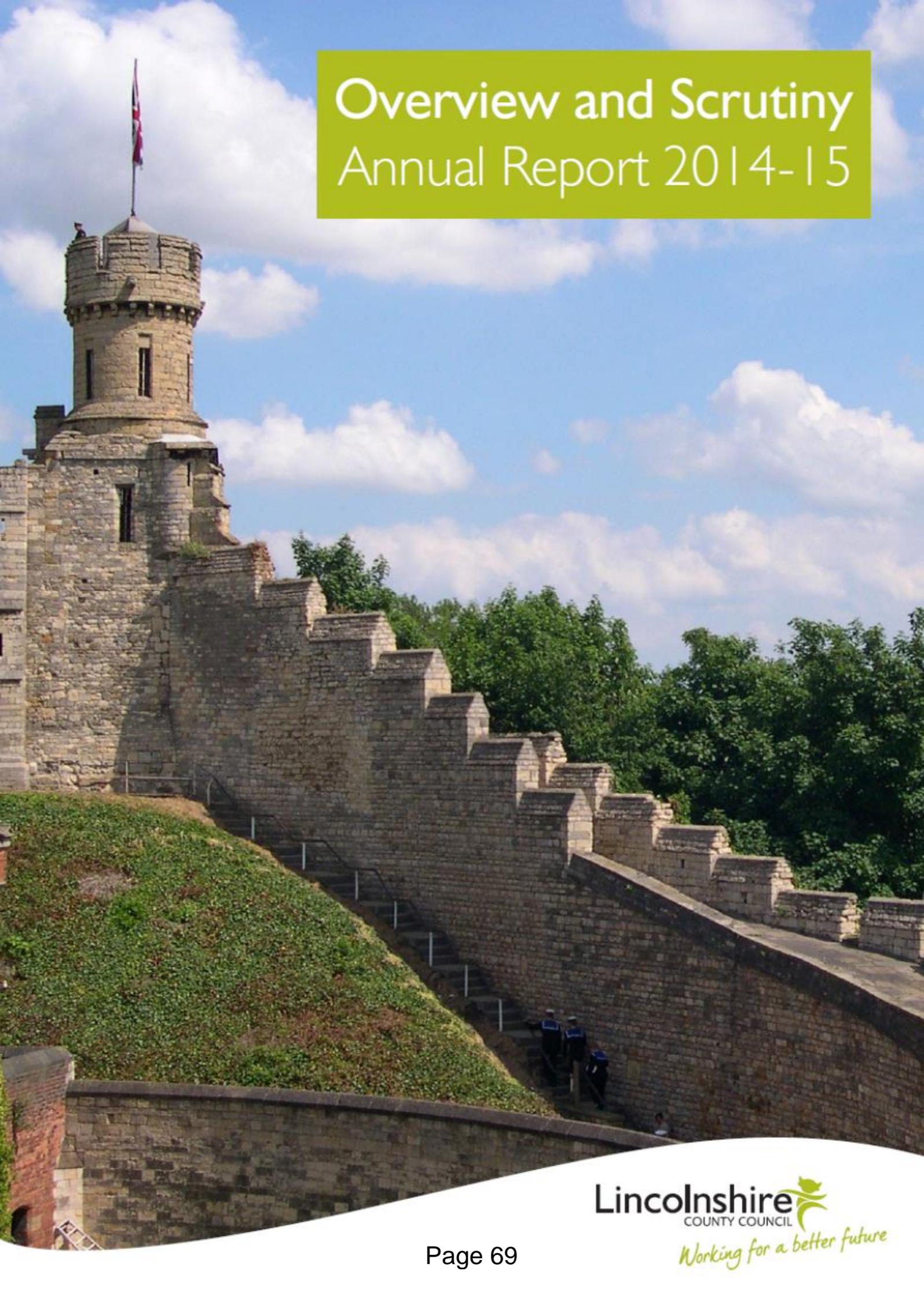


Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014-15



The front cover shows the Observatory Tower at Lincoln Castle. Improvement works at the Castle and the construction of a vault to house Lincoln's copy of Magna Carta have been on-going areas of interest for scrutiny councillors. Over the next year scrutiny will review the project work undertaken and consider the future economic benefits that can be achieved for Lincoln and the rest of the County.

