



LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL
Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

Executive Annual Report 2017/18

April 2018

Decision Making Arrangements (page 2)

Executive Decisions (page 3)

Councillor Eileen Blamire - Leader and Cabinet Member for Relationships with other Councils, Communications, Performance Management, Democratic Services, Legal and HR **(page 4 -12)**

Councillor James Leyshon - Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Property Services, Rural Areas and Car Parking **(page 13– 19)**

Councillor Darren Clifford - Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder with Responsibility for Leisure, Culture and Tourism and Climate Change **(page 20 – 28)**

Councillor Janice Hanson - Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder responsible for Economic Regeneration and Planning **(page 29 – 34)**

Councillor Margaret Pattison - Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Markets, Voluntary Sector, Older People and ICT **(page 35 – 39)**

Councillor Brendan Hughes - Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Community Safety and Clean and Green **(page 40 – 46)**

Councillor Anne Whitehead – Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Finance and Revenues and Benefits **(page 47 – 53)**

Councillor Andrew Warriner - Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Housing and Environmental Health **(page 54-65)**

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

Decisions moved in the name of Councillor	Executive Decisions May 2017 - April 2018			
	Key Decision taken at Cabinet	Non-key decision taken at Cabinet	Individual Cabinet Member Decision	Urgent Business Decision
Eileen Blamire (Leader)	1	6		
Janice Hanson (Deputy Leader)	6	1	5	
Darren Clifford	4	3		
Brendan Hughes	3	3	1	
James Leyshon	4	1		
Margaret Pattison		2		
Andrew Warriner	6	1		
Anne Whitehead	8	2		
TOTAL	32	19	6	0

Executive Annual Report 2017/18

Councillor Blamire

**Leader and Cabinet Member for Relationships with other Councils,
Communications, Performance Management, Democratic Services, Legal
and HR**



Executive Membership

- Cabinet (Chairman)
- Canal Corridor Cabinet Liaison Group
- Museums Cabinet Liaison Group
- Planning Policy Cabinet Liaison Group
- Shared Revenues and Benefits Service Joint Committee
- Corporate Property Review Cabinet Liaison Group

Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc

Lancashire Leaders Meeting

Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

Relationships with other Councils, Communications, Performance Management,
Democratic Services, Legal and HR

Corporate Plan Key Outcomes/Success Measures

Outcomes	Success Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Communities are brought together and the major issues affecting the district are addressed through working in partnership.•Well run, value for money services that are valued by the public and demonstrate good governance, openness and transparency.•Maintain a financially stable position and strong financial forecast for the delivery of Council services.•Sustainable economic growth and jobs will be created in key sectors including energy, knowledge, health and the visitor economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Improve performance and effectiveness of partnerships in delivering corporate priorities.•Improve neighbourhood working by engaging with communities to understand their needs and build resilience.•Maintain an 'unqualified' value for money conclusion from our External Auditors.•Review the Localised Council Tax Benefits Support Scheme (LCTS) to determine a sustainable scheme for the future.•Act on the government's future roll-out of universal credit in the district and other welfare reforms.•Review and rationalise the Council's future accommodation needs to support service delivery and save money.•Implement agreed budget proposals and take positive action where they do not deliver desired outcomes.•Develop and implement a range of further savings and income generation opportunities to sustain the Council's budget.•Determine Lancaster district's contribution to the emerging concept of the Northern Powerhouse.•Improve local conditions for business growth and skills development.

Progress made during 2017/18

Communications

- Through its communications and marketing operations, the City Council has taken an active role in promoting the district, handling press and other media enquiries effectively and supporting elected members with communications expertise. Examples of high profile issues that have benefitted from communications support include the November floods, the Local Plan, the snap General Election, Bailrigg Garden Village and recent developments on the Canal Quarter.

- In supporting other services of the Council, the communications and marketing team has provided expertise to support their operational activities and the development of new projects including the opening of Tranquil Spa at Salt Ayre, the Council's new anti-social behaviour team, festivals and events.
- The Council's website continues to be developed with the addition of extra functionality through the addition of more online payment facilities as the Council looks to continue the move towards having more of its communications online. Steps are also being taken to improve how the Council presents information on its commercial services online as part of its overall strategy of increasing footfall and income by the creation of a bespoke webpage branding module.
- In the last year the website saw a total of 500,995 unique visitors with 3.05 million total views, an increase from the previous year of 15% and 11% respectively.
- Developing our social media channels with additional and more varied content, including videos of staff carrying out their duties, is becoming an increasing priority as more and more people turn towards this medium for their news and to express their views by comments and sharing.
- The Council's corporate Facebook page, for example, has seen an increase in the number of followers of more than 25% in the last year, due to the increased focus that is being directed towards this increasingly important channel. Similarly, the Council's corporate Twitter feed has an increased number of followers and now has more than 10,000 followers with a growing level of engagement.
- Work is currently ongoing to improve the Council's communication with staff, with a new newsletter being launched and a new intranet is in the process of being developed.

Performance Management

Cabinet and Budget & Performance Panel received quarterly updates on corporate success measures, to enable discussion and request further information where appropriate.

Further refinement of success measures and performance indicators will take place in line with the developing Council Plan.

One of the key aims for 2018-19 is to develop from quarterly reporting of performance towards making performance information more open and accessible to officers, members and the public.

Democratic Services

Democratic Services had a busy year with Elections, delivering successful elections for Lancashire County Council in May 2017 and an unexpected snap UK Parliamentary election in June 2017. By-Elections were also held for the County Council division of Morecambe North, the Halton with Aughton and Skerton West City Council Wards, and for the Morecambe Town Council Wards of Bare North, Lune Drive, Heysham North and Out Moss Lane.

In July the Elections team commenced the annual household canvass, which saw the despatch of 63,885 household enquiry forms to residential properties throughout the district. The final response rate was 78%. The majority of those failing to respond to the canvass were either found to be empty properties or were off-campus properties that had not become occupied for the new academic year. The register of electors was published on 01 February 2018.

Work also commenced on a district wide Community Governance Review which will conclude during 2018. Several issues have been raised regarding parish councils and these will be addressed during the review, including a request for a new parish council for Heysham.

There were many interesting civic events throughout the year. In July, the Council welcomed the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment who exercised their right as Honorary Freeman to march through Lancaster the City of Lancaster with bayonets fixed, drums beating and Colours flying. It was a wonderful sight to see with many local school children lining the streets to wave their flags at the soldiers. The Mayor inspected the troops in Dalton Square before welcoming the soldiers into the Ashton Hall for lunch.

This year saw the introduction of a Citizenship Panel chaired by the Mayor with one of its main responsibilities to work with CVS on Citizenship awards for the district. The awards will take place in June of this year and will see the introduction of a new annual award – "The Roger Sherlock Award for Community Inspiration". This award has been welcomed by Councillor Sherlock's family and celebrates the work of unsung heroes in our communities.

In December, officers in Democratic Services worked together with Age UK to host a Loneliness Summit in Lancaster Town Hall. This event was the first of its kind and was hailed as a great success bringing together many local organisations. The aim of the Summit was to raise awareness of loneliness and show what was available for people who were lonely. School children of different ages attended as well as many Councillors. The children attending were asked to take back what they had learnt in their workshops and share with the rest of the school.

In October the Deputy Mayor led a Service of Dedication and unveiled a commemorative paving stone in honour of Private Albert Halton VC in Warton where he was born. Private Halton of the 1st Battalion, The King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment was awarded the Victoria Cross in October of 1917 for gallantry during an attack near Poelcappelle on 12th October 1917. It was a moving event with children from the local school taking part by reading poems about World War One.

Legal Services

Legal Services have continued to support the good governance of the Council, by providing legal and procedural advice to Services in their operational activities, and to officers and members in the decision making process.

Legal Services continue to be involved with a variety of projects undertaken by officers in all services in the Council. They have played key roles in procurement, contract drafting and negotiation as well as providing advice on strategy and risk as well as statutory compliance.

In supporting other services of the Council, Legal Services have again undertaken a number of successful prosecutions including health & safety and planning matters.

Anti-social behavior remains a hot topic, with Legal Services advising on policy, enforcement and undertaking advocacy on behalf of the Council at statutory appeals.

Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO's) have been brought into Lancaster City Centre and proposed for Morecambe Town Centre. Legal Services have drafted and advised on the contents of the PSPO's.

Legal Services have also been involved with the recent refugee re-settlement programme.

The day to day legal work incorporating debt collection, rating cases, recovery of rent arrears, council house sales and other property transactions, including sales and leases, has continued, as has the provision of a local land charges service, and the licensing and information management functions.

Information Governance

The implementation of the General Data Protection Regulations in May of this year is being supported by the expanded Information Governance Team. This team will be supporting the council in complying with the new regulatory regime, together with reviewing and updating our information and data policy.

Human Resources

In the last 12 months the HR Team have continued to work closely with services across a range of activities, including TUPE transfers, service restructures, employee relations

and change management activities. HR provides vital support to services to enable them to deliver their own ambitious plans and essential frontline services to residents.

Apprenticeships

The HR Team have continued to work with managers to create opportunities to appoint apprentices into suitable roles across the Council, with 6 new apprenticeships in the past 12 months. In addition, HR staff have also been working to maximise the apprenticeship levy funds, enabling a number of existing staff to start apprenticeship qualifications, including 8 staff within the Public Realm and Waste and Recycling teams.

