

## Executive Annual Report 2015/16

### Councillor Margaret Pattison

#### **Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Markets, Voluntary Sector, Older People and ICT**

#### **Executive Membership**

- **Cabinet**
- **Planning Policy Cabinet Liaison Group**

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

- **Lancaster Community Fund Grants Panel**

#### **Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities**

##### **Markets, Voluntary Sector, Older People and ICT**

<b>Corporate Plan - Key Outcomes</b>	<b>Success Measures</b>
Communities are brought together and the major issues affecting the district are addressed through working in partnership	Maintain working arrangements with voluntary, community, faith, arts and culture groups in support of key service delivery
Well run, value for money services that are valued by the public and demonstrate good governance, openness and transparency	Improve efficiency and effectiveness, reduce waste and develop customer service through re-shaping our services, using technology and collaborative working as appropriate

Sustainable economic growth and jobs will be created in key sectors, including energy, knowledge, health and the visitor economy	Supporting small businesses as important components of thriving retail centres
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## **Progress made during 2015/16**

### **Markets**

- Lancaster's charter market has continued to do well and provide an additional attraction in the city centre on market days
- The Assembly Rooms has welcomed some new traders during the year and will benefit from the opening of the new Primark.
- Morecambe's festival market is located in the key location for the Morecambe Area Action Plan. Its' future will be considered within the wider context of delivery of the MAAP.

### **Voluntary Sector**

***The council commissions partners from the Voluntary and Community Faith Sector (VCFS) to deliver key activities as a contribution towards the achievement of outcomes in the Corporate Plan. The main areas of investment are:***

- **Advice and Information** - specialist advice and information services to help reduce levels of debt, poverty, personal distress and isolation; increase access to existing services and help reduce the need for other crisis services. The focus is on early intervention and prevention, helping to avoid crisis needs with the associated effect on the lives of families and individuals and reduce the potential need for mainstream and crisis services.
- **Infrastructure Support** - to help secure the future capacity of the VCFS to deliver important services in the district by supporting organisations to be more resilient and to deliver services that are relevant to the needs of the district.
- **Volunteering Coordination** - to increase levels of volunteering in order to increase the capacity of the VCFS to deliver services in the district and provide

effective coordination of volunteers at a central point in support of a range of VCFS organisations.

- **Small Grants** – for the support and development of VCFS organisations and community groups and to protect or develop critical local services and test the feasibility of new local initiatives. An underpinning objective is the achievement of improved social capital in the district by supporting local people, groups and organisations to take an active part, and influence what happens, in their local area.

Our VCFS partners have performed reasonably well throughout the year, with some notable successes, whilst the nature and type of advice and support provided has evolved as a result of welfare reforms with partners now dealing with a widening range of inter-related needs as people make adjustments to their lifestyles. Taking into account the performance and delivery of services by our VCFS partners a decision has been made to extend contracts to 31 March 2017 with funding beyond that being subject to future budget requirements.

## **OLDER PEOPLE**

This year I formed a Cabinet/Champions group where we meet up every couple of months to share good practice which has been very interesting and useful in helping me fulfil my role as Cabinet Member for Older People.

I have engaged with pupils at two of the local secondary schools in connection with this area of my portfolio. I spoke to pupils at Heysham High about Dementia Awareness Training and to sixth form pupils at Morecambe High who had interviewed a number of over 70s and produced a short film 'the good old days in Morecambe' – a great example of local oral history.

I have spoken about my work with the over 55s to 38 Degrees at the Sanctuary Café in Morecambe and have met with the organisers of the Rainbow Centre in Morecambe and attended the Dementia Forum in Torrisholme.

I attended a screening of 'It's a Wonderful Life' at the Dukes with the Dementia Group last December and have participated in two sponsored walks for Alzheimer's Society. I was most proud of two young councillors, Lucy Atkinson and James Leyshon who joined me.

In December 2015 I was invited to County Hall by David Halpin who arranges the Older Peoples Champion Network in the Northwest. It was wonderful to listen to Dementia Friends of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School; the children have trained to be dementia friends through their after school club by supporting a local home for the elderly.

