



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

# **Executive Annual Report 2011/12**

**April 2012**

Foreword from the Leader of Council and Chairman of Cabinet .....	3
Decision Making Arrangements.....	4
Executive Decisions .....	5
Councillor: Eileen Blamire: Leader of the Council .....	6
Councillor Jon Barry: Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Markets, Connecting with Communities, Voluntary Sector and Older People ....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> 14
Councillor Abbott Bryning: Portfolio Holder for Finance & Revenues and Benefits ....	17
Councillor Tim Hamilton-Cox: Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Property Services .....	20
Councillor Janice Hanson: Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Regeneration and Planning .....	25
Councillor Karen Leytham: Portfolio Holder for Housing, Environmental Health and Emergency Planning.....	29
Councillor Ron Sands: Portfolio Holder for Children & Young People and Culture & Tourism .....	35
Councillor : David Smith: Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services – Community Safety .....	42
.....	

## Foreword from the Leader of Council and Chairman of Cabinet



I am pleased to present the Executive Annual Report for 2011/12.

This has been an interesting year. Since May many ongoing problems have been addressed, not least of these, the Market. As you will see in the reports the Services have performed well and have introduced new initiatives while managing to save money. Many of our priorities have been achieved, most of which have been agreed in the Budget which saw a 6% cut in funding, a council tax freeze and many growth items that seemed to be accepted by all parties.

I thank the officers and indeed all our workforce for their hard work during this year. I would also like to thank all Councillors who have scrutinised the Cabinet decisions and have always remained critical friends. We may agree to disagree at times but all of us are here because we care about our district and seek to maintain its outstanding beauty and to improve it as a place to live, work and enjoy as well as providing opportunities for growth and much needed employment.

I hope you enjoy reading this year's report.

Cllr Eileen Blamire

## **Decision Making Arrangements**

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.

The Constitution allows for the appointment of up to 10 Executive Councillors. This year the Leader has appointed a Deputy Leader and 6 other members to the Cabinet. Each have an area of responsibility, set out in their entry in the following report.

## Executive Decisions

The table below shows the executive decisions that were taken from **May 2011 to April 2012**. Please note, these figures include decisions where a Member was involved in the decision jointly with another Member or, in the case of urgent business, where the Member was consulted by the Chief Executive.

Decisions moved in the name of <b>Councillor</b>	Executive Decisions				
	Key Decision taken at Cabinet	Non-key decision taken at Cabinet	Individual Cabinet Member Decision	Urgent Business Decision	
Eileen Blamire (Leader)	1	3	3		7
Jon Barry	7	2	1		10
Abbott Bryning	6	1	0	1 (Joint)	8
Tim Hamilton-Cox	5	0	4	1	10
Janice Hanson	7	3	4	1 (Joint)	15
Karen Leytham	7	5	1		13
Ron Sands	6	1	2		9
David Smith	2	1	1		4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>16</b>			

## Executive Annual Report 2011/12

### Councillor Eileen Blamire

#### Leader of the Council



#### 1. **Executive Membership**

- Cabinet
- Planning Policy Cabinet Liaison Group
- Business Cabinet Liaison Group
- Shared Revenues and Benefits Services Joint Committee

#### 2. **Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc**

- Lancashire Leaders Meeting
- LGA Executive
- Lancashire District Leaders Forum
- Regional Leader's Forum
- LDLSP Partnership Board
- Lancaster & District Vision Board
- Lancashire Central Sub-County Group
- LDLSP Management Group

#### 3. **Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities**

##### **Council Service Oversight:**

Relationships with other Councils  
Information Services

Governance      Communications  
Performance Management

##### **Corporate Plan Key Actions:**

#### Partnership working and community leadership

- Develop a joint public sector approach to delivering services
- Shared Services programme with Lancashire County Council
- Ensure our key partnerships work effectively
- Engage with our communities

#### **4. Progress made during 2011/12**

### **COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING**

The centralised communications and marketing function is now well established, working closely with all services to develop and implement all council marketing and communications plans to support the delivery of service objectives, from Williamson Park to the market, recycling to Salt Ayre Sports Centre and the community pools, regeneration projects to environmental health issues.

You will recall that last year the service contributed ongoing savings of £61,000, more than a third of the total budget.

#### ➤ **E-Communications**

Development of the council's corporate website continues; last year it received more than two million page views and 304,381 visitors, an increase of 11.67% on 2010. The team also continues to expand its use of social media channels. New online e-services this year include:

What's On information

Reporting faults

Platform brochure now in e-format with more than 1,000 subscribers

Salt Ayre e-brochure

Monthly email newsletter

#### ➤ **Media**

The communications section continues to provide a one stop shop to answer enquiries from the media – online, locally, nationally and internationally. More than 790 enquiries were answered over the course of the year and many negative news stories were negated.

The press office function is now the council centre for film enquiries and supported filming to attract visitors to the district, including national TV programmes such as Cbeebies, Ade in Britain, Missing Millions, Great British Railways, the One Show and the Hairy Bikers.

Members will be aware the media office has co-ordinated council support for the Turn Back Time production which will be filmed in Morecambe and bring significant economic benefit both in the making and as a consequence of the publicity the series will attract. It will also hopefully be a source of community pride in Morecambe's West End.

#### ➤ **Take Pride campaign**

The many conversations we have had with residents, businesses and our partners over the past year has highlighted the strong sense of community pride that exists in this district. We were told that we should seek to harness and develop that strength of feeling to support common objectives such as:

- Increasing awareness of volunteering opportunities

- highlighting the many aspects of district we can be proud of, the places, the buildings, the people, the employers, employees etc.
- highlighting the many opportunities for people to take demonstrate their pride by taking responsibility - from something as simple as putting litter in the bins to volunteering, choosing to shop local, promoting the district to family and friends
- highlighting opportunities and benefits of a healthier lifestyle
- promoting awareness of and greater interest in the leisure opportunities our district has

*Take Pride* will be a consistent message promoted across a range of council campaigns. e.g.:

- English Tourism Week
- The launch of a Visit Card for local people to local attractions
- Launch of attraction guides
- Festival and What's On promotion
- Anti dog fouling campaign
- Recycling messages
- Sport and wellbeing promotion

Discussion to engage partners is underway with interest from Lancaster and Morecambe Newspapers, the voluntary sector, Arts partners and the Police.

➤ **Internal communications**

In tandem with the chief executive's office the communications function continues to support internal communications including the development of intranet, staff briefings and the staff e-newsletter. An Employee Survey was issued in May, the results of which are being used to help shape and support future delivery of these internal communications services, as well as to shape the development of the Council.

➤ **Corporate Publications**

Production of three editions of 'Your District Council Matters' continues. The latest edition includes the annual Council Tax leaflet, to reduce costs and increase efficiency of delivery. This has retained last year's reduced costs to the council of £8,000. The magazine has generated income to off set its costs.

➤ **Training**

Specific training is available where required e.g. intranet and web, media and photography.

➤ **Partnership working**

The city council chairs the a district wide Partnership Communications Group, which includes partners from a wide range of public sector agencies. The group explore and develop opportunities for more joined up communication across the public sector.

➤ **Engagement**

As with communications the city council chairs a district wide engagement group. Early outcomes from this work include the Take Pride campaign and the development of a more co-ordinated approach to volunteering district-wide, public sector involvement in the CVS Volunteer Awards.

The engagement function is also taking the lead in pioneering new pioneering engagement approaches for the council. We have just learned that we are one of twelve authorities across the country who will be working with the Local Government Association on a national



programme of activity around engaging with local communities. The focus of our work will be around the role of the ward councillor as Community Leader.

We are also working with partners across Lancashire on a strand of work being referred to as 'Working together with families. We will be working with families already known to services where behaviour or circumstances are complex and/or challenging, where there is the risk of family breakdown; social isolation; anti social behaviour/offending; substance misuse or other poor outcomes which repeatedly result in multiple service involvement and the potential to lose, for example, their home or liberty. We hope this vitally important piece of work will lead to more resilient families across Lancashire and an improved quality of life for them and the communities in which they live.

Finally, 2011 saw the completion of the Connecting Communities project in Skerton and delivery of the Community Plan, as well as support a number of projects arising from it including the Ryelands Park community group.

#### ➤ **Customer Services**

We continue to progress towards a council-wide one stop shop approach to customer service.

Achievements this year include working closely with other council services to ensure successful delivery of customer enquiry handling for a number of key service initiatives including the introduction of Ideal Choice Homes and the Tell Us Once service which enables those dealing with bereavement to report a death just once to a range of public sector organisations. This latter scheme has been very well received by citizens and is now being expanded to include online options.

Closer working between Revenues and Benefits Customer Service have provided customer benefits and increased capacity during peak periods at no additional cost to the council.

This work continues alongside the focus on partnership development with other public sector organisations to deliver efficiencies where possible and to provide a one stop shop approach to public services.