Workforce and Succession Planning and Performance Appraisals

In early summer 2017 HR implemented two crucial areas of work to ensure that the Council adopted a planned approach to managing and developing staffing resource, via the introduction of succession and workforce planning discussions and the re-launch of Performance Appraisals.

Annual succession and workforce planning discussions with senior managers were introduced to ensure that staff are appropriately developed or deployed to meet future challenges, with outcomes feeding into the individual Performance Appraisal discussions. As part of the revised and re-launched Performance Appraisal process all line managers received training in improved objective setting and assessment of individual staff performance. These two approaches provide a clear opportunity to ensure that staff resource is carefully planned, managed and developed, and aligned to the ambitions of each service unit.

Attendance

Working closely with managers and staff, the HR team have enabled the reduction of absence rates from an average of 12.06 days per employee as at 31 March 2010 to an average of 6.46 days per employee as at 31 March 2017. These figures compare extremely favourably against CIPD figures for public sector absence, of 8.5 days per employee for 2016, as well as with other authorities in Lancashire. The delivering of sustained improvements in attendance has a direct impact on Council performance and has resulted in a significant productivity savings, thereby supporting the delivery of

services to the public in the context of ongoing financial restraint. Whilst figures are not yet available for the year ending 31st March 2018, the Council is on target to achieve a further improvement in attendance for the 8th consecutive year.

‘Our Values’

Working closely with colleagues from across the Council, HR has taken a central role in the work around the new Lancaster City Council Values and Behaviours, which are now known simply as ‘Our Values’. At the start of 2018 managers attended workshops to introduce ‘Our Values’, which will be followed with further workshops for all Council staff. Much more work will be taking place over the coming year to embed ‘Our Values’ into all aspects of the organisation and its processes.

Investors in People

HR worked with Services to support the successful re-accreditation for Investors in People status (IIP) under the new and more challenging IIP Framework. The Council was also awarded the IIP Health and Wellbeing Award in recognition of the extensive work led by HR over a number of years to support and improve staff wellbeing. Additionally, as part of the Council’s ongoing commitment to encouraging healthy lifestyles and in conjunction with colleagues from across the authority, HR championed the Council’s involvement in the National Cycle Challenge, which saw the Council achieve an impressive 3rd place.

Celebrating Success

October 2017 saw the inaugural Council wide Celebrating Success employee awards event, which recognised the contribution and achievements of the Council’s workforce with awards for both individuals and teams.

Nine awards were issued, including; Outstanding Contribution to the Community, Outstanding Customer Service and Mentor/Coach of the Year, which were won by staff from across the organisation. The overall Lancaster City Council Award was won by Salt Ayre Leisure Centre.

Achievement awards were presented to individuals who had successfully completed their apprenticeships, as well as Long Service Awards to those staff who had achieved 25 years continuous service with Lancaster City Council.

Relationships with Other Councils

Leaders from the Lancashire Local Authorities are continuing to meet to discuss what a more joined-up, cooperative Lancashire might look like, whether in the form of a Combined Authority or an alternative arrangement.

The informal partnership with Barrow Borough Council and South Lakeland District Council around Economic Development for Morecambe Bay has also made much progress over the last year, with the opportunity to discuss the partnership with Jake Berry MP, Minister for the Northern Powerhouse, in February.

Congratulations and thanks to all the officers and their departments who have worked so hard during the year.

Executive Annual Report 2017/18

Councillor James Leyshon

Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Property Services, Car Parking, ICT, Digital Strategy, Customer Services



Executive Membership

- Cabinet
- Corporate Property Review Cabinet Liaison Group (Chairman)

Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Property Services, Car Parking, ICT, Digital Strategy, Customer Services

Corporate Plan Key Outcomes/Success Measures

Outcomes	Success Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Well run, value-for-money services that are valued by the public and demonstrate good governance, openness and transparency• Maintain a financially stable position and strong financial forecast for the delivery of council services• Establish and implement the council's wider plans for 'digital' to understand and meet the changing needs of our communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review and rationalise the council's future accommodation needs to support service delivery and save money• Develop and implement a range of further savings and income generation opportunities to sustain the council's budget• Review and refresh internal processes and systems to drive efficiency and cost savings• Implement programme of energy efficiency works in council buildings• Improve customer experience through the use of technology

Progress made during 2017/18

Car Parking

- Over last 12 months the overall usage of off street car parks has increased by 4.3% on short stay in Lancaster and 2.3% on long stay. There has been a slight decrease in Morecambe, but this is counteracted to result in an overall increase.

- Use of RingGo continues to prove popular, and currently usage is increasing around 5% each month. RingGo transactions now account for 6% of overall payments.

- Free Christmas parking dates have been agreed again for 2018, in order to support businesses during this key trading period.

- The administration of Residents Parking returned to Lancashire County Council on 1st April 2018, meaning Lancaster City Council are only now responsible for off street parking. We will continue to discuss the implementation and administration of the resident parking scheme with the County Council to minimise any disruption to residents during the transition.

- We have continued to invest and improve our car parks, for example St Georges Quay, Rylands and St Leonards Gate. We have also invested in rural car parks such as Bull Beck and will be looking for long term solutions to issues in management of non-formally adopted car parks.

- Looking forward, a number of key potential developments in our district highlight the strategic importance of our retained car park portfolio. Our management of these sites means we can develop an effective car parking strategy that supports our ambitions for the district whilst utilising new technologies, rationalising pricing structures, focuses on our customers' needs and also supporting with wider aims for the reductions of air pollution and traffic. We will also use the coming year to explore new methods of parking management including exploring the feasibility of pay on exit ticketing and transferable tickets.

- The coming year will allow the development of our car parking strategy for the district, and I intent to engage meaningfully with all of our stakeholders in the development of our vision.

Property

Corporate

- An extensive restructure of the Property Group was completed, which amongst other things has increased capacity for strategic asset management and introduced a new

hospitality team to capitalize on our events spaces. It is hoped that the increased resource and commercial focus will allow greater income generation and better use of our assets.

- Printroom Cafe has entered its second year of trading at the Storey and business has continued to grow financially and develop in new directions. For instance, plans for a pop up café in the foyer of Lancaster Town Hall are being developed to improve economies of scale and ensure the Printroom quality offer is more accessible to staff.

- Work has continued to further develop and improve the Council's asset management database including compliance management.

- Work has commenced on reviews of our corporate property strategy, corporate office accommodation and commercial property portfolios.

- The establishment of my Corporate Property Review Cabinet Liaison Group is allowing full exploration of all challenges and opportunities within the portfolio. I thank all members who have engaged so enthusiastically thus far, and sincerely look forward to making progress in this area.

Building projects

- This year has seen the continuation of the 5 year building work and repairs program across our property and heritage assets as the work identified in the 2012 condition surveys moved into its fifth year.

- A new round of condition surveys has been commissioned to identify essential repairs and maintenance for the next 5 years and improve the accuracy of financial planning in the years to come.

Commercial Land and Buildings

- Throughout the 2017/18 financial year the occupation rate across the Council's operational commercial property portfolio has remained at around 97% representing a relatively stable position and a good level of occupancy overall.
- The disposal of St. Leonard's House to Robertson Construction was completed and work on redevelopment of the building has now commenced.

Energy Investment Grade Audit Programme

- Work has commenced on the installation of a new combined heat and power unit (CHP) and energy efficient lighting at Salt Ayre.

Heysham Gateway

- Progress has been made on the delivery of a major employment-focused development unlocking under-used and poorly-performing land off Imperial Road in Middleton and the conditional sale of a plot of land has been agreed.
- Work is continuing to ensure we make the most of our assets in this area, and we hope to make substantial progress over the coming year.

ICT & Digital Strategy

- The ICT Team have been working to make the best use of cloud and hosting opportunities, including commencing build of the customer experience platform on Microsoft Dynamics 365. The team have been utilising Microsoft tools in the cloud and creating the platform for more use in the future, for example; migration of the Planning system to a hosted solution and starting to use PowerBI for reporting, all on the assumption that most future developments will be cloud based.

- A baselining exercise of staff digital ability has been undertaken, allowing the ICT manager to start working on minimising knowledge and skills gaps and making use of previously hidden potential.

- We have started piloting the use of Office 365 for staff across the institution.

- Work has also started on a bid for local full fibre network, partnering with Lancaster University and involving Digital Lancaster, local businesses, the NHS and Lancashire County Council.

- The ICT Team have been working closely to support a number of other service areas with developments and improvements in systems, for example; procurement and deployment of a spa management system, design and procurement of systems to allow Salt Ayre to run independently of the main data centre while also acting as a disaster recovery datacentre and the development of the garden waste renewals system.

- The service also continues to proudly support apprenticeship initiatives, with two of our apprentices now securing permanent employment with the organisation. Another apprentice started with the team in September with the addition of a further apprentice shortly, 20% of ICT staff will be made up of apprentices or previous apprentices.

- ICT staff also continue to work hard in their own professional development and in sharing best practice. Staff contribute actively to work across the sector, for example the ICT Manager is now a vice president of Socitm (the society for IT management within Local Government), and is a core member of the local public services chief information officer council (LCIOC).

Customer Services

- In order to fully support residents we have worked closely with colleagues in the Revenues and Benefits Service to provide an increasing level of Personal Budgeting Support for Universal Credit claimants struggling with rent arrears, utility debts, lifestyle challenges etc.

