and desired outcomes will be clearly expressed and that the options that were considered and the reasons for arriving at the decision will be explained. After some discussion the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to the following recommendation:

That the Cabinet decision on Wellbeing fees and charges be upheld and that there be no referral back to Cabinet.

#### (2) Lancaster Market – March 2011



Members called in a Cabinet decision with regard to Lancaster Market on the grounds that it had not been made in accordance with a number of the principles of Decision Making, in particular proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome), due consultation and the taking of professional advice from Officers, a presumption in favour of openness, aims and desired outcomes will be clearly expressed and that the options that were considered and the reasons for arriving at the decision will be explained. After some discussion the following recommendation was agreed by the Committee:

That the Cabinet decision on Lancaster Market be upheld and that there be no referral back to Cabinet.

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

At the first meeting of every municipal year Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree who will undertake the role of Cabinet Liaison Member for each member of cabinet although committee members are not permitted to 'shadow' a cabinet member of the same political group. The purpose of this appointment is to help keep the Committee informed of issues within individual Cabinet portfolios. Judging from the limited feedback reported during Updates throughout the year it has proved difficult for Committee members to meet with their respective Cabinet members.

Cabinet members with corresponding Cabinet Liaison Members for 2010/11 are set out below:

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Cabinet Liaison Member</b>
Councillor Langhorn	Councillor Roe
Councillor Ashworth	Councillor Gerrard
Councillor Barry	Councillor Sherlock
Councillor Blamire	Councillor Trolinger
Councillor Bryning	Councillor Plumb
Councillor Fletcher/ J. Whitelegg	Councillor Gilbert
Councillor Kerr	Councillor Towers
Councillor Woodruff/ Robinson	Councillor Histed

As can be seen in the table there have been a number of changes in membership.

The Committee values the opportunity to discuss portfolio issues with Cabinet Members and in developing the work programme every attempt is made to ensure that Cabinet Members are invited to meetings where the agenda items are relevant to their portfolio areas. Cabinet Members will have attended at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee by the end of the municipal year, and the majority of Cabinet Members will also have attended a Budget and Performance Panel meeting.

With regard to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Leader of the Council attended June's meeting to discuss the Corporate Plan and the allocation of portfolios. Councillors Blamire and Bryning attended September's meeting. Councillor Blamire provided an update on developments within the Community Safety portfolio and Councillor Bryning provided the Committee with an outline of his portfolio which included responsibility for a number of projects. November's meeting was dedicated to Crime and Disorder issues which Councillor Blamire (Community Safety) attended as Cabinet portfolio holder. Councillor Ashworth attended the December meeting of the Committee and provided an outline of her portfolio which included responsibility for Children and Young People, Tourism and Community Engagement (Wellbeing). Unfortunately Councillor Fletcher was unable to attend the December meeting and it was agreed that she be invited to attend the January meeting, however at the January meeting it was reported that Councillor Fletcher had

resigned from Cabinet and it was requested that she attend a future meeting to discuss her work and portfolio whilst a Cabinet member, or if this was not possible submit a briefing note with details of the work she has undertaken in her time as a Cabinet member. Councillor Barry was also asked to attend the January meeting, but unfortunately, due to illness, was unable to attend the meeting. Both Councillors Barry and Kerr attended the March meeting of the Committee and discussed issues within their portfolio.

Councillors Ashworth and Barry, Cabinet Members with responsibility, were also invited and attended the Special Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in March regarding play area improvements.



## Urgent Business

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

Since the last annual report and the writing of this report, the procedure of waiving the right to Call-in decisions as a matter of Urgent Business by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny has been utilised on 9 occasions:



**Morecambe Football Club Globe Arena - a proposal for the early conveyance of land to assist with the financing of the Morecambe FC stadium development was dealt with as a matter of urgent business**

- ❑ Allocation of Affordable Housing S106 Contributions to Adactus Housing Association
- ❑ Artle Beck Flood Alleviation Works
- ❑ Land at Edenbreck Farm
- ❑ Sale of land at Scotforth Road
- ❑ Sports and Physical Activity – Funding Offer

On 1 occasion the Chairman advised the Chief Executive that he did not support waiving the right to call-in a decision. This related to Wellbeing Fees & Charges.