The Shared Services project with One Connect to enable county to provide telephony customer service for both authorities and the city council to deliver the face to face on behalf of both organisations has been progressing and Cabinet has been updated regularly. A further report is due to be presented to Cabinet shortly.

Other partnership progress includes the successful relocation of HMRCs Lancaster customer enquiry centre into the CSC at Lancaster Town Hall in March 2011 and the Citizen's Advice Bureaux using facilities at Morecambe Town Hall one afternoon a week. We also offer customer referral to The Pensions Service and signpost other organisations such as Help Direct.

## **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

#### ➤ **Our Priorities and Outcomes**

The council has good arrangements in place to monitor its performance and is making continuous improvements to ensure the best possible outcomes are achieved. At a very high level, our Corporate Plan sets out our Priorities, our planned activities and, most importantly, the outcomes we want to achieve. These outcomes show how what we do

makes a difference. The engagement and understanding we have with our communities, partners and local groups are vitally important in terms of helping us to agree our Priorities, our actions and the outcomes that matter to local people.

➤ **Performance Reviews**

It is important that we understand how the council is performing and take the steps necessary to make sure we get the best results from the resources we have available. The quarterly Performance Review Team meetings have worked extremely well to give portfolio holders and senior management the opportunity to review and guide activities and performance throughout the year. The regular discussions that these arrangements facilitate are extremely useful and help us to work together to get the best results we can. In spite of the challenges we have faced during the last year, the overall performance of the council has been strong and the commitment of both councillors and staff to this has been remarkable.

➤ **Managing Information**

Overall the council is reducing the heavy burden of data collection and will be measuring less but will focus strongly on providing good, robust information on the things that really matter. A new management information system is now being established to allow clearer reporting on progress and achievements and easier management of performance information across all of our services. In the future this will lead to better, clearer information which is more accessible and can be used for many purposes.

➤ **Business Improvement**

An exciting new strand of work that has begun to emerge is Business Improvement, which will potentially bring many benefits. Like all Local Authorities, the council is looking for ways to bring about efficiencies and to maximise what it can achieve from its resources but we want to do this in way that improves life for the citizens of this district and, where possible, protects important services. During the latter part of 2011/12 we have begun some business improvement work initially looking at Pest Control and Car Parking, to see if we can reduce costs, create income or improve our customer service. We know that very often our staff are in the best position to see how what we do can be improved and it is excellent that this arrangement involves staff in bringing about positive changes. Two projects are underway and, as well as potential savings and improvements the result will be staff who will have benefited from new knowledge and skills and able to do more of this work in the future. The work so far has been facilitated by external providers but to allow us to be able to undertake more low cost Business Improvement in the future some staff are also undertaking training as facilitators.

➤ **Budget and Performance Panel**

Our Budget and Performance Panel has undertaken a number of pieces of work during the year, including scrutiny of the corporate review of Service Level Agreements and the council's arrangements for future partnerships working. The panel has reviewed corporate and financial performance throughout the year. This has helped to strengthen the scrutiny process and the council's ability to constructively provide its own internal challenge.

## **PARTNERSHIPS**

An important change that has taken place during the year is the move towards new partnership arrangements and the dissolution of the Lancaster District Local Strategic

Partnership. In November, Cabinet considered what is required to enable the council to work well with its partners and to achieve good outcomes for the district whilst managing the pressures on resources and budgets. The council determined that the time for the formal structures of the LSP has passed but that partnership working is more important than ever. Following this, district partners considered the future of the LSP and determined that it should be dissolved.

Future arrangements look very positive with a number of key partnerships being identified that the council and partners have agreed are important to the district. These include the more formal arrangements such as the Children's Trust and Community Safety Partnership, some important existing partnerships such as the Lancaster Arts Partnership and the Community Leader's Group as well as some equally important developing partnerships for Health and Well Being and for the voluntary sector. We will need to be flexible and adaptable to make sure that we are working together with partners wherever it matters. There is a strong feeling amongst partners that working together will be vitally important in the future but that we and our partners need to do this in a way that really does add value and make a difference to our communities. The council's role in making sure our new arrangements work well and that communications with partners are maintained will be very important.

## **GOVERNANCE**

### **➤ Democratic Services**

The major focus for Democratic Support staff at the beginning of 2011/12 was the induction of 27 new councillors. Although four of the new Councillors had served on the Council in previous years, this was a large intake of new Elected Members and an extensive induction programme was put in place to ensure that the new Members had received the training and equipment necessary to serve on their various Committees as swiftly as possible.

The Service was responsible for implementing the legislative change which required the Council to modify its executive arrangements from May 2011. In line with the new arrangements, on 23 May 2011, a new Leader was appointed by Council for a four year term and, in turn, the new Leader appointed a Deputy Leader and 6 other Cabinet Members.

A parish by-election for Morecambe Town Council was held in December and preparations were being made during the latter half of the year for the first Police and Crime Commissioner elections to be held in November 2012 and an earlier than usual electoral canvass to accommodate those elections, which fall at an unusual time of year.

On the civic side, a full programme of Mayoral events took place throughout the year, and a civic party attended the Youth Games held in Aalborg, Denmark, in August 2011.

### **➤ Human Resources**

A priority for HR this year, in conjunction with Financial Services, has been the procurement of a new HR/Payroll system, which will streamline administrative processes.

Throughout the year, HR have provided advice and support in the planning and implementation of a number of service restructures across the Council, and on proposed shared service arrangements with Lancashire County Council.

The HR Team continues to provide support to individual managers in dealing with disciplinary, grievance and other employment relations matters.

A review has been undertaken of a number of HR policies, including those relating to maternity leave and grievances and disputes, and work is ongoing to ensure that all the Council's HR policies and procedures are up to date.

Following on from the Fair Pay project, work has been continuing towards bringing the remaining employees engaged under the Joint Negotiating Committee Local Authority Craft and Associated Employees "Red Book" Scheme onto the same Fair Pay terms and conditions as other employees.

Another priority within HR has been to work with managers to improve attendance and to reduce absence through sickness. There was a marked improvement during the first half of the year, but unfortunately this improvement was not maintained, and it likely that the target of an average figure of nine days will be exceeded.

Building on its work last year to support staff in making healthy lifestyle choices, the HR Team organised a third successful Healthy Living Day at Morecambe Town Hall in November 2011. Staff were encouraged to attend the event to learn more about keeping themselves healthy and to take part in a range of health related activities.

In addition to arranging training for staff on a wide range of topics, most notably in management skills and change management, the HR Manager has been working on the development of a range of apprenticeship opportunities.

### ➤ **Legal and Licensing**

In terms of litigation there have been a number of successful prosecutions throughout the year including one in respect of a serious health and safety incident which recently received full coverage in the local press.

In addition, the Service has been dealing with a number of applications for leave to apply for judicial review, and is providing legal advice and support in relation to Lancaster Indoor Market, and the Canal Corridor scheme.

The only outstanding compensation claim in relation to the Luneside East Regeneration Scheme is still to be determined in the Lands Tribunal with a further hearing due in May. In terms of the actual regeneration scheme itself, very positive progress has been made and the relevant documentation is being prepared to enable development to commence in April, as planning permission has now been obtained to permit such development.

The staple day to day legal work incorporating debt collection, recovery of rent arrears, council house sales and other property transactions, including sales and leases has continued.

Legal advice is routinely provided for Cabinet and Council reports and solicitors attend and advise the Licensing Regulatory, Licensing Act Committee and Sub Committees, Planning Committee and Appeals Committee, and advise on any subsequent appeals.

The Service provides advice on new legislation, this year most notably the Localism Act 2011.

Local land charges have continued to maintain a high standard of service despite recent staff changes. Fee income has stabilised, although still remains lower than in previous years due to the economic climate and stagnant state of the housing market. Like all other local authorities, the Council is involved in legal proceedings in which personal search companies are seeking repayment of fees for personal searches over a period of years, following a change in the law with regard to fees.

Information management falls within the remit of the Service, and this year has seen an increase in the number of Freedom of Information and Data Subject Access requests.

During the past 12 months the licensing department has introduced and updated various policies. There is a new House to House Collections Policy, which seeks to protect members of the public from bogus collectors. An agreement has been made with the Public Fund Raising Agency (PFRA) in order to regulate face to face collectors (sometimes referred to as "chuggers") that would otherwise be unregulated by legislation. A new Sexual Entertainment Policy has recently been approved.

In relation to taxi licensing, the Rules and Regulations and Procedures for Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles have been updated. In addition to the routine vehicle testing, every vehicle licensed by this authority was subject to an inspection by officers. This was carried out over a 5 day period, and the results were very satisfactory. A successful Trade Fair took place at Salt Ayre Leisure Centre as part of the consultation process with the taxi trade on access and egress to licensed vehicles, and members and the trade were able to view the range of vehicles available. A Taxi News Letter is produced and distributed to members of the trade as well as members of the Licensing Regulatory Committee.