- Working collaboratively, the Customer Service and ICT teams have established a preferred supplier on Stage 1 of our Customer Experience Platform to provide an improved digital offering for our customers and a process driven customer database capable of being rolled out to other Council Services.
- Customer Services have continued to support key council initiatives and changes, including successfully supporting Environmental Services to ensure customers were able to renew their Garden Waste subscriptions in good time for the start of the new subscription period, and with minimal effort.

Executive Annual Report 2017/18

Councillor Darren Clifford

[Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder with Responsibility for Leisure, Culture and Tourism and Climate Change](#)



Executive Membership

- Cabinet
- [Corporate Property Review Cabinet Liaison Group](#)
- Museums Advisory Forum
- Museums Cabinet Liaison Group (Chairman)

Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc

- [LGA Coastal Issues Special Interest Group](#)
- [Museums Advisory Forum](#)

Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder with Responsibility for Leisure, Culture and Tourism and Climate Change

Corporate Plan Key Outcomes/Success Measures

Outcomes	Success Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lancaster and Morecambe Bay will be recognised as important visitor destinations • The attractiveness and offer of the district as a place to visit or invest in will be improved • Health and wellbeing of our citizens is improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt visitor destination management plans for Lancaster and Morecambe Bay • Increase the number of visitors to the district • Increase visitor spend in the district • Develop plans to improve the sustainability of The Platform and other council-managed performances • Complete a detailed feasibility of the potential to improve the quality and sustainability of the city's museums • Improve facilities on offer at Salt Ayre Sports Centre and ensure that they are financially sustainable • Improve local air quality from long term improvements in transportation

Progress made during 2017/18

Visitor Economy, Arts and Culture

Museums

During 2017 a great deal of work was undertaken to look in detail at the City Council's museums and, as a result, a proposal to bring the museums service back in house was wholeheartedly supported by full Council in September. A new post has been created that will bring in specialist capacity to help to develop the museums to take a central role in the heritage and culture of the district moving forwards. Recruitment is currently underway and the transfer of the service will be effected by 30 September 2018.

Archaeological site

Following the exciting excavations that have taken place in recent years, the Council has now taken back management responsibility for the Beyond the Castle project from County Council. New plans have been agreed that will protect the site, establish an expert Project Board and begin the process of developing a funded programme of works. Further details will be considered during 2018/ 19.

Festivals

Vintage by the Sea 2017

- Vintage by the Sea is building its reputation as an international vintage event. Achieved an audience of 35,000 over the 2 days.
- 48% of the audience were from outside of Lancaster District with post codes reaching as far as Brighton and Glasgow
- 94.5% of the audience agreed that VbtS improves the perception of Morecambe as a visitor destination
- Achieved 3,326 bed nights in paid accommodation
- £510,505 was generated for the local economy from visitors outside of the District specifically attend the festival
- 200 local individuals and businesses engaged in the festival
- Value of PR coverage £20,983 and reached an estimated 15,619,877 persons, including coverage of the festival on BBC Breakfast News, BBC North West Tonight, BBC Radio 2 Alan & Mel Show, BBC Radio Lancashire, Women's Weekly, Vintage Life Magazine and many more
- As a result of festival PR campaign, Morecambe was selected as one of the coastal towns showcased in a series of BBC Breakfast features. A morning of BBC Breakfast was filmed around Morecambe promenade, featuring footage from the festival, the outdoor areas of the Midland Hotel and locals, including Cedric Robinson.
- Shortlisted for Large Event of the Year in the Lancashire Tourism Awards.

Audience member quote: "A wonderfully well organised event with a fabulous backdrop of not only the Midland Hotel but the stunning coastline of Morecambe. Lot of stalls and activities for the whole family".

Light Up Lancaster 2017

- Achieved an audience of 45,800 for a two night festival of light, art and fireworks
- 21% of the audience were from outside of Lancaster District
- 2.5% of the audience stayed overnight in paid accommodation
- 90% of the audience stated that the festival was the reason for their visit
- £359,512 of economic impact was generated by the festival
- 92% positive ratings, up significantly from 65% in 2016
- 137 local volunteers involved in the festival
- 54 artists were employed, 6 were international artists, 14 were emerging artists
- 152 participatory workshops were delivered with 2,822 individuals participating, with 35 days of activity in libraries and museums
- From the local businesses surveyed 71% said they were a lot busier than usual over the course of the festival, and 29% were a little busier
- Shortlisted for Large Event of the Year in the Lancashire Tourism Awards.

Audience member quote: *"Strolling around the city with huge numbers of families discovering delights and surprises at every turn. The event was stunning, all the art was of the highest quality and it was both memorable and inspirational. It made me feel really proud of Lancaster and some of the images have lasted for days. Utterly marvellous experience – heart-warming, happy and outstanding."*

Platform

- Achieved an estimated audience of 30,000, an increase from 27,000 in 2016/17
- 20% of the audience were from outside of Lancaster District
- 69 Platform presented shows e.g. Showaddy Waddy, Bay City Rollers, Syd Lawrence Orchestra, Barbara Dickson, Gordon Buchanan and The Pretty Things
- 2 Platform presented children's' shows
- 84 community events e.g. blood bank, flower club, tea dance, craft fairs and weddings

- 26 shows present by private hires e.g. Promenade Concert Orchestra, Morecambe Band, 90's Sorted and Rock Back the Clock
- 5 festivals e.g. Vintage by the Sea, Kite Festival, Steam Punk x 2 and Morecambe Music Festival

Audience member quote: *"One of my best nights out ever! Watched the pretty things last week! Fantastic"*

Marketing and events

- Launched standalone visitor websites for Lancaster and Morecambe Bay with positive feedback.
- Produced and distributed 60,000 visitor guides for Morecambe Bay and Lancaster targeting the visitor market.
- Supported Marketing Lancashire in promoting Lancaster as one of England's Heritage Cities including supporting the Discover England Funded Project.
- Promoted the Lune Valley under the 'City of Outdoors' campaign.
- Programmed and promoted Lancaster and Morecambe Bay as part of the national Heritage Open Days Campaign in September.
- What's On Campaign – Highlighting the best events of the year across Morecambe Bay with digital and print marketing.
- Added to the destination brands image library for partners to use for promotional use.
- Promotional activity to drive visitor numbers with 'Top Ten things to do' and 'Easter Activity'.
- Supported Lancaster University Campus in the City Programme promoting our Twin Towns and Light Up Lancaster under the International Connections theme.
- Programmed and promoted 16 free Brass Band concerts in Happy Mount Park.
- Supported both Universities with student recruitment with various pop-up stalls at their Visit and Arrival Days.
- Financially supported More Music's Catch the Wind Kite festival.
- Devised, promoted and delivered a second season of Town Hall Tours over the summer including a Christmas tour special.

- Supported Armed Forces Day Organisers for delivering and promoting successful events in both Lancaster and Morecambe.
- Supported Lancaster Canal Regeneration Partnership and its plans to celebrate 200 years of the Lancaster Canal in 2019.

Visitor Information Centres (VIC's)

- 2017/8 Visitor enquiries: 110,500 (est)
- 2017/8 Gross income: £286,000 (est)
- 72 Tourism & local businesses supported through VIC sales
- 45 Event Organisers supported via promotion and ticket sales

VIC updates:

- Launch of the new separate Facebook pages for each VIC – branded to reflect destination and services
- Working closely with The Platform Manager & staff to ensure the smooth and effective operation of tickets sales. Development of the dedicated VIC 'Ticket Box' system, information sheet produced to send out to potential customers/event organisers
- Lancaster VIC – information hub for Light Up Lancaster 2017 weekend. VIC opened 10am-10pm to support the event. Busiest weekend ever for the VIC over the two days with 2,000 visitors
- Ongoing partnership with Lancaster BID – Lancaster VIC was used as a base for customers for the Easter Treasure Trail and selling Christmas raffle tickets on their behalf. VIC staff assist with events listing for the BID brochure.
- Re- branding and launch of the Visit Card available exclusively through the VICs encouraging locals and visitors to explore the District
- Working with Morecambe Bay Partnership with the sales/promotion of the Morecambe Bay Seldom Seen map – the VICs are the main agent supplying both over the counter and online sales
- Working with Lancaster Arts Partners to help promote local events and support local creative organisations

- Continued working relationship the Lancaster University Conference Office – assisting with enquiries from the Conference office regarding groups/conferences.
- Dedicated B2B promotion campaigns via our social media channels concentrating on VIC Ticket Box and VIC services
- ‘Pop-up VIC’ at University Visit Days/Arrivals Days/Housing Fairs/Heysham Viking Festival and Morecambe Bay Partnership conference.
- New banner flag signage at Morecambe VIC highlighting the VIC as The Platform Booking Office
- English Tourism Week (competition, pop ups, literature)
- St Georges Day (information, pop-ups)
- Lancashire Day (tasters local produce, pop ups, information)

Climate Change Agenda/ Energy Efficiency

- Approval granted for x2 electric pool cars and x1 electric van – currently out to tender. Expected to have them by May 2018
- Electric charging points to be installed in our Depot (and possibly one in Lancaster) for our electric fleet – commencing April 2018
- County are starting locating on street chargers during this financial year
- City Council are submitting a bid to get 75% funding towards and off street car parking charges scheme- which will be located in car parks near residential areas
- The programme of energy efficiency across the council continues
- Funds to continue feasibility into two potential sites for solar farms were secured at the most recent budget council.

