

Lancashire County Council's Pre-Scrutiny process

The County Council established an Executive Scrutiny Committee (ESC) in 2013. This is a formal Committee, politically balanced and chaired by an opposition member which meets two days before Cabinet and considers all reports which are to be considered by Cabinet. In addition, the ESC considers all Key Decisions which will be made by individual Cabinet Members in the coming month.

The Committee has been established with 13 Members. In addition to the Committee, all Cabinet Members and the County Council's Officer Management Team attend to present reports and answer questions. The specialist officer responsible for the service in the report will also attend as well for each item. If a special meeting of Cabinet is required a meeting of the ESC will also be arranged as well, even if this means holding them both on the same day.

The ESC has no power to stop a decision being made. Like any scrutiny committee the ESC can only make recommendations. There is an item at the beginning of every Cabinet Agenda for the Chairman of the ESC to report the Committee's views or decisions. There have not been many times when the ESC has not accepted the main recommendations of reports going to Cabinet or Cabinet Members, but there have been quite a number of times where there have been supplementary recommendations suggested, or requests that the Cabinet/Cabinet Member defer a decision or part of it.

The meetings are webcast on the County Council's website. Link below:-

<http://council.lancashire.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=878>

The Terms of Reference of the ESC are:

Terms of Reference

1. To review and scrutinise reports and decisions due for consideration by the Cabinet collectively, and to make recommendations to Cabinet on those reports and decisions.
2. To review and scrutinise Key Decisions, other than the making of Traffic Regulation Orders of all kinds including Speed Limit Orders, due for consideration by individual Cabinet Members and to make recommendations to Cabinet Members on those decisions.
3. To review and scrutinise Key Decisions due for consideration by Cabinet Committees, and to make recommendations to the relevant Cabinet Committee on those decisions.
4. The committee may invite to any meeting of the Committee and permit to participate in discussion and debate, but not to vote, any person not a County Councillor whom the Committee considers would assist it in carrying out its functions.
5. To require any Councillor, an Executive Director or a senior officer nominated by him/her to attend any meeting of the Committee to answer questions and discuss issues in relation to the reports and decisions before it for consideration.
6. To appoint a Budgetary Scrutiny Working Group and receive recommendations from it in order to make recommendations to Cabinet on its budget proposals to Full Council.