There have been a few amendments to the Licensing Act 2003, and some of the changes are still ongoing and yet to be implemented. The Home Office have instigated various consultations regarding some of the changes, and licensing officers have taken part in responding to these consultations and reporting to the Licensing Act Committee to ensure that they are updated on any relevant issues.

## **INFORMATION SERVICES**

The main focus for Information Services (IS) this year has been around partnership working. Support is being given to the Revenues Shared Service with Preston ICT and Lancaster Information Services working together. Negotiations have been undertaken with One Connect Limited to see whether service improvements and/or costs reductions could be achieved by IS moving into the strategic partnership with the County Council.

## Executive Annual Report 2011/12

### Councillor Barry

#### Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Markets, Connecting with Communities, Voluntary Sector and Older People



#### 1. Executive Membership

- Cabinet
- Lancaster Market Cabinet Liaison Group

#### 2. Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc

- LDLSP Valuing People Thematic Group

#### 3. Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

Markets	Voluntary Sector
Older People	Connecting with Communities

#### Corporate Plan Key Actions:

##### Partnership working and community leadership

Engage with our communities

Work with the voluntary, community, faith sector to deliver local services

#### 4. Progress made during 2011/12

##### ➤ Partnership arrangements

Following the Cabinet resolutions in November 2011 on the future of partnership working arrangements in the district, the council has begun to develop new arrangements for the voluntary, community and faith sector. This sector already makes a huge contribution to

service delivery in the district and it is believed that there is the potential for this to increase in the right circumstances. A voluntary sector forum is already in existence, which it is believed will provide opportunities for the council and other public sector partners to engage widely with the whole of the VCF sector. In addition, discussions have already begun to consider what arrangements might be helpful in terms of allowing the council to work closely with the infrastructure organisations that support the rest of the sector, so that there can be a common understanding of needs, opportunities and priorities.

➤ **Volunteering**

The Council and the Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership (LDLSP) have continued their support for the Lancaster District Volunteer Bureau, run by Help Direct, and for Volunteer Awards and Training, provided by Lancaster District CVS. Funding to support the bureau will run out at the end of 2011/12 and all partners have been working together to come up with an appropriate solution to the provision of infrastructure support for recruiting, training and supporting volunteers within the district.

The Volunteer Bureau have also run events for council staff to make them aware of local volunteering opportunities that will benefit both themselves and their local community.

➤ **Community Leaders**

The City Council hosts a quarterly meeting of religious and cultural leaders at the Town Hall, which is attended by the Chief Executive, Leader. This group shares information on community plans and events and discusses important issues such as the 2011 riots in British cities.

➤ **Service Level Agreements**

In 2011/12 the council has provided over £500,000 to nearly twenty Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector organisations to deliver projects and services in areas such as health and wellbeing, and arts and culture. The beginnings of closer working with Lancashire County Council on the monitoring of such payments has resulted in a more efficient process both for the councils and the VCS organisations themselves.

The council has reaffirmed its support to the sector by offering the same SLAs again for 2012/13 with an inflationary increase, and has also agreed to develop an even more effective commissioning process for 2013/14 onwards that will focus on outcomes for local people and provide longer-term grants and SLAs that will give financial security to these organisations.

➤ **Community and Welfare Grants**

The Council and the LDLSP have continued to provide nearly £30,000 of small grants funding for VCFS group in the district – these grants, ranging between £500 and £2000, have helped these hard-working groups develop themselves and deliver local activities. Full details of the community grants are available at:

<http://www.lancastercvs.org.uk/funding/communitygrants/> and the welfare grants at <http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/community-and-living/welfaregrants/>

## **MARKETS**

In accordance with the Council resolution from November 2011 on Lancaster Market, negotiations have been held to consider the surrender of the traders' leases with the council and the council's lease with its landlord. A report is due for council to consider the financial framework in April 2012.

The Charter Market remains successful although numbers of traders have reduced slightly during the recession period. A good opportunity exists for improving its future by considering both an extra trading day for which consultation has commenced and to make better use of Market Square following completion of the first phase of the Square Roots scheme.

The Festival Market also remains successful in what are difficult trading circumstances. Trader numbers have remained high with a good variety of commodities. However, careful management must be retained to ensure that traders can continue to retain a sound future in Morecambe's retail hierarchy. Concern is also mounting regarding the fabric of the market which has had little investment in the last 15 years which makes trading conditions difficult particularly in winter.

Finally the Assembly Rooms market retains its niche in Lancaster during difficult trading times.

## **ALLOTMENTS**

All except one allotment site has signed the new council lease. Negotiations are ongoing to sort out the final site. I am also very pleased to report the funding for the Scotforth allotments in the capital programme. Hopefully, we will not need all of the money for this site and we can use it for further allotment development in the district.

## **OLDER PEOPLE**

I haven't been very active on this. However, I did contribute to a research project by Age UK on old people in Carnforth – and then attended the recent meeting where the results of the project were outlined.



## Executive Annual Report 2011/12

### Councillor Abbott Bryning

#### Portfolio Holder for Finance and Revenues and Benefits



#### 1. Executive Membership

- Cabinet
- Shared Revenues and Benefits Services Joint Committee

#### 2. Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc

- Storey Centre for Creative Industries
- Lancaster District Regeneration Partnership

#### 3. Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

##### **Council Services Oversight:**

Financial Services

Revenues and Benefits

##### **Corporate Plan Key Actions:**

- Implement a shared Revenues and Benefits service with Preston City Council, and work with other partners and stakeholders to help ensure smooth implementation of any future welfare reforms.

#### **4. Progress made during 2011/12**

##### **➤ Revenues and Benefits**

Following on from the major improvements in efficiency gained the previous year, the full Shared Service with Preston City Council came into being from July last year. As a result, 80 staff transferred over to Preston, as the host authority. Such a fundamental change in service provision requires honesty, trust and respect between partners - not to mention good governance arrangements – in order to make sure that it succeeds. The first meeting of the Joint Committee was held back in November, and this approved the Business Plan and budget details and confirmed delegated powers. The next meeting is scheduled in May.

The shared service continues to perform well, meeting its targets and making further savings. It is well placed to face the next challenges ahead, these being:

- Developing and implementing a new system of localised support for council tax, to replace the current national benefit scheme – whilst at the same time addressing Government's aim for reducing the total amount of benefit awarded by 10% (or £1M).
- Working with HMRC, DWP and other Government agencies and partnerships in planning for the phased introduction of Universal Credit (and the eventual withdrawal of separate housing benefit).
- Remodelling to accommodate the proposals for a Single Fraud Investigation Service with DWP.
- Preparing for any Business Improvement Districts being set up, initially for Lancaster Centre, and then potentially Morecambe.

All in all, 2012/13 looks like being as eventful as last year.

##### **➤ Other Finance**

More generally, 2011/12 has been a year of both change and consolidation.

Some changes would have gone unnoticed to many – but those who ventured into reading the Council's Statement of Accounts would have noticed that they've got considerably longer. Some might say – including some finance professionals, I believe - that the implementation of 'International Financial Reporting Standards' has done little to help public accountability and transparency - and so the more practical measures introduced in the year before, such as publishing details of payments over £500, might have generated more interest.

But putting the details aside, overall there has been some very good news in terms of financial reporting.

In July 2011 a net underspending of almost £1.1M was reported for 2010/11, and that was after putting aside almost £0.5M into various provisions and reserves.

In November, it was reported that Government was to offer compensation to support a further council tax freeze, but for one year only.

In December, it was reported that the Supreme Court in Iceland had ruled in favour of local authorities and as a result, the Council's prospects for recovering its investments were much improved. (This has been backed up by more recent events; the Council has now recovered over £4M of the £6M invested, with more to follow). Taking account of this good news, another underspending of £1.7M was forecast for 2011/12, allowing the Council to make further top ups to its reserves to take forward various initiatives.

These underspendings set the scene for the recent 2012/13 budget exercise. As a result of all the good work done by Members and Officers, the Council has managed to balance its books for this year, whilst taking advantage of the council tax freeze offer. It has also been possible to support some limited growth, particularly for improvements to Lancaster and Morecambe centres.

It's still not without challenges to face, such as managing its capital financing position pending the sale of land at South Lancaster, agreeing an acceptable and affordable solution for the Lancaster Market position and responding to Government's resource review, which could see some major shifts in how much funding each local authority receives. But the Council has successfully tackled such difficulties before, and I'm sure it will do so again.

➤ **Looking ahead into year 2012/13**

The local government finance bill has two main elements: local retention of business rate growth and the localisation of council tax benefits. The bill is part of the local government resource review. It has been through the commons and is due to pass to the Lords where getting the details right will be a main concern to all councils through LGA lobbying or amendments.

