

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16



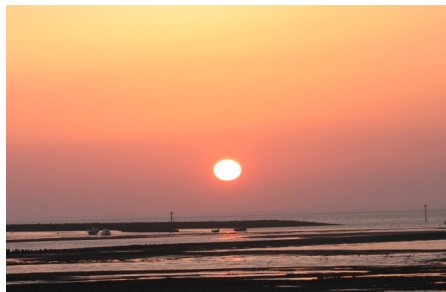
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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has overall responsibility for the performance of all Scrutiny functions (under the Local Government Act 2000) on behalf of the City Council.

The Committee has the power to scrutinise all of the City Council functions and decisions that are not within the Terms of Reference of the Budget and Performance Panel. It also has the power to call-in any decisions that Members feel have not been made in accordance with the Council's decision-making principles.



Membership:

Councillors Nigel Goodrich (Chairman), June Ashworth (Vice-Chairman), Lucy Atkinson, Alan Biddulph, Brett Cooper, Rob Devey, Caroline Jackson, David Whittaker & Phillippa Williamson

Budget and Performance Panel

The Budget and Performance Panel has specific responsibility for providing overview and scrutiny to issues regarding the City Council's performance, budget and financial issues.

Membership:

Councillors Dave Brookes (Chairman), Phillippa Williamson (Vice-Chairman), Sam Armstrong (from February 2016), Brett Copper (until October 2015), Claire Cozler, Andrew Gardiner, Janet Hall, Tim Hamilton-Cox (until February 2016), Colin Hartley, Roger Sherlock (from October 2015 to January 2016), Susan Sykes (from December 2015) & Anne Whitehead (until Feb 2016)

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



HERE ARE SOME OF THE MAIN ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE THIS YEAR

DEMENTIA FRIENDLY

The Committee had agreed to begin a project with Age UK receiving an update on the Dementia Friendly Pilot at the July meeting.

The Pilot had started in Bare with around 14 businesses awarded "Working Towards being a Dementia Friendly Community" status.

However, with Age UK now no longer leading on the project it was agreed that the emphasis needed to become more community led and that it was essential for local Ward Councillors to be involved with the project. All Councillors would be offered a Dementia Friends session as part of the Member Development Programme.

DEFYING DEMENTIA

In February Overview and Scrutiny welcomed Penny Foulds, Honorary Researcher at Lancaster University, who gave a presentation on the ground breaking research that had been undertaken at Lancaster University on a cure for Alzheimer's Disease. There is currently no cure for any of the over 100 types of Dementia, but 60-70% of people living with Dementia suffered from Alzheimers Disease.

Research had uncovered that neurodegenerative diseases were linked to proteins in the brain which stuck together in the brain causing tangles which were proven to cause these diseases. A non toxic drug had been produced by the research team to prevent these tangles forming.

The drug that had been created was now ready to go

to phase one clinical trails. This would be a difficult and expensive process.

DEMENTIA FRIENDS

In March Members of the Committee attended a Dementia Friends Training session run by Age UK.



ROYAL LANCASTER INFIRMARY

CARE QUALITY COMMISSION REPORT

Representatives of the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay came to the July meeting to give details of the Royal Lancaster Infirmary being put into special measures following an inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The CQC was to return to the Trust to re-assess followed by an unannounced inspection in the subsequent weeks.

Improvements had been made by the Trust in the preceding 12 months. £7million had been invested in additional staff including 125 new nurses and 25 doctors, improved communication and engagement with staff, new performance 'dashboards', improved record keeping and easier access to case note availability.

Ward 39, located at the Infirmary, which had been highlighted as inadequate by the CQC, had seen an increase in its number of nurses by 20%. The ward had been split into clinic zones, resulting in improved feedback of the ward.



'BETTER CARE TOGETHER' REVIEW OF LOCAL HEALTH SERVICES

A summary of the 'Better Care Together' project was presented. This had commenced two years ago developing a clinical strategy, with 3 key challenges:

- Improve the sustainability of our services to meet needs of local population
- Improve the quality/safety and experience of patients using local health services
- Reducing the health system deficit

Clinical Leaders across all organisations have come together to design a new clinical care model for the Bay. The Better Care Together Clinical Model would see integrated primary, community and secondary care services in the locality resulting in smaller more responsive hospitals which would still be able to provide essential services such as A&E and maternity.



COMMUNITY SAFETY

Each Year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers Community Safety.

Councillor David Smith, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Safety and Clean & Green and the Chief Officer (Environment) were invited to attend a meeting.

An update of the work undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership within the district was given. Details of the structure of the Lancashire wide Community Safety Strategy Group Agreement 2014-16 which had been approved by Council the previous year were explained.