Introduction

I am pleased to present this year's Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report. The report contains key scrutiny activity over the last year and information about some of the subjects our committees will be scrutinising over the next 12 months.

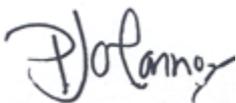
It has been a challenging year for the Council and also for scrutiny. The Council continues to face the challenge of delivering services to the people of Lincolnshire with less and less money and our councillors involved with scrutiny are tasked with analysing this work and its outcomes and providing constructive challenge.

The future delivery of library services in Lincolnshire has continued to generate considerable interest both within the Council itself and in the wider community. Concerns were raised over the decision-making process surrounding the libraries proposals and an Internal Audit Review took place that culminated in a final report with recommendations for improvement including aspects of the scrutiny process. A motion was put to the February 2015 meeting of the County Council proposing an external review of the scrutiny function itself and this motion was carried. Just as scrutiny seeks assurance over the successful delivery of services so it is only right it should seek assurance around its own performance.

The review of scrutiny is underway and five aspects of scrutiny have been highlighted as the focus for the Review;

- Increasing the impact of scrutiny
- The effectiveness of the approach
- Behaviours and culture
- Sound and effective governance
- Learning from good practice

I look forward to reflecting on the successful completion of the Review and on the introduction of improvements to scrutiny in next year's Annual Report. In the meantime, if you would like to know more about overview and scrutiny at Lincolnshire County Council then please feel free to get in touch using the contact details at the end of the report.



Councillor Pat O'Connor
Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

What is scrutiny?

Overview and scrutiny is the process whereby non-executive councillors of the Council examine the authority's functions and services, plus those of partner organisations.

Key aims of scrutiny are to;

- Provide healthy and constructive challenge
- Give voice to public concerns
- Support improvement in services
- Provide an independent review

Overview and Scrutiny is a function of local authorities in England and Wales. It was introduced by the Local Government Act 2000 which created separate Executive and Overview and Scrutiny functions within councils. All non-Executive councillors are eligible to participate in the work of scrutiny. Joining them to scrutinise particular issues are parent governors, church representatives, councillors from the district councils and representatives from other local organisations.

The Council has ten overview and scrutiny committees that consider new policies and strategies, existing policies to see how well they are working and performance information to check that the Council is meeting the standards that have been set.

Each of these committees is also able to establish time-limited Task and Finish Group reviews that focus on a particular issue and consider it in greater detail than is possible at Committee. These reviews will typically last around six months and will include a mixture of interviews with relevant council officers, research of best practice elsewhere, meetings with service users and community groups and consultation with wider parts of the community. These reviews culminate in a final report with recommendations which are then presented to a meeting of the Council's Executive.

Committees can also establish working groups to work in a less formal way either working independently or in collaboration with Council officers. These working groups have responded to national consultations, reviewed existing policies and looked to develop new policies in conjunction with officers.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee



Chairman

Councillor Pat O'Connor



Vice-Chairman

**Councillor Mrs Angela
Newton**

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee is the overarching and co-ordinating scrutiny committee for the County Council. At every meeting consideration is given to the work programmes of each of the Council's scrutiny committees.

A core activity through most of the year was the review of the Council's Constitution. A working group of members drawn from the Committee supported the Council's Monitoring Officer in drafting revised sections of the Constitution and this culminated in a report to the December 2014 meeting of the County Council. One of the initial conclusions of the Review, introduced this year, was for the Committee to take on the responsibility for considering Council-wide documents such as the Annual Report and Business Plan.

In November the Committee received feedback from the consultation regarding the Council's priorities in the future. A consequence of this was a discussion about how financial cuts at the Council can impact on other public sector organisations in the County. As a result a new approach will be introduced in the next budget-setting process which will allow councillors to understand the impact of specific budget proposals on other public sector organisations.

The Lincolnshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable of Lincolnshire Police visited the Committee in October and the Committee had the opportunity to consider strategic and operational policing in the County. The conversation focussed on the cuts in central funding for the Police and all present agreed to continue to lobby for an increase in funding for the Police.

Looking ahead, the Committee will continue to receive updates on the Lincolnshire Broadband Programme and the delivery of superfast broadband connectivity to communities across the County. This process enables the Committee to assure itself regarding the timeliness of the roll-out but also to gain an increased understanding of the Programme and how it should benefit residents.

The major business for the year ahead will be the external review of overview and scrutiny which was agreed at the meeting of the County Council in February 2015 and Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will want to play a key role as this work develops. It was delegated to the Council's Chief Executive to appoint an appropriate external body to review overview and scrutiny and it was agreed that a cross-party Scrutiny Review Group should be appointed to assist the Chief Executive with the Review.

Adults Scrutiny Committee



Chairman

Councillor Hugo Marfleet



Vice-Chairman

Councillor Rosie Kirk

As the Council's approach to commissioning develops, the Committee in the last year has been involved in considering several items prior to a decision by the Executive or the Executive Councillor. For example, the Committee has considered the arrangements for the procurement of the Community Support (Home Care) Service, and the Carers' Support Service. This is an important process, as it enables the Committee to add value, by giving detailed consideration of a topic in advance of a decision.

In Lincolnshire, there are 79,000 carers, who provide support to a relative or a friend. Supporting carers has been a recurring theme for the Committee's work, in particular the additional rights provided to carers as a result of the Care Act 2014. Representatives from the Lincolnshire Carers and Young Carers Partnership outlined how the Act is going to impact on carers and what carers will be expecting from the legislation. During the course of the year, the Committee has received updates from Adult Care as it prepares to implement the new arrangements and will continue to seek further reports on the Lincolnshire Carers Strategy. In July 2014, councillors also heard directly from a carer of two autistic teenagers, which provided a good insight into the challenges that carers face.

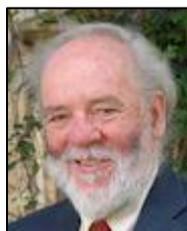
The Managed Care Network for Mental Health aims to improve people's mental health and quality of life by helping them to find safe and effective support. The Committee was told that the Network had 67 member organisations, providing 72 projects at 83 sites across Lincolnshire and so far around 2,500 local people had benefited. However, the most striking element of this item was the Committee receiving first hand a presentation from a service user on her own experiences of mental health and how the Managed Care Network has supported her.

Extra Care Housing usually provides a greater level of care than might be found in sheltered housing, but still enables individuals to retain their independence within their own home. Lincolnshire has fewer Extra Care Housing units, compared to other similar areas. The Committee first discussed the topic of Extra Care Housing in July 2014, when approaches to Extra Care Housing were still being considered. Subsequently, the Committee has supported a decision by the Executive to seek Extra Care Housing by means of a 'contribution model', which is intended to provide over 600 units of Extra Care Housing for a capital outlay by the Council of £8 million.

The Committee has received regular updates on the Wellbeing Service, which was formally launched on 1 April 2014. The service aims to increase the number of people who are able to live independently, with some support in their own home.

During the coming year, members of the Committee are planning to visit several residential and nursing homes in the county, to enhance their knowledge first hand. The Committee will also be considering how the neighbourhood team model is developing in Lincolnshire.

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee



Chairman

Councillor John Hough



Vice-Chairman

Councillor Bob Adams

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has been very busy over the past year. One of its main activities has been the review of **Frontline Social Workers and Safeguarding**, looking at whether safeguarding procedures in Lincolnshire are robust enough and whether social workers receive enough support to carry out their job effectively. The review was chaired by Councillor John Hough, and Councillors Bob Adams, Sarah Dodds, the late John Hicks, Mrs Sue Ransome and Mrs Christine Talbot, and Mrs Emma Olivier-Townrow (Parent Governor Representative) were members of the Task and Finish Group.