And finally thank you to the Head of Financial Services and her staff and to all Service Heads and officers for their hard work in responding to budgetary control through efficiency and other savings which have enabled a programme of modest growth to be part of the final budget.

## Executive Annual Report 2011/12

### Councillor Hamilton-Cox

#### Portfolio Holder for Property Services and Climate Change



1. **Executive Membership**
  - Cabinet
  - Planning Policy Cabinet Liaison Group
  - Canal Corridor Cabinet Liaison Group
  - Climate Change Cabinet Liaison Group
2. **Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc**
  - LDLSP Environmental Thematic Group
3. **Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities**

#### **Council Service Oversight:**

Property Services      Climate Change

#### 4. **Introduction**

I wish to acknowledge the work and support of the officers in the Property Services, Community Engagement and Finance services. In particular I want to thank Graham Cox for his considerable patience and explanatory abilities and wish him a long and happy respite from his various beds of nails; and Richard Tulej, Suzanne Lodge and Mark Davies for leading the collective effort which has gone into realising the solar PV project in such a relatively short timescale. Finally, due recognition to staff across the council, and especially the Bright Sparx, whose actions are contributing to reduced energy (and water) use. Not only does this increase the sustainability of the council's operations, it's

saving hundreds of thousands of pounds to spend on maintaining services to the community.

## **5. Progress made during 2011/12**

### **CLIMATE CHANGE**

#### **➤ (A) ACTIVITY WITHIN THE COUNCIL**

##### ***Carbon dioxide emissions reductions***

City council achievements

2010-11 4.6%

2011-12 to date

The current energy consumption figures show that the council's attempts to reduce its energy usage, combined with a mild winter, are showing impressive results with most municipal buildings experiencing a decrease in energy requirements. This is having an impact on the council's carbon dioxide emissions (t CO<sub>2</sub>) which over the first three quarters of 2011/12 have fallen by 150.58tCO<sub>2</sub> across the council's buildings compared with the same period last year, representing a 10.97% reduction. (This excludes vehicle fuel emissions which are included in the overall figure quoted for 2010-11.) This puts the council even further ahead of meeting its target of reducing its CO<sub>2</sub>emissions by 34% by 2020 compared with 2008.

Emissions reductions – and the monetary savings which go with them - are being achieved in a number of ways:

- **Greater energy efficiency in buildings**

This is where the two parts of the portfolio combine in perfect harmony because the use of the council's buildings plays a significant part in the council's climate change policy. Improved energy efficiency policies are now in place helping to save money and reduce carbon emissions. New double glazing in Morecambe town hall and improved insulation in both town halls have increased energy efficiency and it is anticipated that further savings will occur when a new gas boiler and associated works is installed in Lancaster town hall in the latter stages of 2011-12 and into 2012-13. Beyond the municipal buildings, other council-managed property is seeing reduced energy usage. PRT reports demonstrate particular effort directed at reducing consumption in the facilities in Williamson Park; and of course Salt Ayre sports centre continues to blaze a trail.

Salt Ayre is the single largest consumer of energy amongst the council's municipal buildings. 2011/12 has seen a continuation of the campaign to identify ways of reducing energy consumption within the building. With less than a month to go of the financial year, it's distinctly possible that Salt Ayre will achieve a 50% reduction in gas and electricity use compared to four years ago. The installation of a pool cover has realised significant energy savings and I am keen that covers for the community pools are funded from the 'Invest-to-save' budget as soon as possible.

- **Behavioural change**

Bright Sparx – the council's enthusiastic, inter-office energy and waste reduction champions - are integral to raising awareness of climate change in council offices. The team help lead staff to carry out actions together, which tackle climate change as well as saving energy, waste, CO2 and money. In February 2012 a new handbook was produced which gives guidance and advice on how to reduce use of resources. This updated version will assist the Bright Sparx to continue their excellent achievements.

- **Installation of renewable energy on council-owned properties**

Following cabinet approval on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2011, up to £1.75million was allocated towards the installation of solar panels on municipal buildings and council housing communal buildings during 2011/12. This first phase of installation is expected to end on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2012 to maximise the potential benefits from the Feed-in Tariff (FIT) scheme. At the time of writing it seemed likely that very roughly half the allocated amount would actually be spent by the end of the month, with a review to take place then as to the financial viability of additional installations beyond March. Specifically up to 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2012 160kW of solar PV capacity had been installed on: (1) Salt Ayre sports centre (49.26kW); (2) White Lund depot (49.5kW); and (3) Kingsway and Glebe Court sheltered housing schemes (30kW each).

- **Other uses of the 'Invest-to-save' budget**

There is a wide range of proposals to save energy which merit further investigation – in addition to the pool covers. A report to cabinet has been postponed several times, partly because of the management time being taken up by the solar PV; and latterly because of financial uncertainty arising from elsewhere.

➤ **(B) CLIMATE CHANGE-RELATED ACTIVITY IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY**

- **Green Partnerships Award**

During 2011/12 Lancaster City Council has contributed £2000.00 to the Green Partnership awards for environmental projects, match-funded by the county council. This has seen eight projects in the district receive awards up to £500.00.

- **Warmer Homes Project**

During 2011/12 Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership has been working with Tadea, the sustainable energy and carbon reduction organisation, to manage a scheme which will see up to 2,000 homes in Lancaster district fitted with cavity wall and loft insulation.

- **Warm Homes Healthy People**

The council has been successful in securing Warm Homes Healthy People funding from the DoH amounting to £72,825.00 for the purposes of supporting vulnerable people living in cold housing. This will provide a valuable additional opportunity to work with partners to further address the needs of vulnerable residents of the Lancaster District. The council will be taking responsibility for managing and distributing funds in order to release the money for use in the district.

- **Sustainability Partnership**

The council also contributed time and resources to the Sustainability Partnership during 2011 and helped ensure a number of successful public events aimed at highlighting environmental issues in the Lancaster district. Events during the financial year included: the Incredible Edibles awards, PASS on Plastics, and Wonderful Woodlands in Williamson Park.

- **(C) ACCOUNTABILITY**

- **Climate Change Cabinet Liaison Group**

The Climate Change Cabinet Liaison Group has held (roughly) bi-monthly meetings since October, and provided a platform for councillors to gain further details about sustainability activities, and in particular the solar PV installation programme.

## **PROPERTY SERVICES**

- **Building works**

Major works contracts were completed in respect of roof and associated works to Lancaster and Morecambe town halls that have remedied the serious backlog of repairs that have built up over many years. As previously noted, the schemes assisted significantly in the council's energy efficiency programmes. Morecambe town hall toilet areas were refurbished to provide suitable facilities for staff and members - a long overdue requirement. In addition the opportunity was taken to provide improved and more flexible office space that has assisted the accommodation review. Since the Access to Services review was commenced, the amount of space per workstation has reduced by 30.4% - a significant saving of office space and its associated costs. However the head of service advises that the council's building stock is by no means in good condition and a condition survey has been commissioned to identify the priorities for future spending. The capital budget includes £1.67m for this purpose.

- **Asset management**

As a property owner, the council is affected in the same way as others in the property market with a significant reduction in demand for property affecting both rental income and capital receipts. This will continue to be challenging for the foreseeable future. The receipt from south Lancaster has been pushed back into 2012-13. Other land has not achieved the target valuation and has been withdrawn from sale agreement. But cabinet approved the transfer of council-owned land to facilitate the development of affordable housing at Ashbourne Road, Skerton.

Partly because of reduced energy costs and higher rent-rolls, Citylab is running ahead of budget; as is St. Leonard's House, though only against an upwardly revised budget deficit and stripping out recharges. The deficit is a matter of deep concern and the building is to be the subject of a report to cabinet as and when management resource allows.

£370k has been set aside to deal with the sagging steps below the Ashton Memorial and timber rot in the Butterfly House.

Land at Middleton has been marketed following cabinet's decision in July 2011 and a number of expressions of interest received which may prove to be complementary, but not all of which strictly 'have a direct link, or are intrinsically linked, to the energy coast priority of the council'.

➤ **Off-street car parking**

New fees and charges have been approved that will contribute towards the council's financial position whilst also reflecting the delicate balance between income, traffic management issues and the needs of residents, businesses, visitors and commuters. The average increase in charges was 2.8% and the contribution that parking revenue makes towards the maintenance of council services is acknowledged. Ticket sales in the current year have held up encouragingly in Lancaster; less well so in Morecambe. £80k has been set aside in the capital budget for car park re-surfacing. The cost of a pay and display machine which takes credit and debit cards was deemed to be prohibitively high.

A special word of thanks to David Hopwood, the parking manager, whose presentation of parking charge options and options analysis really was exhaustive in informing the final recommendation to cabinet.

➤ **CCTV**

Cabinet voted to maintain the current coverage of CCTV in Lancaster and Morecambe but to reduce the number of hours of real-time monitoring, with the active agreement of the police.

