



LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL
Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

Executive Annual Report 2012/13

April 2013

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Foreword from the Leader of Council and Chairman of Cabinet



I am pleased to present the Executive Annual Report for 2013/14.

This has been an interesting year. Progress has been made in all these services in spite of funding cuts and efficiency savings.

The Council has taken over the running of The Storey and a Business Plan is being produced so that the building becomes sustainable. Considering the upheaval and some bad publicity, our officers have spent time working with tenants to ensure that the building will be a viable business and well-used by the public, with a regular programme of events and bookings.

A closer relationship with both universities has begun and we have also begun a twinning relationship with Yangzhou in China.

I wish to thank all our officers who have worked hard to maintain and improve services in these difficult times.

Richard Tulej is leaving us and from working with him for so long, I know how much his hard work and dedication will be missed.

Thank you to all our staff.

Cllr Eileen Blamire
Leader

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 2012 to April 2013**. 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 Councillor	Executive Decisions				
	Key Decision taken at Cabinet	Non-key decision taken at Cabinet	Individual Cabinet Member Decision	Urgent Business Decision	
Eileen Blamire (Leader)	7	2			9
Jon Barry	5	5	1		11
Abbott Bryning (Finance)	6	6	2		14
Tim Hamilton-Cox	7	2	5		14
Janice Hanson	8	6	1		15
Karen Leytham	10	3	3		16
Ron Sands	1	4	1		6
David Smith	7	2			9
TOTAL	51	30	13		94

(Decisions taken between May 2012 and 2 April 2013)

Executive Annual Report 2012/13

Councillor Eileen Blamire

Leader of the Council

**Cabinet Member for Relationships with Other Councils,
Communications & Performance Management**



1. Executive Membership

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

2. Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • Lancashire Leaders Meeting | • Lancaster & District Vision Board |
| • LGA Executive | • Lancashire Central Sub-County Group |
| • Lancashire District Leaders Forum | • Duke's Board |
| • Regional Leader's Forum | |

3. Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

Council Service Oversight:

Relationships with other Councils

Governance

Communications

Performance Management

Corporate Plan Key Actions:

- Review the Council's use of customer insight to inform and shape services and create efficiencies
- Develop and implement 2012 engagement plan in partnership, where appropriate, to inform member decision making
- Work with public sector partners to deliver a range of innovative approaches to communicate and engage with our communities
- Develop a programme around the community leadership role of councillors
- Ensure our key partnerships are working effectively
- Work to develop increased online service delivery options and engagement via social media
- Work with public sector partners to communicate key messages and information locally.

4. Progress made during 2012/13

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Below is a summary of developments in 2012/13:

- **E-communications**

Development of the council's corporate website continues. In 2012 it received 360,100 unique visitors, a 9% increase on 2011.

SOCITM (Society of Information Technology Management) 2013 results show we have retained our 3-star rating, missing (by the narrowest possible margin) a 4-star rating. Areas of our site were detailed in their main report as examples of national best practice.

A mobile version of the website went live in March. It is aimed at smartphone users, who make up more than half the population, with the navigation structure and content based on analysis of our most used pages/services from the main site, balanced with the need to keep the site usable and focused on key content.

Exploiting e-channels of communication is a key objective making it easier for customers to do business at times and in ways to suit them, whilst at the same time

improving customer satisfaction, communicating in a more cost efficient and timely way.

- **Media**

We provide a one stop shop to answer enquiries from the media – online, locally, nationally and internationally. Increased use of social media channels within the council and by the public has seen a shift towards more online communications, which includes updating Facebook, Twitter and web with news and responding to individual enquiries online.

We also support filming enquiries to attract visitors to the district and 2012 was a particularly successful year. National TV programmes including Turn Back Time, Panto and Question Time were all filmed in our district. In all three examples given, crew and presenters/actors took up accommodation and spent money in the district, supporting the local economy. In addition they paid income directly to the city council.

- **Take Pride campaign**

The Take Pride campaign aims to

- increase social responsibility
- improve where we live
- improve health and wellbeing
- increase support for the arts
- increase local people's use of and promotion of our attractions

- **Council magazine**

Costs have been further reduced and the aim is to have just two magazines in 2013, at the same time increasing the amount of information available online and via other channels, including the online newsletter.

Engagement

Our work in this area helped support the Take Pride campaign, encouraging partner support and weaving the campaign into partnership opportunities and messages. This included a range of partner briefings, the development of a Take Pride CVS Award, supporting the CVS Volunteer Awards and partner Take Pride town centre events.

New channels have been introduced to encourage people to engage with council services; examples include improved web pages, an online panel and 'have your say' cards.

Last year we held a Special Council Young People event which was a great success with 'Political Speed Dating' and 'Student Power' gaming on the menu.

During last year we also took part in an LGA sponsored 'keep it REAL' project aimed at developing the community leader role of councillors.

Customer Services

Progress towards a council-wide one stop shop approach to customer service continues.

Operational achievements this year include:

Continued roll out of Tell Us Once
Supporting the Collective Energy Switching project
Cross service business process improvement work leading to a more efficient residents' parking customer service.
Support for the Police Commissioners Elections

Customer Insight

This work aims to ensure customer data and information about customers is effectively used to better understand our customers' needs, expectations, behaviours and experiences; and in turn design and deliver effective and efficient services, facilitating self service where appropriate.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

In these challenging times, it is vital that the council is able to perform really well. In the last year we have been able to continue to deliver our Corporate Plan Priorities well, in spite of limited budgets and other reduced resources. Managing performance is an important part of making sure we succeed in a way that is efficient and effective.

Performance Reviews

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 excellent. Portfolio holders and officers are involved regularly in reviewing our performance across all service areas, supported by new reporting and monitoring arrangements. These arrangements, although new, are working well and during the next year we will continue to make sure we have the right, up to date information to help us to manage services and to make important decisions about what we can deliver.

We have introduced more flexible arrangements to allow portfolio holders to discuss performance in the areas for which they are responsible, whenever it is useful. The discussions that these arrangements facilitate are extremely valuable and help us to see quickly what needs to be done to get the best results we can.

Business Improvement

A new strand of work that has emerged during 2012/13 is Business Improvement. Initially concentrating on Pest Control and Car Parking the techniques used will successfully bring about positive changes to deliver efficiencies and maximise achievements within available resources. We know that very often our staff are in the best position to see how what we do can be improved and with the benefit of experience and training undertaken in 2012/13 the plan is to facilitate more low cost

Business Improvements in the future in a way that improves the way we do things to that we can do 'more for less' without compromising on service delivery.

Partnerships Performance

Partnership working is an important way of delivering local services. Work has started to review our key partnerships, partly to meet the council's governance requirements, but most importantly to help the council to ensure it's partnership working and supporting arrangements are fit for purpose, efficient and cost effective.

This work will focus on a limited number of key partnerships only but will help to make some quick win and longer term improvements and efficiencies to ensure that important partnerships are able to achieve the impact that is needed.

Budget and Performance Panel

Our Budget and Performance Panel has reviewed corporate and financial performance throughout the year, undertaking specific reviews that have helped to provide scrutiny and internal challenge. Reviews have included Salt Ayre and Service Level Agreements.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Following the consideration of proposals regarding One Connect Limited, the main focus during the last year has been to develop future strategy proposals for ICT. This is to establish what sort of ICT set up the Council needs in order to deliver efficiently and effectively against its corporate priorities. It also needs to be flexible enough to respond to the various challenges ahead, whilst protecting the integrity and security of the many systems and huge amount of data held.

It is widely recognised that the Council's network has been slow and troublesome at times, with some users experiencing difficulties with access and processing speed.

To help combat this, during the past twelve months the ICT Service has completed work to provide the organisation with improved computer storage facilities and faster internet access. ICT are keeping the organisation's line of business applications running and have been supporting replacement of the HR and Payroll application, major upgrades to other applications and continuing support and enhancement to the Revenues Shared Service systems. Alongside this, ICT have taken over network infrastructure support for the Storey building and reports from tenants have been favourable

ICT provision has been reviewed against the Corporate Plan with input from councillors and senior management in order to formulate a plan for ICT provision that will meet current and future needs. This plan, once approved, will be implemented over the next three years. A key part of the plan is to bring the software used by the council up to date, to meet the needs of all areas of the business. As an example, the ICT Manager has been working with an ICT Steering Group to provide improved access to council network facilities for councillors and a pilot is to be embarked on shortly, where a number of councillors from within the ICT Steering Group will trial the latest Windows 8 software with Microsoft Direct Access

to facilitate access to emails and documents. WiFi is being installed in meeting rooms to give access to internal network resources and internet during meetings and internet only access when the rooms are hired out to third parties.

Ultimately ICT impacts right across the Council and it is important that ICT provision is improved and is cost effective

GOVERNANCE

Democratic Services

A major focus for the Service during 2012/113 was the Police and Crime Commissioner election held in November 2012. There was a considerable amount of preparation required to administer the supplementary vote system which was used for the first time at this election.

Since November, the Service has been preparing for the County Council elections in May 2013, and has also started its preparations for the implementation of individual electoral registration in 2014.

During 2012/13, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England has been undertaking an electoral review of the district, and the Service has assisted the Commission with the provision of information, and, through the Council Business Committee, has responded to the Commission's consultations on Council size and warding arrangements.

The Service has continued to provide support for the meetings of Council, Cabinet and Committees. Officers have assisted the Overview and Scrutiny Committee by facilitating discussions with United Utilities and the University which have led to the provision of bus information signs at Lancaster Bus Station.