Each Community Safety Partnership agreed its own priorities for the district and the priorities set for this area are:

- Domestic Abuse
- Substance Abuse
- Road Safety
- Violent Crime
- Anti-Social Behaviour

The Police advised that PCSOs were not included as part of their budget and that if Members wished to continue with these funding would have to be found elsewhere or from compensatory savings.

Also discussed were CCTV, vandalism in local parks, in particularly Happy Mount Park and safety on cycle tracks.



CCTV

At the January meeting an update on the decision of Cabinet to give notice to terminate service contracts of CCTV provision was given. Within the notice period, and prior to any decommissioning of equipment, any approach by organisations interested in taking on the CCTV operation, at no cost to the Council, would be considered.

Members discussed CCTV in the district and potential alternatives and suggested exploring whether the Lancaster BID and the proposed Morecambe BID may be interested in providing CCTV provision in the future.

It was decided that this would be looked at by the Late Night Economy in the Lancaster District Informal Task Group.

LATE NIGHT ECONOMY IN THE LANCASTER DISTRICT

INFORMAL TASK GROUP

The first meeting of the group took place on the 4th February with the terms of reference and a number of themed meetings being agreed.

Representatives from Lancashire Constabulary, Lancaster BID and Morecambe BID, Pubwatch, Castlegate Security, Street Pastors and licensees as well as representatives from the NHS.

The Task Group is being supported by officers from Licensing, Environmental Health and Community Safety and Legal.

The Task Group had its first themed meeting in March and received a presentation on the Licencing Act 2003 and the tools available to Local Authorities through the Act to monitor and control licensable activities.

At the time of writing this report the work of the Task Group is ongoing.

Themed meetings

- Community and Wellbeing
 - Licensing
 - Trade
- Impact on Street Cleaning
 - Health and Wellbeing

Membership:

Councillors Charlie Edwards (Chairman), Sam Armstrong, Lucy Atkinson, Caroline Jackson, and Roger Mace, David Whittaker and Nicolas Wilkinson.

FIVE YEAR HOUSING LAND SUPPLY

In October a presentation was provided on the five year housing land supply.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local authorities to plan for, and identify, a continuous supply of housing. The current housing strategy was set out in the 2008 Core Strategy. This sets a requirement for the period of 2003 to 2021 of 7,200 dwellings, equivalent to 400 dwellings per annum and 2,000 dwellings over a 5 year period.

The Council is currently under delivering on these figures and the current under delivery rate is 1,622 houses.

The Committee was advised that the Council could currently identify a five year supply of 2,507 dwellings. This included sites with planning permission and additional sites identified though the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) process.

Members heard about the methodology for establishing the housing supply figures and were informed that, based on this the housing supply figure, as of 31st March 2015 was 3.4 years.

Mr Barker attended the meeting on behalf of the Planning Advisory Service (PAS). He informed that the advice provided by officers was a local application of national principles that were well understood and it was articulated accurately in terms of national procedure. Mr Barker had reviewed the evidence base which the Council officers had commissioned and compiled to inform the Local Plan and also found that to be robust and sound. The Council was urged to proceed promptly to submit a draft plan to the Planning Inspectorate to ensure that it was the Council itself who would determine what the Local Plan would contain.



OTHER ISSUES

CHILD BUS FARES IN THE LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE AREA

The Managing Director of Stagecoach Cumbria and North Lancashire and the Chairman of the Bus User Group came to the meeting in January. An overview of the pricing structure Stagecoach have in place for young people was provided. There are a number of agreements in place with local colleges and the university for discounted tickets subsidised by Stagecoach. They are also trialing an Under 19's day rider costing £2. This trial would run through to February and, if successful, it would be rolled out across the district.

SUBSIDISED BUS ROUTES

An update was provided on the impact of the County Council's withdrawal of subsidies to certain bus routes; Stagecoach would lose £650K a year from April 2016 in subsidies from the County Council. Stagecoach had assessed all subsidised services and made suitable alterations to mitigate financial risk and the outcome would be some reductions and rerouting of services in the district. The County Council had set aside a fund of £2 million to assist local communities to provide their own bus service where cuts had to be made.

PORTAS PROJECT

The Chair of the Morecambe Town Team attended the December meeting. She gave an update on the initiatives under the Portas Project including street planting and cleaning, markets, celebrity signing events and Christmas lights.

There had also been a Corporate Town Branding exercise and a Victoria Street Art Project. This would involve locally themed murals on buildings on Victoria Street, Morecambe.