- ❑ Vacant Shops Funding: Approval of Funding for Childhood Festival
- ❑ Morecambe Football Club
- ❑ Application For Consideration Of Waiver Of The Repayment Of 'Right To Buy' Discount In Case Of Hardship
- ❑ Fireworks Event - Evening Parking Arrangements



**Artle Beck Flood Alleviation Works - the right to call-in was waived in order to allow a contractor to be appointed.**

## **Budget and Performance Panel**

**Membership:** Councillors Roger Sherlock (Chairman), John Whitelegg (Vice-Chairman until February 2011), Evelyn Archer, Roger Dennison, Jean Dent, Keran Farrow, Emily Heath (Vice-Chairman from February 2011), Tony Johnson and Elizabeth Scott

### **Foreword from the Chairman of Budget and Performance Panel**

This year the Budget and Performance Panel has scrutinised a wide range of issues which I have considered an important part of the Overview and Scrutiny process.

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

This report examines a summary of the panel's work from the past year. The panel has received regular reports from the Leader of the Council in respect of Performance Review Team meetings undertaken by individual Cabinet members, as well as Corporate Financial Monitoring reports from the Head of Financial Services.

The panel also considered a number of new issues. A resolution passed at Cabinet on 27 July 2010 requested that 'Budget and Performance Panel be requested to include a review of the Housing Revenue Account responsive repairs overspending within their work programme for 2010/11.' This will continue to be monitored in 2011/12.

Throughout the year Chief Officers have attended the meetings to advise on decisions relating to their services, and the panel has also invited external representatives to give evidence at meetings where required. Members have been instrumental in proposing ideas and initiatives to be included on the work programme.

Of particular interest to the panel were: the annual report from the Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership, and the update to the Sustainable Staff Travel Plan.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the panel for their support and input and officers from Democratic Support, particularly Jane Glenton and Tom Silvani for their continuing hard work and diligence.

An outline of the main issues considered by the Budget and Performance Panel in the municipal year 2010/11 is provided below.

***Councillor Roger Sherlock  
Chairman Budget and Performance Panel***

## **Corporate Performance Monitoring**

As required by the Council's Performance Management Framework, the Panel received regular reports on performance as part of the Performance Review Team cycle of meetings, and quarterly corporate performance monitoring reports, comprising strategic summaries of how the Council was performing in delivering its corporate plan targets, using exception information from the Performance Review Team meetings with individual Cabinet members. Over the year, Members were advised of the work being undertaken to achieve and monitor target delivery for corporate priority actions and savings. Areas of concern raised by the Panel were reported to Cabinet portfolio holders, and Service Heads were requested to respond regarding failing targets.

## **Annual Report**

The Panel received the report of the Corporate Performance Manager advising of the publication of the Annual Report 2009/10, which provided an overview of the Council and how it performed against targets set nationally for its services, the goals it set itself and its achievements in the last financial year.

The report showed some of the ways that the Council had made a positive difference in the district in 2009/10 and gave a taste of some of the human stories behind the statistics. It also advised that the Government had recently removed the legal duty to produce an Annual Report or Best Value Performance Plan. The Annual Report was the Council's key mechanism for reporting its performance to the public and had therefore been retained in the current year.

The Panel decided that the Annual Report should be used as a base line reference for considering the Council's performance in the coming year and to inform the future Work Programme of the Panel.

## **Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership Thematic Groups**

One of the seven objectives of the Member Development Strategy 2010-11 was to enable Members to gain more understanding of the Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership (LDLSP), and the Panel's terms of reference included scrutiny of the performance of the Partnership.

