

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15



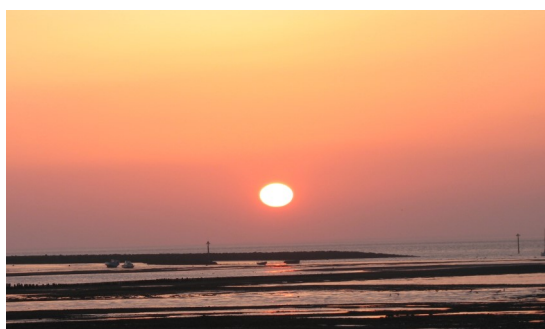
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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

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



Membership:

Councillors June Ashworth, Caroline Jackson, Roger Dennison, Tony Johnson, Roger Mace, Ian Pattison, Pam Pickles, Emma Smith and David Whitaker

Budget and Performance Panel

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

Membership:

Councillors Tony Anderson, Dave Brookes, Chris Coates, Janet Hall, Alycia James, Richard Newman-Thompson, Elizabeth Scott, Keith Sowden and Susan Sykes

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



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

DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES & SOCIAL ISOLATION

The Committee dedicates one meeting each year to look at issue affecting older people. Age UK and Help Direct have provided details about the growing ageing population, social isolation and living with dementia.

Last year the Committee decided to work with Age UK



and Help Direct to set up a pilot Dementia Friendly Community in Bare and Torrisholme wards.

In October Diane Armstrong from Age UK gave the committee an update on the pilot.

A number of Dementia Friends sessions have been held in Bare with 60 people from local businesses attending over the last few months. The next phase of the initiative is to visit the businesses and agree three simple actions. The businesses will then be recognised as 'Working Towards being Dementia Friendly and will receive a window sticker to promote their achievement.

The pilot has now moved into Torrisholme.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Lancashire County Council is responsible for Public Health across the district. The Committee has previously invited representatives to inform of the work being undertaken in the district. The statistics have highlighted where the district was significantly worse compared to the rest of the country.

These were:

- Smoking in pregnancy
- Starting breast feeding
- Alcohol specific hospital stays for under 18s
- Drugs misuse
- Self harm hospital stays
- Acute sexually transmitted infection
- Life expectancy
- Smoking related deaths
- Heart disease
- Strokes
- Road injuries and deaths

The Committee asked for more detailed information to ascertain problem areas in the district to enable the City Council to work with Public Health and a presentation has been provided on strokes—an overview of the situation in the district.

ROYAL LANCASTER INFIRMARY

CARE QUALITY COMMISSION REPORT

At the September meeting of the Committee members were given an overview of the Care Quality Commissions (CQC) report which had resulted in Morecambe Bay Primary Care Trust being placed in special measures.

Members were informed that 30 inspectors had visited all 3 main hospital sites; Royal Lancaster Infirmary, Westmorland General Hospital and Furness General Hospital. The review had highlighted some good practices within the Trust but felt that there were areas that were deemed inadequate and in need of improvement.

The Committee was advised that a number of improvement policies had already been set in motion and the Trust Board had agreed an Overarching Quality Improvement Plan to deliver long term quality improvements over the next 3 years.

It was also reported that a Improvement Director was to be appointed along with the establishment of an Improvement Board which would report on a monthly basis. The trust has also partnered with two other trusts who will act as "Buddies", providing help and support.



£3 MILLION INVESTMENT IN NURSING STAFF

At the December meeting of the Committee a further update was given where it was reported that one area that had been invested in was staffing with it being reported that an extra £3million had been allocated to nursing.

It was also reported that the action plan was already having positive results showing better outcomes and more confidence in reporting. There has also been improvements in harm reduction, patient experience and incident reporting had increased.

Regular updates will continue to be provided on these issues.



COMMUNITY SAFETY



Each year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers Community Safety.

This year, the Committee invited members of the police service who gave a presentation on the future of Neighbourhood Policing. They reported that the policy focuses on the most vulnerable and most at risk in society and aims to work with partners and voluntary groups.

Members were advised how monthly PACT meetings offered opportunities for local communities to meet their neighbourhood teams, raise concerns and find out more about policing in their area. The Police are proposing to extend this to include drop-in sessions to meet the community and increase their use of technology such as social media to further expand their engagement with and accessibility to local communities.

The Committee also heard presentations on:

- Community Safety Trends
- New Anti-Social Behaviour Powers
- An update on CCTV



BETTER CARE TOGETHER

The Committee receives regular updates on the “Better Care Together” review of Health Services.

At the September meeting of the Committee it was reported that the Clinical Strategy for Health Services in Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust had recently been completed and submitted. The main policies were presented:

- No closures or privatisations at the three main hospital sites.
- Core services to be retained including A&E at Lancaster and Barrow hospitals.
- Elective surgeries to be available on fewer sites to drive up quality, reduce costs and make recruitment easier.
- More flexibility in funding for Morecambe Bay Health and Care Services.
- Significant short term investment in primary and community care across Morecambe Bay to reduce inappropriate and unnecessarily long stays in hospital.