SPORT & LEISURE

Salt Ayre Leisure Centre

- The new Tranquil Spa facility opened in October, which completed the vast majority of the transformation of Salt Ayre Leisure Centre.
- The project has been delivered on time and within budget.

Success

- We won the Connected Procurement and Commissioning award at the national iNetwork Innovation Awards
- The new facility has seen a remarkable turnaround in, not only revenue generation, but also the number of people using the facility whilst maintaining the diverse demographic of customer. The introduction of classes specifically for expectant women, coupled with a gym membership that includes for customers over eighty years of age, has seen a truly unique lifecycle of customers provided for.
- Health and Fitness membership numbers have increased from approximately 700 to 2,860.
- Health and Fitness income is projected to achieve approximately £860k by March 2017, compared with £340k in previous years.
- Compared to previous financial years :
 - Fitness classes in general have increased by 83%.
 - Number of active female members have increased by 78%.
 - Swimming in general has increased by 10%.
 - Swimming lessons have increased from 300 to 500 participants and is rising.
 - Activities have increased by 267% (Energy and Xheight).
 - Average travel distance from people within Lancaster has increased from 3.7km to 4.6km.

Tranquil Spa

- The new spa facility opened in October 2017 and has proved to be popular with customers. As a new business 'within a business', it is gradually improving and the month of February has seen week on week improved performance with projections to meet target by the end of the financial year.
- The facility provides tremendous wellness opportunities for users and the thermal journey and Feel Good Suite are gathering popularity as each week goes by.

- The thermal journey consists of a salt inhalation steam, aromatherapy steam, herbal sauna and larger standard sauna. All of the facilities are finished to an extremely high standard, as are the changing / shower facilities.
- The Feel Good Suite is a facility area within the Spa that includes equipment that specifically supports people with various mobility issues and enables exercise to be undertaken in a controlled and safe environment with highly qualified staff in attendance.
- The final feature within the Spa is the 'Hub' which has up to date equipment for meetings / conferences and can hold approximately 100 people. The area also doubles up to hold activities such as karate and yoga (not at the same time!) and is used by the leisure centre to undertake a staff training programme.

Future

- Whilst the majority of the transformation is now complete, officers are keen to maintain the momentum and are exploring the possibility of introducing some to the 'Gravity' feature and 2.) Possible introduction of a children's play feature to help maximise catering revenue during the warm summer months when families are less likely to want to visit indoor facilities (apart from swimming!).
- Building on the success of the centre and maximising the financial benefits to the council, we are also exploring the setting up a Local Authority Trading Company, subject to member approval, with immediate savings around VAT and business rates. The learning from this puts us in a position to exploit trading opportunities throughout the rest of the council.

Community pools

- Following the decision to hand the pools back to Lancashire County Council and to try and help facilitate community ownership, I'm pleased to be able to report that so far all 3 pools have a realistic chance of survival in the hands of community groups or schools. Carnforth pool has already re-opened and Heysham has confirmed its opening date. This result shows just what can be achieved when we all work together for the good of our communities.

Executive Annual Report 2017/18

Councillor Janice Hanson

[Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder responsible for Economic Regeneration and Planning](#)



Executive Membership

- Cabinet
- Canal Corridor Cabinet Liaison Group (Chairman)
- Housing Regeneration Cabinet Liaison Group
- Planning Policy Cabinet Liaison Group (Chairman)

Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc

- Management Group of Lancaster Business Improvement District (BID)
- Morecambe Bay Partnership
- Growth Lancashire Ltd

Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

Responsible for Economic Regeneration and Planning

Corporate Plan Key Outcomes/Success Measures

Outcomes	Success Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable economic growth and jobs will be created in key sectors including energy, knowledge, health and the visitor economy • The attractiveness and offer of the district as a place to visit or invest in will be improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine Lancaster district's contribution to the emerging concept of the Northern Powerhouse • Realise benefits to the Lancaster district of a combined authority for Lancashire • Regenerate central Morecambe through the Morecambe Area Action Plan • Complete Local Plan for the Lancaster district, setting out a vision for the natural and built environment to 2031 • Achieve the annual requirement for the availability of land for housing development • Adopt the Lancaster City Masterplan • Improve local conditions for business growth and skills development • Sustain small businesses as important components of thriving retail centres • Enhance Lancaster's urban centre through investment in the built environment, heritage assets and the public realm • Improve inward investment through the attractiveness of the district as a place to live and work • Evaluate economic impact, delivery and funding of the arts in the district

Progress made during 2017/18

Regeneration

Lancaster District Local Plan

- Full Council approval to publish and submit December 2017
- Plan published February 2018 (to be submitted May 2018)

South Lancaster / Bailrigg Garden Village

- Construction started on Phase 1 of Lancaster University Health Innovation Campus
- Ongoing development on university campus and new master plan produced
- Detailed studies undertaken on topics such as water management especially after November 2017 floods
- Decision taken to produce an Area Action Plan for the Bailrigg Garden Village at December council meeting – issues and options consultation to take place May 2018
- Bus rapid Transport study underway (led by County Council) with options consultation also taking place in May 2018
- Bid for Housing Infrastructure Fund money for essential transport improvements successfully moved onto to next stage March 2018
- Continued capacity funding for Garden Village

Lancaster

- Canal Corridor North
- Work nearly complete on Lancaster centre narrative and vision
- Working with County Council on early stages of Movement Strategy following approval of Lancaster Transport Master Plan
- Dwellings now being constructed on Luneside East site and plans progressing for student accommodation on rest of site
- Development work and funding bidding underway for Lune Phase 3 flood protection along Caton Road – outline approval in place for £m ERDF grant with full bid due May 2018
- All business flood resilience grants now paid out for properties affected by Storm Desmond

Morecambe

- First two phases of Wave Reflection Wall replacement complete. Last phase completes August 2018
- A View for Eric (Morecambe Townscape Heritage Initiative 2) nearing completion
- Work underway on Chatsworth Gardens phase 2

- Public realm works in and around Morecambe centre complete

Heysham Gateway

- Work on overarching master plan and delivery strategy nearing completion
- First public sector land disposals underway and first planning application received for GVS filters
- Significant demand for land and premises being managed and directed to best locations
- Work ongoing with major occupiers such as Peel Ports and EDF Energy to facilitate their future needs

Development Management

- The last year has witnessed the start of a number of development projects within the district that have been supported by the Council's Planners. These include the first phase of the Health Innovation Campus, which will have a significant, positive economic impact on our district and will further enhance Lancaster University's international reputation. The redevelopment of the former Broadway Hotel site will deliver high-quality residential redevelopment overlooking Morecambe Bay. It is also pleasing to see the commencement of the new 'student-village' at Bulk Road, particularly given the previous dereliction of the site in a key gateway location into the city. We welcome the much-anticipated implementation of the planning permission that was granted for residential dwellings at Luneside East on St George's Quay. Finally, we await the completion of the combined, new facility for Lancashire Fire and Rescue and the North West Ambulance Service at Cable Street.
- In terms of planning activity, the Council continues to receive a high number of planning applications. County-wide benchmarking undertaken at the end of 2017 indicates that this Council determined the highest volume of planning applications within Lancashire.
- The same statistics also indicate that Council Planners granted planning permission for 89% of all applications determined within the same period.

- Provisional government statistics indicate that Council Planners will have determined over 97% of all major applications within statutory timescales or within a mutually-agreed timescale with the applicant. For non-major planning applications, this figure now exceeds 90% - the Council's best performance for many years.
- With increased development activity, there is inevitably an increase in the number of planning enforcement cases that the Council investigates. The Council is currently taking steps to ensure that it has sufficient capacity to investigate breaches of planning control. This is critical to ensuring that the district is an attractive place to live and work.

Economic development

- Background work to develop the Council's Economic Growth Plan is well underway and a number of events will now be held from the end of April onwards to consider our evidence base, our main opportunities and challenges and to plan what we will prioritise. We are keen to involve members from all parties and to work with our economic partners in developing our Economic Growth Plan.
- The Economic Development team is now shaping up and we are busy recruiting into a final new post to cover business and skills. The Council will be once again be able to support and encourage business growth and investment, working closely with our economic partners. The Council is now a member of Growth Lancashire and will be working with Lancashire partners to make sure that business support services are available and businesses know how to access them. At present over 200 businesses a year access support and we will work to increase this.
- With new Place Marketing capacity now in place, the Council is developing a Place Narrative and a Place Board to help to put Lancaster district on the map as a place to invest, to do business and to work, as well as building on our reputation as an established visitor destination. An investment prospectus will be developed that promotes land and premises

including commercial centres. An early opportunity to promote the district was taken when the Council attended MIPIM UK in Late 2017. Lancaster was highly profiled as part of the Lancashire wide offer and feedback was excellent.

