

Lancashire County Council

External Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 25th February, 2020 at 10.00 am in Committee Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston

Agenda

Part I (Open to Press and Public)

No.	Item
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1.	Apologies
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2.	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
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Members are asked to consider any Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests they may have to disclose to the meeting in relation to matters under consideration on the Agenda.

3.	Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 January 2020	(Pages 1 - 6)
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4.	Universal Credit in Lancashire	(Pages 7 - 24)
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5.	Chair's update
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Verbal report.

6.	External Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2019/20	(Pages 25 - 32)
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7.	Urgent Business
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An item of urgent business may only be considered under this heading where, by reason of special circumstances to be recorded in the Minutes, the Chair of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency. Wherever possible, the Chief Executive should be given advance warning of any Member's intention to raise a matter under this heading.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the External Scrutiny Committee will be held on Tuesday 21 April 2019 at 10.30am at County Hall, Preston.

County Hall
Preston

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

Lancashire County Council

External Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 21st January, 2020 at 10.00 am in Committee Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Edward Nash PSC (Chair)

County Councillors

D Stansfield	T Martin
J Burrows	Oades
A Cheetham	G Oliver
S Clarke	M Pattison
C Crompton	J Shedwick
D Foxcroft	

County Councillor Margaret Pattison replaced County Councillor Azhar Ali for this meeting.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

County Councillor Margaret Pattison declared a non-pecuniary interest for **Item 6 – Lancashire County Council Waste Treatment Facilities – Supporting Future Carbon Reduction Initiatives**, as she was a member of the Lancashire County Council Development Control Committee.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 October 2019

Resolved: That the minutes from the meeting held on 15 October 2019, be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Report of the Strengthening Flood Risk Management and Preparedness Task and Finish Group

Also in attendance were County Councillor Albert Atkinson, Cabinet Member for Technical Services, Rural Affairs and Waste Management; Rachel Crompton, Flood Risk Manager; and Dianne Taylor, Principal Flood Risk Officer. There were requests to speak from County Councillor David Whipp, County Councillor Erica Lewis, Councillor John Singleton JP, Fylde Council, Siriol Hogg, Churchtown Flood Action Group (FIAG), and, Richard Guinness, Lower Yarrow FIAG. County Councillor Matthew Salter presented the report of the Strengthening Flood Risk Management and Preparedness Task and Finish Group to the committee.

The following comments and suggestions in relation to the recommendations that were set out in the task and finish group report were raised by those who requested to speak:

- Recommendation 9 (Short term) – a request was made to strengthen the recommendation to state that flood resilience grants should be made available at all times.
- A new recommendation be added to request the Cabinet Member to give consideration to increasing the highways drainage budget.
- Letters need following up with sustained action.
- Primary flood risk assessments were produced by or on behalf of the developers seeking permission to build before being commented upon by the county council's Flood Risk Management Team. It was not thought appropriate that developers were able to play such a prominent role in the process to determine whether their own applications posed a flood risk.
- Request for the Flood Tactical Plans (23 sites) to be listed in the report.
- A need to reference the Local Government Association (LGA) where applicable within the recommendations and to send the report to the LGA.
- Concerns were raised about the non-performance of riparian owners.

It was suggested that the above points be incorporated into the recommendations of the Strengthening Flood Risk Management and Preparedness Task and Finish Group, and for the Cabinet Member for Technical Services, Rural Affairs and Waste Management, County Councillor Albert Atkinson and the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, County Councillor Keith Iddon to provide a written response. It was also suggested that the responses be considered in the first instance by an additional meeting of the task and finish group and to report the outcome of its meeting to committee.

Resolved: That;

1. The written responses from the relevant Cabinet Members be considered by the Strengthening Flood Risk Management and Preparedness Task and Finish Group.
2. The Task and Finish Group report on the outcome of its meeting to the External Scrutiny Committee at the earliest opportunity.

5. Learning lessons from lived experiences of Universal Credit

The Chair welcomed Lisa Scullion, Professor of Social Policy at the University of Salford, to the meeting. A presentation was delivered on learning lessons from lived experiences of Universal Credit.

Universal Credit was the most important and fundamental reform since the inception of the welfare state. Some of the ambitions of Universal credit were to:

- Reduce poverty

- Simplify the benefits system
- Ease movement in and out of work and taking on extra hours
- Financial incentives to make work pay

Other countries were looking to the United Kingdom to see how Universal Credit was working.