During the review, the Task and Finish Group spoke to social workers and attended a range of social care meetings across all the locality teams. The review highlighted that safeguarding procedures in Lincolnshire are, on the whole, robust and that social workers do receive a lot of support. There are some areas for improvement such as around recruitment and retention and the use of mobile technology and these will be monitored through the action plan updates.

The Committee has continued to receive a number of reports relating to the expansion of primary schools or the establishment of new primary academies due to the growing pressure on primary school places and the Council's legal obligation to ensure there are sufficient primary school places available. The Committee has also considered the outcomes from the Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers undertaken in late 2014. The Ofsted report highlighted that

"The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee provides robust scrutiny of services for children and young people. Elected members on this committee have good insight and knowledge of their communities and the issues faced by children's services. In June 2014, a Scrutiny Committee task and finish group conducted a review of frontline social work and safeguarding services over a six-month period using a rigorous methodology. The action plan established from their recommendations is now monitored by the committee."

The Committee members have also undertaken a number of visits to different teams in Children's Services to speak to staff and learn more about their areas of work. In 2014-15, this has included visits to Queen's Park Community Hub and the social

care locality teams. In September 2014, the Committee also received training on the commissioning process and the new commissioning strategies. The Committee has also set up a working group to examine with officers what support the current School Improvement Service offers to schools and academies and how to improve the existing School Improvement offer for schools and academies.

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee will be considering a number of key issues over the next year, including the action plan arising from the recommendations in the Ofsted inspection report, an update on the action plan for the Frontline Social Workers and Safeguarding report and the introduction of the new national Progress 8 measure for monitoring school performance.

Community and Public Safety Scrutiny Committee



Chairman

Councillor Chris Brewis



Vice-Chairman

Councillor Linda Wooten

A major piece of work for the Committee has been the scrutiny of proposals to reshape the library service following a Judicial Review of the Executive's previous decision. An extraordinary meeting of the Committee was held in January and representatives from Save Lincolnshire Libraries and Friends of Deepings Library, as the two biggest petitioners, and also councillors who were not members of the Committee, were given the opportunity to address the Committee.

The re-shaping of the library service continues to be an area of great interest for many councillors and concerns have been expressed about the decision-making process and the role that scrutiny has played in this. A recent Internal Audit report entitled 'Organisational Learning – Libraries Project' highlighted a number of areas for improvement including recommendations relating to scrutiny and the decision-making process. The Committee will continue to review the implementation of the Executive's decision during the next year.

The Committee was pleased to welcome Peter Wright, Governor of HMP Lincoln, to one of its meetings when he advised that the prison had improved greatly following its last inspection by HM Inspector of Prisons. The Committee will be visiting the prison in May 2015 to see for themselves the improvements made. Visits like this will form part of the Committee's activities over the next year as it seeks to increase its understanding of key issues.

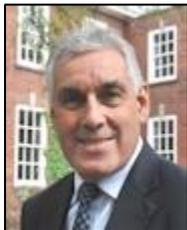
The Committee has taken great interest in the Joint Ambulance Conveyance Project the County Council is running in partnership with the East Midlands Ambulance Service, aimed at improving the quality of service and outcomes for patients in Lincolnshire. The pilot is due to end during the coming year and the Committee will continue to monitor its outcomes.

The Committee received a very informative presentation on the increase in doorstep crime. This is a particularly unpleasant type of crime which often targets the most vulnerable people in our communities. Following this presentation, the subject was suggested to the Councillor Development Group as a development session for the whole Council and this session has been arranged for June 2015.

During the year, the Committee will also be reviewing the outcomes of a Domestic Homicide Review and looking at what can be learnt from this tragic event for all agencies in the County.

The Committee also sits as the Council's statutory Crime and Disorder Committee, where it scrutinises the work of the Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership. With the increase in the use of so called 'legal highs' particularly in Lincoln, the Committee held a development event on reducing public health harm. This included sessions on legal highs and illegal alcohol and tobacco where members were shown examples of these products and how to identify them.