- Over the last year, the Council has supported the North Lancs Expo, run by the Chamber, which was highly successful and provided a great opportunity for businesses to showcase what they do to. In 2018, the Council will work hand in hand with the Chamber to deliver another North Lancs Expo. The Bay Living Awards in September 2017 was sponsored by the Council and was a tremendous success, really putting the spotlight on the district's businesses.
- West End One (Phase 1 of the Chatsworth Gardens initiative) was awarded best refurbishment at Sunday Times British Homes awards and has been nationally publicised. Phase 2 of the Chatsworth Gardens is now underway and the properties transferred to the developer. 51 units of accommodation now in development.
- A Coastal Communities Team was awarded funding by the government and is working on proposals for coastal improvements for the area around Morecambe, Heysham and Bare.
- £2M funding has been secured for flood defences along River Lune to protect the Caton Road industrial estates. Work undertaken to secure remaining public funding and private sector contributions, working closely with local businesses in the flood affected area.
- Flood recovery and resilience schemes have successfully dealt with 60 grants to businesses following Storm Desmond in 2015.

Executive Annual Report 2017/18

Councillor Margaret Pattison

[Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Markets, Voluntary Sector, Older People and Rural Affairs](#)



Executive Membership

- Cabinet
- Planning Policy Cabinet Liaison Group

Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc

- Lancaster Community Fund Grants Panel
- Yorkshire Dales National Park Board

Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

Responsibility for Markets, Voluntary Sector, Older People and Rural Affairs

Corporate Plan Key Outcomes/Success Measures

Outcomes	Success Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communities are brought together and the major issues affecting the district are addressed through working in partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine the future delivery and funding of voluntary, community and faith sector services groups• Improve performance and effectiveness of partnerships in delivering corporate priorities• Improve neighbourhood working by engaging with communities to understand their needs and build resilience

Progress made during 2017/18

Older People

This has been an interesting and enjoyable year with Older People's Portfolio working and supporting so many different groups in the Morecambe, Lancaster District. I have been invited to attend so many groups and Parish Councils tackling loneliness, isolation and safety in the home, media safety right through to keeping fit over 50s.

Last May I organised a football match between my team, Lancaster and Morecambe Bay Rovers, and a team from Liverpool Sefton, men over 45years, this was great fun

bringing lots of people together raising £1.334 for Defying Dementia, research into Dementia as there are 105 different forms of Dementia.

I am part of the Elected Member Champions Network contributing to the lives of Older People to maintain independence, support their rights to services, whilst feeling safe and well in their community. This has connections in and outside the home for example:- Jo Cox Loneliness Commission, Cyber Security in Later Life, Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub-Value of Older Workers, Safe Trader Scheme, Health and Fitness advice in later life.

I am honoured to be part of “The Bay Dementia Hub” which is held on the first Friday in the month, with lots of help and advice in one room from solicitors to help with home care; Age UK, the Pension group, A Life More Ordinary at the Dukes Theatre, N Compass, Samaritans and many more.

I will be hosting the Elected Members Champions Network on March 21st 2018 at Lancaster Town Hall inviting elected members from around the Northwest, sharing good practice with what we do in our beautiful area. My speakers will be Dr Andy Knox from Ashtrees Surgery Carnforth, N Compass Northwest, and myself jointly with Anne Oliver from Age UK Lancashire. We will talk about the fantastic day we had at Lancaster Town Hall last November concentrating on “Loneliness.” That day was very well organised by Jenny Kay and Stephen Metcalfe, with lots of stalls of different services and schools attending with elected councillors. The day started early with BBC Radio Lancashire broadcasting live from Lancaster Town Hall. They interviewed myself about how I tackle loneliness and isolation in my ward, they also interviewed Nia from Galloways and Anne Oliver From Age UK Lancashire. Thank you to everyone involved.

Lancaster City Council are very proud of the over 50s housing. This year has seen the Government announcing another policy review and it will be publishing a green paper on care and support for older people in the summer of 2018. The paper will set out plans for how government proposes to improve care and support for older people and tackle the challenge of an ageing population. From my involvement with older people and organisations that support them there is a real challenge to find and fund a long term solution for care and support for older people to enable them to maintain their dignity

and security in old age. The Council is still a major provider of sheltered housing accommodation with 575 units of accommodation and it is pleasing to report that the Council continues to maintain these services. The Council also has a larger stock of accommodation that can meet older people's needs and we also provide adaptations both within the council housing and the wider housing stock in the district to help older people to live in their homes.

Markets.

The Council operates 3 Markets each with their own different feel. These are the Festival Market in Morecambe, the Assembly Rooms and the Charter Market in Lancaster. They provide the opportunity for independent traders to sell an eclectic range of products. Lancaster's Charter Market is developing a reputation for its street food, as well as popular goods and products. The Assembly rooms provide affordable space, in a listed building, for smaller traders. The Festival Market is a traditional Market housed undercover and remains popular with residents and visitors. Rents at all the Markets are very reasonable and the cost of managing and staffing the Market is covered by income generated.

The prudential for Markets to attract visitors is recognised as is the need to ensure the balance with shop based businesses and other attractions.

As such Market Officers have spent the last few months visiting other Markets to learn from best practice. The intention is to use this learning to help develop options that could improve the Council's offering and compliment the wider development of Lancaster and Morecambe Centre. Work on the feasibility of these options, including engagement with traders, will take place in 2018/19.

Voluntary Sector

Our Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector commissioning grants will stay the status quo as set out by Cabinet, the steering group from Overview and Scrutiny will look at the grants again to see where there are any gaps.

I work alongside many fantastic voluntary groups supported with funding, and also get out there on our streets organising “Weed Our Street” with Heysham High students, councillors and local groups kindly helping us to make our area look clean and tidy. I am leading a group to transform 64 back alleys in the Morecambe area hopefully to make communal, safe areas making Morecambe blooming again working with the council and voluntary groups.

Rural Areas.

I feel very honoured to be on the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.

Following the establishment of the National Park in 1954, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority became an independent body, within the framework of local government in 1997. We provide some services similar to those provided elsewhere by district and county councils. For example, we are the local planning authority. Most of the things we do, however, are particular to national park authorities.

Our Purposes.

Our role is clearly defined in Parliament by our two statutory purposes. These are:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park.
- to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public.
-

In pursuing these purposes, we are also required:

- to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park.

To sum up, we are here to conserve and enhance the National Park and to help others to share in and enjoy it.

Executive Annual Report 2017/18

Councillor Brendan Hughes

[Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Community Safety and Clean and Green](#)



Executive Membership

- Cabinet

Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc

- Lancashire Waste Partnership
- Community Safety Partnership

Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

Responsibility for Community Safety and Clean and Green

Corporate Plan Key Outcomes/Success Measures

Clean and Green Places

Outcomes	Success Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The impact on the environment from council operations and services will be minimised •Local communities are clean and residents have a sense of pride in the district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Maintain and / or improve average Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating in council homes • Implement programme of energy efficiency works in council buildings •Install electric vehicle charging points in the district • Reduce business travel mileage across all council services • Maintain percentage of household waste reused, recycled or composted •Maintain percentage of people who perceive the district's streets and public spaces are clean •Increase involvement of local communities in improving local areas, parks and open spaces •Implement a pilot scheme for litter enforcement services

Progress made during 2017/18

It has been an exciting year within Environmental Services and the service having to introduce Green Waste collection charges has been a large piece of work. We continue to offer our services in house successfully.

Our award winning parks continue to thrive with the help of our hard working friends groups. We worked hard to help our colleagues at Morecambe Town Council gain a Gold in the North West in Bloom competition.

We have worked hard with Vodafone and our other CCTV partners to run a pilot mobile camera scheme to help in the fight against fly tipping. More cameras are being rolled out in the coming year around the district.

I must take this opportunity to put on record my thanks for all ES staff involved in the clean up after the floods at the latter end of last year. I think we really excelled and went above and beyond for the sake of our residents. Flooding will almost certainly happen in the district again and we are putting measures in place to be even more proactive in our response.

I genuinely believe ES has achieved some really good, positive things for the district. I think we live in a clean area and have a great basis to build upon in the coming years. I have given some bullet pointed stats provided by officers as a general round up:

Waste and Recycling

Developed a subscription service for residents to opt into garden waste service, bringing in an income of £737,427 (2016/17 £127.896 and £612.531 2017/18)

- Delivered subscription leaflets to every property in the district
- Printed, stuffed and sent out 23,967 envelopes
- 3,818,354 no. collections of which 99.925% were collected without complaint (2851 reported missed bins in 2016/17)
- Collected 30,480.84 tonnes of non-recyclable waste
- Collected 19,387.32 tonnes of recyclable materials

Commercial Waste;

- Collected 3733.02 tonnes of commercial waste
- Collected 984.32 tonnes of commercial mixed recyclables.
- Introduced in cab devices for the Trade Waste Crews

Bulky waste for the period 01.01.2017 to 31.12.2017

- Collected 300.17 tonnes
- Made 3655 trips

- Collected 9706 items
- Reused/Recycled an average of 54.92%
- Retained the University Contract for the collection of residual waste service estimated value £183,106.00 for a further 2 years (with an option for a further 2 years).
- Developed a new Service leaflet
- Reviewed specification and took ownership of 12 New RCV's.
- Trained 111 staff in Manual Handling, Reversing Assistant and COSHH