One particular challenge with regard to democratic support was to implement the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information (England) Regulations 2012, which made changes to the requirements to give notice of forthcoming key decisions and of items of Cabinet business containing exempt or confidential information.

On the civic side, a full programme of Mayoral events took place throughout the year.

Human Resources

A priority for HR this year, in conjunction with Financial Services, has been the procurement and implementation of a new HR/Payroll system, which will streamline administrative processes across all services. Following the successful implementation of the Payroll system, work is now underway to build the HR side of the system.

Another priority, in accordance with the Corporate Plan, has been the development of a range of apprenticeship opportunities within the Council. Eight apprentices are

now in post within the Council, with a further four appointed as part of our partnership with HT Forrest.

The HR Team have continued to focus on developing strategic initiatives and providing service support on a range of operational and transformational projects across each service.

In relation to the development and day to day management of staff within each service, HR officers have continued to support service managers on a range of initiatives. There has been a particular focus on working with service managers to reduce absence through sickness, ensuring that absence matters are handled in a proactive and timely manner and in line with the revised Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure. The Council is on target to reduce absence to its lowest level to date. To ensure compliance with Council procedures and our statutory obligations, the HR Officers have continued to support and guide managers in all disciplinary, grievance and capability cases. This support covers investigations, hearings and appeals, including any appeals to the Personnel Committee. The HR Team also manage all Employment Tribunal cases where the Council is named as a respondent, preparing case files in preparation for hearings.

Work has also been ongoing to ensure that Council's HR policies and procedures are up to date. This year has seen revisions to the Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure, Early Termination of Employment Policy and the Paternity/Partner Leave Policy and Procedure. A new Social Media Policy was also published.

Following a resolution of Council in November 2012, HR have undertaken work on the proposal to implement the Living Wage.

Training has taken place on a wide range of topics to meet the wider corporate needs, including a range of Management Essentials Workshops. An extensive range of Health and Safety training has also been provided, and the Council has become accredited by the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) to deliver its own certified Health and Safety Management Programmes. This ties in to the in-house delivery of First Aid training. These enhancements are seen as a major step change in expanding training provision, whilst delivering outcomes at a much lower cost. The E-Learning system has been further developed and a range of Web based learning programmes are now available to all staff. HR also joined forces with Skills for Life to support staff in gaining valuable literacy and numeracy qualifications.

In the last 12 months the Team has continued to identify and deliver initiatives to support staff in being healthy in the workplace and making healthy lifestyle choices. In April 2012 the HR Team launched a new Health and Wellbeing section of the intranet, which allows all employees to access a range of resources and information from one central source. During April - May the first staff pedometer challenge took place, with 12 teams competing to walk the most steps over a 2 weeks period. A very successful Health and Wellbeing day was held at White Lund Depot in July, which had a particular focus on men's health. The Council's commitment to the health and wellbeing of its workforce was again recognised by NHS North Lancashire when the Council successfully achieved a Silver Partners in Health Award, building on the achievement of the Bronze Partners in Health award

in 2011. Lancaster City Council is only the third organisation in North Lancashire to achieve the Silver Partners in Health Award. In making the award the panel "recognised that the organisation demonstrates a strong communication focus which is viewed as essential in driving forward a cultural shift in workplace health and wellbeing. There is a very strong commitment from staff, particularly in HR to embed the health and wellbeing at work agenda within the organisation".

Legal and Licensing

The Legal Service has dealt with a number of high profile legal issues during the year. These have included dealing with the termination of sub-leases to ensure the vacation of Lancaster Indoor Market, and the subsequent arrangements for surrender of the lease; dealing with the Storey Creative Industries Centre and the implications of the liquidation of the company that ran it; and dealing with the development agreement for the Canal Corridor scheme.

Legal Services have also dealt with a judicial review of the decision to grant planning permission to Booths in respect of land at south Lancaster, and have supported the Council's role as a second defendant in respect of an appeal against the Secretary of State's decision to uphold the Council's refusal of planning permission in respect of adjoining land.

The only outstanding compensation claim in relation to the Luneside East Regeneration Scheme is still proceeding in the Lands Tribunal., with a further appeal still to be heard on the valuation issue.

Legal Services have supported Environmental Health at an inquest following a fatality, which the Council had responsibility for investigating under health and safety legislation. There have been a number of successful prosecutions throughout the year in respect of benefits fraud, taxi licensing and planning. The 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 the Licensing Regulatory, Licensing Act Committee and Sub Committees, Planning Committee and Appeals Committee, and provide legal and procedural advice.

Local land charges have continued to maintain a high standard of service, although the workload and, in consequence, the income, is influenced by the economic climate and the state of the housing market. Like all other local authorities, the Council is still 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. This involves overseeing the responses to Freedom of Information and Data Subject Access requests received by the Council, and responding to any subsequent complaints raised with the Information Commissioner.

In relation to licensing, the Service was restructured at the start of 2012/13, and the licence renewal procedures, particularly in relation to hackney carriages and private hire vehicles have been streamlined. The focus of the service remains the safety and protection of the public, and this is reflected in regular inspections of vehicles. Taxi Proprietors' Forum meetings are held with the Licensing Regulatory Committee twice a year, and the Taxi Liaison Group meets as and when required. A Taxi News Letter is produced and distributed to members of the trade as well as members of the Licensing Regulatory Committee.

Likewise, premises licensed under the Licensing Act 2003 are being inspected to ensure public safety and protection. The Licensing Act Sub-Committee has met on twelve occasions through the year to consider new applications, applications for variations, and the review of existing licences.

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Councillor Barry

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



1. Executive Membership

- Cabinet

2. Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

Markets

Voluntary Sector

Older People

Connecting with Communities

Corporate Plan Key Actions:

- Support the provision of more allotment plots
- Work to develop the resilience and capacity of the VCFS to deliver sustainable local services
- Work with public sector partners to deliver a range of innovative approaches to communicate and engage with our communities
- Through Take Pride and marketing activity, increase awareness of social responsibility and opportunities to contribute to their communities and the district as a whole

3. Progress made during 2012/13

Commissioning

During 2012/13, the council introduced new commissioning arrangements to support the VCFS to deliver important services in the district. These services will help to develop the resilience of the VCFS but will also help to protect some of the services that matter to local people, including the most vulnerable in our district.

Over the next three years, the council will invest in a range of services including advice and information to help individuals and families across the district, support for training and development work for local voluntary and community groups and support to help increase volunteering in the district.

A new small grants scheme to be rolled out during the next year, will offer opportunities to local groups and organisations to bid for funds for new developments or one off activities that will deliver benefits for people in the district.

Take Pride Community Fund

During late 2011 the council, with the support of Lancashire County council, also made £283,000 of Second Homes funding available to the VCFS in the form of the Take Pride Community Fund. Nearly 100 expressions of interest were received and ultimately 26 projects ranging from £1000 to £40,000 were funded across the district, covering a range of excellent activities and projects. Full details are available at www.lancaster.gov.uk/communityfund

Community and Welfare Grants

The Council, with the support of Lancashire County Council Second Homes funding has been able to continue to provide £25,000 of small grants funding for VCFS groups in the district through the Community Grants and the Welfare Grants schemes. These grants, ranging between £500 and £2000, have helped these hard-working groups to develop and deliver local activities.

Full details of the community grants are available at:

www.lancastercvs.org.uk/funding/communitygrants and details of the welfare grants at www.lancaster.gov.uk/community-and-living/welfaregrants

Volunteering

The Council has worked with partners to develop new and improved support arrangements for both volunteers and for organisations wanting to offer volunteering opportunities. Alongside Lancashire County Council and 'One Lancashire', the new countywide infrastructure support programme, we have commissioned a new volunteering brokerage service in the district. This will be provided by Lancaster District CVS, operating from their new premises in the Cornerstone in Dalton Square. The

council has also supported the annual district Volunteer Awards, again run by LDCVS and held in the Ashton Hall in June.

Community Leaders

The City Council, is working with religious and cultural leaders in the district as part of the Community Leaders Group to share information on community plans and events and to discuss important local issues and developments.

Markets

- Elected Members via Council, Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny agreed ongoing commitment to the 3 markets (Assembly Room, Morecambe Festival, Lancaster). Besides this also made specific recommendations relating to The Festival Market.
- Council agreed £50,000 one off development fund for 13/14
- Officer working group set up to consider development of markets- linked now to wider Council aims eg tourism, regeneration.
- Exchange visit planned with Manchester markets. Manchester market officers will visit our markets to offer advice and vice versa
- Worked with Duchy of Lancaster to put on a special Christmas Market in the grounds of the castle. The weather was atrocious but there were an estimated 3,300 visitors to the event.
- Council officers are developing new rules for the Charter Market. I will be meeting with officers to give agreement to these.

Allotments

Allotments lease issues are now resolved. We continue to wait for capital funding so that we can move forward with the new allotments in Scotforth. I also visited a potential site in Caton with ward members. Not sure how this is going but was 'progressing' last time I heard.