DRAFT ENERGY STRATEGY

The Draft Energy Strategy was considered at the September meeting. Cabinet had previously agreed in principle to develop a 5MW solar farm in Middleton but this project was now in question as the Government had launched a consultation on funding of Solar Farms. This was likely to delay the project beyond its planned March 2016 target date.

Other developments in the energy strategy included energy audits on council buildings and a review of travel plans.

MAIN ISSUES CONSIDERED BY BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE PANEL



CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING

The Panel receives regular reports including strategic summaries of how the City Council is performing in delivering its Corporate Plan targets. The Panel scrutinises these reports in order to identify any areas of concern. This year the Panel has asked for further information regarding:

- The CorVu system — the Council's Performance Monitoring System
- Association of Public Services Excellence (APSE) report and Action Plan, arising from review of Environment Services, Repairs and Maintenance Service.
- Salt Ayre Solar Panels
- Information on statutory and non-statutory duties

Other areas of concern were



TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

identified and, in some cases, briefing notes have been requested.

Richard Dunlop, Director of Capita Asset Services and the Council's Treasury Management Advisor, attended the February meeting. He gave a presentation on Member involvement, the regulatory structures, overview of the strategy including borrowing money, the current economic background and investments.

The Panel's views were sought on the proposed Treasury Management Framework for 2016/17.

SALT AYRE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

A presentation was provided on the proposals. This covered procurement,



business case, development advantages and the transformation of facilities.

The Panel requested additional information to support the business case for the development proposals.

BUDGET CONSULTATION

In January 2016 the Panel received a presentation on the City Council's Budget and Policy Framework proposals for 2016/17. Members also considered Lancashire County Council's, Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner's and the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority budget proposals for 2016/17. The Panel considered each set of proposals in detail and comments and queries made were fed back to the relevant organisations.

CALL-IN AND HOLDING CABINET TO ACCOUNT

HOLDING CABINET MEMBERS TO ACCOUNT

Overview and Scrutiny has continued to hold Cabinet members to account. This has taken place through the Call-in process and considering items of business at Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Budget and Performance Panel and also through arranging for Cabinet members to come to meetings to discuss issues and developments within Cabinet portfolios.

CALL-IN

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

The choice to 'Call-in' a Cabinet decision is used sparingly at the City Council, and with care.

The procedure ensures that, if necessary, decisions or proposals made by the Cabinet, a Cabinet Member, a Cabinet Committee, an Officer with delegated authority, or under joint arrangements can be thoroughly examined, amendments proposed, and full debate entered into by all Members.

It is the view that Call-ins are only used in exceptional circumstances. 'Exceptional circumstances' are where members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have evidence which suggests that the decision in question has not been made in accordance with the principles set out in Article 13 'Decision Making' of the City Council's Constitution.

There have been two requests for Call-in's this municipal year.

Reorganisation of the Office of the Chief Executive

The first, in August, Cabinet was asked to reconsider a decision made regarding the reorganisation of the Office of the Chief Executive. Upon reconsidering the decision Cabinet requested a report from the Chief Executive on the legal and financial implications of; a) replacing the Chief Executive; b) sharing a Chief Executive; and c) operating without a Chief Executive and making alternative arrangements for the Head of Paid Service. This report was considered at the September meeting of the Personnel Committee.

Storey Tasting Garden

The second Call-in was a request for Cabinet to reconsider a decision regarding the Storey Tasting Garden. Upon reconsidering the decision Cabinet members agreed with the proposition recommended by Overview and Scrutiny Committee that while the restoration of the artwork in the garden was not a high priority for the Council, a minimal amount of officer time would be provided to clarify the governance issues to enable a Friends Group to apply for major grant funding to restore the artwork as lead partner with the Council. Following clarification of the governance issues and clear permission to proceed, the Friends Group would be given 12 months to raise the necessary funds. If this provided unsuccessful the Council would revert to its alternative masterplan option of improving the gardens without restoring the artwork.

CABINET LIAISON MEMBERS

**CABINET MEMBERS WITH CORRESPONDING CABINET LIAISON MEMBERS FOR
2015/16 ARE SET OUT BELOW: -**

CABINET LIAISON MEMBERS

COUNCILLORS

Nigel Goodrich
Phillippa Williamson
Brett Cooper
June Ashworth
Caroline Jackson
Brett Cooper
Nigel Goodrich
Phillippa Williamson

CABINET MEMBERS

COUNCILLORS

Eileen Blamire
Janice Hanson
Abbott Bryning
Darren Cilfford
Karen Leytham
David Smith
Margaret Pattison
Richard Newman-Thompson/
Anne Whitehead

At the first meeting of every municipal year Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree who will undertake the role of Cabinet Liaison Member for each member of Cabinet. This appointment helps keep the Committee informed of issues within individual Cabinet portfolios.