Public Realm

- NWIB – Gold winner for the first time. Work with Morecambe Town Council
- Green Flag Awards for Williamson and Happy Mount Parks
- Seaside Award – Morecambe North & Morecambe South Beaches
- Implementation of new service delivery in Cleansing resulting in more collections over 7 days
- Implementation of new Graffiti Machine in Street Cleansing – Zero tolerance on Graffiti
- Implementation of quad bike delivery of street weed spraying
- 2 x new gum machines to tackle gum litter in urban cores of Morecambe and Lancaster
- Bay Cottage Play Area Re Development – funding through Friends of Bay Cottage
- New Outdoor Gym at Coronation Field – funding through Community group
- New play area at Grosvenor Park – funding through Heaton with Oxcliffe PC
- Field In trust Centenary designation for Miss Whalleys field with community group
- Improvement to Storey Garden - funding through Friends of Storey Garden's
- New major planting scheme outside Lancaster Castle -working with Duchy of Lancaster

- Implementation of new car parking provision at Ryelands Park – part of the parks masterplan
- Parks customer consultation undertaken at Williamson and HMP resulting in improved satisfaction rates
- Implementation for 4 x fly tipping surveillance cameras. Further 4 x being funded by MTC and MBID
- Monkey Enclosure Development at Williamson Park – increased footfall and revenue
- Early implementation of Williamson Park eliminating single use plastic. Reuseable Coffee Cups, Biodegradable cups, paper straws and bamboo take away crockery
- Supporting Emma Clear, Zoo Keeper, with a phd in Zoo research
- Opening of new cascade at Williamson Park in partnership with friends of Williamson Park
- Partnership working with Lancaster University on research of street weeds and Community Gardens
- Part of recovery team following Galgate flooding – taking 100's tonnes of waste away
- Winning full tender for Flyde Council – 800 hanging baskets
- Supporting newly forms Friends of Poulton Park
- Implementation of charges to Splash park facility increasing income and lowering running costs
- Commercial rebrand of Nursery complex and successful Christmas tree sales to increase footfall and revenue
- Agreement to host major events including Highest Point Festival at Williamson Park
- Partnership working improvements with County, MTC, community, private housing associations, Schools, universities

Repairs and Maintenance

Following the recent Ministerial announcement on a Social Housing Rent settlement from 2022 and successful conclusion of our dealings with the Administrators of Carillion we will be moving forward with an application for planning permission on our first New Build Council Housing in more than 30years

Highlights include

- A complex £5.4M Planned investment programme delivered through a mixture of in-house teams and external contractors has been delivered including the following
 - 158 Kitchen Replacements
 - New Roofs to 93 properties
 - New Heating Systems/Boiler upgrades to 190 properties
 - 700 External Door Renewals to 395 properties
 - New upgraded radio-linked smoke alarm installations to over 400 properties
 - Replacement of suspended ceilings incorporating new LED emergency lighting and new upgraded fire detection system to Glebe Ct sheltered scheme
 - Commenced renewal programme of inefficient hot water cylinders to non-gas flats on the Mainway estate
 - New consumer units fitted to over 100 properties
 - Communal area refurbishments undertaken to 8 flat blocks on Mainway serving 62 flats
 - Delivered comprehensive programme of disabled adaptations including 2no. extensions.

- Responded to the November storm floods by sourcing alternative accommodation for those families in council homes affected and contractors are on site undertaking refurbishment works with tenants expected to return home during the first quarter of 2018/19

- In addition to our programme of safety works outlined above, as a response to the Grenfell tragedy, we brought forward our programme of fire door upgrades on Mainway, approx. £120K.
- Despite a 41% increase in the volume of empty homes over the first two quarters of 2017/18 numbers of empty homes in the re-letting process reduced from a peak of 106 (28/6) to below 50 in the new year. This effort also saw re-let times fall from a peak of 81+ days in August to 37 days in January. We have seen a levelling off of turnover in the final quarter but are still anticipating approx. 450 relets compared to 343 in 2016/17
- An externally led LEAN process review of the Void process was undertaken from January onwards. Working closely with the front line teams involved a number of recommendations have been made which are being piloted into 2018/19. We hope to see benefits in the numbers of empties within the process and the turnaround time in the coming year
- With colleagues from ICT, finance and Council Housing we developed a detailed RMS Development Plan to upgrade IT systems and enhance delivery and management of our repairs and asset management processes. With projects initiated in 2017/18 and budgets identified for delivery in 2018/19 we look forward to implementing a suite of improvements over the coming year
- As a part of the Development Plan towards year end we upgraded and commenced testing TOTAL our repairs IT system. This will allow us to introduce a range of new functions which will improve the tenant experience, such as text messaging in advance of repair visits and improved back office effectiveness

This is a small snapshot of our achievements in 17/18 with some exciting changes planned for 18/19.

A thank you to Mark and the various teams within Environmental Services for all your hard work.

Executive Annual Report 2017/18

Councillor Anne Whitehead

[Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Finance, Revenues and Benefits, Skills](#)



Executive Membership

- Cabinet
- Canal Corridor Cabinet Liaison Group
- Shared Revenues and Benefits Service Joint Committee

Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc

Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

Responsibility for Finance, Revenues and Benefits, Skills

Corporate Plan Key Outcomes/Success Measures

Outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a financially stable position and strong financial forecast for the delivery of council services • Well run, value-for-money services that are valued by the public and demonstrate good governance, openness and transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement agreed budget proposals and take positive action where they do not deliver desired outcomes • Develop and implement a range of further savings and income generation opportunities to sustain the council's budget • Maintain an "unqualified" value for money conclusion from our external auditors • Review the Localised Council Tax Benefits Support Scheme (LCTS) to determine a sustainable scheme for the future • Act on the government's future roll-out of universal credit in the district and other welfare reforms

Progress made during 2017/18

Finance

In March 2017, we adopted a two-stage approach to budget development to help achieve financial sustainability over the medium term. The first stage focussed on the budget proposals for 2017/18, and included ones that could be implemented readily or were minor, or were building capacity to ensure that the Council could deliver its existing transformational and innovative budget options for future years. They included the creation of a £500K reserve to allow the Council to re-engage in pro-active economic development work to help boost local economic growth, attract new businesses, create jobs and support the development of skills locally. A Marketing Manager, Marketing Assistant, and an Economic Development Assistant have recently been appointed, and recruitment of an Economic Development Officer is underway.

The second stage took place during 2017/18, when Cabinet undertook a strategic review of the Council's existing priorities and services, including performance, as well as looking at options to innovate and modernise. We have developed, prioritised and planned a programme of efficiencies, income generation and invest-to-save proposals for 2018/19 onwards. Our four main ambitions for 2018-22 are a thriving and prosperous economy, clean and safe neighbourhoods, healthy and happy communities, and a smart and forward-thinking Council. Many of the budget proposals focus on income generation and efficiency savings. They also include the use of reserves in the next two years, which it is hoped will both help us to achieve progress in our priority areas and lead to increased income to support our priority areas. A balanced budget has been set for 2018/19, but the Council faces deficits of £0.6M in 2019/20, £1.9M in 2020/21 and £2.4M in 2021/22.

For this and future years, the Annual Reporting and Statement of Accounts has been brought forward to 31 May, leaving just two months after the year end. Good progress has been made in preparation for the 2017/18 report.

The Council continues to face highly uncertain and very challenging financial prospects. Central Government still plans for local authorities to be completely funded by business rates and council tax by 2020/21. However, progress towards producing an appropriate business rate retention scheme is slow. The development of such a scheme is highly complex, as account needs to be taken of tax raising capacities of local authorities to help address fairness and equality. Government is continuing to engage and consult with local authorities on this, through its Fair Funding Review, and more detailed proposals are being worked on in conjunction with the Local Government Association through joint Steering and Working Groups. There continues to be a cap on council tax rises. Locally, we have a number of large and exciting regeneration and infrastructure projects to consider and manage, and this adds to the challenge of managing the Council's spending, investments and borrowing.

The operation and forecasting of the existing Business Rates Retention Scheme is growing more complex and more uncertain. We now have confirmation (subject to the 2017/18 closure of accounts) of the £4M additional net income in respect of business rate income for 2016/17. Current forecasts for the next two years are based on core retained general business rate income being at baseline. The Council still has a disproportionate exposure to rating appeals, particularly in relation to the Heysham

power stations. Also, we are unlikely yet to have received all the appeals following the implementation of the 2017 Rating List.

Revenues and Benefits

The service has had another challenging year, adapting to and implementing continuing welfare reforms and other changes.

In July 2016, the Lancaster & Morecambe district went live on the full Universal Credit (UC) service, which is administered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). It is reported that there are around 6,000 customers currently receiving UC in the City Council area. There is a lot of information-sharing between the two organisations, and through Customer Services the Council provides personal budgeting support to UC applicants on behalf of DWP. The volume of work is increasing, but sadly many claimants do not attend for interview and we are trialling service provision at the Job Centre to better engage with claimants at the first point of contact. The Assessment team continues to experience issues with the processes (as they link to DWP): these are ongoing and are being highlighted to DWP as they arise.

The Localised Council Tax Support scheme benefits were maintained during 2017/18 and in December Council took the decision to retain basically the same scheme for 2018/19, with only very minor changes to help customers and bring it in line with changes to the housing benefit scheme.

The service has had many issues to deal with this year relating to business rates, including the recent revaluation and the myriad of property relief schemes now in place, together with the ongoing difficulties of rate avoidance tactics. The Morecambe Business Improvement District (BID) is now in place, alongside the Lancaster BID, and collection rates for both are currently in excess of 98% for the year.

