

Overview and Scrutiny

in 2009-10



Welcome

A warm welcome to the 2009-10 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report. It's been another very positive and productive year and this report aims to bring you up-to-date with some of the major achievements for overview and scrutiny during the last year and our plans for the next twelve months. In addition to this report, we've also produced a short video that highlights some of our key review work. Do take a look at it by going to our website www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/scrutiny and let us know what you think.

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Councillor Howard Johnson
Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

What is Overview and Scrutiny?

All of Lincolnshire's **77 county councillors** are committed to improving the well-being of the people of Lincolnshire. Nine of these councillors work in the Executive. The other 68 councillors are non-executive councillors. They investigate important issues that affect the people of Lincolnshire through the overview and scrutiny process. Issues under investigation can be to do with Council services or wider matters affecting the community as a whole. Whatever the issue, councillors make sure they speak to the people that matter, the people providing the services and, most importantly, the people of Lincolnshire, the people who use our services.

How Does Overview and Scrutiny Work?

The Council's **nine overview and scrutiny committees** are made up of non-executive councillors. These committees line up with the themes in Lincolnshire's **Sustainable Community Strategy**. This Strategy contains all the key objectives for the county and the important targets for the people of Lincolnshire. A key role for non-executive councillors is their work in **task and finish groups**. In these groups, they look at a topic in greater detail, talk to the people who matter and then prepare reports with suggestions for improving services.

How is the Council Performing?

Councillors want good quality services for the people of Lincolnshire. The County Council's main priorities are contained in the annual **Business Plan**, which supports the themes in the **Sustainable Community Strategy**. A key role for overview and scrutiny committees is to review the Council's performance in delivering the Business Plan, and to see if this performance is leading to improvements for the people of Lincolnshire. The Council's performance rating continues to improve and the work of our overview and scrutiny committees will support this.

How Do We Talk to You?

Councillors like to speak to people **face to face**. Working in task and finish groups, councillors can speak to a wide range of people about the topic under review. These include the people who use the services or are affected by the topic being looked at. Councillors want to know people's views on the topic, to find out what is working and what could be improved.

As part of the review of **Personal Budgets**, councillors have spoken to groups of people who receive adult social care and their carers in the Horncastle and Skegness areas. These discussions have been very positive for all involved and have given councillors valuable insight into this new process and how people receive social care.

Another group of councillors is looking at how to improve the **outcomes for vulnerable children and young people in deprived areas of Lincolnshire**. Councillors have spoken to a range of professionals, organisations and parents at the Moorland Children's Centre in Lincoln and the Mablethorpe Children's Centre. These discussions were very useful for everyone who took part and provided the Councillors with extensive information on where there could be improvements to the services provided to support these children and young people, and their families. The councillors will identify where any further improvements could be made to the range of services offered to support the least advantaged children, young people and their families.

What's Important to You?

Lincolnshire has experienced the most severe winter weather for 25 years. Councillors have looked at **winter maintenance services**. These services cover the treatment of roads and pavements in icy and snow conditions. They have suggested changes to the arrangements for clearing snow from pavements. They have also supported the County Council's continuation of providing grit in bins, which can be used by members of the public on local trouble spots.

Patients and their visitors are concerned about **car parking charges at hospitals**. The Department of Health has consulted on these charges. Councillors have supported the removal of charges for patients and their visitors, as they often have to use their cars to get to a hospital in Lincolnshire.

We all believe that **people should be treated with dignity and respect**, particularly vulnerable people in receipt of health and social care. A group of councillors recommended that all county councillors should show their support by signing-up to the Department of Health's **Dignity in Care Campaign** which champions dignity and respect for all those receiving care. Lincolnshire County Council is now one of only a small number of councils to achieve a full sign-up of its councillors.

When a family member or a friend needs an **ambulance**, we need to be sure that it will arrive quickly. Councillors were aware that in parts of Lincolnshire ambulances were not arriving in time. Councillors have looked at the money that goes into ambulance services and have made some recommendations. Sometimes an ambulance is not required for certain types of call. If these calls are dealt with differently, this will free up ambulances for the calls where they are really needed.

We all want to feel safe and secure in our homes and our local neighbourhoods. **Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)** working as part of local policing teams can be seen in our communities, which help reassure us and make us feel safe. Councillors found evidence to support the role of these officers in communities and have encouraged their continued development.

In these difficult economic times, it is vital that the County gets its fair share of national and European funding. Councillors are looking at Lincolnshire County Council's **relationships with a range of business partners** and the amount of funding that we get. Councillors have recognised that the Council has been very successful in securing the funding that it currently receives and want to be sure whether we can access even more money to sustain and improve Lincolnshire's economy.

The Coming Year

In the coming year we will continue our good work and we are planning to review other important services in the County. Excessive use of alcohol is harming the health and wellbeing of an increasing number of people. We will look at what is on offer to help people **reduce harm from alcohol**.

Flooding has affected many people in the County and the County Council now has a lead role in **managing flood and drainage**. Councillors will be taking a great interest in this new responsibility and will be helping to ensure that this is performed successfully.

Contact Us

If you want to know more about our plans or about the work we have done then please contact the Scrutiny Team using the details below.

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