Economic Scrutiny Committee



Chairman

Councillor Tony Bridges



Vice-Chairman

Councillor Chris Pain

Over the past year, the Economic Scrutiny Committee has been very active. One of its main activities has been the review of the **Impact of Transportation on Maximising Economic Growth** which has examined the impact of transportation on the vitality of the Lincolnshire Economy. The review was chaired by Councillor William Webb, and Councillors Chris Brewis, Tony Bridges, Geoff Ellis, Colin Mair, Chris Pain, Steve Palmer, Mrs Elizabeth Sneath and Lewis Strange were members of the Task and Finish Group.

During the review, the Task and Finish Group spoke to key employers representing Lincolnshire's business, tourism and transport sectors. The review highlighted that the transport infrastructure, in particular rail and the road network, in Lincolnshire did have an impact on businesses and tourism. It also identified some potential transport improvements which need to be investigated further and developed into business cases, along with the broader need to develop a long term strategy to improve transport infrastructure needs in Lincolnshire. The review recognised the desirability of dualling key A roads, such as the A15. Dualling of main A roads like the A15 would greatly improve the economy of Lincolnshire as well as attract international investment along its corridors.

The Committee has received a number of reports over the last year particularly around policy development. This has included multiple reports on EU funding programmes where the Committee has provided a steer on the best way of maximising the funding opportunities to support future growth in the Greater Lincolnshire area and supported the bids put forward for EU funding. The Committee has also provided advice regarding which pilot projects should be pursued to help improve employment and skills in Lincolnshire and are now monitoring the outcomes from these projects. More recently, at the April 2015 meeting, the Committee considered and supported Lincoln Cathedral's bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to improve the Cathedral's visitor and community offer in response to the potential increase in visitor numbers resulting from Lincoln Castle Revealed.

One of the main items of interest for the Economic Scrutiny Committee over the past year has been the ongoing developments in relation to Lincoln Castle Revealed. The Committee has received regular updates on the progress of the project, the new shuttle service to the Castle, and on the marketing activity that has been taking place. The Committee undertook another visit to the Castle in February, which was widened out to other members of the Council to attend as well, to see first-hand the developments and progress at Lincoln Castle.

The Economic Scrutiny Committee has also considered a number of reports regarding the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) and is monitoring the implementation of the Growth Deal for Greater Lincolnshire which currently amounts to £146.2 million of future capital investment to support the growth of the local economy.

In September, the Committee held its meeting at Mercury House, a business incubation centre, in Gainsborough to gain a better understanding of how a business incubation centre operates and what the benefits are to a small business. At the meeting, the Committee heard from some of the tenants about the difficulties of operating a business in Gainsborough and the challenges faced by small businesses.

Over the forthcoming year, the Committee will be looking at the impact of the Lincoln Castle Revealed project on the economy and tourism, monitoring the implementation of the recommendations from the Impact of Transportation on Maximising Economic Growth Scrutiny Review, considering the outcomes from Greater Lincolnshire Employer Survey, and looking at how to improve employment and skills in the nursing sector.

Environmental Scrutiny Committee



Chairman

Councillor Lewis Strange



Vice-Chairman

**Councillor Mrs
Victoria Ayling**

The Committee was pleased to hold its meeting in March 2015 at the new Energy from Waste facility in North Hykeham. The visit was an opportunity for the Committee to see the facility providing a sustainable, safe and affordable waste treatment solution. Following the meeting the Committee also visited the new Gainsborough Household Waste Recycling Centre and the Gainsborough Waste Transfer Station. These visits were extremely helpful as they enabled the Committee to see for themselves how different parts of the waste service work together.

The Council has been successful in obtaining a grant from the Department for Energy and Climate Change for a new low carbon district heating network, powered by the Energy from Waste facility. During the next year the Committee will follow the delivery of a scheme with interest and how many businesses and households will benefit. This will also help to build on the Committee's work around the Green Deal including fuel poverty and affordable warmth.