More generally for the service, budget savings targets have been achieved and despite reducing operating costs, local taxation collection rates have been broadly maintained.

The service continues to perform well in processing benefits promptly and accurately (on average 24 days for new claims and 10 days for changes in circumstances). It is hampered in obtaining UC information from DWP, although slowly but surely matters are improving.

Looking forward, the focus remains on managing ongoing Government reforms effectively and shaping service delivery to encourage channel shift by educating and assisting customers to use self-serve solutions.

Community Wealth Building and Local Procurement

During the year I attended presentations on Community Wealth Building, the focus of which is to ensure that wealth that exists in a district benefits the local economy and local people. One important element is local procurement. Local procurement models have been developed in the North West in recent years, notably by Preston and Manchester City Councils. A team bringing together relevant expertise from within the Council (Chief Executive's Office, Economic Development, Procurement) has undertaken some initial steps to investigate the opportunities for local procurement. The Council plans to develop and implement a Lancaster District approach to Community Wealth Building, learning from the experiences of Preston and Manchester.

A crucial first step in the process is to analyse the Council's expenditure, and software will be purchased to undertake this. We will also work with Lancaster University Management School to identify joint working opportunities for engagement with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and with the University itself as a key anchor institution. We will work with SMEs to help them meet the procurement requirements of the Council and other anchor institutions.

We propose to take part in the Business in the Community (BITC) scheme, one of the Prince of Wales's charities, which provides a business secondee for two years to help engage businesses in developing employment in deprived communities, social enterprises and co-operatives

Skills

The updated report on the Lancaster District Economic Prospects (Turley, Sep 2017), identified a number of challenges faced by the District in ensuring that sustainable economic growth is delivered. Two of these challenges specifically relate to the skills agenda. First, the employment base is currently dominated by larger employers, and there is a need to encourage business start-ups and SME growth to help to build a more diverse and resilient employment base. Second, there is a need to identify the areas of local skills shortages, and for the Council to engage with and work with partners delivering skills and training.

The Economic Development Officer (Business and Skills) post is now being advertised as a permanent position and will provide the capacity needed to allow the Council to work with partners on the Skills agenda. This will include the development of a Skills Forum for the district, working closely with schools, other education providers and businesses to create better connections and supporting or developing local projects that help to tackle our skills challenge and improve prospects for local people. I shall be visiting Lancaster and Morecambe College at the beginning of April.

Following the decline of some of the national Information, Advice and Guidance programmes and Education Business Partnerships, there has been a concern that links between schools and businesses are not strong enough. This means that schools are less able to fully understand the skills requirements of local businesses and local businesses are finding that young people are less likely to have skills they need for local opportunities. To begin to tackle this, the Council has been working with the Lancashire's Skills and Employment Hub to build a network of Enterprise Advisers from local businesses to work with local schools and colleges to develop their employer engagement programmes.

The Council has secured "National Skills Academy for Construction" status, which has enabled the Supplementary Planning Document on Employment and Skills Plans to be developed. This approach strongly supports the use of local labour on development projects and allows the Council to influence retention of both the jobs and the wealth that arises from the jobs to be retained in the district.

In March, the Council assisted Lancashire Enterprise Partnership's Skills and Employment Hub in a successful event to launch "Escalate" for skills agencies and clients. This is a really useful, comprehensive and easy to use online system that points people towards training and development options at all levels. I was delighted to attend this event and be given a demonstration.

The Digital sector in Lancaster is being recognised as important at the regional level and could potentially be a strong economic driver for the district. The Council is working closely with Digital Lancaster to help shape their key objectives of premises, business support, skills retention and infrastructure improvements. This is part of an approach that will provide a compelling local offer for businesses and for those people who have digital skills that are needed and want to be located here. There are strong links with the University and a wider approach to graduate retention.

The Council has provided support for a local group delivering "The Sowing Club" and "The Growing Club", programmes that are designed to support women to develop their skills and employment / self-employment prospects. This is an unusual project that is outside the framework for mainstream funds but is providing some of what is needed in the district for new start up businesses and local skills. I was delighted to attend their launch in March, and talk to some of the women being supported.

Executive Annual Report 2017/18

Councillor Warriner

**Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder with responsibility for
Housing and Environmental Health**



Executive Membership

- Cabinet
- District Wide Tenants Cabinet Liaison Group
- Housing Regeneration Cabinet Liaison Group (Chairman)

Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc

- Health and Wellbeing Partnership

Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

Responsibility for Housing and Environmental Health

Corporate Plan Key Outcomes/Success Measures

Outcomes	Success Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Enhanced quality of life of local residents through access to affordable, decent housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Increase the number of improved homes •Improve access to housing by addressing evidence of need • Increase provision of social housing • Continue to try to establish a new build and acquisition programme to increase the number of council houses in the district •Complete feasibility study of selective licensing of private sector landlords • Increase the number of vulnerable households benefiting from Warm Homes Initiatives •Improve local air quality from long term improvements in transportation • Maintain a percentage of “broadly” compliant (rating 3 or higher) food businesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Health and wellbeing of our citizens is improved 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Maintain a financially stable position and strong financial forecast for the delivery of council services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Develop and implement a range of further savings and income generation opportunities to sustain the council’s budget

Progress made during 2017/18

Environmental Health

PUBLIC PROTECTION

Anti-Social Behaviour

- Established a dedicated and highly flexible Anti-Social Behaviour team taking on a wide range of cases dealing with issues around neighbour nuisance, mental health, drug dealing and substance abuse, and young people related ASB. Informal advice and warnings have been supplemented with formal powers (such as community protection warnings and notices, and new civil injunctions).

- Completed substantial research into young people related anti-social behaviour. This identified, for example, the benefit that some hang-out zones would cater as safe places where kids can be kids.

Environmental enforcement

- Fly tipping and other wastes-related offences continue to be a significant public concern, as well as costing the council hundreds of thousands of pounds to clear up. A number of successful investigations and enforcement actions have been delivered, including prosecutions.
- The council's waste collection, street cleansing and enforcement services are coordinating efforts to improve the cleanliness of seriously affected local areas. More detail is appearing now in the Spring 2018 edition of 'Your District Council Matters'.

Dog fouling

- The dedicated Dog Fouling Enforcement Officer service, funded by Morecambe Town Council and operated in the Morecambe area, continues to provide a high level of visible advice and deterrence. The most recently calculated pick-up rate for dog fouling is 99.4% and every offender has been formally dealt with by way of fixed penalty notices. This forms part of the council's busy Dog Warden team which once again has been kept very busy.

Air quality

- Our officers have been busy working on specific projects, for example:
 - with the local taxi trade to introduce low emission electric vehicles to the fleet
 - with planning officers to increase the numbers of dwellings served by electric vehicle charging points
 - with the county council and Stagecoach on cleaner engine technology in the passenger bus fleet.
- They have been working more widely with public health partners on ways to improve local air quality, and with the Health & Wellbeing Partnership to promote walking and cycling opportunities and facilities (which have the added sociable benefit that people in our communities are more engaged and less cocooned in their private cars).

Food Safety

- Delivery of Safer Food Direct – completed 2 business start-up inspections and 6 “gain or retain” audits, generating £1,300 income
- Delivered 3 food hygiene training courses, training 43 food handlers (generating approximately £2,000 income)
- Delivered 2 sous vide training course, generating £2,600
- Designed and delivered Food Fraud training to 24 officers, generating £3,000
- Sold 17 “Eat Safe” food safety packs and diary packs for food businesses
- Carried out approximately 700 food hygiene inspections
- We have taken one food fraud prosecution case – trial date has now been moved to October 2018
- Increased our income generation from water sampling, ships inspections, “Eat safe” and “Safer Food Direct”
- Seized and destroyed 8 pallets of unfit frozen food

Licensing

- Revoked 3 Taxi driver licenses due to serious matters putting public health at risk
- Carried out 180 unannounced taxi vehicle compliance inspections vehicles resulting in issuing 75 defect notices and 2 vehicle suspensions

Pest Control

- The council’s pest Control service has launched its commercial trading arm called Unbugged, serving business clients with the aim of helping to subsidise the costs of our residents’ pest control needs.

Health and Wellbeing

- The council’s officers have been a key part of organised community conversations around health and wellbeing needs. They have also supported a range of community wellbeing initiatives.

Early Action

- New for 2018/19, the Lancaster district will have an integrated Early Action team across a range of agencies and with community involvement to tackle problems at an early stage before they become difficult to manage and resolve.

Civil Contingencies

- During 2017 there was continuing progress in developing local emergency plans and by the end of the year ten communities in the district had completed and published their own plans.
- In November there was another extreme weather event that resulted in flooding in Galgate, Hala, Halton and other parts of the district. The council and emergency services response was fantastic and support to the affected communities continued during the post flooding clean up and beyond. Lessons learned from the debrief are already being implemented.

Private Sector Housing & Cemeteries

HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY

- The council's award winning in-house Home Improvement Agency (HIA) has continued to enable vulnerable residents to maintain independence and to remain safe, secure and warm in their own homes.
- The HIA manages and delivers the city council's DFG programme. All HIA clients are screened for possible DFG adaptations. The HIA has no waiting lists in operation and clients are assisted throughout the grants process.
- Lancaster's DFG allocation in 2017/18 was £1,775,217, compared to £783,000 in 2015/16. The average completed DFG in 17/18 is currently £5,360.31. The figure is well below the national average, which is in the region of £7000.

