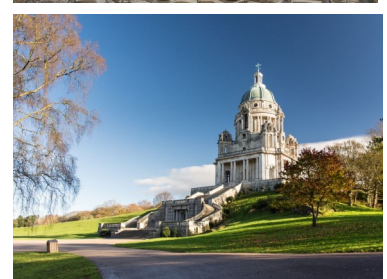


OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22





Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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

Budget and Performance Panel

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

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Each year a Community Safety meeting is arranged.

The Chair welcomed Andrew Snowden, Lancashire's Police and Crime Commissioner, Chief Inspector Cara Leadbetter and Sergeant Lindsay Brown to the December 2021 meeting of the Committee.



The Police and Crime Commissioner gave the Committee an overview of his Crime Plan for 2021-2025 which had recently been launched.

He also gave an overview of his activities since being elected to the role of Police and Crime Commissioner. The Committee was advised that a back to basics approach was being undertaken to fight crime in Lancashire.

It was reported that the priorities of the Police and Crime Plan were:-

- Getting tough on anti-social behaviour.
- Disrupting and dismantling organised

crime.

- Tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- Cracking down on burglary and robbery.
- Targeting dangerous drivers.

Members of the Committee were advised that the Commissioner's aim was to reinforce neighbourhood task force policing in Lancashire. Initiatives such as an Antisocial Behaviour Problem Solving Unit were being invested in as well as more average speed cameras and an independent review of the Road Safety Partnership was being undertaken.

The Committee asked a number of questions regarding traffic issues, electric scooters, street drinking, groups of youths, problems in back alleys and hate crime.



The Committee thanked Andrew Snowden, Chief Inspector Cara Leadbetter and Sergeant Lindsay Brown for their attendance.

COMMUNITY SAFETY (Part 2)

For the second half of the Community Safety meeting the Chair welcomed the Leader of the Council, the Director of Communities and the Environment, the Head of Public Protection and the Council's Resilience & Community Safety Officer.

The Committee was provided with an update on the current projects being undertaken in 2021/2022 and future developments for 2022/2023 for the Lancaster District Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to ensure that the Lancaster District continued to be a safe place in which to live, work and explore.



It was reported that the CSP had identified antisocial behaviour as its main priority but was currently running a consultation exercise to identify the other priorities for the district. A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) had also been undertaken as part of the ongoing process of identifying the priorities for the CSP from 2022/2023.

The Committee was advised that the key points from the JSNA had identified that there are a wide range of issues experienced across the district with 14.6% of the Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA's) being in the top 10% of most deprived areas in England.

The JSNA identified that victims living in postcodes in deprived areas and high rise flats were 4 times more likely to be a victim of reported crime than the normal for Lancaster district.

The JSNA had also highlighted that alcohol is known to contribute to offending behaviour, particularly violence, anti-social behaviour and criminal damage. It noted that Lancaster was the eighth worst performing district in the Northwest for under 18's hospital admissions linked to alcohol. To address this the Lancaster CSP had commenced preparatory discussions to establish a Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) as well as continuing to work with the Police Licensing Officers/Council Licensing Officers to identify problematic premises that require multi-agency visits.

The Committee was also advised that Cabinet had recently approved the introduction of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) covering several areas of the district. This had been a piece of work undertaken with the CSP and its partners.

The Committee went on to discuss the PSPOs and the future work of the Community Safety Partnership.

The Committee thanked the Leader of the Council and Officers for their attendance.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY REVIEW OF THE LOCAL PLAN FOR LANCASTER DISTRICT - PROGRESS ON A CONSULTATION DRAFT (REGULATION 18)

At the June 2021 meeting the Committee considered a report which detailed the progress made on preparing the Climate Emergency Review of the adopted Local Plan.

The Head of Planning and Place, the Planning, Housing Policy Manager and Senior Planning Officer (Policy) attended the meeting.

The Committee noted that Full Council had adopted the Local Plan on 29th July 2020 which set out how much development was required to meet the local need for homes and jobs in the period to 2031.

The Council had also agreed to immediately review the Plan in line with the Climate Change Emergency that had been declared by the Council in January 2019.

It was reported that over 30 policies had been revisited with 5 main topics emerging:

- Heritage and Climate Change.
- Efficiency in New Housing.
- Blue-Green Infrastructure (the natural environment).
- Sustainable Transport.
- Water Management.

The Committee was advised that Cabinet had agreed to formally commence the review and that the process had begun with remote scoping consultations taking place in Autumn 2020.

The Committee raised a number of questions relating to consultees, the process of producing the Local Plan and the HIF bid and its relevance to the City Council's Local Plan.

Members also went on to discuss the importance of Modal Shift both locally and nationally in relation to private car use and public transport. The use of electric vehicles was also discussed.

The Committee noted that progress had been made on the Climate Emergency Review of the adopted Local Plan and endorsed the intention to seek an imminent approval from Cabinet to commence the Regulation 18 Stage of informal consultation on the draft revised Local Plan.



The Committee thank Officers from Planning for their attendance.

BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE PANEL



Throughout the year the Panel has provided scrutiny on reports, which in turn has provided more clarity on trends and quarterly and annual variance. The following are the main topics considered.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Panel's views were sought on the proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23. This was an opportunity for the Panel to consider and make comments or recommendations on the Strategy prior to its formal presentation to Council in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

BUDGET CONSULTATION

In February 2022 the Panel held its annual Stakeholder meeting. A presentation from Councillor Anne Whitehead, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance, and Resources was provided on the City Council's Budget and Policy Framework

Proposals for 2022/23. The presentation contained details regarding:

- Council's Core Plan 2030- Strategic Priorities.
- Climate Emergency Outcomes.
- Community Wealth - Building Outcomes.
- Community Engagement, Power and Resilience Outcomes.
- Recent Achievements.
- Budget Proposals – Savings, Income Generation and Additional Resources.
- Council Tax, Spending Power and Budgeted Funding Assumptions.
- Fees and Charges for 2022/23, General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme.
- Future Strategy and Outcomes-Based Resourcing.