The Panel requested and later received an Annual Performance Report (2009/10) from the LDLSP in respect of delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). This report provided a performance update for 2009/10 based on the end of year reports from the thematic groups and also provided the end of year reviews of current LSP funded initiatives and an update of the LDLSP Management Group proposals for the use of Performance Reward Grant (PRG) allocated to the LDLSP from the Lancashire Partnership.

The Thematic Groups have made significant progress in delivering the priorities assigned to them and the Second Homes monies had been used for the activities that had enabled delivery. The LDLSP faces unknown challenges over the next few years due to the impact of the current economic climate, a reduction in funding levels/provision of resources and the withdrawal of partners from partnership funding.

The LSPs had recently been informed that the second instalment of PRG would no longer be available. The City Council, as accountable body for the LDLSP, had confirmed that £478,384 had been received and the Management Group had agreed to target PRG funding at the issues identified as of most concern across Lancashire, being referred to as 'Big

Ticket' issues: Health Inequalities, Climate Change, Affordable Housing and Worklessness and the Economy, adding a fifth one of Community Cohesion.

In 2010/11, there would be a refresh of the SCS and the PRG programme would be implemented. The LSP will be seeking to strengthen its performance management processes and increase its visibility amongst partners and the community.

The Panel has also requested that the Chair of the Children and Young People Thematic Group be asked to report to Budget and Performance Panel on the work undertaken by the Thematic Group in 2009/10 in respect of delivering the targets in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

### **Consideration of Sustainable Staff Travel Plan Update**

The Panel received an update on progress in considering the development of a sustainable staff travel plan. It was reported that there was an action under the Climate Change priority in the Council's Corporate Plan to deliver the appropriate actions from the Energy Savings Trust (EST) Green/Grey Fleet Review. Included in the Fleet Review were opportunities for reducing staff travel for business and other purposes.

Members were advised that the Council did not have a specific staff travel plan but had been developing this area through other Council strategies and policies – for example, cycling demonstration town and access to services.

Developing a travel plan would contribute towards delivering the Council's corporate priorities for Climate Change. To this end an officer working group had been established, comprising cross service representation from key services, and supported by the Council's Sustainability Co-ordinator. The working group reported into the Climate Change Cabinet Liaison Group, and was being co-ordinated through a number of sub-groups. One of these sub-groups had developed a framework for the draft policy for staff business travel, and this would be considered by the officer working group and management team before being referred to the cabinet liaison group.

The Panel requested that Cabinet consider a workplace travel plan including identification of the budgetary implications of undertaking this work. Officers had met with Lancaster University's Environment and Travel Co-ordinator to discuss their travel plan, as requested by the Panel.

The Panel received an update on these issues where it was advised that the Council's Corporate Plan made no provision for the delivery of a workplace travel plan, and that to produce a plan the Council would need to employ a full time officer to undertake the work.

### **Whole Life Costing in Procurement**

The Panel received the report of the Procurement Manager to provide an update on the use of Whole Life Costing (WLC) within the Council following a request from the Panel at its meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2010, that a report on progress to-date be presented in six months' time.

The Panel were advised that WLC referred to the total cost of ownership over the life of an asset, taking into account the costs which occurred after an asset had been constructed or acquired, such as maintenance, operation and disposal, and these were considerations when decision-making. The City Council had acknowledged that accepting the cheapest tender was not always in the best interests of the authority and the public it served. The Contract Procedure Rules had been amended to reflect that a Responsible Spending

Officer (RSO) could define criteria that provided for the most economically advantageous offer being determined where considerations other than purchase price also applied.

It was reported that officers were drawing together a programme of training to provide guidance on Sustainable Procurement for different levels of purchasing and it was planned that WLC would be included in this training. The Panel had requested that in line with existing frameworks and guidance, WLC considerations be covered in reviews of future Information Technology procurement.

### **Council Investments**

The Panel received information on the different types of investment that the Council may consider, and how the accounting and other financial implications vary.