Executive Annual Report 2012/13

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

- Urban Commission

3. Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

Council Services Oversight:

Resources : Financial Services - Revenues and Benefits

Corporate Plan Key Actions:

- Review local tax collection and recovery arrangements in response to welfare reforms and BID proposals
- Consider the implications of council tax, benefits and business rate proposals
- Meet all accountability and transparency requirements

4. Progress made during 2012/13

➤ Revenues and Benefits

The service has had a very challenging year, in the lead up to major finance and welfare reform changes. Key achievements include:

- Developing options for the new localised council tax support scheme and preparing for implementation from 01 April 2013. Although claimants will see no reduction in support entitlement from next year, in some ways the new scheme will work very differently. This has added some new complexities and challenges, both on the benefits administration side and on budget and council tax setting – this latter has impacted on all tiers of local government from the County Council to Parish Councils.
- Preparation for other welfare reforms, most notably the ‘bedroom tax’. A lot of work has been done to help claimants prepare for the changes, but inevitably for some this only hits home when people start to see and feel the impact of the changes on their finances, or face recovery action for rent arrears. Some of the regulations surrounding these welfare reforms were still being clarified at the time of producing this report, and so it is possible that other changes made have arisen in the meantime. Also, an update to the Discretionary Housing Payments Policy is due for consideration at Cabinet in April.
- Developing options for reducing council tax discounts and exemptions for second / empty homes, as a way of increasing revenues and helping bring properties back into use. These changes also came into effect from 01 April and so the preparatory work had to be done in the last financial year.
- Preparing for the collection and administration of business rate income within the Lancaster Business Improvement District (BID), again from 01 April.

Looking forward, emphasis will be on managing and monitoring the impact and performance in relation to the above changes, as well as other day to day revenues and benefits workloads. Government plans for the national implementation of Universal Credit will be monitored carefully, and responded to as appropriate.

The nature of revenues and benefits changes means that increased monitoring will now need to be undertaken across tiers of local government and measures are being taken to co-ordinate this.

The shared service with Preston continues to work very well and this provides a useful platform on which to share information and learn from experience. This is particularly relevant, given the need for the Council to review its localised council tax scheme prior to 2014/15.

➤ Other Finance

2012/13 was a year of change and uncertainty. Much of this centred on Government's Resource Review, which resulted in the Business Rates Retention Scheme being

introduced as reflected in the Local Government Settlement. There is still much to be done to understand the future implications of this change.

Much uncertainty surrounded future funding prospects for Local Government, which were announced later than expected. From the Settlement, it is clear that Government has given the City Council and other authorities a little more time, before further major funding cuts are felt in 2014/15 – and with a message that more reductions should be expected in subsequent years.

The Government also offered another round of council tax freeze compensation grant, but equivalent to only 1% (for two years).

Given the pressures over the medium term, in a very close vote Council decided to increase council tax by 2% for 2013/14, as a measure to help protect services. Something has to give.

Looking forward, the Council is in a good position to plan for the future and tackle the forthcoming challenges head on. Its reserves and balances are healthy and over the next quarter or so, some of the big long-standing financial uncertainties should be resolved either way.

It also has a lot of practical measures either being taken forward now, or planned for the next financial year, to improve and streamline financial processes. These will help to save money but still ensure sound financial governance and reporting. They will cut across all services, including Financial Services.

All in all, this year looks even more challenging than last year, but we will be ready for it.

This year a special thanks is due to all Finance and Revenues staff and to others closely working with them to ensure that we are able to take a longer view of how to protect essential services in the face of a decline in support from central government. In the forthcoming year residents will feel the full impact on family finances of the introduction of the complexities of the universal credit welfare support scheme. Additionally, before then, in the earlier part of the new municipal year, the government's spending review will present further problems as part of the Chancellor's decision to seek more cuts in local government expenditure.

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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 (Chairman)

2. Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

Council Service Oversight:
Property Services
Climate Change

3. Introduction

I wish to acknowledge the work and support of the officers in Resources, Environmental Services and Community Engagement. In particular I want to thank Gary Watson, David Hopwood and Dan Wood for the clarity of their reports and briefing notes and Mark Davies for leading the collective effort which has gone into realising the solar PV project. My aim above all others is to reduce energy consumption across the council's operations. 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 as funding from other

sources diminishes. It also sets a great example for the rest of community in reducing carbon emissions year-on-year.

4. Progress made during 2012/13

CLIMATE CHANGE

(A) ACTIVITY WITHIN THE COUNCIL

Carbon dioxide emissions reductions

2011-12 8.59 %

2012-13 to date show a slowing in the rate of improvement

The data for a sample of council-run buildings show continuing success in reducing energy consumption but the impressive rate of improvement seen last year, perhaps unsurprising given the prolonged winter period, has not been sustained. The cumulative reduction in carbon dioxide emissions to March 2012 was 19.69% based on a 2008 baseline, against a target of 34% by 2020. So progress to date is well ahead of that target. Progress will have been maintained but the final 2012-13 outcome report on the council's carbon emissions will be available in the summer.

Emissions reductions – and the monetary savings which go with them - are being achieved in a number of ways, as described below.

Improvements to building fabric and facilities continue to pay dividends in reduced energy usage. The gas boilers in Lancaster town hall were finally replaced with modern units and refurbishment of office space in the town hall basement included more energy efficient lighting. In the first three quarters gas consumption in the town hall reduced by 7% but the biggest difference will be seen over the final winter three months.

As Jon Barry and myself have pointed to a number of times, Salt Ayre sports centre has led the way in reducing energy consumption since 2008. The very considerable achievement there was deservedly recognised on a national stage last November when the sports centre won a gold award in the 'Environmental Best Practice in City Councils' category of the Green Apple Environment Awards thanks to its success in reducing its energy consumption and carbon emissions by more than 42% in just three years. Congratulations again to Susan Williams and her team. However, there are indications that gas consumption may have plateaued – perhaps not surprisingly - and the failure of the CHP plant over a period in the winter has led to a small rise in gas consumption in 2012-13. But electricity usage has continued to decline at Salt Ayre and when the solar PV panels are finally connected up we should see further significant savings. The performance of the panels at White Lund depot show just what is possible. On average over nearly 10 months, the PV panels on the depot roofs have contributed 18% of the power consumed, peaking at 39% in the summer months. Even given the generally gloomy summer last year, the financial performance of the panels at the depot are comparable with the projections made in the business case.

Following on from the first phase of solar panel installations which were reported in the executive annual report 2011/12, further installations exceeding a total of 110kW have been completed at the following council housing properties: Beck View Sheltered

Housing Scheme (26.5kW), Ripley Court Sheltered Housing Scheme (26kW), Bronte House (18kW), Wordsworth House (17kW), Gaskell House (13.75kW), and Ruskin House (13kW).

In summary the HRA capital budget has funded installation of solar photovoltaic panels at four Category 2 sheltered housing schemes and at four blocks of council housing flats. This will enable the council to generate electricity for use in its properties, as well as providing an income through the Feed-In Tariff scheme.

Given the demonstrable reduction in heat loss after the installation of the pool cover at Salt Ayre, covers were installed on each of the community swimming pools in March on an 'invest-to-save' basis.

Budget approval was sought and gained to fund a renewable energy strategy for the council which will provide an authoritative prospectus both for invest-to-save measures which are particular to the opportunities available within the council's property holdings; and for projects which the council can lead on in the wider community, taking its cue from the People Power model (see below).

The original invest-to-save budget approved in 2011 (and enhanced in 2012) remains sequestered to support the financing of the lease buy-out of Lancaster market hall.

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

Affordable Warmth

Lancaster city council has secured funding from a number of sources, including the Department of Health (DoH) and the Primary Care Trust, for the provision of services which aim to enable vulnerable residents to remain safe, warm, and independent in their own homes. The funding has expanded the services available through the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) which enhance the homes of vulnerable residents, and has allowed the council to deliver a range of activities through working external partners including Age UK, Citizen's Advice Bureau, Help Direct, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, and LESS. In addition, Performance Reward Grant funding amounting to £48,260.50 has been provided to the HIA as part of their 'Affordable Warmth Improvement Programme', the success of which could see a further £48,260.50 funding made available for the financial year 2013/14

Collective Energy Switching

February 2013 saw the launch of a pilot collective energy switching scheme for the district which gives residents the chance to join forces with the council to negotiate and take advantage of cheaper energy tariffs. In delivering the scheme, Lancaster city council is working with the other authorities Lancashire. The project completed, branded People Power, during April 2013 and a repetition of the scheme is being considered.

Green Partnerships Award

During 2012/13 Lancaster City Council has contributed £2000.00 to the Green Partnership awards for environmental projects, match-funded by the county council. This has seen 12 projects in the district receive awards up to £500.00.

Sustainability Partnership

The council also contributed time and resources to the Sustainability Partnership during 2012/13 and this Partnership is working towards a programme of events which will highlight environmental issues in the district.

(C) ACCOUNTABILITY

Climate Change Cabinet Liaison Group

Given that the solar PV programme had largely been installed by then and the renewable energy strategy had been stalled by lack of officer time, the liaison group has not met since May. The procuring of the renewable energy strategy should see the invigoration of the liaison group.

PROPERTY SERVICES

Organisational change

The council has implemented the shared Property Service with Lancashire County Council and asset management now lies within the portfolio of the head of Resources.

Building works

Major works contracts were completed in respect of replacement gas boilers and basement office refurbishment in Lancaster town hall. The schemes assisted significantly in the council's energy efficiency programme. The members' room in Morecambe town hall was finally established.

Conditions survey

Last year's executive annual report noted the then head of service's view that despite the investment in the town halls, the overall condition of council-owned properties was by no means good and that a conditions survey was being commissioned. This has reported and a capital expenditure requirement of £11.667m identified over the next five years.