➤ **Property Services structure review**

Cabinet has approved the principle of shared service provision for Property Services with Lancashire County Council. The appointment of a senior property officer is underway and once an appointment has been made, the shared service will commence. This will provide a wider, complementary range of expertise for the council, especially in quantity surveying and energy management. The benefit of that expertise has already been appreciated in the management of the solar PV project. Operational management of council properties will remain with the shared service whilst strategic asset management will transfer to the head of Finance at that time.



## Executive Annual Report 2011/12

### Councillor Janice Hanson

#### Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Regeneration and Planning



#### 1. **Executive Membership**

- Cabinet
- Business Cabinet Liaison Group
- Canal Corridor Cabinet Liaison Group
- Planning Policy Cabinet Liaison Group

#### 2. **Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc**

- Lancashire Rural Affairs
- North Lancashire Local Action Group
- LGA Rural Commission
- North West Rural Affairs Forum
- LDLSP Economy Thematic Group
- LDLSP Education, Skills and Opportunities Thematic Group

#### 3. **Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities**

##### **Council Service Objectives:**

Economic Regeneration                      Planning

##### **Corporate Plan Key Actions:**

Economic Regeneration

- Energy Coast
  - i. Promote nomination for nuclear new build
  - ii. Support national infrastructure development
  
- Visitor Economy
  - i. Improve public realm, parks and open spaces
  - ii. Maximise cultural, heritage and retail offer

#### Housing Regeneration

#### **4. Progress made during 2011/12**

### **REGENERATION AND POLICY SERVICE END OF YEAR REVIEW**

2011/12 has seen significant activity for the Regeneration and Policy Service despite the continuing economic down turn. It is clear that the development industry is in some areas making preparations for economic recovery and across a broad range of fronts engagement on planning applications, in plan making and with various regeneration agencies has made 2011/12 a very busy year. The eventual reuniting of the service at Morecambe Town Hall in the summer was welcomed by all the staff.

#### ➤ **Policy and Delivery**

In the area of plan making significant effort has been made to work towards preparing new Land Allocations and Development Management polices for the Local Development Framework. Most of this work has now been completed and draft documents will be available for publication in summer 2012.

The Morecambe Area Action Plan has been the subject of extensive interactive community consultation resulting in high level visionary options being published. The next phase will be to turn these into preferred options adopted by the council.

The strategic housing operation has negotiated match funding to deliver partnership schemes for affordable housing with Registered Providers and has been addressing options for intervention in the area of empty homes.

The Economic Development function has created an effective new working relationship with the County Council's officers which has been extremely fruitful securing new funding from the Lancashire Economic Partnership for cleaning up contamination on Luneside East, and a commitment towards assisting with funding for the Lancaster Science Park and Heysham Gateway, the expansion of Heysham Port.

The first phase of Lancaster Square Routes has been implemented resulting in new lighting and surface materials in Market square and the removal of the fountain. Support work has also been taking place with the Lancaster and Morecambe Chambers of Commerce to prepare for proposals for Business Improvement Districts in both Town Centres.

#### ➤ **Development Management**

The year has been particularly difficult for this section as there has been a high demand for services and a significantly reduced workforce to match it after last years redundancies. The creation of temporary posts has helped to maintain an improved level of performance but demand for things like pre application advice still generates complaints about capacity. A number of major planning decisions have been revisited with revised permissions being given for Lancaster Moor Hospital, Luneside West/ Luneside East, and Lunsfield Quarry.

A significant amount of resources has been consumed by appeal and public inquiry work this year. Preparation for the Claughton Moor Wind farm appeal became abortive when it was withdrawn. Costs have been paid by the appellants to the council. The Public Inquiry into a new food store at Scotforth has been time consuming and will continue into the next financial year.

A major enforcement case has developed at Gibraltar Farm, Silverdale with the Service Head having to bring his own expertise into play to evaluate options for action which the council will contemplate in 2012/13.

Significant work has been undertaken to resolve the heritage issues relating to the Canal Corridor North Development and at the end of the period the developer, Centros has announced that it is now in a position to move towards preparing new planning applications.

The Building Control operation has continued to suffer from loss of income as private sector operations in the city have increased competition and by the end of the year the service is examining alternative means of service delivery with adjoining local authorities. A report on new options for providing this service will come forward in the new financial year.

#### ➤ **Environmental Management**

The maintenance of sea defences has continued to be a high priority with needs arising from finding new sources of funding to repair depreciating structures such as Morecambe's wave reflection wall. The section has also been involved in supporting agencies dealing with the discharge of effluent from Middleton

Treatment Works into Morecambe Bay, the Artle Beck Drainage Scheme, and the replacement sewage operations in Lancaster Town centre.

Engineering expertise has played a fundamental part in implementing other projects such as Lancaster Square Routes, demolishing the Dome, and continuing to install cycling infrastructure.

The Arnside/Silverdale AONB Unit has played a leading role with a number of partner organisations in bidding for funding for a Nature Improvement Area for Morecambe Bay and if successful will manage the funding with the City Council acting as accountable body.

Strategically the service has continued to take a leading role with the consortium of Lancashire and Cumbria local authorities preparing to engage in the Infrastructure Planning Process for the National Grid upgrade in Lancashire and Cumbria. The Head of Regeneration and Policy has also represented the City Council on the New Nuclear Local Authorities Group which secures cooperation between the eight local authorities nominated for nuclear new build.

The service has also been preparing to engage fully with the Infrastructure Planning Commission in the examination process for the Heysham/M6 Link, and over the Christmas period senior officers were active in preparing rebuttals for the Judicial Review proceedings which attempt to challenge the councils decision to grant planning permission for Booths to erect a supermarket on land at Lawsons Bridge.

The Head of Regeneration and Policy and a number of his officers have also played a full operational role in maintaining an effective duty rota for emergency planning cover for the district out of hours. This has also involved taking part in a number of managed exercises to test the council's emergency planning processes.

## Executive Annual Report 2011/12

### Councillor Karen Leytham

#### Portfolio Holder for Housing, Environmental Health and Emergency Planning



#### 1. **Introduction**

I'm proud of how much health and housing has achieved over the past 12 months, as this report shows, through the hard work and dedication of its staff and officers. It's brilliant that we can see projects coming to fruition and with continued enthusiasm, move forward. That said, we still have an awful lot of hard work left to do and there will always be uphill struggles. We need to remain positive and be ready for the continued challenges.

I'm excited about the creation of the new housing regeneration cabinet liaison group with its scope to embrace all existing and new ideas, with an aim to bring forward more affordable housing and regeneration schemes.

#### 2. **Executive Membership**

- Cabinet
- District Wide Tenants Cabinet Liaison Group
- Lancaster Market Cabinet Liaison Group
- Housing Regeneration Cabinet Liaison Group
- Planning Policy Cabinet Liaison Group

#### 3. **Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc**

- LGA Coastal Issues Special Interest Group
- LDLSP Health & Wellbeing Thematic Group

#### **4. Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities**

##### **Council Service Objectives:**

Housing      Environmental Health      Emergency Planning

##### **Corporate Plan Key Actions:**

###### Statutory Services

- Deliver statutory services to ensure minimum standards are met

###### Housing Regeneration

#### **5. Progress made during 2011/12**

##### ➤ ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

- The Cemeteries Service has maintained its Charter for the Bereaved status and was successful in achieving the Green Flag Award for Morecambe Cemetery and Morecambe Parish Church for a second year running with Torrisholme Cemetery gaining a Green Flag for the 4<sup>th</sup> year running.
- 95% of our districts Food Businesses are compliant with food safety legislation. 71% of businesses have scored a Food Hygiene Rating of 5, Very Good, which is a 17% improvement on the position 12 months ago. Feedback from consumers about the new food hygiene rating scheme has been positive and most of our businesses also seem happy with it.
- The Team have effectively reduced the burden of formal inspections on local businesses, in line with national requirements, by combining Food Safety and Health & Safety interventions where feasible.
- The service has taken various types of enforcement action where appropriate including fixed penalties, statutory notices, issuing formal cautions and taking prosecutions. One prosecution resulted in fines totalling £15,000 for a local company which allowed an employee to suffer a near-fatal injury when he fell through a fragile roof. This will send a strong message to other businesses about the need for responsible management of safety risks.
- In response to skin cancer risks arising from excessive and unsafe use of commercial sunbeds, officers have completed a successful project under Health and Safety legislation. This has highlighted the need for further to discourage acceptance of under-age customers, and there will be an enforcement focus on this during 2012-13. Other areas of focus will be pub cellar safety, commercial horse riding livery yards, gas safety in catering premises, managing violence at work, and warehouse safety.