Members had requested that the relevant officers consider invest to save schemes that would provide a greater rate of return than Council investments and report back to the Panel. The report had advised that there were fundamental differences between investments in treasury terms and invest to save schemes, which meant that it was not currently possible to consider invest to save arrangements as an alternative to other investments. A comparison of potential rates of return was not, therefore, a relevant consideration in formulating treasury strategies.

The Panel were advised that councils across Britain were now able to sell renewable electricity to the grid and discussed this as a potential for investment, however the City Council's present capital position was already faced with significant pressure and there were major risks attached to various regeneration schemes and land sales to generate income.

Members were advised that the City Council needed to create capacity to determine a programme for capital investment that was affordable, prudent and sustainable, in accordance with the CIPFA Prudential Code.

It was also reported that Climate Change was one of the Council's priorities and was contributing to the wider climate change agenda through its links with the Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership (LDLSP). The Climate Change Strategy set out actions that the City Council would take, or consider taking, to tackle Climate Change in the district, including reducing energy use, reducing carbon emissions from Council buildings, and working with partners, including the Energy Saving Trust and the LDLSP to develop and assist in the implementation of local climate change action plans.

The Panel agreed to request reports back to a future meeting of the Panel on various issues discussed.

### **Council Housing Responsive Repairs Budget**

The Panel received an update which provided Members with information relating to the overspend on the Council Housing Responsive Repair Budget for 2009/10. The report highlighted the actions that would be taken to monitor the expenditure in 2010/11.

Members were advised of the statutory obligations the Council had, as landlord, to carry out repairs to the Council's housing stock and relevant legislation. These included keeping the structure and exterior of the dwelling in repair, keeping the installations for supply of water, gas, electricity and sanitation in proper working order and keep the installations for space heating and water heating in proper working order.

In 2009/10 there had been an overspend because there had been a considerable increase in the number of void properties. As Council Housing Services had identified the void turnaround as a top priority within its business plan in order to maximise rental income, this work had been undertaken as a priority to allow properties to be re-let as soon as possible. Other contributors to the overspend were issues such as lift repairs, high levels of sickness resulting in external contractors being employed and emergency repairs to boilers.

The Panel were advised of the measures which were being implemented to improve monitoring and control of expenditure of the responsive repairs budget in 2010/11. The Panel discussed the incentive scheme for tenants which currently paid £75 if they kept their property in good repair prior to leaving. It was suggested that this could be raised to £100 as a pilot for a year.

### **Budget and Policy Framework Proposals for 2010/11**

At its Budget meeting in February, the Panel and stakeholders received a detailed presentation by the Leader of the Council on Cabinet's budget and policy framework proposals for 2011/12, and were advised of the draft set of priorities that had been used by Cabinet to drive the budget process. The economic climate had impacted on the Council's priority setting, and the budget had been set to reflect the impact of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) on funding levels, and many savings had had to be identified.

The Council's efficiency and savings proposals were also outlined; the bulk of the savings which were required had been made through efficiencies linked to draft priorities. In addition, potentially up to £2M would be available to support invest to save schemes, such as energy efficiency proposals. The Leader answered extensive questions from the Panel and stakeholders.

### **Presentation of Budget Proposals by Lancashire County Council**

At its Budget meeting in February, the Panel and stakeholders received a report and detailed presentation from the County Council's Director for Resources on County's budget proposals for 2011/12.

The Panel were advised that the County Council's budget was facing similar issues and processes to those occurring at the City Council. The County Council anticipated having to make £179M in savings over the next 3 years, which represented a reduction of one quarter of the annual budget. The reasons for this were the reduction in funding from central government and significant increases in costs. The County Council's overriding priority was to protect vulnerable members of the community.

A large proportion of these savings had been identified as 'below the line' savings which would reduce the management and administration costs of the Council, without impacting on services. Over a three year period 'below the line' savings were estimated to generate over £55M. Savings from service efficiencies were estimated at approximately £12M over the same period of time. Reductions in services would amount to approximately £97M, and would affect a broad range of services and areas.

The County Council's Director for Resources answered extensive questions from the Panel and stakeholders who raised issues.