The committee was informed that a lot of research had been done around some of the issues regarding Universal Credit in terms of its implementation and impacts. Over the last few years there had been calls to pause and fix the Universal Credit roll out.

A summary of the key points raised at the meeting is set out below:

- Job Centres were viewed as a benefits administration place, rather than somewhere to go to find a job.
- Job opportunities were felt to be largely agency based and temporary and people did not feel secure.
- Evidence suggested that sanctions backed system was not beneficial and sometimes led to disengagement – the cost of which was then displaced and picked up by the third sector and the NHS. In some circumstances this could undo the good work of all other agencies.
- A need to recognise that for some people the transition from legacy benefits to Universal Credit proved difficult to manage, navigate and understand – in particular people who were vulnerable and had complex needs.
- The North West was the primary site for service leavers (veterans).
- Significant variation in support provided by work coaches in particular the manner in which they engaged with people. Particular reference was made in relation to people with mental health problems.
- Five week wait for the first payment. The implications of which meant that people accrued rent arrears and had little or no income to cover the basics.

The committee in considering the points raised at the meeting felt that there were two key points to investigate with the county council's Welfare Rights Service being; issues of dehumanisation as people try and work the system rather than finding work and how people would fall into a hole while they wait for the first payment (five week wait – or longer in some circumstances).

The following key lines of enquiry in preparation for when it hears evidence from the Welfare Rights Service were developed:

- How fit for purpose the county council's Welfare Rights Service was?
- Where can the most disadvantaged people go to for help and how the county council might assist?
- How can we use the county council's influence as the fourth largest local authority to instigate change?

- How will the gap in funding the county council's crisis support scheme be bridged?

Resolved: That;

1. The presentation as delivered be received as part of the External Scrutiny Committee's ongoing review of Universal Credit.
2. The key lines of enquiry set out in the minutes above be used in preparation for a future meeting of the External scrutiny Committee when it will hear evidence from the Welfare Rights Service.

6. Lancashire County Council Waste Treatment Facilities - Supporting Future Carbon Reduction Initiatives

The Chair welcomed Paul Brindle, General Manager, Lancashire Renewables Ltd and Steve Scott, Head of Service Waste Management, to the meeting.

A presentation was delivered on current waste processing activities and future opportunities at the council's two Waste Recovery Parks, in support of reducing carbon emissions and the associated carbon footprint within Lancashire.

The committee was informed that significant carbon reductions had been observed following the phased cessation of processing activities, ramp down and stabilization of reconfigured and simplified waste processing operations over the past few years.

In support of Lancashire County Council's approach to a low carbon future within Lancashire, Lancashire Renewables Limited intended to prepare and present to the company Board a new policy and supporting programme of works for consideration at its meeting in March 2020.

Lancashire Renewables Ltd had engaged with low carbon companies regarding solar power and had looked at opportunities to install solar roof panels at its facilities. The additional weight of solar roof panels was an overriding factor to the implementation of such infrastructure. The company had received some proposals from suppliers.

Resolved: That the presentation be noted as part of the External Scrutiny Committee's continued review of low carbon energy.

7. External Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2019/20

The report presented set out the External Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for the municipal year 2019/20.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

8. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the External Scrutiny Committee would take place on Tuesday 25 February 2020 at 10.00am in Cabinet Room B (The Diamond Jubilee Room) at the County Hall, Preston.

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston

External Scrutiny Committee

Meeting to be held on Tuesday, 25 February 2020

Electoral Division affected: (All Divisions);
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Universal Credit in Lancashire

(Appendices A and B refer)

Contact for further information:

Gary Halsall, Tel: (01772) 536989, Senior Democratic Services Officer (Overview and Scrutiny), gary.halsall@lancashire.gov.uk

Executive Summary

Amena Patel, Equality and Welfare Reform Transformation Project Lead & UC Help to Claim Best Practice Lead from Citizens Advice Rossendale and Hyndburn and Joanne Barker, Welfare Rights Manager, Welfare Rights Service, Lancashire County Council will attend the meeting to deliver the presentations set out at appendices A and B respectively.

Recommendation

The External Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

1. Receive and consider the presentations as part of the continued review of Universal Credit in Lancashire.
2. Determine next steps for the review of Universal Credit in Lancashire and any key lines of enquiry for future meetings of the External Scrutiny Committee.

Background and Advice

Following on from the last meeting of the External Scrutiny Committee on 21 January 2020, requests were made for attendance from the Lancashire County Council's Welfare Rights Service and Citizens Advice to attend this meeting and to present their findings and experiences on the roll out of Universal Credit in Lancashire.