Councillor Whitehead also responded to questions from members of the Panel, and also a member of the public. Other Cabinet Members and City Council officers in attendance also assisted with responses to queries.

The Panel raised a number

of issues including:

- Income from business rates – Heysham Power Station.
- Public realm – change in responsibility for toilets.
- Building Control.
- Mellishaw Park.
- Outcome Based Resourcing.
- Salt Ayre Leisure Centre.
- Eden North and the Levelling Up Fund.
- Staff pay and inflation.
- Community Engagement/volunteers and a 10 year plan.
- Canal Quarter.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Panel considered the Investment Strategy at its December 2021 meeting, following its presentation to Cabinet earlier in December. The Panel was asked to comment on the proposed strategy and refer any comments to Cabinet to amend the strategy before Cabinet submitting this to Council for consideration.

DISCUSSIONS WITH CABINET MEMBERS

Each year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee invite Cabinet Members to provide an overview of their portfolio and to answer questions from the Committee.

In February 2022 Councillor Cary Matthews Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing attended the meeting. The Director for Communities and the Environment also attended the meeting.

Councillor Matthew's provided the Committee with a detailed overview of the Housing Portfolio which included:

- Council Housing.
- Homelessness.
- Private sector housing.
- Social Housing.
- Caravan sites.
- Traveller sites.
- Refugee housing.
- Household support & resilience.

The Committee was updated on the Mainway project and was advised that Cabinet had approved the next phase of the regeneration on Mainway including the acquisition of Skerton High School. This included an initial accelerated first phase of the Masterplan proposals.

An update was also provided on the redevelopment of the Mellishaw Caravan Park. The Committee was advised that an architect had been appointed and a planning application would be submitted for consideration in March 2022.

Councillor Matthews also provided an update on homelessness in the area. It was reported that work continued to support the homeless in the district. There are 4 individuals who live on the streets by choice and had decided that they did not want to be rehomed.

The Committee was advised that the Council was providing an extra 5 emergency beds and a further 12 bed scheme was being progressed with Government funding.

The Committee discussed the housing LATCO

that had been established and the advantages and options it created for the Council. Members also discussed rough sleepers and how they could be helped further. A number of questions were also raised relating to homelessness, Mainway, the Retrofit Officer, cladding and empty properties.

In March 2022 Councillor Sandra Thornberry Cabinet Member with responsibility for Arts, Culture and Wellbeing attended the meeting. The Committee was provided with an update of Councillor Thornberry's portfolio which included:

- Arts, Culture, Festivals and Events.
- Museums.
- Visitor and Information Centres.
- Sport and Leisure.
- Community Health and Wellbeing.
- Equalities and Social Justice Initiatives including age; disability; race; religion or belief; sex, gender or gender identity.

Councillor Thornberry advised that an Arts and Culture Strategy was to be developed this year focusing on the Council's priorities and the assets the Council owned in consultation with local people and organisations. The Committee was informed of the ongoing success of Salt Ayre Leisure Centre and that the Spa had been nominated for a national award. The Committee raised a number of questions relating to Well Being, food clubs, the Culture Strategy, museums, joint working with local organisations, the Ashton Hall, twinned towns and accessibility.

Councillor Anne Whitehead, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance and Resources, has regularly attended meetings of the Budget and Performance Panel. A number of Cabinet members also attended the Budget and Performance Panel Stakeholder meeting in February 2022.

Councillor Heath recently provided the Committee with an overview of her portfolio.

Cabinet members are thanked for attended scrutiny meetings.



WORKING GROUP & TASK GROUPS

RECYCLING WORKING GROUP

Since its formation in 2020 the Recycling Working Group has considered a number of topics including current and future development's in waste, the Draft National Waste Strategy and trials working with County Council. They also considered the Consistency in Household and Business Recycling Consultation and waste and recycling reform.

TASK GROUPS

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed to the formation of three new Task Groups; the Informal Planning Task Group and the Revitalising Key Centres Informal Task Group have both been scoped.

The third task group is recommended to be a formal task group named the Ethical and Sustainable Investment Policy Task Group. A draft scope is scheduled to be considered at the April Committee meeting.

HOLDING CABINET TO ACCOUNT AND CALL-IN

HOLDING CABINET MEMBERS TO ACCOUNT

Overview and Scrutiny Members continue to hold Cabinet Members to account. This takes place through the Call-in process and considering items of business at Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Budget and Performance Panel and also through arranging for Cabinet Members to come to meetings to discuss issues and developments within Cabinet portfolios, as well as through meetings of Pre-Scrutiny Members.

CALL-IN

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

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

There have been no requests for Call-in this municipal year.

PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

Pre-Scrutiny is the process mainly based on officers providing briefings on Cabinet reports and the study of the City Council’s published ‘Key Decisions’ contained in the List of Forthcoming Key Decisions. With this information the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can select issues that add value and, if necessary, consider before a decision is taken.

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

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

OUTSIDE BODIES

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

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

OUTSIDE BODY	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MEMBERSHIP
Homelessness Forum	Mandy King
Lancaster, Morecambe and District Fairtrade Group	Abi Mills



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Budget and Performance Panel would like to thank the following for their contribution to the Scrutiny process during 2021/22:

- Cabinet Members who have appeared before Overview and Scrutiny bodies;
- Representatives from organisations, which have delivered presentations to the Committee/ Panel this year;
- Officers who have attended meetings and participated in the work of scrutiny.