- Another busy year for the Environmental Protection team with hundreds of investigations being carried out into a range of complaints of pollution (noise, odours, smoke, light, refuse, drainage) across the district. Customer satisfaction has been improved this year which is pleasing following a restructure which reduced staff but created efficiencies.
- In addition to our normal workload, a survey of radon gas has also begun, with monitors being installed in over 90 domestic properties to assess whether levels of radon are a cause for concern in this district. Quarry blast monitoring has also resumed in response to an increase in complaints. Results so far have indicated compliance with planning permission in all instances.
- The Pest Control Service has continued to expand its range of services, introducing drain camera surveys this year. These have already raised a significant amount of income for the service. The team has also increased its number of annual contracts with local businesses, and has continued to provide an excellent service, borne out by the 100% customer satisfaction reported in survey results. Pest Control now has its own Twitter account and is steadily building up its number of followers and fellow tweeters.
- The Dog Warden Service has held two Roadshows this year, resulting in a substantial number of dogs benefitting from free microchipping, subsidised neutering and advice on behavioural problems. New initiatives to deal with the ever-increasing fouling problem have been introduced, including an eye-catching poster for residents to display in their windows and more targeted enforcement campaigns. Discussions with the police regarding investigation of dog bites have resulted in a better working relationship and the development of a useful protocol.
- Environmental Health now deals with the whole process for animal licensing and caravan site licensing, having taken over some aspects previously carried out by Licensing. This should ensure efficiencies and a seamless service.
- A thorough revision of the Council's multi-agency flooding plan for the area has been undertaken which was then tested at a countywide exercise at Hutton in December. Other plans have been maintained and updated as required.
- Exercise Heronswood - council wide test of Business Continuity plans at LTH in February with 75 staff taking part and testing the plans for their respective services against a scenario where flooding had damaged two council buildings and associated infrastructure. Many service business continuity plans were updated in the run up to this exercise and the learning will now be incorporated into further revisions.
- Emergency Planning principles have been embedded in the planning for major council events such as the Fireworks and Seaside Festivals. Events staff have received additional training and event plans are exercised beforehand in conjunction with the emergency services. These improvements are assisting the planning for the Olympic Torch relay, which will be in the district for several hours on 22 June 2012, and other associated events.

## ➤ **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING**

- The size of the private rented sector continues to grow. The Housing Standards Team has been concentrating on reducing the most serious hazards (category 1 hazards) in the private rented sector, and on reducing fuel poverty by improving heating systems and insulation. Fire safety continues to be a priority and the team has a close working relationship with the Fire Service. During the coming year, the team will undertake a project with food/health and safety colleagues targeting hotels and hostels that house some of our most vulnerable residents. Mandatory Licensing of houses in multiple occupation has reached the end of its first five year cycle. The team has reviewed the effectiveness of licensing and is concentrating on visiting and renewing licences in relevant properties.
- The Home Improvement Agency (HIA) has continued to enable vulnerable residents to remain independent, safe, secure and warm in their homes. The HIA provides care and repair type services which includes advice and assistance to undertake repairs/maintenance as well as assistance in considering their housing options and ways to raise finance to undertake works. Handyman services are also available to carry out minor works. The HIA is also responsible for delivering the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant programme.
- In 2011/12 the HIA successfully secured funding from a framework of key partners including the NHS PCT, the County Council's Adult & Community Services and the Supporting People programme. This funding has enabled the expansion of the core HIA service to meet the needs of residents. Working in partnership with the Homeless team, the HIA has also taken on the delivery of the 'Sanctuary' service, completing security works to the homes of 'at risk' clients. The HIA is also currently in discussion with a number of partners to secure funding to enable the delivery of additional bolt-on HIA services for vulnerable residents in 2012/13.
- Throughout 2011/12 the HIA has promoted the service extensively to residents in the district and developed closer working relationships with key partners to enable vulnerable clients to be referred to the agency, this has led to a significant increase in demand for the service. The agency has continued to deliver positive outcomes for vulnerable residents, demonstrating excellent value for money with high levels of customer satisfaction.
- Homeless acceptances are being maintained at the same levels as in the previous year and successful prevention cases continue to prevent homelessness. However, the service is currently facing new challenges with the welfare reforms we are already seeing an increase in presentations with the implementation of the single room rent rate for the under 35's and further changes which will be implemented in April 2013 will make it difficult to maintain these levels due economic climate and changes in government policies. The prevention contract with the YMCA due to end in July this year with this work being taken "in house" and a substantial saving being made.
- The CLG funded "Places of Change" project is now complete and is operating at full capacity with 7 bed "crisis accommodation" units and the new build 11 bed move-on accommodation units. The 8 new build flats for move-on for young



people at Greyhound Road Bridge are due to completed on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 providing much needed independent living units for young people.

- The Supporting People contracts have been in place for several months now for the Refuge and the Teenage Mother & Baby Unit. However, significant delays with sourcing suitable premises means it is now envisaged that the delivery of the 6 bed Refuge for domestic violence homeless household's project for the district will be open by the end of this year. it is still unclear at this time when the teenage pregnancy unit will be ready.
- The DCLG has made available funding to the districts to assist with the implementation and roll out of the new Lancashire wide Homeless 16/17 year olds protocol. Lancaster has been chosen to be one of 3 pilots with Lancaster University evaluating and monitoring the 3 projects – projects due to start March 2012 for approx 18 months.
- Temporary Accommodation (TA) targets remain below government targets – currently there are 7 available TA properties available within the district.
- The established housing options team to support the delivery of choice based lettings and housing options is working well. Applicants seeking housing are now receiving the best possible advice on the options available to them to address their housing circumstances and needs.
- DCLG have made a small amount of funding available to roll out the governments No Second Night Out (NSNO) Initiative across Lancashire following a NSNO pilot in London to tackle Rough Sleeping. Work is also progressing to identify premises for emergency accommodation for single persons following a successful bid to the Homes and Communities Agency.

### ➤ **COUNCIL HOUSING**

- As part of its ongoing commitment to seek the views of council housing tenants the council commissioned BMG Research (BMG) to carry out a postal survey amongst its customers. The headline is that overall satisfaction with the council housing service has significantly increased since the last comprehensive survey was carried out in 2008. More than four fifths (85%) of tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided by council housing, with two fifths (38%) very satisfied. This year's results show a marked increase in overall satisfaction from those reported in 2008.
- Self-financing of council housing is now with us. The financing of council housing has been centrally directed for decades through a national Housing Revenue Account, the HRA. From the 1 April this year council housing will be self-funding and local authorities will not be subject to a complex government subsidy system, which in the case of Lancaster had the possibility of us paying approximately £3m into a national pot – known as negative subsidy. Instead we will pay a one-off amount of approximately £32m and this money will need to be borrowed and financed.

- Self-financing should give the council and its tenants the ability to look at options and opportunities which could not be considered under the existing financial arrangements. The council will need to balance of priorities, ensure tenant/resident, input, investment in the asset and resource base, and proper long term asset management - looking at possibility for increased refurbishment, service investment, regeneration, acquisition and new build. We will need to adopt an increasingly business like approach to housing and asset management.
- 2011/2012 saw the successful introduction of choice based lettings. Choice-based lettings schemes are designed to introduce an element of choice for people who apply for council and housing association homes. Choice-based lettings allow people applying for a home (including existing tenants who want a transfer) to bid for properties which become available on a housing priority based system.
- The repairs and maintenance service including the council housing capital and planned maintenance is now being delivered through the council's Environmental Services. Over £1.9 million is spent on responsive repairs. This service area is undergoing a period of change which should result in an efficient and effective service for future delivery.
- We continue to deliver the decent homes programme with the budget increasing to £4.3 million being spent on the planned maintenance and improving the council housing stock. The partnership with Forrest on the planned maintenance and capital programme is working well. The partnership arrangements have been subject to internal audit and the level of assurance was substantial. As part of the partnership arrangement we are looking to introduce 6 apprentices shared equally with Forrest during the coming months.
- In addition to the ongoing energy efficiency programme which includes boiler replacement and insulation, 2011/2012 has seen the installation of solar photovoltaic panels to help reduce the costs of providing communal lighting within the larger category two sheltered housing schemes and some other blocks of flats.

## Executive Annual Report 2011/12

### Councillor Ron Sands

#### Portfolio Holder for Culture and Tourism, Children and Young People



#### 1. Introduction

To obtain a near instant grasp of the breadth and scope of the portfolios embracing “Culture and Tourism” and “Children and Young People” it is best at first not to read every line of this report in detail (that can come a little later). But rather to quickly glance at the first line of every paragraph.

Such an exercise, for me at least, leads not to mental indigestion but rather to a recognition of the astonishing competence of our city council staff. Without their guiding intelligence and dedication each paragraph could easily become simply a check list of assorted items to be ticked off before moving on to the next “task”. But with that underlying intelligence and dedication, we observe a coherent and common pursuit of the ideals and objectives that are contained within such sweeping departmental descriptions as “Well-being” and “Community Engagement”.