In December the Committee was informed that the Development Plan had been submitted for the “Better Care Together” project and had been received well by both NHS England and Monitor.

Further stakeholder events took place through January 2015 to raise awareness of the development plan.



THE MARMOT REVIEW “FAIR SOCIETY, HEALTHY LIVES”

The Marmot Review was published in February 2010. The report highlighted a number of unfair and unjust inequalities in health and proposed a new way to reduce health inequalities in England by taking action across all social determinants of health including education, occupation, income, home and community.

Marmot proposes that the key to tackling health inequalities is to create conditions for people to take control of their own lives. This requires action across social determinants of health beyond the scope of the NHS, placing emphasis on the role of Local Government, alongside National Government Departments, voluntary and private sectors.

Dr Mike Grady, a member of the Marmot Review Team, provided members of the Council with a presentation on the findings of the Marmot Review. At December’s meeting of Overview and Scrutiny members considered a report of the Chief Officer (Health and Housing) and Director of Public Health of Lancashire County Council regarding the Council’s response to the Marmot Report.

The Committee noted the 6 key policy objectives recommended by the Marmot report and resolved to undertake work on health inequalities and requested officers from the City and County Councils to scope a joint piece of work.

Policy objectives in the Marmot Review:

- Give every child the best start in life.
- Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives.
- Create fair employment and good work for all.
- Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.
- Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.
- Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention.

Findings of the Marmot Review

- People living in the richest areas in England will on average live 7 years longer than those in the poorest.
- People living in poorer areas not only die sooner but spend more of their lives with a disability.
- The review highlights a clear social gradient to health inequalities—the lower ones social economic status is the poorer ones health is likely to be.
- Health inequalities arise from a complex interaction of many factors including housing, income, education, social isolation, disability, all of which are strongly influenced by a persons social economic status.
 - Health inequalities are largely preventable.
- Action on health inequalities requires action across all social determinants of health, including education, occupation, income, home and community.

FIRE STATION CAPACITY

In June the Committee was given details of a report on the outcome of the Emergency Cover Review that aimed to save the fire service £4 million over 3 years which proposed a reduction in capacity of Lancashire Fire Station .

Councillors were advised that there would be no fire station closures but the Lancashire Fire Authority had agreed to reduce the number of full time fire engines in Lancaster.

Lancaster currently has 2 full time pumps operating around the clock. The proposed reduction would see this reduced to one full time pump and one reserve pump.

There are 3 different ways this could be achieved:

- Full time pump and retained pump operating from the existing fire station.
- Full time pump at the existing fire station and a retained pump at a new 'satellite' fire station.
- Full time and retained pump from a new fire station.



The Committee was advised that fire risk and activity had declined over the last few years. Data showed that the number of fires and the number of casualties as a result of fires are both down significantly in the last decade.

Councillors raised concern over the data used in the review. Data relating to the impact to the area from recent development projects including the M6 Link, Heysham Port and new housing developments was not available at the time of the review. All of these development projects are expected to see increased population and traffic flow through Lancaster which could see increased pressure placed on the fire services.

The Committee asked a number of questions relating to the loss of the pump in respect of the anticipated population growth in Lancaster (students and an aging population), traffic issues due to development projects including Booths, Lancaster Science Park and Housing developments and the impact on response times.

As a result of the debate the Committee requested an urgent review into the decision to remove the second full time pump from Lancaster Fire Service.

OTHER ISSUES

BEYOND THE CASTLE

At June's Overview and Scrutiny meeting members were given a presentation on the "Beyond the Castle" project which aims to promote the site as an area of national archaeological importance and improve links between the Castle and the St Georges Quay areas. Targeted workshops on heritage, ecology and landscape have been held to engage local communities in the site and identify gaps in knowledge about the archaeological site. Geographical Surveys have taken place on the site and have provided vital new information on the presence and location of Roman and Medieval architecture on the site. The Committee was also informed that the project had secured £59,000 of Heritage Lottery funding from the "Our Heritage" programme for a 18 month programme of learning and engagement activities.

SUBSIDISED BUS SERVICES

The Committee also looked at the issue of subsidised buses. It was reported to the Committee that subsidised bus services are ranked by their financial viability meaning that bus routes which underperform financially are more at risk of being withdrawn irrespective of the community need.

The County Council have proposed a revised criteria to measure each subsidised bus route in relation to the purpose of the journey and accessibility to the local community.

The Committee agreed to set up a working group to look at the proposed criteria in more detail.

WEST COAST MAIN RAIL LINE

Members were invited to meet with representatives of Network Rail to discuss areas of concern regarding flooding of the West Coast Mainline. It was agreed to write to the County Council and the Environment Agency to request that the three organisations work together on this issue.

