

Lancashire County Council

Community, Cultural, and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 18th April, 2024 at 2.00 pm in
Committee Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston**

Present:

County Councillor Ged Mirfin (Chair)

County Councillors

J Shedwick	J R Singleton JP
S Hind	J Berry
Y Motala	H Khan
R Woollam	E Lewis

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from County Councillor Charles Edwards.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 6 February 2024

The Chair wished to extend his sincere thanks on behalf of the committee to John Morrissy, Director of Organisational Change and Development, who would soon be retiring from the county council. The Chair highlighted that John had completed many sterling pieces of work for the committee and wished him all the best for the future.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2024 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Partnership Working: Proposals to Review, Co-ordinate and Improve Collaboration

The Chair welcomed County Councillor Mike Goulthorp, Lead Member for Finance and Resources, and Kieran Curran, Head of Corporate Strategy and Policy, to the meeting.

A presentation was provided on a proposed programme of work to review, support, and enhance partnership working at the county council, overseen by the Communities, Cultural and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee with appropriate and regular consultation with, and input from, our services, Directorates, and external partners.

The committee thanked the officers for the detailed report and presentation, a copy of which is attached to the minutes.

Comments and queries raised from the committee were as follows:

- The committee were supportive of commissioning a wider research project on partnership working and brought forward the suggestions of the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to further this piece of work, and / or the holding of an Evidence Day where officers within the authority be invited to share their experience and knowledge on partnership working. With the latter, it was highlighted that given the scale of the council, several quality assurance methods should be put in place in advance, including the creation of a standardized set of questions for each participant, and directly reaching out to those who would be in the best position to inform on the topic.
- Members further highlighted that the experts on partnership working, who could inform and direct best standards practice, were those who were currently doing the job. Officers highlighted that a key priority of the strategy was to improve the standards and practice already in place, through continuous evaluation of performance against standardised measures.
- The committee suggested that a benchmarking exercise, looking into the structure and functioning of partnership working in other authorities would be beneficial. It was further highlighted that some organisations, including other county councils, have a 'partnership director' role within their leadership structure which could be a future consideration.
- The committee also enquired into the possibility of a new committee on Strategic Partnerships, that would be able to directly interact with external organisations on a regular basis and receive regular reports on the effectiveness of ongoing partnerships.
- The committee was informed of the necessity for potential partnerships to have a tangible benefit to the residents of Lancashire for them to be pursued. Officers highlighted how shared responsibilities can be fragile, and emphasised the importance of partnerships being structured, systematic, and bound by a formal agreement to mitigate this vulnerability.
- Members noted that one of the most integral partnerships for the county council, that should influence its strategic direction, was community engagement and collaboration. In addition, the importance of clear communication to the public regarding ongoing partnerships and decisions was emphasised.



- The committee suggested that gaps within the council's partnerships should be investigated. It was recommended that the wealth of knowledge and talent of the residents of Lancashire should be mobilised by increasing collaboration, and encouraging co-investment, with the county's universities.
- The committee noted that partnerships between internal departments should be prioritised to ensure any decisions taken did not infringe upon any services; it was encouraged that more consideration should be given when making decisions as to which services could be impacted.
- Regarding the target to improve current working partnerships, the relationship between the county council and district councils was highlighted by members as a key target for effective streamlining and upgrading the existing best practice. An example of planning applications, where applications are processed on a district level, and then passed onto the county council before any work can begin, was provided to highlight current delays in the system.
- Members requested that a list of both members and officers involved in partnerships be provided to the committee. Officers confirmed this would be undertaken during the mapping and surveying section of the work plan.

Resolved: That the following recommendations be shared with the Cabinet Member for Resources, HR and Property (Deputy Leader):

- a) Consideration be given to an Evidence Day to be established where officers across the authority provide their expert views and / or the formation of a Task and Finish Group to take this work forward.
- b) Consider potential 'gaps' in our current partnerships, for example, is the county council making the most of its partnerships with universities across Lancashire.
- c) Consider key performance indicators to be used to identify how partnership working can be benchmarked and measured in terms of success.
- d) A recommendation be made to the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee regarding the development and use of a 'value for money' Partnership Assessment tool as well as other metrics.
- e) A list of senior officers and councillors to be devised detailing involvement in current partnerships.
- f) Proposals be put together by officers to form an outline plan for taking this work forward.
- g) That the recommendations detailed in the report, as listed below be taken forward:



- a. Development of a database or map of our current partnership landscape.
- b. Establish firm legislative frameworks and statutory obligations.
- c. Scoping and Mapping – Consider what Partnerships should we look closer at? Build on information already shared with the Committee and use case studies. Launch “Partnership Survey” and work with officers across the Authority.
- d. Evidence gathering and benchmarking – Invite key partners and sector experts (e.g. LGA) and look at what other councils are doing (e.g. Cambridgeshire). Identify best practice industry standards, including from the private sector.
- e. Draft corporate partnership framework – standard set of flexible approaches, including an overarching "partnerships protocol" and checklists of criteria for establishing, evaluating, and reporting on partnerships.
- f. Recommendations of how partnership working could be improved and best practice shared, to come back to the committee as part of the committee's work plan in 2024/25.

5. Lancashire Community Safety Agreement and Performance Update

The Chair welcomed County Councillor Peter Buckley, Cabinet Member for Communities and Cultural Services, Clare Platt, Head of Health, Equity, Welfare and Partnerships, Alison Wilkins, Senior Public Health Practitioner (Stronger and Safer Communities) and Lee Sculpher, Senior Partnership Analyst from Lancashire Police. to the meeting.

The report provided formed the annual update report to the committee, meeting the requirements of a Crime and Disorder Committee to oversee and review the delivery of joint responses on community safety as required under the Police and Justice Act 2006.

The committee thanked the officers for the detailed report and presentation, a copy of which is attached to the minutes.

Comments and queries raised from the committee were as follows:

- The committee questioned why gender was not specified under the category of domestic abuse, despite it being a largely gendered crime. Officers explained that this data did exist, and further data could be circulated to the committee. In addition, the committee raised concerns as to the lack of data presented on violence against women and girls. It was explained that the issue was currently encompassed under a broader category of violence



against the person, but the Violence Reduction Network in Lancashire, did record it separately.

- It was noted that District councils received in-depth insights into crime figures across their areas. Members requested that a cross comparative report, with equal depth and spanning all of Lancashire's districts, be provided to the committee, to better understand and map crime profiles and concentrations across Lancashire's district borders.
- It was suggested that where reports seek to provide overview accounts of crime data and highlight key issues, easily accessible links could also be provided on where to find in-depth reporting and data on all of the key issues. Members agreed this would be helpful.
- Members requested that future reports also included updates on the progress on crime reduction and feedback on current strategies in place.
- The committee questioned the figures for youth offending with referral orders and whether these had increased or decreased. Officers confirmed that this data was provided to the Lancashire Criminal Justice Board, the information could be obtained and circulated to members.
- Regarding the proposed timeline and consultations for the new Lancashire Strategic Assessment, the committee questioned how they intended to engage with elected members. Officers confirmed that members would be invited to attend upcoming workshops, where there was further opportunity to put forward any issues specific to their local communities.
- The committee requested that they have increased access to Lancashire Talking and data from the service and for this to be included in future reports where possible. It was highlighted that the service, which over 100,000 residents of Lancashire had registered with, would be a valuable representation of public opinion.
- It was suggested a Bite Size Briefing could be provided to councillors on Domestic Violence and Domestic Homicide reviews.

Resolved: That the following recommendations be shared with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Cultural Services:

- a) A cross comparative report on crime statistics across Lancashire to be provided to the committee to better understand crime profiles across districts.
- b) Future reports to the committee to include links to more detailed data, where available, allowing further drilling down of data.
- c) The final Strategic Assessment to be presented to the committee in early 2025.



- d) Details of delivery plans at district / unitary CSP level to be shared with committee members.
- e) A register of which partners are involved in each of the 6 key issues at district level to be shared with committee members.
- f) Data to be provided on Lancashire youth crime and details about what is being done to prevent crime amongst this group.
- g) Information to be shared on Lancashire Talking, including useful extracts from recent data.
- h) A representative of the Crime and Disorder Team to also attend next time to provide an update on Anti-Social Behaviour.
- i) A Bitesize briefing to be arranged on Domestic Violence and Domestic Homicide reviews.

6. Work Programme 2023/24

The committee considered the work programme and updates from previously agreed recommendations for the 2023/24 municipal year.

Resolved: That the Community, Cultural and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2023/24, be noted.

7. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Community, Cultural and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee will be held on Tuesday 21 May 2024 at 10:30am in Committee Room B – The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston.

H MacAndrew
Director of Law and Governance

County Hall
Preston