Amena Patel, Equality and Welfare Reform Transformation Project Lead & UC Help to Claim Best Practice Lead from Citizens Advice Rossendale and Hyndburn and Joanne Barker, Welfare Rights Manager, Welfare Rights Service, Lancashire County Council will attend the meeting to deliver the presentations set out at appendices A and B respectively.

At the last meeting of the committee it was "felt that there were two key points to investigate with the county council's Welfare Rights Service being; issues of dehumanisation as people try and work the system rather than finding work and how

people would fall into a hole while they wait for the first payment (five week wait – or longer in some circumstances).

The following key lines of enquiry in preparation for when it hears evidence from the Welfare Rights Service were developed:

- How fit for purpose the county council's Welfare Rights Service was?
- Where can the most disadvantaged people go to for help and how the county council might assist?
- How can we use the county council's influence as the fourth largest local authority to instigate change?
- How will the gap in funding the county council's crisis support scheme be bridged?"

In considering the presentations set out at appendices A and B, the External Scrutiny Committee is asked to determine next steps for this review and agree any key lines of enquiry for future meetings.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

The presentation set out at appendix A represents the views of Citizens Advice and are not those of Lancashire County Council.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

Universal Credit Help to Claim

Amena Patel

Citizens Advice Rossendale & Hyndburn

February 2020



Rossendale
& Hyndburn

Universal Credit and Help to Claim in Lancashire

About Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice gives people the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward - whoever they are, and whatever their problem.

We're a network of 280 local Citizens Advice across England and Wales, with 8 of these in the Lancashire Jobcentre district. Full service Universal Credit was rolled out in Lancashire by December 2018.

Help to Claim Service Overview

National service supporting people to make a Universal Credit claim - from initial claim to first full payment.

Step 1: Multi-channel access



Step 2: Help to Claim check

We'll check that Universal Credit is the right benefit for the client to claim

Step 3: Individual needs assessment

We'll assess everyone's individual needs at the first point of contact to gauge the level of support they need

Step 4: Support to start a claim

- Check entitlement
- Set up email or accounts
- Work through to-dos
- Access phone or home visit support

Step 5: Completing a claim



Verify their identity



Provide additional evidence



Understand monthly payments



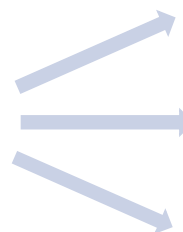
Access adaptations and easements



Apply for additional financial support

Step 6: Access to longer term or additional Support

- Debt
- Housing
- Other benefits



**citizens
advice**

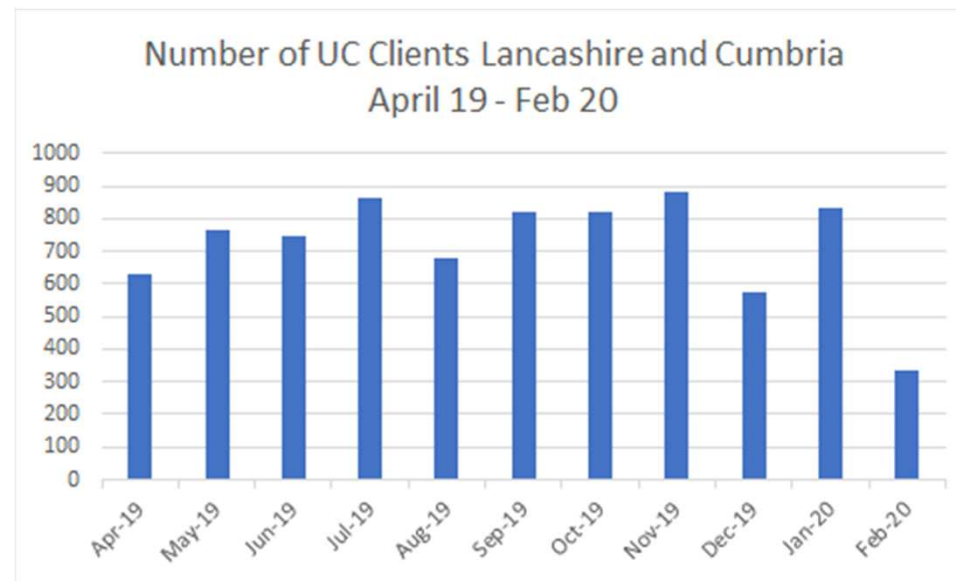
**Rossendale
& Hyndburn**

Citizens Advice client numbers 1st April 2019 - 11th of February 2020

3. Universal Credit

Since the 1st of April 2010 local Citizens Advice advised **6954 clients** living in Lancashire with **23816** issues relating to **Universal Credit**.