The condition survey covered 138 properties and monuments. The survey concentrated on those building elements at greatest risk or most likely to fail. The objectives of the survey were to give an overview of building condition and to provide estimated costs of remedial work. The condition survey also indicated the requirement for further specialist surveys and design works that may be needed and this may reveal further cost implications in the future. Where possible an estimate of cost has been included within the survey and where not possible, provisional sums have been included. The service is currently building up a programme of work from the information obtained through the condition surveys. This is still a work in progress and the service is consulting with the county council about programming options. The methodology the service is using to build up the programme of work is as follows:

- Identify all grade D repairs¹ in condition surveys.
- Remove any buildings or items from the list that are the responsibility of a tenant under a full-repairing lease for example.
- Remove any work from the list to buildings which clearly have an uncertain future as a result of the property review which has just got underway, the purpose of which is to identify buildings which do not have a long-term future as part of the council's operational requirements.
- Where possible and as finance permits add grade C² repairs that compliment the grade D repairs e.g. should a grade C and D repair both require scaffolding then it makes financial sense to carry out both of these items at the same time to avoid paying for the scaffolding twice.

Once the programme has been firmed up it will be shared with members in a report prior to implementation. The provisional budget for year 1 is £2.4m.

From the point of accountability for, and transparency of, capital expenditure on municipal properties, it has been agreed that once the programme is finalised information will be provided in the form of a report prior to any work commencing.

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 and the property review will have to take this into account. The receipt from south Lancaster has been pushed back into 2013-14.

Progress is being made in developing uses for the land at Middleton which was marketed following cabinet's decision in July 2011.

A number of parties have expressed interest in council-owned land being marketed in conjunction with the adjacent landowner at Nightingale Hall farm.

Off-street car parking

The long-term future for management of the Parksafes car park was agreed and as a consequence it will remain in the control of the city council.

New fees and charges were approved at cabinet which are budgeted to deliver an inflationary (c.2%) increase in income and so contribute towards the council's financial position. I personally did not support the increase this year given that the county council has not (nor even engaged politically on the possibility) increased on-street charges as a counterweight; and because of the possible additional congestion which may arise from

¹ D – Replacement

Exhibits major deterioration, serious risk of imminent failure or is a health & safety hazard: urgent attention required.

² C – Poor Condition

Exhibits various defects and should be programmed within the next two to three years.

United Utilities' works in the city centre. For the greater good of the council's budgetary position I have to hope that my misgivings prove to be unfounded.

Air quality

The council has invested substantial time and money in addressing its responsibilities through a series of technical assessments and the appointment of a new air quality management officer last year. Three Air Quality Management Areas remain - in central Lancaster, in Carnforth and in Galgate. The AQMAs were declared because the city council expected levels of the traffic exhaust pollutant nitrogen dioxide to exceed one of the government's mandatory air quality objectives.

The council has completed further assessment of air quality in the affected areas and is working on air quality action plans.

Defra has responded favourably to the council's current work and proposals. It has accepted the council's timescales, acknowledged the additional resources invested in air quality, and welcomed the council's thorough approach to the review and assessment process.

Executive Annual Report 2012/13

Councillor Janice Hanson

Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Regeneration and Planning



1. Executive Membership

- Cabinet (Deputy Leader)
- Business Cabinet Liaison Group (Chairman)
- Canal Corridor Cabinet Liaison Group
- Planning Policy Cabinet Liaison Group (Chairman)

2. Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc

- Lancashire Rural Affairs
- North Lancashire Local Action Group
- LGA Rural Commission

3. Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

Council Service Objectives:

Economic Regeneration

Planning

Corporate Plan Key Actions:

- Develop and deliver planned elements of the Project Management Plan for the national grid infrastructure project
- Develop clear land allocation and development management policies for a new nuclear power station in Heysham
- Work with the private sector to develop proposals for city centre development in Lancaster
- Work with strategic partners to bring forward proposals for a science park adjacent to Lancaster University
- Continue to deliver Lancaster Square Routes Scheme
- Prepare and agree an area Action Plan for central Morecambe
- Develop proposals for connecting the Heysham Gateway
- Develop a framework for Community Infrastructure Levy to secure funding contributions for local infrastructure
- Commence delivery of Townscape Heritage Initiative 2
- Planning for sufficient, good quality housing across the district
- Complete housing schemes in the West End

4. Progress made during 2012/13

REGENERATION AND PLANNING

1. 2012/13 has been an exceptional year for the Regeneration and Planning Portfolio. Despite the fact that the country remains in recession there are now clear indications of significant developer and investor interest in Lancaster District. Rather than simply being a routine recovery some of these interests have the potential to present the district with one of the most exciting periods of regeneration and growth in its cultural and heritage offer for decades. The ability of the City Council to support and facilitate this major private sector growth opportunity has been crucial, and a major contributing factor to the level of attention Lancaster district is receiving at this time.
2. Strategically the City Council has continued to work closely with Lancashire County Council to present a joined up approach to economic development activities associated with new development opportunities. Officers of both councils meet regularly to track progress on the major investment schemes. In addition close working with the Cumbrian authorities in relation to national infrastructure projects, and development plan preparation continues. In particular the City Councils Officers have been assisting South Lakeland District Council overcome hurdles presented to them by the Planning Inspectorate in relation to the examination of their draft Local Plan.

3. The City Council has been engaged in three national infrastructure projects under the new procedures which see such schemes determined directly by the Planning Inspectorate and the Secretary of State. The Head of Regeneration and Planning supported the County Council's project team at the formal examination of the Heysham/M6 Link proposals in the summer. A decision by the Secretary of State is imminent as this report is being prepared. The City Council also took part in the consultation process on the strategic route options for the national grid upgrade between Sellafield and Quernmore and gave clear opinions along with the Cumbrian authorities on their preferences for further detailed evaluation. The City Council is also acting as host authority for further wind farm development in Morecambe Bay west of the Duddon primarily because the electrical connection makes landfall at Heysham. The City Council has enabled the partner authorities in Cumbria to play a much more significant role in influencing the preparation of the development application by a joint working arrangement.
4. The emergence of detailed proposals by the Duchy of Lancaster for the eventual re-use of Lancaster Castle, and the signing of modifications to the development agreement for the Canal Corridor North by British Land herald two major regeneration opportunities for the city with the potential to raise its profile in the sub regional hierarchy for the benefits of both local communities around Morecambe Bay and visitors. Significant commitment from the City Council through its planning and economic development activities will be required to deliver these schemes successfully.
5. As part of the overall spatial planning process the City Council has prepared and approved for public consultation a new Local Plan which includes both Land Allocations and Development Management policies. They have undergone a period of public consultation and responses have now been evaluated. The plan will now be reported back to Council to consider the format of the version to be submitted to the Secretary of State. All Councils were set a demanding deadline by the Government to make progress on plan preparation in the National Planning Policy Framework. Failure to do so would leave the Council vulnerable to appeals for development in locations they don't support. The efforts undertaken last year to progress the plan have helped alleviate that threat.
6. Alongside the Local Plan an Area Action Plan for Morecambe has also been prepared and consulted upon. It has generated a considerable degree of consensus at local level and has guided an eventual decision on the Urban Splash proposals for the Central Promenade site. The plan is now in a position to be considered in final form to be submitted to the Secretary of State. More importantly it is available to act as a resource to encourage investors to look at central Morecambe as a viable location to undertake development. The City Council has also provided support to the Morecambe Town Council in implementing their Mary Portas Pilot project. The project builds on some of the key ideas in the Area Action plan to help rejuvenate the Towns "High Street".
7. Despite the economic conditions prevailing in the country at the moment the Regeneration and Planning Service have worked hard to encourage potential development interests to engage in the regeneration of several major brown field sites. At this time all of the major sites are now either the subject of planning applications or are the subject of pre application negotiations. Work has actually

- commenced on two of the major stalled sites at Luneside East and Lancaster Moor Hospital, stimulated by the positive approach taken by the Council as the Local Planning Authority. Officers successfully defended a major appeal against the refusal of planning permission for a major food store at Scotforth and fought off a Judicial Review of the Council's decision to approve a new store for Booths on adjoining land. The decisions also secured further confirmation from the Secretary of State of the importance of focusing new growth on Lancaster City Centre.
8. Despite the abolition of the North West Development Agency the Council's expertise in pursuing external funds from various agencies of Government have remained successful. During the year £4 Million in the form of a loan was allocated by the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership through its Growing Places Fund to facilitate the clean up of contamination on Luneside East. Over £2 Million was invested by the Homes and Communities Agency in the Lancaster Moor Hospital Annex to encourage development on a stalled site. £1.9 Million was also awarded by the Homes and Communities Agency under Clusters of Empty Homes Funding which will be used to regenerate empty properties in the Chatsworth Gardens area of Morecambe's West End, a bid which was acknowledged as being the best one submitted nationally.
 9. A commitment to funding for continuing replacement of key elements of the sea defences at Morecambe was secured from the Environment Agency along with funds to investigate solutions for major flooding problems at Slyne with Hest. In partnership with a number of national conservation organisations the Arnsdale/Silverdale AONB unit achieved success in securing nomination for the creation of a Nature Improvement Area around Morecambe Bay and the North Lancashire Coast. This in turn creates a major opportunity to bid for additional funding for nature conservation activities within the area.
 10. In regulatory terms the Council has continued to target the owners of run down and unsightly commercial properties in both Morecambe and Lancaster with untidy site legislation and in special locations the incentives of grant aid, to improve the appearance of the two town centres. This no tolerance approach to poorly presented properties has reinforced the message that the districts private sector businesses share the responsibility for the success of the districts economy along with the Council. No better example of committed and responsible businesses embracing the need to contribute more to enhancing Lancaster City centres offer exists than the successful vote to support the creation of a Business Improvement District in Lancaster. Support for the preparation of the BID and its subsequent establishment to deliver the objectives over three years was provided by the City Council's economic development officers.

