



Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

2022 – 2023





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Foreword



**CC David Westley,
Chair of Scrutiny
Management Board**

I am delighted to present this report on the work of Scrutiny during the civic year 2022/23. The report gives an insight into the important work undertaken by the various scrutiny committees over the past year and the positive impact it has had on the democratic process.

Throughout the year Scrutiny Members continued their vital role in Lancashire County Council by holding the decision makers to account, developing and reviewing policy as well as considering how the Council is delivering its commitments to the residents of Lancashire.

The Scrutiny Management Board and Scrutiny Committees have welcomed the opportunity to work

closely with the Cabinet and Senior Officers. Scrutiny has sought to focus on the critical issues for the Council and provide constructive input in finding ways to improve outcomes for residents.

A sincere thank you go to the Chairs, Vice Chairs and Members as they bring energy and enthusiasm to their roles. Under their leadership the Committees are working together on cross cutting issues, providing constructive challenge and recommendations to the Cabinet, Senior Officers and Partners.

Finally, I would also like thank all the scrutiny officers for their hard work, support and guidance that have been essential in delivering effective scrutiny.





Introduction

What is Scrutiny?

Scrutiny is an important function in supporting the county council's governance arrangements.

Scrutiny committees are made up of county councillors from a variety of party-political backgrounds and some scrutiny committees have a small number of co-opted members.

Scrutiny has powers to scrutinise decisions that Cabinet are planning to take, or those that have already been taken and/or implemented. Further to this, there are specific powers for scrutiny to hold the NHS to account as part of the health scrutiny arrangements.





Strengthening Scrutiny Arrangements

The Local Government Association conducted a Corporate Peer Challenge in October 2021. From this review, it was recommended that the county council look how the overview and scrutiny could further increase its impact on accountability and development of policy.

Since then, a review was undertaken, with proposals presented and agreed at the Full Council Annual General Meeting in May 2022, which included changes to the structure of the scrutiny function.

The changes intended to deliver several improvements, including:

1. To ensure scrutiny work planning is better structured and reflects the council's corporate priorities.
2. To make it clearer which committee is responsible for which service, function or issue.
3. To raise the profile of scrutiny and ensure it is influencing decisions about services for the people of Lancashire.

Scrutiny plays an important role in supporting the council's governance arrangements, and the function has been on its own improvement journey, working with the LGA to provide training and guidance for all councillors and senior officers.

This annual report aims to demonstrate and help measure scrutiny's performance in its first year of the new arrangements in operation.



Scrutiny in Lancashire

Scrutiny in Lancashire is made up of four service area committees, one board and one steering group, and each have a different area of responsibility:

Scrutiny Management Board

Chair: County Councillor David Westley

Children, Families and Skills

Chair: County Councillor Andrea Kay

Community, Cultural and Corporate Services

Chair: County Councillor Ged Mirfin

Environment, Economic Growth and Transport

Chair: County Councillor Rob Bailey (Dec 2022 – present) and County Councillor Rupert Swarbrick (May – Dec 2022)

Health and Adult Services and Health Steering Group

Chair: County Councillor David Westley





Scrutiny Committee Meetings

- 32 committee meetings
- 56 reports from a variety of services across the county council and external partners
- 182 recommendations
- 1 call-in

Task Groups/ Inquiry Days

- 2 Task Groups
- 1 Inquiry Day

Scrutiny Training Sessions

- 4 Local Government Association training sessions
- 8 service area briefings
- Access to external training through various organisations



>>> Scrutiny Learning and Impacts...

Of the 212 parished areas in Lancashire only 18 received funding from the county council to carry out public realm work. A recommendation that all remaining parish and town councils be offered a chance to apply for a direct allocation subject to appropriate checks was made.

The Warm and Welcome Task Group provided the necessary influence to Cabinet in establishing the Lancashire Warm Spaces Grant Scheme.

Scrutiny training included briefing sessions on:

- Mental Health
- Alternative School Provision
- Public Health Annual Plan
- SEND Transport School Dashboard

Members of the Youth Council provided valuable input and supported the redesign of the recruitment poster for School Governors.

Health partners continued to engage well with scrutiny and as a result has afforded the Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to monitor key developments including the New Hospitals Programme, the community mental health transformation and virtual wards.

A letter of appreciation was sent to all the Parish Lengthsman in Lancashire following an update on Parish and Town Councils at the Community, Cultural and Corporate Services Committee.

Following the review of scrutiny arrangements, the Scrutiny Management Board was established. This has enabled effective co-ordination and monitoring of overview and scrutiny's work across each of the scrutiny committees. The Board also established a newly formed Councillor Support Steering Group.

Scrutiny Listened...