Chart showing trends in the number of clients we have advised on Universal Credit in Lancashire since 1 April 2019



4. Help to Claim

Of these we advised **4537 clients** were helped with **17534 issues** relating to Universal Credit through via our **Help to Claim** service.

Total number of **new claimants** in Lancashire = **39224**

18% of all new claimants in Lancashire were advised by **Citizens Advice**

We advised **Help to Claim clients** via the following **channels**:



5. Referral routes:

Help to Claim clients came to us via the following **referral routes/signposting**:

- Self-referral
- Jobcentre Plus
- Citizens Advice Universal Credit Helpline
- Local Authority
- Other support agencies

6. Demographics of Universal Credit claimants

Demographics of clients advised on Universal Credit in Lancashire



50% of clients advised on Universal Credit were **male**

49% of clients advised were **female**

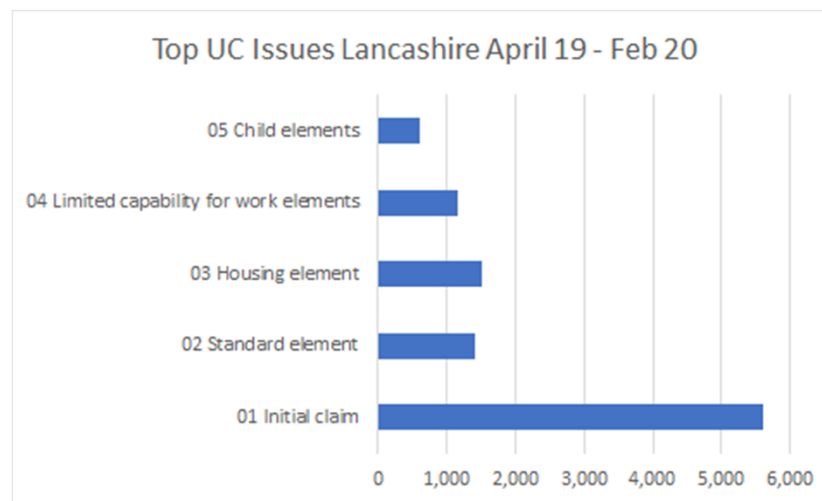


6% of clients advised on Universal Credit were **disabled**

55% of clients advised had a **long term health condition**

7. Top 5 Universal Credit issues in Lancashire

Chart showing the top 5 most common issues relating to Universal Credit experienced by clients in Lancashire.



8. Other Issues for Universal Credit Clients

58% of clients advised on **Universal Credit** were also advised on **other issues** relating to:

40% of them were also advised on other **welfare benefit issues**

15% were helped/advised with **debt issues**

9% needed help with **food banks and/or other charitable support**

7% needed help with **housing issues**

6% needed help with **employment advice**

9. Areas of Concern within Lancashire:

- Digital support
- Habitual Residence Test (HRT)
- Refugees making a UC claim
- Complex Needs for UC claimants
- Advance Payments
- ID Verification

10. Best Practice - Areas of Research:

- Digital Inclusion
- Conditionality
- Complex Needs

Thank you & Any Questions

Amena Patel

amena.patel@carh.org.uk

Equality and Welfare Reform Transformation Project Lead & UC Help to Claim Best Practice Lead

Universal Credit in Lancashire

Jo Barker
Welfare Rights Service

Useful points to note

- Roll-out completed by December 2018
- Telephone claims available for those without digital skills/resources
- Citizens Advice help to claim in addition to JC+ support
- Exceptions for some who can still claim legacy benefits
- Migration won't be complete until Sep 2024

Concerns..

- Still 1 in 5 claims fail
- Claims closed 'in error' (DWP state following procedure)
- Delays in work capability assessments, cases missed
- Mandatory reconsiderations and appeals ignored or frustrated
- Successful judicial reviews leading to compensation

Concerns..