In short the very varied activities and initiatives outlined below collectively contribute to making the Lancaster District an enviable place in which to live, to work, and to play. And for that, we must be grateful to our city council staff for making it possible.

#### 2. Executive Membership

- Cabinet

### 3. **Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc**

- British Resorts Association
- Morecambe Bay Partnership
- Children's Trust Partnership  
Lancaster District
- Historic Towns Forum
- Museums Advisory Panel
- LDLSP Children & Young  
People Thematic Group

### 4. **Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities**

#### **Council Services Objectives:**

Children and Young People

Culture and Tourism

#### **Corporate Plan Key Actions:**

##### Economic Regeneration

- Visitor Economy

##### Partnership working and community leadership

- Engage with our communities

### 5. **Progress made during 2011/12**

- **COMMUNICATIONS, TOURISM MARKETING, EVENTS AND VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRES**

This year we have worked in partnership with the tourist board, Lancaster Arts Partners, AONBs, museums, and Bay Tourism Association in the development of a Visitor Marketing Plan for the district, with the Lancaster focus increasingly placed upon its cultural and heritage offer and the animation brought to both places through the festival and arts scene.

We have worked closely with a range of partners to develop a programme of events and marketing to support the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lancashire Witches, with the aim of increasing the number of visitors as a result.

We are also developing relations with Lancaster University to increase opportunities for tourism marketing from families and the overseas market.

In Morecambe the tourism marketing focus continues to build on the natural heritage offer and again the animation of the town through its vibrant festival scene.

The profile of Carnforth, as part of the wider Bay area, important rail interchange and gateway to our natural tourism attractions such as RSPB, AONBs, is also being developed.

The latest visitor figures demonstrate a continuing positive upward trend.

I represent the district on the County Tourism Partnership which is promoting partnership working across the county and encouraging different parts of the district to share best practice and exploit the county wide offer. Most recently I enjoyed an exchange visit with Preston and, partly through the group, tourism signage is improving.

➤ **Events**

Our Core events continue to be:

The Sandcastle Festival  
The Seaside Festival  
The Fireworks Spectacular

This past year we have worked closely with Morecambe Town Council to develop a joint Morecambe Events Programme, 'Morecambe Festivals by the Sea', encouraging new visitors to enjoy the events but also take a fresh look at Morecambe and enjoy its natural assets.

Last year's Fireworks Festival included an enhanced daytime offer, working with arts, museum and other partners, to promote the city's heritage offer, including the introduction of a new guided walk, focussed on the Pendle Witches. The walks drew record crowds, the VIC had its busiest day ever, with a 57% increase in footfall on the previous year, retailers recorded an excellent day and attendance at the event increased by 60%, to a record number of 16,000.

The record figures for the Fireworks Spectacular. The Sandcastle Festival and Seaside marketing plan resulted in an independent economic impact assessment that the events contributed £1.4m to the local economy, with a high percentage of visitors from outside the district, many first time visitors which were there specifically for these events.

In 2011 the city council established an Events Safety Advisory Group, which brings authorities and emergency services together, to advise and assist in the planning and development of key events for the district, including the council's own major events.

Members will be aware that in 2012 the council is also hosting the Olympic Torch and plans have been put together for an impressive additional festival showcasing the district's outdoor and sporting tourism potential. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity and one that this district should build on in order to create a lasting legacy that benefits the health and wellbeing and pride of local people but that increases our reputation as a desirable destination for new and emergency markets. We only need to look at what the Way of the Roses to see what cycling has done for our tourism.

➤ **Visitor Information Centres VICS**

The visitor information centres continue to play a vital role, assisting visitors responding to our marketing campaigns through handling enquiries, website updates and brochure fulfilment. A marketing plan has also been produced to encourage footfall and income generation opportunities in the centres.

Visitor enquiries continue to rise. A comparison of August 2010 compared to August 2009 shows a 15% increase at Morecambe VIC and 16% increase at Lancaster VIC. For

2011 the figures had rise by a further 10% at Morecambe VIC and 11% at Lancaster VIC.

Income has seen huge increases, with a 45% rise compared to the previous year for Lancaster VIC and 18.5% increase at Morecambe VIC.

In 2011 MVIC was voted National Tourist Information Centre in the Visitor Information Services category, an accolade that staff are rightly proud of but which has been a boost to Morecambe's profile as a visitor destination.

□ **SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, SUPPORT TO ARTS ORGANISATIONS, MUSEUMS**

➤ **Lancaster Arts Partnership (LAP)**

We have supported a number of art organisations including the Dukes Theatre, Ludus Dance, More Music, Storey Gallery and Litfest. The Council provided £218,800 of grants in total and this has attracted a further £1,785,994 in grants and earned income secured by these organisations. Thirty Three full-time and fifty eight part-time staff are employed directly by these arts organisations.

➤ **Arts Development**

We have supported a number of arts projects including Spot on Rural Touring's performances in rural village halls, Green Close Studio's rural dance, Bowland festival and the development of a Lancashire Witches project, Spotlight Production's youth engagement project on the Marsh, LAP's Catalyst application to the Arts Council for £240,000 and a number of other significant projects.

➤ **Sports and Arts Project**

The project commissions local partners to deliver sports and arts activities in areas and at time of high anti-social behaviour and has successful in engaging with well over 1000 young people potentially at risk of offending.

➤ **Museums Partnership**

We are now in a clear position to be able to move forward with a review of the partnership arrangement with County Council. A recent Cabinet report set out the general scope of the review and governance will be a key factor in ensuring a vibrant and successful offer is provided. A report setting out options will be presented to members later this year.

➤ **Parks and Open Spaces**

○ **Williamson Park**

During this year the park has had 93 weddings in the Ashton Memorial and circa ten thousand wedding guests making it one of one of the most popular wedding destinations in the County. The Pavilion Café continues to be popular and income has increased. The Butterfly House has seen its highest visitor numbers for the last 5 years. In 2011/12 the Park has worked with a range of partners and has provided a diverse range of events within the Park.

○ **Happy Mount Park**

Continues to provide the district and Morecambe in particular with a wonderfully popular visitor attraction destination. Investment in the splash park will enable the season to

start positively and Wellbeing officers are currently in dialogue with a concessionaire to improve the mini golf facility.

The HMP Volunteers have worked hard in and around the Japanese Gardens and Woodland Walk, they have cleaned the ponds, pruned trees and bushes, planted bedding plants and introduces some quirky features such as self powered water pumps via use of stationery cycles.

➤ **Open Weekend Community Activity Programme**

New for 2011/12 this took place between the 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> July at various Council facilities, including Salt Ayre Sports Centre and the Community Pools. Over 1000 people took part in over 60 activities which were offered in partnership with 30 of our partner organisations, including local sports clubs and community organisations. This programme provided a varied range of sports for the community to “Have a go” and also provides local clubs and organisations with an opportunity to promote themselves and gain further long term members to their organisation.

➤ **International Youth Games**

Took place in Aalborg from the 2<sup>nd</sup> August this year and provided 5 days of competition. The Lancaster squad arrived home with a rewarding 58 medals (15 Gold, 17 Silver, and 26 Bronze). The squad competed in individual and team sports including; Badminton, Golf, Swimming, Table Tennis and Tennis.

A team of young people with disabilities also formed part of the squad for the first time and they had a fantastic experience. Also involved with the event was a Lancaster cheerleading squad and musical band to support the cultural programme offer.

➤ **Children and Young Peoples Holiday Activities**

During the April (Easter), Summer, October and February school holidays approximately 2000 opportunities for people to participate in activities were taken up and from this 40% were new participants who had not previously taken part.

**Play schemes** – Local partners were commissioned to deliver play schemes this year instead of the Council recruiting and employing up to 60 seasonal staff to provide this service. As the budget was reduced it did result in fewer play schemes being offered. 5 Play schemes were commissioned for the summer of 2011 and ran from 1st August to 26th August, Monday to Friday all day. Marsh Community Centre, Signposts and Lancaster YMCA delivered Play schemes on the Ridge, Marsh, Poulton/West End, Heysham and Skerton Areas.

We have also worked with Morecambe Community Football Club who have provided mobile play sessions in the following locations, Warton, Carnforth, Marsh, Galgate, Heysham Village, Ridge, Globe Arena, Caton, Regent Park and Happy Mount Park.

➤ **Sport and Physical Activity Alliance**

The **Community Activity Programme (CAP)** consists of a number of small partner projects. Since the programme commenced, some 5429 people have participated in regular sport and physical activity, 2531 were under 16, 105 were people with a disability and 114 were people from an ethnic minority background, 36 new coaches have been trained, and 77 new volunteers are working within this programme. In addition the programme has engaged with 624 health referrals (Referred by a GP or Practice Nurse)

and 1902 young people at risk from offending. The Police recognise the positive contribution that the Sports and Arts Diversionary Project is making in addressing anti social behaviour - anti social behaviour has fallen by around 21% across the district and up to 40% in some areas.