Executive Annual Report 2012/13

Councillor Karen Leytham

Portfolio Holder for Housing, Environmental Health and Emergency Planning



1. Executive Membership

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

2. Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| • LGA Coastal Issues Special Interest Group | • Health & Wellbeing Partnership |
|---|----------------------------------|

3. Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

Council Service Objectives:

Housing
Environmental Health
Emergency Planning

Corporate Plan Key Actions:

- Deliver social and affordable housing schemes

- Deliver improvements in private sector housing via enforcement and support
- Bring empty properties back into use
- Deliver the council housing planned maintenance and capital programme
- Undertake measures to tackle homelessness
- Work with the voluntary sector to reduce rough sleeping in the district
- Deliver effective environmental health services
- Develop strategic health and wellbeing arrangements in the district
- Work with partners to develop an air quality strategy for the district
- Maintain resilience in emergency planning

4. Progress made during 2012/13

COUNCIL HOUSING

General

- The council continues to deliver its decent homes programme and remains a high performer in maintaining its housing stock through the partnership between the Repairs and Maintenance Section and Forrest.
- The council has adopted a medium term financial strategy and has agreed to set a rent policy that supports the future investment needs of its HRA housing stock. The council is committed to maintaining decent homes. The council has the opportunity to consider further investment and growth in its service and stock.
- The first year of the self financing has passed. The council increased the 2012/13 council housing capital programme to £3.892m. During 2012/2013 the council was able to invest a further £147k in installing solar panels.
- New investment has now been built into the 2013/2014 capital programme which has increased by a further £1m enabling the council to deliver an expanded programme including energy efficiency work including boiler replacements, and renewable technologies, remodelling and refurbishment of the council's Category 2 sheltered housing schemes, increased environmental works on estates, critical lift replacements in blocks of flats, and increasing the funds available to undertake adaptations for people with disabilities.
- The council is now also now planning to invest in providing new 1 bedroom council housing within the district as we know we have demand for smaller accommodation and this will also provide options for those affected by the 'bedroom tax'.
- Tenant satisfaction with the repairs and maintenance service remains high.

Tenancy

- 2012/2013 has an increase in the number of properties available to relet. It is predicted that over 400 households will have been rehoused in council housing by during the year (Approximately 82% to new tenants, 18% to existing tenants).

- The year has also seen the council's housing register grow to just over 2300 applicants (Approximately 18% are existing council tenants looking to move). The overwhelming demand is for smaller accommodation with 59% of the applicants on the housing register requiring 1 bedroom, and a further 27% requiring 2 bedrooms.

Neighbourhood and Community

- Preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour on the council's estates remains a high priority working together with residents and other agencies. Tenancy management remains challenging and the year has seen over 285 new cases during 2012/2013 being dealt with by housing management staff. Working with other agencies is extremely important through the Multi-Agency Partnership Team (MAP), the Anti Social Behaviour Risk Assessment Conferences (ASBRAC), the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC - the main aim of the MARAC is to support the highest risk victims of domestic abuse in their area) and the Prolific and other Priority Offenders Group (PPO).
- 2012/2013 has also seen a considerable input into Working Together with Families, a county wide development incorporating the Government's Troubled Families Programme. The objective is for agencies to jointly work to turn around the lives of some of the most troubled families in the district.
- The annual council housing garden competition remain perennially popular with tenants and leaseholders, and again the standard was extremely high. All those who took part were invited to a presentation to celebrate their success and achievements.
- High levels of service are provided to sheltered housing scheme tenants thorough the sheltered housing support and community alarm contracts the council delivers on behalf Lancashire Supporting People. We have also continued to be able to provide community alarm support and telecare support to the wider community. A shift by Lancashire Supporting People in the way older persons supported housing for older people is procured and funded in future years presents a challenge to the council in providing its supported housing for older people.

Rent

- Despite the economic pressures on tenants the number of tenants getting into serious arrears remains low at 3%. (% of tenants in serious arrears owing £250 or more and over the equivalent of 13 weeks net rent). The overall collection rate remains high with the proportion of rent collected being 98.8%.
- The council is very conscious of the impact of the forthcoming Welfare Reforms on tenant who receive benefits. Working with the housing benefit service, CAB, and other agencies a series of information drops in were provided across the district and tenants have been contacted individually about the potential impact of the reductions in housing benefit due to the under occupation rules being introduces under the Welfare Reforms. Work will continue to see how the council can help its tenants affected by these changes.

- Through the new financial freedoms the council has in recognition of the financial difficulties many tenants are facing the council agreed not to increase its rents for 2013/2014. This decision was taken by Cabinet along with the decision to recommend increased investment in council housing.

Tenant Involvement

- The council's engagement with tenants has gone from strength to strength, and is continually seeking to improve how tenants are engaged in the setting and delivery of the council housing services provided. The District-wide Forum and the Tenant Quality Groups have worked well this year and have looked at many aspects of the services. Tenant representatives have undertaken a number of "Mystery Shopping" exercises during the year including looking at end of tenancy inspections, the operation of the emergency call centre, communal areas of flats, and the choice based letting service.
- There is a very active sheltered housing tenant group and individual sheltered housing schemes have taken part in many activities. Tenants at Kingsway Court were successful in the Britain in Bloom competition and got proper recognition of their efforts and involvement in maintaining the gardens at the sheltered housing scheme. This was also rewarded through a successful funding bid to the Prince's Trust.

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING and CEMETERIES

Housing Standards

- 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 12/13 the team undertook a project with food/health and safety colleagues targeting hotels and hostels that house some of our most vulnerable residents and worked closely with Lancaster University to further improve the properties they use to accommodate their students. The majority of houses in multiple occupation (HMO's) subject to Mandatory Licensing were re-licensed during 12/13.
- The Housing Standards team increased their work on reducing fuel poverty during 12/13 by employing an officer in partnership with NLTPCT to target vulnerable tenants in the private rented sector.
- During 12/13 the Housing Standards team made two successful prosecutions against a landlord for failure to comply with statutory housing legislation. The team also successfully defended an appeal from a landlord against the enforcement of an Improvement Notice for the improvement to the heating and insulation in two flats in Morecambe.

Home Improvement Agency (HIA)

- The Home Improvement Agency has continued to enable vulnerable residents to remain independent, safe, secure and warm in their homes.

In 2012/13 the HIA successfully secured continued funding from the framework of key partners including the NLTPCT, the county council's Adult & Community Services and the Supporting People programme. This funding enabled the HIA service to continue to meet the needs of vulnerable residents. In addition the HIA continues to provide a number of bolt on services for vulnerable residents including the delivery of the 'Sanctuary' and 'Haven' service, completing security works to the homes of 'at risk' clients suffering Anti Social Behaviour and Domestic Violence in partnership with the Homeless team.

- The new Warm Homes Service launched October 2012 - this is a new free service for vulnerable residents in the district funded by Lancaster City Council, Department of Health and NLTPCT to help vulnerable residents stay warm over the winter. The HIA provides practical solutions to help vulnerable residents keep their homes warm at an affordable level over the winter period.

Homelessness/Housing Options

- 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 have already seen 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 to the economic climate and changes in government policies. The prevention contract with the YMCA and Signposts has now ended. This work is now delivered "in house" with a substantial saving.
- The CLG funded "Places of Change" project for 16-25 year olds is operating at full capacity with the 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 have all been allocated to young people moving on to independent living and all tenancies have now been sustained for nearly 12 months.
- The Supporting People contracts have been in place for several months now for the delivery of a local Refuge and the Teenage Mother & Baby Unit. The 6 bed Refuge for Domestic Violence will open on 1st April 2013. The Teenage Mother & Baby property acquisition has fallen through and it is disappointing that this development will probably not go ahead
- 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
- In October 2012 the council, in partnership with North West Methodist Action, launched the new 'Social Lettings Agency', with the aim of increasing access to good quality private rented sector accommodation for homeless households. 8 properties have now been leased from private sector landlords with a further 8 coming in to the scheme as part of the empty homes programme.
- Following the establishment of Choice Based Lettings within the housing options team to support the delivery of choice based lettings the feedback we have received

has been very positive. Customers have embraced the new on-line applications with limited disruption or complaint.

As part of our improved service to customer's, officers now provide outreach and support to vulnerable applicants in their own homes and at regular drop-ins throughout the district. Officers also assisted 83 vulnerable applicants through the assisted bidding process for those applicants with disability or health issues.

Consultation is now under way to review the council's allocation policy, local connection, forces applicants and the effective allocation to those most in need is a high priority for the authority.

The DCLG have made a small amount of funding available to roll out the governments No Second Night Out (NSNO) initiative across Lancashire. Lancaster City Council has joined a new national scheme which aims to make it easier for people sleeping rough to get the help they need. So far, it seems to be working well.