- Fraudulent claims impact
- Special Guardianship Order carers and problems with claims
- Financial Safeguarding team struggling to resolve issues with DWP
- Mixed Age couples now affected
- Impact on Childrens and Adults services
- More people in work with financial problems seeking advice

Advice needs

- Resolving errors is time consuming
- Customers wrongly advised to claim UC and losing legacy benefits – unable to reverse claims
- Challenging decisions often complex and long delays
- Where possible resurrecting legacy claims and avoiding UC claims

Impact on LCC

- Front line staff seeing more and more people in financial crisis/serious mental health issues
- Time consuming trying to support service users
- Increased requests for financial support
- Some cases where vulnerable adults placed in residential care as no alternative

Impact on LCC

- SGO carers – LCC payments adjusted to take into account payments for children subject to SGO. Securing correct UC entitlement has been problematic so longer term advice needs
- Income from financial assessments will reduce as more people migrate to UC
- Financial Safeguarding Team having constant problems

QUESTIONS?

External Scrutiny Committee

Meeting to be held on Tuesday, 25 February 2020

Electoral Division affected: None;

External Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/20

(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:

Gary Halsall, Tel: (01772) 536989, Senior Democratic Services Officer (Overview and Scrutiny), gary.halsall@lancashire.gov.uk

Executive Summary

The themed work programme for the External Scrutiny Committee is presented at appendix 'A'.

Recommendation

The External Scrutiny Committee is asked to note and comment on the report.

Background and Advice

A statement of the work and potential topics to be undertaken and considered by the External Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the 2019/20 municipal year is set out at appendix 'A'. The work programme is presented to each meeting for information.

The work programme for 2019/20, will feature a themed approach to some of the Committee's work on climate change and low carbon energy. This follows a resolution by Full Council at its meeting on 28 February 2019, in relation to the Notice of Motion to declare a climate emergency; and an agreement between the Chairs of the External and Internal Scrutiny Committees for this Committee to act on Full Council's call to review the council's operations and to help identify how the council's activities might be made net-zero carbon by 2030.

The work programme is a work in progress document.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

This report has no significant risk implications.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None		
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Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

External Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/20

The External Scrutiny Committee Work Programme details the planned activity to be undertaken over the forthcoming municipal year through scheduled or extraordinary Committee meetings, task group, events and through use of the 'rapporteur' model.

The items on the work programme are determined by the Committee following the work programming session at the start of the municipal year in line with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees terms of reference detailed in the County Council's Constitution. This includes provision for the rights of County Councillors to ask for any matter to be considered by the Committee or to call-in decisions.

Coordination of the work programme activity is undertaken by the Chair and Deputy Chair of all of the Scrutiny Committees to avoid potential duplication.

In addition to the terms of reference outlined in the [Constitution](#) (Part 2 Article 5) for all Overview and Scrutiny Committees, the External Scrutiny Committee will:

1. Review and scrutinise issues, services or activities carried out by external organisations including public bodies, the voluntary and private sectors, partnerships and traded services which affect Lancashire or its inhabitants, and to make recommendations to the Full Council, Cabinet, Cabinet Members, Cabinet Committees or external organisations as appropriate.
2. Review and scrutinise the operation of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership in Lancashire in accordance with the Police and Justice Act 2006 and make reports and recommendations to the responsible bodies as appropriate
3. In connection with 2. above, to require an officer or employee of any of the responsible bodies to attend before the Committee to answer questions
4. Co-opt additional members in accordance with the Police and Justice Act 2006 if required, and to determine whether those co-opted members should be voting or non-voting
5. Review and scrutinise the exercise by risk management authorities of flood risk management functions or coastal erosion risk management functions which may affect the local authority's area

The Work Programme will be submitted to and agreed by the Scrutiny Committees at each meeting and will be published with each agenda.

The dates are indicative of when the External Scrutiny Committee will review the item, however they may need to be rescheduled and new items added as required.

Topic	Scrutiny Purpose (objectives, evidence, initial outcomes)	Initial Scrutiny Method	Lead Officers/organisations	Proposed Date(s)	Recommendations	Progress
low carbon energy theme throughout 2019/20						
Electricity North West	Leading the Way to Zero Carbon	Committee	Helen Norris, Helen Boyle, and Mike Taylor, ENW	16 July 2019	See LCC website	Response to 1, 2 and 5 received on 15 October 2019. 3 and 4 in progress. Rapporteur report for 6 presented at 15 October meeting.
Electricity North West	Vulnerable Customers and the priority services register	Committee	Helen Norris, Jo Crinson and Jill Hendry, ENW	15 October 2019	See LCC website	In progress

Appendix 'A'