➤ **Salt Ayre Sports Centre and Community Swimming Pools**

Salt Ayre Sports Centre (SASC) currently has a fitness suite membership base of in excess of one thousand customers and is performing well in difficult economic and competitive times. Initiatives such as the one pound swim have proved successful and the link with Community Pools has seen wider benefits with staff working between sites. The Active health team are based at SASC and continue to work with an extremely successful programme linked to every GP surgery in the district to assist people with improving their health by following an active participation programme.

➤ **Children and Young People MEND (Mind, Exercise, Nutrition...Do it)**

Mend is a programme that is funded via the Primary Care Trust and is aimed at children who are clinically obese and who have been referred by a school nurse. The programme provides education and activity sessions for the child and their parent/guardian to participate in. This targeted approach has proved very successful during 2010/11 and received very positive feedback from those who have attended.

□ **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

➤ **Children's Trust**

The council continues its support for the Lancaster District Children's Trust Board and Partnership, working closely with a wide range of partners to develop priorities and identify opportunities for projects and commissioning. The Children's Trust Board is one of the key partnerships the council has identified for support and, in particular, the council is working with Lancashire County Council to ensure that the new arrangements set up in 2010/ 2011 work well.

➤ **Safeguarding and Child Protection**

The Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy continues to inform and direct staff, elected members and volunteers on all aspects relating to Children and Young People. Work on supporting staff in this important area continues with a revised Safeguarding Action Plan being developed in conjunction with the Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board. A new e-learning training package has been developed for all staff and the corporate group of officers with responsibility for safeguarding issues within their service has been reconstituted.

➤ **Local Democracy Campaign**

Local Democracy Week was held in October 2011 providing young people with the opportunity to become involved with their local council – in particular, the ever successful 'pupil power' day at Lancaster Town Hall..

➤ **Careers Fairs**

The Partnerships Team have attended a number of Careers Fairs at local schools and colleges, promoting the council as a potential employer – especially in regard to the new apprenticeship placements that are being offered.



➤ **DAPHNE Bid and supporting young victims of Domestic Abuse**

A source of European funding (known as DAPHNE) has been identified for an innovative project to support children and young people who are at risk, or have been the victims of, domestic abuse. In partnership with Lancaster District Women's Aid a bid has been developed and submitted, with the results being announced later in the spring.

□ **CULTURE AND TOURISM – REGENERATION AND POLICY**

➤ **Morecambe Area Action Plan**

The preparation of the plan has moved to the stage where the council's officers have summarised the large number of comments received from interactive activities with the community, businesses and other stakeholders. This has formed a draft vision for the central area of Morecambe which has received a large degree of consensus. The next stage of plan preparation will be to formalise preferred options for the council to consider. This will be a statutory Development Plan document so in addition to being realistic and deliverable by the private sector it will also have to undergo a formal examination by the Secretary of State. The programme to achieve this is currently to timetable.

➤ **Lancaster Square Routes**

The first phase of Lancaster Square Routes has been implemented resulting in new lighting and surface materials in Market square and the removal of the fountain. Support work has also been taking place with the Lancaster and Morecambe Chambers of Commerce to prepare for proposals for Business Improvement Districts in both Town Centres.

➤ **Cultural Heritage Strategy**

This piece of work has formally glued together the cultural heritage offers of both Lancaster and Morecambe with the need to develop the arts and the districts retail offer. It now forms an important part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework.

➤ **Lancaster Castle**

The Duchy of Lancaster has now engaged consultants to examine potential future uses for the castle and the City Council has been asked to play an important role in working closely with the Duchy in the forthcoming year to help shape their vision for the schedule ancient monument. During 2011/12 City Council Officers fully briefed the Duchy and their consultants on economic activity in the district, ongoing developments being facilitated by the Local Development Framework and important forthcoming proposals.

## Executive Annual Report 2011/12

### Councillor David Smith

#### Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services – Community Safety and Clean & Green



#### 1. Introduction

I am pleased to present this, my first report as Cabinet member for 'clean and green'. Thank you to Mark Davies, Member Services and Democratic Services and too many others to mention for their help and patience over the past year.

#### 2. Executive Membership

- Cabinet

#### 3. Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc

- Lancashire Waste Partnership
- LDLSP Safety Thematic Group (including Crime Reduction Partnership)

#### 4. Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

##### **Council Service Oversight:**

Environmental Services      Community Safety      Clean and Green

##### **Corporate Plan Key Actions:**

##### Statutory Responsibilities

- Actions to increase amount of household waste re-used, recycled and composted
- Deliver services that keep our streets safe
- Deliver public realm services that keep our streets clean
- Deliver statutory services to ensure minimum standards are met

## 5. Progress made during 2011/12

### ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

#### ➤ **Waste / Recycling**

- Food waste collection service rolled out District wide.
- Reuse, recycling, composting figure has increased to 43.3% (as at Dec 2011).
- Formally benchmarked service via Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) Performance Networks. Within our group of similar Authorities we were one of the best performers in terms of low cost of refuse collection / recycling per household.
- We expect over 60% of all Bulky household waste collected in the District will be reused or recycled in 2010/11. The Bulky Matters partnership now also operates in Wyre and Blackpool.
- Trade waste recycling service has been introduced and is operating successfully.
- Arranged visits to new waste management facility at Leyland for all interested Members. Also arranged visits for a local and international schools
- Continued work by enforcement team to reduce littering, fly tipping and to educate people about the importance of reuse, reduction and recycling of waste.
- Ongoing work to ensure efficiency of waste collection / recycling rounds.

#### ➤ **Cleansing / Grounds Maintenance**

- Won Silver Gilt award at Tatton show which was then displayed on Morecambe Promenade. This year's entry will be themed on the 'Way of the Roses' and will again be displayed on the Promenade.
- New themed flower bed displays to be planted on the Promenade as well as increased planters and floral displays.
- Supported various 'in Bloom' entries (e.g. Morecambe, Heysham).
- Since 2006/7 we have adopted a planned approach to playground provision which has been refined further in the last couple of years. As a result of this approach we have seen over £850,000 of money spent on improving play areas within the District. Well over half of this funding has come from external funding which we have been able to bid for because we have a clear strategy for playground provision. In this year new play areas were built at Hala and in Heysham Village and a number of existing play areas were improved. Whilst there is not further Council capital funding available in 2012/13 we will continue to work with Parish Councils, community groups, the County Council etc to see what further opportunities there are to attract funding to improve play provision in the District.
- Successfully tendered for external works demonstrating value for money.
- Worked with a number of local schools and community groups to improve open space (e.g. planting bulbs, trees).
- Did improvement works on Ryelands Park based on feedback from connecting communities project and further work funded by United Utilities is due to take place.
- Nominated Regent Park, Morecambe and Fairfield play area, Lancaster for QE2 Field in Trust status.

- Commenced delivery of Public Realm agreement with County. As an example the majority of County grassed areas in the District are now mowed by the City Council. Well received by Parished areas.
- Work with Community Payback team to improve management of the District's open space has been very successful.
- Noticeable improvement in standards of street cleansing and response to reports of flytipping, littering etc.
- Delivered 2011/12 Street Pride Scheme. Currently planning 2012/13 scheme which will also allow for Councillors to nominate areas of open space. The 2012/13 programme is being drawn up and will focus on areas that are in the need of most attention.
- Launched a project to work with Lancaster and Morecambe College to allow students to complete their horticultural qualifications.

#### ➤ **Toilets**

- Refurbished toilets at Carnforth. Bull Beck is scheduled for 2012/13.

#### ➤ **Highways Maintenance**

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

#### ➤ **Fleet Management**

- Continues to operate efficiently and effectively. Work taking place to ensure our fleet is operated in an efficient and effective way.
- Review of grey fleet underway.

### **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

- Funded 9 PCSOs for 2012/13.
- Appointed Chair of Community Safety Partnership
- Made good progress delivering aims and objectives of the District's Community Safety Plan. Progress on this was reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Significant reductions in incidents of community safety priorities for the District in violence, serious acquisitive crime, road safety.
- 2.3 % increase in domestic abuse in this District. Generally the trend across the County is an increase in incidents of domestic abuse. This could point to the fact that more people have confidence in the system to report it. Either way domestic abuse remains a priority for the Community Safety Partnership.

#### ➤ **Hate Crime Officer**

Dr Lewis Turner has continued in the role of Hate Crime Officer for Wyre and Lancaster District, based at the City Council for half that time. The project is joint funded for five years by the Big Lottery, Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership (LDLSP) and Wyre CSP and is the only project of its kind in the North West. Lewis works in partnership with the Police and raises awareness about hate crime and promotes the development of different ways for people to report it.