- Following a successful bid to the Homes and Communities Agency work is currently progressing to identify a preferred provider to build a new homeless hostel for rough sleepers/entrenched homeless. Revenue funding for the project has now been secured with a build completion date of December 2014. The project will consist of crisis, move on and self contained units and will deliver a wide range of on site services including health, drug alcohol, training, education and in work support. In the meantime we are going to deliver a small 4 bed supported housing unit at 50 Portland Street in Lancaster until the new scheme is opened.
- During 2011/2012 new legislative requirements and associated consultations came out of the Localism Act. The government has been consulting on tackling tenancy fraud, the allocation of accommodation, the introduction of tenancy strategies and policies, reinvigorating the right to buy, changes to the social housing regulatory framework, tackling under-occupation, the introduction of the Housing Ombudsman Service to deal with all housing complaints to name but a few. Most of these new requirements were addressed in the service business plans and work plans for 2012/2013 and 2013/2014.

Cemeteries

- 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 third year running with Torrisholme Cemetery gaining a Green Flag for the 5th year.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Food Business Regulation

- Of our 1,521 food premises 1,154 are now included within the food hygiene rating scheme. 95% of businesses currently rated under the scheme were 'broadly compliant' with legal requirements at the time of unannounced inspections. 75% gained a five out of five rating which is a 4% improvement on the previous year.

- 448 food safety and hygiene complaints have been investigated, up 52% increase on the previous year. These complaints appear to be on the increase which may be a sign of difficult financial times for some food businesses.

Workplace Safety Regulation

- A programme of health and safety interventions in higher risk premises have focused on swimming pools; launderettes; funeral directors; asbestos in church halls; staff exposure to noise in nightclubs and late night bars; open farms and animal attractions; caravan sites; hairdressers and barbers; body piercers.
- The Health and Safety team has conducted a number of regulatory investigations into serious workplace accidents. The 93 notified accidents included people suffering a fractured back, an amputated finger, an amputated thumb and a severe internal injury.

Environmental Protection

- Under pollution control legislation officers inspected a wide range of businesses holding permits because they emit air pollution. They have been closely in the development and remediation of the contaminated gas works site at Luneside East, and continued a programme of new regulatory work to risk assess private water supplies in rural areas
- Whilst routinely called out to reported pollution incidents, it is less commonly known that environmental health officers make comment on new planning and licensing applications to prevent problems before they happen. During the past year officers responded to 601 planning applications and 133 temporary event notices. Officers also attended Planning and Licensing Regulatory Committee meetings to advise on environmental health matters, presenting evidence at two planning appeal hearings and three licensing hearings.

Nuisance, Grime And Anti-Social Behaviour

- A long-standing case of anti-social behaviour by a prolific pigeon feeder in Morecambe was successfully taken to the Magistrates Court with the help of local residents providing witness statements. An ASBO was granted and the situation is now improving.

Dog Control

- Four new Dog Control Orders have been introduced under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2006 relating to:
 - Fouling in public areas
 - Dogs off leads in designated areas
 - Putting dogs on leads when requested by an authorised officer
 - Dog exclusion areas

Enforcement officers can now issue Fixed Penalty Notices for all four offences, making enforcement simpler, quicker and less costly than under previous legislation.

- Three very effective dog fouling enforcement operations were carried out, resulting in nine Fixed Penalty Notices being issued. The presence of enforcement officers

had a much wider effect on the dog walking community, with many dog walkers welcoming this enforcement.

- Licensing for home boarding of dogs has been introduced. It is estimated this will affect around 40 local home boarders. This will provide for dog welfare and security.

Pest Control

- The council's Pest Control service has extended its range of residential and commercial pest control services, receiving excellent customer feedback and increasing its commercial contract work. Pest Control is also on Twitter and building up a following of Tweeters!

Emergency Planning

- The Council's Duty Emergency Incident Officer system has been turned out at the request of the emergency services on many occasions to incidents of flooding, unsafe buildings, fires and on one occasion a report of a hand grenade being found that led to the evacuation of over 100 homes. Our role is to coordinate with the emergency services and other partners, offering the council's support and resources to help deal with the emergency incident and restore normality.
- Planning for the Olympic Torch Relay was an innovative joint operation with Wyre Borough Council and Lancashire County Council. A number of possible emergency scenarios were planned for and tested beforehand by all the agencies concerned. Despite the horrendous weather, the Olympic Torch Relay passed safely and successfully.
- The Council hosted a live emergency exercise at Salt Ayre Sports Centre in October 2012. Challenge II tested the set up and operation of a Reassurance & Monitoring Centre by the National Health Service in the aftermath of a fictitious radiation incident. Over 200 local volunteers, including 60 students from the College, went through the monitoring system to test its efficiency. The exercise was funded by a government grant and learning from the day will inform national planning for radiation incidents.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING:

- The public health function transferred to Lancashire County Council on 1st April 2013 and the clinical commissioning group takes over commissioning responsibility from the PCT. Throughout 2012/13 we have been working closely with LCC, CCG and other partners of the Health and Well Being partnership to plan how we can jointly deliver our health and well being priorities and ensure the health outcomes for our citizens are the best they can be. Even as all our organisations contract due to budget cuts, we will continue to work together to deliver the Health and Well Being partnership's action plan and ensure that the decisions we make now lead to long term health improvements.

Executive Annual Report 2012/13

Councillor Ron Sands

Portfolio Holder for Culture and Tourism, Children and Young People



1. Executive Membership

- Cabinet

2. Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc

- Morecambe Bay Partnership
- Children's Trust Partnership Lancaster District
- British Destinations
- Historic Towns Forum
- Lancaster District Children's Trust Board
- Museums Advisory Panel
- Lancashire Tourism Forum
- English Heritage Regional Network (North West)

3. Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

Council Services Objectives:

Corporate Plan Key Actions:

- Provide leisure facilities
- Work with public sector partners to deliver health and leisure activities for children and young people and older people
- Through the Take Pride campaign and opportunities arising from the Olympic year, raise the profile and importance of involvement in sport and leisure activities
- Improvements to parks and open spaces
- Deliver positive leisure activities for young people
- Work with partners to support the Children's Trust Board and partnership and develop a Children and Young People's Plan for the district
- Continue to develop and market Happy Mount Park as a key visitor attraction
- Develop retail and visitor service provision at Williamson's Park
- Work with partners to develop and deliver events and festivals throughout the district
- Develop and agree a tourism marketing brand for the district
- Complete the review of the Museums Partnership
- Work with the duchy to consider options for the long term use of Lancaster Castle
- Work in partnership to develop and deliver a tourism marketing plan for the district and its attractions, particularly focussed on staying visitors
- Develop and deliver a campaign to encourage film and broadcast companies to the district
- Support arts in the district working with the Arts Partnership.

4. Introduction

My portfolios have a greater amount of so-called "discretionary" spending than most others. I choose the qualification "so-called" advisedly, because in actual fact the activities described below are essential if we are to live up to the laudable ambitions inherent in such sweeping descriptions as "Community Engagement" and "Community Well-being".

In these times of unprecedented local government financial pressures it behoves us to consider the vital importance of the work that has been undertaken by our dedicated and committed staff, at all levels. And I am grateful for the opportunity this report provides to acknowledge the invaluable contributions made by city council employees to our day to day operations. It often seems that the public expect more and more to be achieved on fewer and fewer resources.

So my mantra this year, and even more pressingly, for future years, is "Yes, discretionary; but also absolutely essential".

5. Progress made during 2012/13

TOURISM MARKETING, EVENTS AND VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRES

Highlights over the past year include:

Branding strategy

Major regeneration projects provide new opportunities for the district from a visitor economy and investor perspective.

The city council, with joint funding from county, is working with consultants and partners to develop a destination brand and strategy to market the district and its principal destinations, as an appealing place in which to visit, invest, work and live. The process has included close liaison with Marketing Lancashire and a wide range of stakeholders.

Events

Events continue to be developed not only to increase the number of people coming to the district but to enhance the experience they have and reputation of the places in line with our overarching tourism strategy. Enhancements and partnership working to support this in 2012 include fireworks fired from Lancaster Castle, adding 'Light Up Lancaster' to the Fireworks weekend and reflecting the Vintage appeal as part of Morecambe's Heritage Weekend.

As well as the core festivals:

- Sandcastle – crowds of 8,000 plus, Seaside festival crowds of 25,000 plus and the Fireworks festival with crowds of 14,500 plus; all of which have a significant economic impact.

2012 also saw the development, delivery and marketing, in partnership, of the following:

- Heritage Weekend into an attractive festival and worked closely with partners to develop and deliver a range of attractive events including:
- Unlocked – celebrating the history of Lancaster
- Light Up Lancaster – as a prelude to the Fireworks
- Kite Festival – funding and support

In partnership with the Charter Market, the Dukes Theatre, the Duchy of Lancaster and community choirs and schools, for the first time ever delivered '*Christmas at the :Castle*' attracting 3,500 visitors on a blustery, freezing, dark day.

Despite horrific weather a cross council approach also led to a successful *Olympic Torch Relay event, accompanied by the City Centre Cycle Race and Velocity Weekend.*

Our thanks must also go to Morecambe Town Council for £20k support towards the Seaside Festival and various other sponsors for direct or in-kind support.

Tourism marketing and development

We have worked in partnership with the tourist board, Lancaster Arts Partners, AONBs, museums, the University and Bay Tourism Association in the development and delivery of various campaigns -

Highlights include:

- the 400th anniversary of the Lancashire Witches, which attracted significant national and international media interest, greater than any other Lancashire event in 2012.
- Working closely with English Heritage and County Council the council also produced the Discover Lancaster Guide to the city which resulted in national publicity.
- University open days – we have worked in partnership with the University recruitment and welcome departments on activities including visit days (with pop-up stands), arrival days and fresher's fairs (facilitate guided tours on the visit days around Lancaster City Centre). We have also promoted the Fireworks Spectacular Event as a way of introducing many students to the history of Lancaster and its diverse arts programme of events. We have also worked with the University ward councillors to forge closer links to assist with daytime activities.
- Festivals by the Sea campaign with £5k funding support from Morecambe Town Council.
- Morecambe Vintage Day – Held the following week after the Seaside Festival the Bradford to Morecambe Car Rally and Vintage Village Hall and Tearoom (based at the Platform) presented high attendance figures over the Heritage Weekend (estimated at around 10,000) without any significant budget increase.