Topic	Scrutiny Purpose (objectives, evidence, initial outcomes)	Initial Scrutiny Method	Lead Officers/organisations	Proposed Date(s)	Recommendations	Progress
low carbon energy theme throughout 2019/20						
Universal Credit	Learning lessons from lived experiences of Universal Credit	Committee	Professor Lisa Scullion (Separate meeting to be arranged between Chair of the Committee and Department for Work and Pensions – date tbc)	21 January 2020	See LCC website	-
Lancashire Renewables Ltd	Energy from waste	Committee	Paul Brindle, General Manager, Lancashire Renewables and Steve Scott, Head of Waste Management, LCC	21 January 2020	The presentation be noted as part of the External Scrutiny Committee's continued review of low carbon energy	-
Strengthening flood risk management and preparedness in Lancashire	Task and finish group report	Committee	CC Matthew Salter and Gary Halsall, LCC	21 January 2020	See LCC website	In progress
Universal Credit	Dealing with people in Lancashire (https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/economy/income-earnings-and-benefits/universal-credit/)	Committee	Joanne Barker, Welfare Rights Manager, LCC and Citizens Advice	25 February		

Appendix 'A'

Topic	Scrutiny Purpose (objectives, evidence, initial outcomes)	Initial Scrutiny Method	Lead Officers/organisations	Proposed Date(s)	Recommendations	Progress
low carbon energy theme throughout 2019/20						
	https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/economy/income-earnings-and-benefits/claimant-count-figures/			21 April 2020 - tbc		
Lancashire Energy Strategy	Activities arising from the key findings of the Strategy	Committee	Chair of LEP, Andy Walker, LCC	21 April 2020 - tbc		
Community Safety Partnerships	Outcome of the review of Community Safety Partnerships and Governance Arrangements	Committee	Debbie Thompson and Clare Platt, LCC	21 April 2020 - tbc		
Lancashire Energy HQ	Education and training	Committee	Bev Robinson, Principal and Chief Executive	21 April 2020 - tbc		
United Utilities	Renewable energy - biogas, solar panels, hydro- and wind turbines on water and wastewater sites across the North West/Lancashire.	Committee	Chris Matthews (tbc), United Utilities	21 April 2020 - tbc		
Task and finish groups						
Strengthening flood risk management and	To bring together the expertise of all flood risk management authorities, local flood and emergency response groups, and residents to better understand how the County Council as Lead Local Flood	Task and finish group	LCC, Environment Agency, United Utilities, Flood action groups	Task and finish group report presented at 21	See report	

Appendix 'A'

Topic	Scrutiny Purpose (objectives, evidence, initial outcomes)	Initial Scrutiny Method	Lead Officers/organisations	Proposed Date(s)	Recommendations	Progress
low carbon energy theme throughout 2019/20						
preparedness in Lancashire	<p>Authority and all other flood risk management authorities can better support residents to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - be prepared for flooding; - respond to flooding; - recover from flooding; and - understand what we can do together to reduce flood risk. 			<p>January 2020 meeting.</p> <p>Awaiting written response from Cabinet Members.</p>		
Rapporteurs						
Universal Credit	Bite size briefing: Universal Credit full service roll out in Lancashire	Rapporteur (CC G Oliver)	Joanne Barker, Welfare Rights Manager, Health, Equity, Welfare and Partnerships, LCC	5 March 2019	Report circulated to Committee in March 2019. Invite representative from DwP to present on dealing with people in Lancashire	In progress
Low Carbon and the Lancashire Energy Strategy	To determine how the Lancashire Energy Strategy can be progressed.	Rapporteur (CC E Nash)	Andy Walker, Economic Development Service, LCC and Electricity North West	16 July 2019	-	Completed
	Low carbon technology and legislation		CC Ed Nash	15 October 2019		Completed

Other topics to be scheduled:

- Co-ordination of roadworks across Lancashire – LCC, utility companies and housing developers
- Quality of works/repairs on highways by utility companies
- Natural Energy Wyre, Halite Energy, Ecotricity, [Future Biogas](#)
- Follow the council pound (Rachel Tanner Head of Procurement)
- HS2
- Greater Lancashire Plan (Richard Kenny) – 14 July 2020 tbc

NB:

- Outcome of the trans-pennine road study by Highways England to be reported to Internal Scrutiny Committee (Dave Colbert, Specialist Advisor, LCC)
- Green Summit – tbc
- LCC Carbon Plan/Internal Energy and Water Management Policy - Policy development and energy performance of LCC buildings (Denise Jepson, Energy Team Manager, LCC, Electricity North West, Lancashire Renewables (CEO), Npower, Total Gas and Power, Heat network) – 14 July 2020 tbc