The Committee values the opportunity to discuss portfolio issues with Cabinet Members and, in developing the work programme, every attempt is made to ensure that Cabinet Members are invited to

meetings where the agenda items are relevant to their portfolio areas.

Cabinet Members have also been invited to and have attended Budget and Performance Panel meetings throughout the year particularly with regard to performance and budget issues.

GET TO KNOW THE CABINET

In October an informal “Get to know the Cabinet” evening took place. All Cabinet Members were invited to attend along with their respective Cabinet Liaison Members and Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Budget and Performance Panel.



Liaison members took part in a “speed dating” session with a 1 minute “date” with each Cabinet Member before moving onto the next. This was followed by informal discussions between Cabinet and Scrutiny Members. The main topics for discussing included:

- Corporate Priorities within the Portfolio.
- Up and coming issues.
- Possible Task Groups.
- Any concerns raised by the Cabinet Member.
- How the Cabinet Member and Cabinet Liaison Member will Communicate.



Cabinet Members have also been invited to attend both Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Budget and Performance Panel meetings throughout the year for specific topics and also asked to provide a presentation and answered questions on their portfolios.

APPOINTMENTS

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

OUTSIDE BODY

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MEMBERSHIP

Homelessness Forum

Tracy Brown

Lancaster and Morecambe Fairtrade District Steering Group

Brett Cooper

Museums Advisory Panel

Phillippa Williamson

Representatives are asked to report back, if necessary, to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the work of these bodies.

PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

Pre-Scrutiny is the process mainly based on the study of the City Council's published 'Key Decisions' contained in the List of Forthcoming Key Decisions. It also includes information provided by Cabinet Liaison Councillors. With this information the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can select issues that it would like to consider before a decision is taken.

Each year the Committee appoint a Councillor to the role of Pre-Scrutiny Champion. The current Pre-Scrutiny Champion is Councillor Caroline Jackson. Councillor Jackson meets regularly with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Budget and Performance Panel.

This process can help to add value to decisions at the pre-decision stage, can widen consultation to include Non-Executive Councillors and it can also help to minimise the use of Call-in.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomes the opportunity to submit a response during the consultation phase of a decision and encourages this approach.

HEALTH SCRUTINY

Councillor Colin Hartley is the City Council's representative on the County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee. He has been invited to attend scrutiny meetings when health issues have been discussed. These have included updates on the Better Care Together Review of Local Health Services, a Care Quality Commission report—update on the Royal Lancaster Infirmary.

FUTURE DIRECTION

There are a number of issues that have not yet been considered or finalised this year in view of the amount of work that has been included on the Committee's Work Programme.

There are also a number of issues that remain on the Work Programme along with some fresh issues.

These include: -

- Peer Review.
- Major flooding incidents.
- Experiences of change from the Cabinet to Committee Governance system.
- Energy Strategy.
- Promoting the Local Economy.
- Licensing Scheme for Private Sector Rented Properties.
- Updates on Health Scrutiny.
- APSE Report and Action Plan, arising from review of Environment Service, Repairs and Maintenance Service.
- Budget Overspends/Variance.
- Procurement Strategy.
- Update on the wider implications of the CorVu system.

Both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Budget and Performance Panel will commence considering items for their Work Programmes for 2016/17 early in the new municipal year.

Members of the public are encouraged to suggest issues that they feel should be reviewed. This can be done by emailing scrutiny@lancaster.gov.uk.

Scrutinising the decision makers

IS there an issue affecting you and your community that you would like to see Lancaster City Council to look into?

Scrutiny is important to local democracy and exists to hold decision-makers to account and ensure that issues of concern to local residents and visitors are addressed.

It could be a problem in a local area, a council service or an issue which you feel the council, using its community leadership role, should take a lead on improving.

If there is a particular issue that you think should be scrutinised, let us know by writing to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, c/o Democratic Services at Lancaster City Council, Town Hall, Lancaster LA1 1PJ.

Alternatively, email scrutiny@lancaster.gov.uk or telephone 01524 582065.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Overview and Scrutiny and Budget and Performance Panel would like to thank the following for their contribution to the Scrutiny process during 2015/16:

- Cabinet Members who have appeared before Overview and Scrutiny bodies;
- Representatives from organisations, which have delivered presentations to the Committee/ Panel this year;
- Officers who have attended meetings and participated in the work of scrutiny;
- Members of the public who have attended meetings, or submitted evidence as part of the ongoing work of scrutiny;
- Training and development provided both internally and externally;
- All current members of the Democratic Services Team.