We have worked hard to encourage filming in the district, raising the profile of the district and supporting the economy. High profile successes include:

- Turn Back Time
- Panto (Boxing Day TV special)
- The BBC's Question Time at Lancaster Town Hall

Visitor Website

2012 welcomed 216,538 unique visitors to the website, 49% up on the 2011 total of 144,602 visitors. In addition to this, the first 2 months of 2013 totalled 36,923 unique visitors, a massive 41% up on 2012's 26,227 visitors for Jan and February.

Visitor Information Centres

Visitor enquiries continue to rise. A comparison of the first 6 months January – June 2011 to January – June 2012 showed a 20% increase in 2012 at Lancaster VIC and a comparable number of enquiries at Morecambe VIC year on year

Despite the current economic climate income at Morecambe VIC has continued to perform with a gross income of £202K, Lancaster VIC has seen positive development

and sales taken through the online shop which is managed by staff at the centre - particularly with sales of Platform and Williamson Park event tickets.

As well as delivering ticketing for the Platform and Williamson Park VICs now offer a similar service for a range of other partners, including the recently introduced sales of tickets for Lancaster Castle tours, reflecting good partnership working. Offering a seven day a week service at Morecambe VIC during the summer months, the centres continue to offer a 'one stop shop' for visitors and local people alike.

Lancaster's VIC had to move out of the Storey for a number of months which affected visitor numbers and income. However, since returning, numbers and income are recovering and are reaching comparable levels – November and December 2012 showed an increase of 2% in enquiries compared to the same period in 2011.

Staff at Lancaster VIC are providing an efficient reception service for all The Storey businesses, and have worked closely with other Council departments on recent projects within the building including signage and support and promotion of in-house events. The VISIT CARD exclusively available from both VICs continues to go from strength to strength with over 25 offers available when using the card. VICs have also hosted a range of events from Lancashire Day, St Georges Day to the recent launch of Discover Lancaster book and Cedric Robinson's new book..

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Children's Trust

The council continues its support for the Lancaster District Children's Trust, 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 joint coordination arrangements continue to work well.

During 2012/13 the Trust has delivered an action plan that has included joint work to actively involve young people in decision-making, commissioning services to provide early intervention to stop problems getting out of hand, and overseeing the 'Working Together with Families' project in the district.

Working Together with Families

This partnership approach is focused on better outcomes for the families involved and also reducing the financial burden on public organisations. A key element is a single 'lead professional' for each family with whom families build a trusting relationship and who acts as a gateway to services. This project is also benefitting government financial rewards for successfully supporting families with issues around crime, worklessness and educational attainment.

The city council has supported 'Working Together with Families' since its inception and a number of city council officers are now being designated as lead professionals. Already the needs of hundreds of families have been 'mapped' and several dozen families are

being worked with directly. Resources from Lancashire County Council are being made available for coordination and administration.

Champion for Young People

Councillor Paul Aitcheson has now been appointed as the first Champion for Young People. His role is to complement the Portfolio responsibilities and he has promoted and raised the profile of issues relating to children and young people with other elected members, officers and the public.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

The council's Safeguarding arrangements for children & young people have been updated and refreshed during 2012/13, to meet current requirements. A new easy to read Safeguarding Policy and a range of training opportunities are now available across the council. Key contacts for advice and information are available to support staff and members who have safeguarding concerns.

The council has been working with the Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and other district councils to share good practice, and our Safeguarding Policy has been adopted as an exemplar by other local authorities.

Local Democracy Campaign

The annual Local Democracy Week was held in October 2012, again providing hundreds of young people with the opportunity to become involved with their local council – in particular, the ever successful 'pupil power' day at Lancaster Town Hall. Feedback has been excellent.

Careers Fairs

The council has been represented at a number of Careers Fairs at local schools and colleges, promoting the council as a potential employer – especially in relation to the new apprenticeship placements that are being offered.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Lancaster Arts Partnership (LAP)

We have supported a number of art organisations including the Dukes Theatre, Ludus Dance, More Music, Litfest. The Council provided £192,400 of grants in total and this has attracted up to a further £1,797,168 in grants and earned income secured by these organisations. LAP is supporting the development of a District Arts Strategy. Consultations with stakeholder organisations have taken place taking place. An online based public consultation was launched in mid March 2013. The final version of the Arts Strategy will be presented at Cabinet later this year.

Arts Development

We have supported a number of arts projects including (but not exclusively) Spot on Rural Touring's performances in rural village halls, and the Lancashire Witches project.

We are supporting an application to the Arts Council for £90,000 over 2 years to develop a Light Up Lancaster festival.

Over the past 3 years 40 applications have been made and £586,996 of funding secured for local artists and organisations. This compares very favourably when compared to other local authorities from across Lancashire and in terms of participation in the arts, a national survey 'Taking Part' suggests that Lancaster's adult engagement in the arts is 46% one of the highest in Lancashire.

Olympic Torch Relay

The Olympic Torch passed through the district on the 22nd June 2012 on it's way to London. The route through the district started in Carnforth and went through Morecambe and Lancaster travelling a total of 13 miles. The City Council engaged with communities and schools to ensure there were safe places to view the torch. An estimated 45,000 people braved the wettest day on record for Lancaster to cheer the Torchbearers on.

Velocity

As part of the Olympic Torch celebrations, the Council delivered the velocity festival which included:

City Centre Cycle Race

This was the first City Centre Cycle race to be held in Lancaster in years. Despite dreadful weather, turnout was good to watch 2 races around a unique course. The Partnership with British Cycling and Cycling development North West helped the race to run smoothly and catered for around 80 competitors in total with many spectators enjoying this unique spectacle.

Watersports event

During the weekend there was plenty of activity on the Promenade. Kite surfing competition, jet ski displays and sailing and canoeing taster sessions run by local clubs.

International Youth Games

This took place in Rendsburg, Germany between the 23rd - 27th July this year and provided 5 days of competition. The Lancaster squad arrived home with a rewarding 47 medals (16 Gold, 14 Silver, and 17 Bronze). The squad competed in individual and team sports including; Athletics, Badminton, Golf, Rowing, Swimming, Table Tennis and Tennis. Music and dance was also included this year.

Children and Young Peoples Holiday Activities

During the April (Easter), Summer, October and February school holidays exciting programmes were offered in Council facilities including Salt Ayre Sports Centre, Community Pools, Williamson Park and Happy Mount Park. These programmes allowed other partners to promote and deliver activities in a joined up approach. More family activities are now included as part of the programme and over 2000 places were available during the year. Satisfaction levels remain in the 90%+ range.

Play schemes

Local partners were commissioned for the second year to deliver play schemes. 5 Playschemes were delivered on the Marsh, in Skerton, Poulton, the Westend and on the Ridge. We worked in partnership with Marsh Community Centre, Signposts, CEEP and Fylde Coast YMCA. The schemes had 100% attendance with 94 children on the waiting lists.

PCT funded projects

We delivered a range of sport and physical activity projects across the district aimed at getting more people active. Activities included dance, football, boxercise, disability sport, swimming, hockey and running. The funding also paid for community members to become trained exercise to music instructors able to deliver in their communities.

The projects cost over £20,000 and engaged over 200 hard to reach young people.

Disability Sport

The team delivers 2 adapted cycling sessions, 1 multi sport and 1 football session per week for adults with learning disabilities. Around 60 people per week plus carers are involved. The football session has progressed with a team being put together who will be playing a number of friendly matches in the coming months with teams from Westmorland and Skelmersdale.

SPAA (Sport & Physical Activity Alliance)

The group consists of Lancaster University, PCT, Lancashire Sport, Sports Clubs, Schools and the Lancaster & Morecambe College and the Council. The SPAA is a consultee for sports funding, administers the sports awards and is working to deliver an action plan that aims to make the district the most active in the north west by 2017.

The group also administers the Sportivate funding that aims to get 14 – 25 years olds into and retained in sport. The district received £30,000 this year and funded 26 projects that targeting over 500 young people.

Leadership Training

A number of sport leadership courses are delivered throughout the year in primary and secondary schools across the district. The course enables young people to deliver activities in schools and community settings. Over 150 young people successfully completed course this year.

Sports and Arts Project Diversionary Activities

The project funded by the PCT and CSP commissions local partners to deliver sports and arts activities in areas and at times of high anti-social behaviour and has been successful in engaging with well over 350 young people potentially at risk of offending.

Parks & Open Space Diversionary activities

These activities are engaging young people within their local communities and provide sport and play activities. Some of these young people may not engage in any other extra curriculum sport or play activities. Weekly sessions take place in Ryelands Park, Regent Park and Poulton Park in Morecambe.

Strawberry Fields Diversionary Project

We are currently working with Strawberry Fields a local organisation that has resulted in funding for additional sports sessions. The aims of this project is to encourage young people to take part in physical activity and promote the benefits of health and wellbeing; to engage with young people to reduce anti-social behaviour and encourage young people to have more involvement in the activities that the Council delivers and to promote further volunteer opportunities. During the sessions young people are 'signposted' to various clubs and sporting activities.