The Director for Resources assured the Panel that these comments would be fed back to the County Council's Cabinet, and would be considered as part of the County Council's revenue budget and capital investment strategy consultation process.

## Task Groups

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

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

The Barriers to being a Councillor Task Group and the Review and Audit of Parish Council Funding Task Group both completed their work during the municipal year. With the Older People's Task Group referring its Draft Strategy to the Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership to conclude. Further detail on these task groups is provided below.

### Older People's Task Group

**Members:** *Councillors, John Barnes (Chairman), Susan Bray, Anne Chapman, Sheila Denwood, Janie Kirkman, Mike Greenall, Sylvia Rogerson, Ron Sands and Morgwn Trolinger*

Regrettably, during the work of the Task Group the Chairman Councillor John Barnes passed away. Councillor Morgwn Trolinger stepped in as Chairman to continue the good work he had begun. The Task Group was set up in summer of 2009 to consult with the Older People's Partnership Board who had commissioned the production of a Strategy for older people for the Lancaster district. The Task Group considered the Strategy in its draft form and felt it needed more work. The Task Group held a consultation evening in January



**Members of the Older People's task group went on a site visit to the Rainbow Centre - pictured are some of the regular attendees of the centre's choir group.**

2010 to consider the main issues that should be included with the strategy. Whilst awaiting the final version of the draft strategy, the Task Group undertook two visits to the Rainbow Centre in Morecambe and the Friendship Centre in Lancaster to see the good work carried out in our local centres.

Progress on this Task Group has been slow, but at the last meeting of the Task Group, the Chairman of the Older People's Partnership Board advised Members that the Partnership Board would be cease after its next meeting. The Board had agreed that it could no longer fulfil its Terms of Reference and should therefore come to an end. The Chairman advised that the Draft Strategy which had been

amended to a more readable shorter form would be amended to reflect this change. The Task Group was advised that the Council could not take ownership of the Draft Strategy but it could refer it to the Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership to conclude.

## Barriers to being a Councillor Task Group

**Members:** *Councillors Jude Towers (Chairman), Tina Clifford, Keran Farrow, Melanie Forrest, Val Histed, Janie Kirkman, Roger Plumb, Ron Sands, and Peter Williamson*

This Task Group was established in response to the findings of the Councillors Commission Report which when published in December 2007 highlighted the lack of diversity amongst councillors nationally. The Task Group aims to identify the barriers which prevent individuals from standing as councillors within this district and ascertain what measures the council can take to address this issue. In order to fulfil its terms of reference various forms of consultation have been utilised including questionnaires to current councillors, parish councils, community consultation register and the Council's online consultation.

The Task Group's final report was considered at a meeting of full council on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2010. The Chairman of the task group briefly outlined the background which had led to the setting up of the Task Group and the work which had been undertaken to identify how representative of its community Lancaster City Council was currently and what was perceived by past and present councillors and members of the public as barriers to greater community participation.

Council accepted the recommendations of the Task Group; more details are available on the Council's website at [www.lancaster.gov.uk](http://www.lancaster.gov.uk)

## Review and Audit of Parish Council Funding Task Group

**Members:** *Councillors Chris Coates (Chairman), Keith Budden, Tina Clifford, John Gilbert, Mike Greenall, Val Histed, Sylvia Rogerson and Roger Sherlock*

This Task Group was set up after Special Expenses were removed by full Council in December 2008. It first met in October 2009 to consider whether there was a need for Special Expenses in the Lancaster district. Expert witnesses were brought in to present evidence on services provided by the Council and County Council such as grass cutting, street cleansing and highway issues. The Task Group considered whether double taxation was an issue. A public meeting was arranged in January 2010 and all Parish Councils were invited to attend to put forward their views.