Despite staffing issues throughout 17/18, the HIA has increased the number of grants completed to 213 compared to 122 in 2016/17. Through the promotional work and the use of independent OTs, which now account for almost 50% of all referrals, the HIA has also increased the number of referrals received to 419 compared to 269 in 2016/17.

- The Handyperson Service carries out minor work which residents find difficult to find a contractor to undertake and which helps them to remain independent in their own home. There is no charge for using the Handyperson Service, however clients are required to pay for any materials.

HOUSING OPTIONS (HOMELESSNESS & CHOICE BASED LETTINGS)

- Homeless acceptances have reduced over the last 10 years and are now starting to level off. With the introduction of five new Homeless Prevention Officers (HPOs) the team are now working at an even earlier stage and this has resulted in an increase in the numbers of successful homeless prevention cases. Rough sleeping is an ongoing issue, not in terms of numbers, but in terms of people's complexities. Christchurch is the only direct access shelter in the North West and we see an influx of homeless people coming in to the District from other areas.
- The Refuge has been operational since April 2013. It provides 7 units for families fleeing domestic violence. The funding for this service was 'at risk' from March 2017 due to the cuts in the Lancashire County Council Supporting People Programme. Funding has been secured to extend the contract until September 2019.
- Temporary Accommodation (TA) targets remain below government targets - currently there are 6 available family TA properties available within the district.
- Choice Based Lettings - An updated Housing Allocations Policy was approved in March. In the past 12 months we have advertised and let around 363 council tenancies and a further 122 Housing Association tenancies within the District.

- Oak Tree House homeless hostel for rough sleepers/entrenched homeless has been open for nearly 3 years in April 2018. The project provides 23 beds, 6 crisis beds, 12 move on beds and 5 self-contained semi-independent flats for the over 25s. The scheme continues to deliver a wide range of on-site services including health, drug, alcohol, training, education and in work support. The service is a North Locality provision with effect from March 2018 following a re-tender and recent re-commissioning of the service.
- We assisted with coordinating help and support to households affected by the recent floods in November 2017 by providing advice and assistance with rehousing into temporary accommodation and permanent rehousing.
- The Home Office approached the Council 2 year ago to assist with the Asylum Seekers Dispersal Programme for single people and families. In the past 12 months we have rehoused 5 households leaving SERCO accommodation who have been given leave to remain and registered a further 10 households on to the housing register.

HOUSING STANDARDS

- The Housing Standards team continues to work across the district to improve standards of accommodation and management in the private rented sector. The team has dealt with 811 requests for service, and made improvements to 143 privately rented properties.
- An extensive 10 week public consultation was held at the end of 2017 on whether to introduce a licensing scheme for private landlords in Morecambe. Taking all views into account, the outcome was a decision to pilot an intelligence led enforcement approach concentrating on dealing with problems associated with rogue landlords. Alongside this, in partnership with Lancashire County Council, innovative and sustainable ways of building the resilience of people and communities will be developed with a more collaborative way of working with

partners including statutory services, non-statutory services, the voluntary, community and faith sector.

- The programme of grants awarded following the floods in December 2015 closed on the 31st March 2018 when £700,000 of grant aid will have been allocated to residential properties. This includes several larger community projects, where a number of households have grouped together to install measures to prevent future flooding. Unfortunately, further flooding in November 2017 left another 276 properties in the district with flooded habitable rooms, requiring the team to be involved in a joint emergency response to ensure all residents were safely housed.
- Lancaster welcomed 10 resettled refugee families in July 2017. 10 houses were sourced and prepared for their arrival, and a contract awarded to a local organisation Global Link to provide integration support. We are also working with Serco who are providing accommodation for Asylum Seekers using 29 houses in the district.
- Following the Grenfell fire, the team has worked with Lancashire Fire and Rescue to identify all private residential high rise blocks in the district, and ensure they are safe.
- The Lancaster University Approved Homes Scheme is developing well with our support, and has resulted in an improvement of property conditions in the student sector. The University is investing in marketing to promote and grow the scheme, and Housing Standards sit on their Advisory Board.

CEMETERIES

- We are continuing to observe a trend of slightly reduced burial numbers whilst the number of interments of cremated remains increases.
- Improvements to our chapel buildings began in 2017. Pew runners have now been installed into Torrisholme, Scotforth and Skerton Cemetery, with the aim to furnish Hale Carr Cemetery chapel during 2018.

- In order to allow the public to gain easy access to our service, we now have a Cemeteries Office representative based at Lancaster Town Hall for a scheduled day to allow for appointments. This has raised the profile of Lancaster City Council's Cemeteries Office, and offered improved customer service.
- The Cemeteries service looks forward to continuing these improvements in partnership with the Grounds Maintenance Department when it transfers to Environmental Services in the new financial year.

Council Housing

Introduction

- The year is ending with the government promising a 'wide-ranging, top-to-bottom review of the issues facing the Social Housing sector', with the Council continuing to play a significant role in directly providing good quality and affordable homes to rent through its council housing service in an increasingly challenging environment.

Improved customer satisfaction

- We have had the result of our two yearly tenant and leaseholder satisfaction survey undertaken by an independent market research company. The survey tells us that overall satisfaction with the service has increased to 86%.
- Significant effort is being made to improve our repair and maintenance service and the Council should be able to report improved satisfaction and performance in this part of the service.

Supporting tenants, protecting income

- 2017/18 saw two new Household Intervention Officer posts being established to support tenants with vulnerabilities and other support needs. The objective being to encourage tenant independence and support tenancy sustainment. Since June 2017 they have intensively worked with over 100 vulnerable households. I am pleased to report that Cabinet approved further resources for this area in the 2018/19 budget and an additional Household Intervention Officer is to be appointed.

- Through the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, the Government removed the ability of the Council to determine its own rent policy. As a consequence, from 2016/17 to 2019/20 most property rents continue to be reduced by 1% year on year. This has provided some medium term financial challenges, and this has been compounded with the full roll out of Universal Credit within this district presenting many financial challenges to our tenants and has been reflected in rising rent arrears and increasing numbers of tenants getting into debt.
- However, despite these challenges, the Council is successfully managing its Council housing rent collection to help mitigate against the full impact of these changes. During last year's budget process the Council made provision for additional resources to support this work with a new post of team leader – Income Manager being established in June 2017 to develop the income management services we provide within council housing. A further Income Management Officer is also to be appointed in 2018/19 to help manage the increase in the number of tenants who have found themselves in rent arrears.

Greater awareness of all stakeholders of service standards

The service will have by April 2018 re-published service standards giving tenants and leaseholders a clear indication of the service standards being provided. This year has also seen increasing interaction with service users and tenants through social media (Facebook, and I would recommend everyone to follow the council housing service via Facebook).

Community development

Through its council housing services the Council has continued to promote its broader community engagement, investment and development objectives, and continued to support the Ridge Community Centre and the Marsh Community Centre in the work they are doing in their areas.

Improved tenancy support and management

- The service has also been reviewing other areas of tenancy management and a review has been undertaken of the Council's tenancy agreement to ensure that it remains current and effective. A statutory consultation with tenants on the

proposed changes will take place over the coming months with a view to issuing a revised tenancy agreement in September 2018.

- It is pleasing to note that the 2017/18 tenant survey showed increased satisfaction from tenants with the way anti-social behaviour reports are being handled and that the Council is amongst the top quartile in satisfaction when compared with other comparable landlords.
- A review has also been undertaken to improve tenancy enforcement, and procedures and review working practices have been reviewed, including the HRA financially contributing the establishment of the pilot ASB team within Health and Housing Services. The ASB team, together with the Tenancy and Estate Management, have successfully tackled some extremely difficult and persistent cases which have impacted on our estates.

Decent homes and decent neighbourhoods

- As a Council we continue to perform well in this area. The challenge is to ensure that we continue to maintain and update asset information to ensure that the investment we are making delivers decent and sustainable homes. This is an ongoing process and through the Repairs and Maintenance Service the 5 year investment plan is annually revised and updated.
- This investment needs to continue to be delivered through the annual capital and planned maintenance programme. Over this last year we will have spent over £4m on capital and planned maintenance works on the Council's housing stock.
- We also continue to seek to achieve ambition of new council housing and hopefully by the end of 2017/18 full planning approval for potential new build schemes at Carnforth will have been obtained. At this stage the financing of the build will need to be confirmed, and a report will be brought back to Cabinet to consider how this scheme can be moved forward to conclusion later in the year.

Looking forward

- Over the forthcoming year, as highlighted in the HRA budget report, the Council is focusing on:
 - developing and implementing a marketing strategy to rebrand council housing to become 'housing of choice';
 - continuing with aspirations for new build council housing to meet demand and investigate alternative vehicles for delivery;
 - protecting current income and increase going forward through reducing empty home turnover and improvements to the 'end to end' lettings process to generate efficiencies (i.e. lean thinking);
 - continuing to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Repairs and Maintenance Service (RMS) through investment in technology to extend mobile working;
 - improving tenancy management and support by increasing capacity in early intervention and prevention to support tenants struggling with maintaining tenancies, debt (impact of Universal Credit) and promote pathways into employment;
 - continuing to support wider community development and engagement in the council housing services of the Council.