RENEWABLE ENERGY STRATEGY

The Committee was advised of the Draft Energy Strategy which had previously been brought before the Cabinet. It was reported in the Corporate Plan 2014/15 that Council would commit to contributing positively to the challenges of climate change and minimising the Council's impact on the environment and that it is essential that the Council as a whole, Members and Officers take ownership of the Renewable Energy Strategy. Members asked a number of questions and it was agreed that the Energy Strategy would be included in the Committee's Work Programme.

MAIN ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE PANEL



CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MONITORING

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

- Carbon emission reduction targets.
- Reported increased number of people participating in sport and leisure activities.
- Measures to improve income from renewable energy projects.
- Increased council housing void properties.



Other areas of concern identified by the Panel were reported to Cabinet portfolio holders and chief officers were asked to respond regarding targets.

PROPERTY UPDATE—ONGOING REPAIRS AND OCCUPANCY LEVELS IN COUNCIL COMMERCIAL PROPERTY

In June the Panel received an update on previous reported projects and initiatives highlighting significant emerging property related issues including ongoing repairs and occupancy of Council owned commercial property.

Members requested further information on the reasons for low occupancy in some of the City Council's commercial



properties and what action was being taken to increase occupancy levels across the councils commercial property portfolio.

BUDGET CONSULTATION

At its meeting in January 2015 the Panel received a presentation regarding Lancaster City Council's Budget and Policy Framework Proposals for 2015/16. Members also considered Lancashire County Council's, Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner's and the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority budget proposals for 2015/16. The Panel considered each set of proposals in detail and any comments and queries made were fed back to the relevant organisations.

CALL-IN AND HOLDING CABINET TO ACCOUNT

HOLDING CABINET MEMBERS TO ACCOUNT

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

CALL-IN

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

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

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

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

There has been one Call-In in this municipal year. Cabinet was asked to reconsider a decision made regarding funding grants for The Dukes and Grand Theatre. Upon reconsidering the matter, Cabinet reaffirmed its original decision to provide funding for The Dukes but accepted the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consult with the theatres and interested organisations to provide clarity and a way forward. The Grand has since received a one off grant from the City Council of £15,000 for repairs to the theatre.

CABINET LIAISON MEMBERS

CABINET MEMBERS WITH CORRESPONDING CABINET LIAISON MEMBERS FOR 2014/15 ARE SET OUT BELOW: -

CABINET LIAISON MEMBERS

COUNCILLORS

June Ashworth
Caroline Jackson
Roger Dennison
Roger Mace
Emma Smith
Tony Johnson
Pam Pickles
Ian Pattison

CABINET MEMBERS

COUNCILLORS

Eileen Blamire
Janice Hanson
Abbott Bryning
Ron Sands
Karen Leytham
David Smith
Jon Barry
Tim Hamilton – Cox

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

The Committee values the opportunity to discuss portfolio issues with Cabinet Members and, in developing the work programme, every attempt is made to ensure that Cabinet Members are invited to meetings where the agenda items are relevant to their portfolio areas.

Cabinet Members, particularly Councillors Eileen Blamire and Abbott Bryning, have been invited and have attended Budget and Performance Panel meetings throughout the year.

APPOINTMENTS

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

OUTSIDE BODY

Homelessness Forum

Lancaster and Morecambe Fairtrade District
Steering Group

Museums Advisory Panel

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MEMBERSHIP

Caroline Jackson

David Whitaker

Roger Dennison

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

PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

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

Each year the Committee appoint a Councillor to the role of Pre-Scrutiny Champion. He meets regularly with the Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Budget and Performance Panel.

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

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

HEALTH SCRUTINY

Councillor Paul Gardner is the City Council's representative on the County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee. He gives regular updates to the City Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Gardner gave updates which included Health Checks, Morecambe Bay Hospital Trust being put into Special Measures and the role of Public Health now that it is the responsibility of the County Council.

FUTURE DIRECTION

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

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

These include: -

- Updates on the "Better Care Together" review of local health services.
- Royal Lancaster Infirmary - Care Quality Commission's report.
- Marmot Review.
- Consideration of older people's issues.
- Consideration of Community Safety issues.
- Energy Strategy.
- Draft Empty Property Strategy.
- Draft Older People's Strategy.
- Updates on health scrutiny.
- Update on the Dementia Friendly pilot.
- Update on new Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2014 on Ridge Square.
- Updates on the future of the Castle and Beyond the Castle project.

Both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Budget and Performance Panel will commence considering items for their Work Programmes for 2015/16 early in the new municipal year.

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

Scrutinising the decision makers

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

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

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

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

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Overview and Scrutiny and Budget and Performance Panel Councillors and Officers would like to thank the following for their contribution to the Scrutiny process during 2014/15:

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