Youth Council

The Youth Council representatives on the Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee have an invaluable role in providing committee members and senior officers with the views from children and young people on all topics considered in committee meetings.

Schools

Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee membership includes five voting co-opted members representing faith schools and parent governors. Members engaged with schools in preparation for the School Place Planning and School Transport Inquiry Day.

District Councils

All 12 district councils responded to the Public Realm Agreements Task Group's survey. The responses provided a wealth of insight on how they fulfilled the terms of the existing Public Realm Agreements.

Libraries

Community, Cultural and Corporate Services Committee members requested detail on LCC support to the Library's Friends' Groups. Part of the review entailed engagement with groups to seek views on support, which was considered by members, from which recommendations were made to further enhance support provided.

NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB)

Since the ICB's formal establishment in July 2022, the ICB has engaged well with scrutiny and continues to regularly attend scrutiny meetings discussing a number of service areas including workforce, winter planning, GP's and dentistry.

Scrutiny Contribution to Corporate Priorities

Delivering Better Services

Councils Web Presence and Customer Digital Experience



The Community, Cultural and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee received a report on areas of work linked to Customer Experience, including the activities to improve the Customer Experience within the county council's services, data and insight, the role Members play in understanding Customer Experience, and digital interaction. From this report five recommendations were made and accepted by the Cabinet Member.

Libraries and Libraries Friends Groups



The Community, Cultural and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee received a report in response to a request from the committee to review how the Library Friends' groups supported the county council to deliver library services, and how the council in turn supports them. As a result, several recommendations were made and accepted by the Cabinet Member.

Protecting our Environment

Management of LCC Countryside Sites



The Environment, Economic Growth and Transport Scrutiny Committee received a report on the Management of Lancashire County Council Countryside Sites. From discussions, six recommendations on further enhancements for service users were made and accepted by the Cabinet Member.

Public Rights of Way and the Lovecleanstreets app



The Environment, Economic Growth and Transport Scrutiny Committee received a presentation on the implementation of the 'Love Clean Streets' app for reporting problems on Lancashire's network of public rights of way, which will be a replacement for the current 'Report It' system. As a result, recommendations were made and accepted by the Cabinet Member.

Caring for the Vulnerable

Family Hubs



The Children's, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee were presented with an update on progress to develop the Family Hubs network across Lancashire. Family Hubs provide a way of joining up locally to improve access to services, strengthen the connections between families, professionals, services, and providers and putting relationships at the heart of family help. Work in the initial priority areas of Burnley, Pendle and Lancaster had begun and the rollout across all Districts would take place by September 2023. The update gave members of the committee the opportunity to ask important questions about the rollout of this key service for families in Lancashire.

NHS Community Mental Health Transformation Programme



The Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee received a presentation on the Community Mental Health Transformation, part of a national NHS England programme which sought to provide an integrated partnership across all partner agencies. Following discussions, several recommendations were agreed with a view to further monitoring of the programme as it progresses.

Happier Minds

The Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee received a report from the LCC Public Health Team on Happier Minds which covered a wide range of areas from emotional health, dementia, alcohol and drug use and suicide and self-harm. As a result, a number of recommendations were agreed with a view to further monitoring at future meetings of the committee.

Supporting Economic Growth

Highway Safety Inspection Policy, KPI's and lovecleanstreets app



The Environment, Economic Growth and Transport Scrutiny Committee received an overview of the current Highway Safety Inspection Policy and set out how the new Lovecleanstreets App would be included in the policy. A full copy of the policy was included for information. Following discussions, a number of recommendations were made and accepted by the Cabinet Member.

Looking Ahead 2023/24

Key scrutiny areas from each committee:

Environment, Economic Growth and Transport:

- Road Safety
- Net Zero Infrastructure
- Levelling Up East Lancashire

Health and Adult Services:

- New Hospitals Programme
- Strengthening Community Services
- Mental Health Service Transformation

Children's, Families and Skills:

- Family and Complex Safeguarding
- Alternative Provision Strategy
- Schools Transport

Community, Cultural and Corporate Services:

- Culture Review
- Lancashire Ethnic Minorities Partnership Update
- People Strategy
- Community Safety Working Group

Scrutiny Management Board:

- Review of Cabinet's budget proposals for 2024/25



Officer Contacts

Gary Halsall, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Scrutiny Management Board and Environment, Economic
Growth and Transport Scrutiny Committee
Email: gary.halsall@lancashire.gov.uk

Misbah Mahmood, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee and
Community, Cultural and Corporate Services Scrutiny
Committee
Email: misbah.mahmood@lancashire.gov.uk

Samantha Parker, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee and Health
Scrutiny Steering Group
Email: sam.parker@lancashire.gov.uk