The Task Groups final report was considered at a meeting of full council on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2010. Council accepted the recommendations of the task group (a recommendation in relation to Play Areas was omitted by Council), but with additional recommendations to note the report as an 'interim' report and request that the Task Group reconvene to consider a number of outstanding issues. Details are available at [www.lancaster.gov.uk](http://www.lancaster.gov.uk)

Following the reconvening of the Task Group the Chairman presented a further report of the Review and Audit of Parish Council Funding Task Group for acceptance by Council on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2010. He identified a number of issues which the Task Group had investigated in accordance with the wishes of Council and reported that the Group had concluded that there was no justification for introducing any Special Expenses at this time.

The Council noted the update provided on various matters from the Review and Audit of Parish Council Funding Task Group, for acceptance as the final report by the Task Group. More information is provided on the Council's website.



## Allotments Task Group

Councillor Emily Heath, Chairman of the Allotments Task Group, introduced the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee presenting the Task Group's findings and recommendations to Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2010. A number of the recommendations were agreed by Cabinet, including that the relevant Cabinet Members be asked to bring forward recommendations of one or more sites that could be used to increase allotment provision, and that Cabinet consider in the future the appointment of a designated officer, on an adequate basis, through a re-allocation of existing resources, to have responsibility for allotments and developing the proposals and procedures set out in the Task Group's report.

## Progress on the Implementation of Task Group recommendations – Civic Task Group



← The Great Mace is still used for Annual Council (the Mayor Making Ceremony), Mayor's Sunday, The High Sheriff's (Shield Hanging) Church Service and Freeman's Court. It has however, been retired from full Council meetings.

The review of the civic function within the City Council provided an opportunity to update and review the practices and events, some of which have remained unchanged for many years. Some of the proposals have proved either difficult to implement or unpopular with those who wish to maintain the tradition of the Mayoralty but many of the changes made have been well received. The focus of the Mayoralty and civic events continues to be reviewed to ensure that it continues to be relevant as well as upholding traditions. In particular since this review was undertaken there has been a substantial reduction in the budget available which has meant that every event continues to be regularly evaluated to ensure that it provides value for money.

## Media and Public Relations

Over £1,000 worth of free publicity has been generated through the use of Press Releases circulated by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a reduction on the previous year.

The figures below have been generated by our media monitoring software “newsflash” from 11<sup>th</sup> February 2010 to 21<sup>st</sup> February 2011.

Releases issued = 4

Date	Title	Local media take up	EAV
21/05/10	Overview and Scrutiny seeks topics for discussion	2	£320
12/07/10	English Heritage presents to council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee	2	£300
27/08/10	Change of venue of meeting	1	£64
08/12/10	Community Payback Scheme	2	£420

**Total EAV = £1,034**

The above press releases were issued to the local media (Morecambe Visitor, Lancaster Guardian, Lancaster and Morecambe Reporter, LEP, Bay Radio, Radio Lancashire and a local news website, Virtual Lancaster). It must be noted that the total equivalent advertising value indicated above does not take into account the cost of air time given by the two local radio stations and the space taken up by the local website Virtual Lancaster.

- Between 15<sup>th</sup> February 2010 and 15<sup>th</sup> February 2011 there were 529 page views of ‘Overview and Scrutiny’ recorded.(including news items)
- 413 of these ‘hits’ were unique page views
- There were 364 page views of the main Scrutiny web page
- 277 of these ‘hits’ were unique.

*Page View:* the total count of hits for the page (can include the same person looking at the page several times)

*Unique Page View:* counts how many different people have viewed the page

## Training and Development

Lancaster City Council continues to contribute its scrutiny reports to the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) database although this year we did not send any representatives to the CfPS Annual Conference.

No further training was provided for Members this year, as most of the Members are in the fourth year of a four year term, with City Council Elections scheduled for May 2011.

## **Health Scrutiny**

The Committee was advised in September of the restructure of scrutiny at the County Council with Councillor Harrison replacing Councillor Farrow as the co-opted City Council member to the Health Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Harrison was requested to a future meeting of the Committee meeting to provide an update on developments within Health Scrutiny. However, in January it was noted that, unfortunately, Councillor Harrison had tendered his resignation from the Health Scrutiny Committee with immediate effect and that a replacement would be appointed by Council.