At the end of 2013, the Committee established a Textiles Recycling Working Group of four members to work with officers by providing guidance and challenge on the way forward in developing an agreement with the Salvation Army Trading Company to manage the textile recycling bins in the Council's Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). When the Working Group reported back to the Committee earlier this year, the Committee agreed that the Working Group would continue to review the future running of the HWRCs and will report back to the Committee.

Over the past year, the Committee has received regular updates on odours emanating from both the Ingoldmells and Spalding Sewage Treatment Works. Whilst acknowledging the odour at Ingoldmells has improved, the situation still remains a concern for the Committee due to the high number of visitors to the area during the summer season and its impact on the local economy. The Committee has written to Anglian Water requesting that more in-depth inquiries into the infrastructure in the area be undertaken and following this request, Anglian Water has now committed to review both the capacity at the treatment works and the sewer network in Ingoldmells. The Committee will continue to monitor progress over the coming year.

In June 2015, the Committee looks forward to a number of school children attending their meeting to give presentations on how they have implemented the award winning Schools Collaboration and Resource Efficiency Programme (SCoRE) in their schools. This is an excellent programme which has enabled schools to become more sustainable by spotting energy saving opportunities and making changes throughout the school.

Flood and Drainage Management Scrutiny Committee



Chairman

Councillor Lewis Strange



Vice-Chairman

**Councillor Mrs
Victoria Ayling**

The Committee has continued to work closely with other partners and agencies in working to protect Lincolnshire from flooding. This has included the seven district councils, Environment Agency, Anglian Water, Anglian Northern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and Internal Drainage Boards.

During the year, the Committee has continued to challenge the progress made by the Environment Agency in delivering two flood alleviation schemes in Louth and Horncastle. This has included hearing directly the concerns of local residents affected by the proposed scheme in Horncastle. The Committee will continue to monitor the delivery of these two very important schemes which when built should bring much needed protection to the two towns.

The Committee held its May 2014 meeting at the offices of Boston Borough Council. This meeting was followed by a visit to the site of the proposed Boston Barrier and also to other sites in the town impacted by flooding following the tidal surge which took place along the East Coast during December 2013. The Committee greatly values these visits to sites around the County which bring to life the work being undertaken to prevent flooding and looks forward to continuing these visits over the coming year.

The Committee has also scrutinised detailed reports produced by the County Council and the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum on the response to the East Coast tidal surge event in December 2013. Over the coming year, the Committee will look to monitor the delivery of the recommendations and lessons learnt.

During the year the Committee took on the role of responding to the Anglian and Humber Flood Risk Management Plans published by the Environment Agency. The Committee established a time-limited Working Group to develop the full and detailed responses to the consultations, which were supported by our partners and subsequently submitted to the Environment Agency.

As part of the County Council's duties as a Lead Local Flood Authority, the Committee will continue to monitor the investigations carried out following flooding incidents, as required by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

As his term of office as the Chairman of the Anglian Northern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee comes to an end, the Committee would like to record their thanks to Robert Caudwell for his invaluable advice and support to the Committee since its inception. The Committee welcomes his successor and hopes to continue this positive working relationship over the coming years.

Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire



Chairman

Councillor Mrs Christine Talbot



Vice-Chairman

Councillor Chris Brewis

A key role for the Health Scrutiny Committee is responding to formal consultations by NHS commissioners on service changes. One consultation in the last year was NHS England's proposals for Congenital Heart Disease standards which will impact on Glenfield Hospital in Leicester. As part of its response, the Committee made ten recommendations to NHS England and a decision on the standards is expected in the near future.

United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust was placed in 'Special Measures' in July 2014, following an Inspection of its Hospitals. To seek reassurance the Committee continued to receive reports from the Chief Executive of the Trust during the year on its plans for improvement. In March 2015, the Trust's improvements were recognised and the NHS Trust Development Authority allowed the Trust to come out of 'Special Measures'. The Committee will continue to receive regular updates from the Trust, as further plans for improvement are developed.