Museums

The review of the Museums Service in our district continued for much of last year. Toward the end of the year a joint Steering Group comprising members from both the City and County Councils supported by officers from both organisations was set up. It has been agreed that the role of the group was to discuss future management arrangements, how they would work, and to identify areas that required further exploration and examination.

There have been two meetings of the group to date in December and February with a third meeting being scheduled for April. To date discussions have centred around value for money, improving joint working, the recent condition surveys, marketing, pricing and programming and the recently discovered Silverdale Hoard. The February meeting was held at the recently refurbished Museum of Lancashire in Preston and offered the opportunity to look behind the scenes as it were with a tour of the adjacent Conservation Studios and see the work being carried out in the areas of design, conservation and curatorship

Williamson Park

This year, Williamson Park has hosted 89 weddings, 8 wedding receptions, 1 baby naming ceremony and has welcomed ten thousand wedding guests through its doors. The Ashton Memorial also gained national coverage when it featured on Channel 5's Celebrity Wedding Planner.

The Pavilion Café continues to be popular and income has increased year on year. The Café has just been awarded 'Taste Lancashire' accreditation which awards excellent dining experience whilst investing in locally sourced produce. The park also gained 'Visit England' accreditation for the first time in five years and was marked as an excellent visitor attraction. The Zoo has seen its highest visitor numbers for the last 6 years with 1500 more paying visitors this year than last and over 2700 school children have had guided tours since last April.

The Park has worked with a range of partners and has provided a diverse range of events within the Park.

Williamson Park continues to have a strong volunteer programme with regular groups working along side our staff. Since April 2012 Williamson Park has received 1992 hours of voluntary support which equates to over £14,000 if costed.

The park also continues to receive funding from the Forestry Commission for woodland improvements. At present 500 British native trees have been planted and 50 bird boxes constructed for installation in March.

Platform

This year the Platform has seen over 30,000 people through its doors and has held 214 events. Of the 214 events held at the Platform, 121 were commercial and 93 were community events. With summer 2013 shows such as 'Horrible Histories' already close to selling out, the installation of black out curtains, along with improvements to the bar and the refreshments available, the Platform continues to increase and improve its offer to all customers big and small.

Community events

As a council we support the local community in facilitating events and activities on our land. In 2012 we offered guidance and advice to 39 events that took place on the promenade and in our parks.

Health promotion

Promotion of parks and outdoor facilities is on going through school visits and events within parks. The health benefits of using green space has been well documented and our role is to encourage local people to take advantage of the spaces around them.

Happy Mount Park

A Green flag award has proudly been achieved through the Tidy Britain Group which acknowledges the high level of management in the park. Much of this work is due to the excellent partnership work that takes place internally between council services.

Regent Park

The Friends of Regent Park have been working hard in partnership with the council and a new development plan for the whole park has been produced. Extensive consultation has taken place in the local community over the last 12 months and funding is now being sought.

Salt Ayre Sports Centre and Community Swimming Pools

In recent years, Salt Ayre Sports Centre has developed from a traditional leisure facility into a comprehensive health, wellbeing and social hub many of which are described elsewhere in my report.

The Centre has proved its environmental credentials by winning a national award designed to find Britain's greenest companies, councils and communities. The sports centre, were successful in becoming a Green Apple Award Gold Winner thanks to its success in reducing its energy consumption and carbon emissions by over 42% in just three years as well as saving the council more than £145,200 in energy costs.

The financial savings which have been made as a result of reduced energy consumption at Salt Ayre Sports have provided the finance for the purchase of new covers for the community swimming pools at Carnforth, Heysham and Hornby. Although the impact on energy consumption cannot be accurately predicted, it is anticipated that the resulting financial savings will pay for the cost of the covers within four years.

Executive Annual Report 2012/13

Councillor David Smith

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



1. Executive Membership

- Cabinet

2. Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc

- Lancashire Waste Partnership
- Community Safety Partnership

3. Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

Council Service Oversight:

Environmental Services Community Safety Clean and Green

Corporate Plan Key Actions:

- Support Community Safety Partnership and new arrangements around Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC's)
- Implement energy efficiency measures for council buildings, housing and vehicles
- Deliver the objectives of the Lancashire Waste Strategy 2008-2020 to increase amount of household waste re-used, recycled and composted
- Deliver actions to reduce the fuel consumption of council fleet
- Work with partners to deliver services that keep our streets clean and safe
- Fund Police and Community Support Officers for 2012/13

- Implement agreed actions for public realm with an emphasis on street cleansing and improvement of open spaces
- Through Take Pride and marketing activity, increase awareness of social responsibility and opportunities to contribute to our clean, green and safe places

4. Progress made during 2012/13

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Waste / Recycling

- During the course of the year waste collection staff picked up nearly 4.8 million bins and boxes from peoples houses.
- Reuse, recycling, composting figure for 2011/12 was 41.6% (our highest ever so far for a full year).
- 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.
- Trade waste recycling service has been introduced and is operating successfully.
- Revised and formally agreed the district wide policy for waste collection
- Agreed a new cost sharing arrangement with the County Council which contributes £1.2 million per year to the costs of waste collection / recycling.
- 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 improve the efficiency of waste collection / recycling rounds with further options planned for 2014/15.

Cleansing / Grounds Maintenance

- New themed flower bed planted on the Promenade as well as increased planters and floral displays.
- Supported various 'in Bloom' entries (eg Morecambe, Heysham)
- Worked with County Council / Hala community group to design, externally fund and build a new play area on Hala, which is now completed.
- Worked with County Council / friends of Ryelands Park to design masterplan and successfully bid for external funding for first phase of the masterplan.
- Worked with County Council / friends of Regents Park to design masterplan and successfully bid for external funding for first phase of masterplan.
- Worked with various friends of groups eg Happy Mount Park, Williamson Park on smaller scales projects.
- Worked with reformed Storey Gardens friends of group with aim of the gardens being utilised as a public space again
- Successfully tendered for external works demonstrating value for money.
- Worked with a number of local schools and community groups to improve open space (eg planting bulbs, trees)

- Continued 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. The County Council also now contribute to the programme which we manage on their behalf.
- Noticeable improvement in standards of street cleansing and response to reports of flytipping, littering etc.
- Delivered 2012/13 Street Pride Scheme. The 2013/14 programme is being drawn up and will focus on areas that are in the need of most attention.
- Recruited 2 apprentices

Highways Maintenance

- Commenced new agreement for 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 and machinery operates in an efficient and effective way.
- Recruited a new apprentice

Repairs and Maintenance

- Put in place new management arrangements in the repairs and maintenance section
- Made significant improvements in the working practices and processes that are in place for repairing and maintaining our Council Houses.
- Delivered planned maintenance programme on schedule and in budget and developed
- From 2013 rota painting will be delivered in-house as opposed to via a contractor thus delivering a much more flexible and value for money service as well as providing additional employment opportunities with the Council
- Worked with our planned maintenance partner, Forrest, to put in place an apprenticeship programme to train up to 6 young people to become qualified tradespeople.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

- Funded 9 PCSOs for 2012/13 and will continue to fund PCSOs in 2013/14
- Appointed onto the PCC scrutiny committee

- Following the elections in November for the new Police and Crime Commissioner both Elected Members and officers have been working closely to ensure our strategic direction compliments their plans and aspirations.
- The council has continued to coordinate the regular ASBRACS and MAPS meetings that deal with specific instances of anti-social behaviour and problem offenders that need a multi-agency approach. These processes are running very smoothly, delivering a quick turnaround on cases, and good practice has been passed on to the countywide review of ASBRACS

While the ASBRAC meetings address incidents of anti-social behaviour that is personal to individuals and their families, the MAPS meetings address incidents of environmental anti-social behaviour such as: fly-tipping, graffiti, nuisance in and around car parks and other public spaces, and secondary fires. Lancaster City Council work closely with partners to ensure problems are addressed immediately and in order to keep our District clean and safe.

- The council has continued to contribute funding towards the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service run by Lancaster and District Women's Aid – this service has supported victims of abuse and their families and has helped to increase the reporting of domestic abuse incidents. After many years of short-term funding all statutory partners have committed to funding the IDVA service on a longer term basis from 2013/14 onwards. The City Council was the first partner to formally sign up to the new joint commissioning arrangements. The council has also used Performance Reward Grant funding allocated for domestic abuse issues to fund the Domestic Abuse Outreach service (which supports women suffering abuse but who are at less immediate risk of harm) for 2013/14 whilst it secures longer-term funding.
- 2012/13 has also seen the development of a Lancaster and District Women's Centre. Lancaster District Community Safety Partnership (CSP) contributed £9,000 towards a safe and positive women-only facility based in Lancaster Probation office that helps address issues such as homelessness, mental health problems, misuse of drugs and alcohol, domestic violence, parenting and offending. The Women's Centre take a holistic approach to all services offered; looking at a woman as a whole and individual person. It is intended to use statistical information from this project to develop a full time Women's Centre within the District 2013/14 from onwards.
- We have continued funding the role of Hate Crime Officer for Wyre and Lancaster District, who is based at the City Council for half a week. The project is joint funded for five years by the Big Lottery, Lancaster District Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and Wyre CSP and is the only project of its kind in Lancashire. The project is currently exceeding set targets and directly supporting those suffering from or at risk of hate crime.
- A successful funding application was made to CLG to address alcohol issues in the District - the project is being run by Strawberry Fields Training C.I.C with oversight by the council.