Looking ahead the areas which the network are keen to address include:

- Transport for over 55s
- Isolation and loneliness in the home
- Depression and mental health in the over 55s
- Safeguarding for vulnerable adults in their own home and Older People's homes
- Digital in the future for over 55s
- Good warm comfortable homes

In connection with homes I had the pleasure of touring Ripley Court with the Chief Officer (Health & Housing) to see how this housing for the over 55s had been upgraded. I came to the conclusion that I want to live there myself. It was a wonderful place with a very outgoing warden!

More recently, in February this year, Penny Foulds, Honorary Researcher at Lancaster University delivered a presentation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the ground breaking and welcome research that had been undertaken at Lancaster University on a cure for Alzheimer's Disease. Anne Oliver from Age UK delivered a Dementia Friends Session at the same meeting to members that were present and hopefully this can be rolled out so all members and staff can benefit from this training.

## **ICT**

At the start of 2015/16 there was a major restructure of the ICT service, aimed at improving ICT support and development, in order to support the Council through

its programme of future change. This has been largely successful although there have been difficulties in retaining and attracting people to the more skilled roles, possibly due to the influence of a national ICT skills shortage which is raising salary expectations beyond what we can offer. Measures to tackle this are ongoing.

A large amount of this year's effort has gone towards upgrading the ICT infrastructure and continually improving security arrangements. The former is to support ever more complex business needs while the latter ensures that these needs are met without compromise to the organisation's information security. ICT again achieved Public Services Network (PSN) connection compliance and supported the Finance service in achieving Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI DSS) compliance. Shortly there will be Wi-Fi available in all meeting rooms so that councillors can bring in their council devices to meetings; the first step towards paperless meetings perhaps!

Having moved to Windows 8.1 in the latter part of 2014/15, this has allowed us to extend the productive life of PCs and we've only needed to replace around 50 (8% of our total number) this year.

In terms of more service specific examples of ICT's work, having supported the Elections team in procuring and implementing a new elections system, the ICT service ensured its availability and smooth running during the May elections. Immediately following the elections equipment was rolled out to all new councillors in an efficient manner. Also, using both their technical and procurement skills, the ICT service has also been able to assist the Sport and Leisure team in selecting a development partner for Salt Ayre.

In terms of responsiveness, asbestos problems in the basement of Lancaster Town Hall and storm Desmond both threw up big challenges of keeping the computers running and providing the infrastructure for relocating staff, but these were met by dedicated staff putting enormous effort in –right across the Council, including ICT. With the asbestos problems Revenues staff were evacuated from the basement at 4pm on Friday and ICT had a business as usual telephone system ready for 9am on Monday with every member of Revenues staff relocated and

working by 5pm that day. When Desmond hit ICT staff had a generator brought in and worked through the Saturday night to have systems ready for the District Emergency Control Centre and all Sunday and Monday to have systems up and ready for 9am Tuesday when both the Town Halls were reopened. It would be great if the need for such challenges could always be avoided – but life isn't that simple and so it's good to know that services and staff have got the wherewithal to deal with situations if and when needed.

Looking forwards the ICT team are now working on developing a modern customer relationship management (CRM) system to meet the future needs of the Council and the changing world of digital. At the same time they are replacing the traditional telephone system with a full unified communications and collaboration suite.

Customer Services are also working with colleagues in ICT to review our existing Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform with a view to improvement, to offer a better, more customer- focused and efficient service in the future.

Members may have heard reference to “Channel Shift” – work is ongoing to meet the needs of our “digital” customers, who have the growing expectation of shifting their contact with us from the traditional face-to-face and telephone channels to more efficient and cost effective 24/7 online interactions. Self-service also reduces demand on the back office and customer services, and in time it too should deliver savings and Customer Service Advisers are working with customers to encourage them to self-serve through the Council's website, where possible. The capability for this will expand greatly in the coming months and years. Nonetheless, we need to ensure that customers continue to experience an acceptable level of service and customer satisfaction. The Council's website has been revamped with a single sign on option for customers to access many Council services under one log in. Measures like this will make it much easier to do business with us – and give us much better customer intelligence.

A relationship is building with ISS at Lancaster University with collaborative working towards the iLancaster app, providing information for citizens, tourists and

students on the move, and a public Wi-Fi trial at a number of locations in Lancaster and Morecambe.

It is a challenging but exciting time.