## **Lancashire Scrutiny Network**

Representatives from this Council continue to attend the quarterly meetings of the Lancashire Scrutiny Network. These meetings provide a networking opportunity and help clarify the role of Councillor and Officer. Providing an opportunity to share best practice, the partnership exists to share work programmes and highlight where joint working could take place, the meetings also improve links between District and County Council. This year, West Lancashire, Lancashire County Council and Rossendale have hosted the meetings. Issues discussed have included new scrutiny powers including crime and disorder, petitions, partnership scrutiny and the possible implications of the Localism Bill.

## **Northwest Scrutiny Officer Network**

This group comprises officers who support the Overview and Scrutiny function (representing all the local authorities in the North West of England). The group exists to share best practice issues, to avoid duplication and maximise the resources available to assist in the development of Scrutiny and meets on a quarterly basis. Membership of the group includes authorities such as Tameside, Stockport, Liverpool, Cumbria and Lancashire Councils and thus has access to significant expertise and knowledge. This year Blackpool and West Lancashire have hosted the network meetings and the issues discussed have included updates from the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS), the Localism Bill and petitions legislation.

## **Appointments to Other Bodies**

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

- Homelessness Forum – Councillor Gilbert
- Lancaster & District Vision Board – Councillor Roe
- Lancaster and Morecambe Fairtrade District Steering Group – Councillor Gilbert
- Museums Advisory Panel – Councillor Bray

Members are asked to report back regularly to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on these bodies.

## **Joint Scrutiny**

As referred to previously in this report a recommendation has been forwarded to Lancashire County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to establish a joint task group to address gritting policy. The request was considered by County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee at their March 2010 meeting. In June it was reported

that the request for a joint task group had been rejected by the County's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **Performance Review**

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

### **Scrutiny of Partnership working**

This continues to progress with the result of the pilots undertaken with the Museums Partnership and Community Safety Partnership being reported to the Budget and Performance Panel. (See page 17 for further details of developments in relation to scrutiny of partnerships).

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

Response time to requests for briefing notes and reports continues to improve.

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

The Scrutiny webpage has been developed to include links to all task group reports now includes information on current task groups.

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

A number of issues have attracted public and media interest including the call-ins and also other topics such as play areas. The task groups also generated substantial interest from the public.

## **Conclusion**

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

## **Future Direction**

There are a number of issues that have been unable to be considered this municipal year in view of the amount of work that has been included on the Committee's Work Programme.

These include:

- Wind Energy - Presentation;
- Report back on Shared Services developments;
- Update on Transforming the Community Services Agenda – Lancashire NHS Trust - to inform how wider change within NHS North Lancashire is progressing;
- Lancaster Prison - Presentation.

Update reports have been requested on the agreed recommendations of the following former Task Groups:

- Update on the implementation of recommendations of the Council Assets Task Group;
- Update on the implementation of recommendations of the Canals Task Group.

Scoping for an Affordable Housing Task Group has been undertaken and it is anticipated that this will be formally created in the new municipal year.

As in previous years both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Budget and Performance Panel will commence considering items for their Work Programmes for 2011/12.

The Committee may also need to consider other issues resulting from new legislation from Acts of Parliament resulting from the Localism Bill.

## Acknowledgements

Overview and Scrutiny Councillors and Officers would like to thank the following for their contribution to the Scrutiny process during 2010/11:

- Cabinet Members who have appeared before Overview and Scrutiny bodies;
- Representatives from Lancashire County Council who have attended Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Task Group meetings;
- Representatives from the organisations which have delivered presentations to the Committee/Panel this year;
- Staff who have attended meetings and participated in Overview and Scrutiny reviews;
- Members of the public who have attended meetings or submitted evidence as part of the ongoing work of Scrutiny;
- All current and former members of the Democratic Services team.

## The Overview and Scrutiny Officer Support Team

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

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