During the last year, the Committee has regularly monitored the response time performance of the East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust, with the Chief Executive attending the Committee regularly. The Committee has acknowledged improvements, but ambulance response times in the east and south of the County remain a concern and the Committee will continue to monitor these in the coming year.

In May 2014 patients at Burton Road GP Surgery in Lincoln were told that the surgery would close on 30 September 2014. The Committee, together with representatives of the patients at the surgery, challenged this decision by NHS England. Senior managers from NHS England were required to attend the Committee on three occasions and account for their decision making. NHS England changed its mind and there was a procurement exercise, which led to the announcement in March 2015 of the surgery remaining open for a minimum of five years. This represents a major success for the Committee in protecting services for patients.

During the last year, the Committee has received training from the East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust, on its operational arrangements; and from the Care Quality Commission on their new inspection arrangements in relation to GP practices and hospitals.

Every year each local provider of NHS-funded services is required to share with the Committee its draft 'Quality Account', which includes the provider's priorities for the coming year. The Committee may make a statement on each Quality Account, which must be included in the published Quality Account. During 2014 the Committee, working jointly with Healthwatch Lincolnshire, made eight statements on a range of providers, and work is in hand on the arrangements for 2015, where joint arrangements are continuing.

In the coming year the Committee is expecting to respond to local NHS commissioners on their proposals for a major reconfiguration of Health Services in Lincolnshire, as part of the Lincolnshire Health and Care programme. The Committee will also be looking in more detail at how local commissioners and providers meet the priorities in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee



Chairman

Councillor Michael Brookes



Vice-Chairman

Councillor Andrew Hagues

In June 2014, the Committee's **Speed Management in Lincolnshire** Task and Finish Group presented its final report and recommendations. The members of the Task and Finish Group were Councillors Michael Brookes (Chairman), Mark Allan, Bill Aron, Andrew Hagues, Tiggs Keywood-Wainwright, Bob McAuley, Mrs Marianne Overton MBE, Robin Renshaw and Tony Turner MBE, JP. This review looked in-depth at the Council's current speed management policies in light of revised guidance from the Department for Transport.

A key feature of the review was the high level of public engagement, which included over 500 responses to the Review Group's survey and four focus groups involving local community representatives. The Committee agreed nine recommendations which were subsequently all approved by the Executive. These recommendations will now help to shape a revised Speed Limit Policy along with a policy to address issues around schools, particularly parking.

Over the past year, the Committee has been particularly interested in monitoring the delivery of a number of key infrastructure schemes which will have a significant impact on the people who live and work in Lincolnshire. These include the Lincoln Eastern Bypass, the Lincoln East West Link Road, Canwick Road Improvements, Grantham Southern Relief Road and the building of footbridges over the High Street Level Crossing and the Brayford Wharf Level Crossing in Lincoln. The Committee will continue to monitor the delivery of these high profile schemes over the coming year to ensure they are completed within time and budget and cause as little disruption as possible.

During the past year, the Committee has undertaken pre-decision scrutiny on both the Sleaford and Spalding Transport Strategies. These are two key documents, developed in partnership with North Kesteven and South Holland District Councils, which provide an approach to the improvement and provision of transport and access for the two towns and surrounding areas. The Committee supported both documents and made a number of recommendations, including support for the reinstatement of the footbridge over the Winsover Road crossing in Spalding, which have now been incorporated into the final versions.

The Committee has continued to take a key interest in the development of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) following the introduction of CPE in the County in 2012. This enforcement has seen an improvement to the parking problems seen around the County, especially in Lincoln, and the Committee will continue to review how the surplus from enforcement penalties is used to further improve parking in the County. The Committee was pleased to note that the County Council's Parking Services and APCOA had been shortlisted for a British Parking Association award.

As the Council moves to a commissioning approach, the Committee will continue to monitor the long standing Lincolnshire Highways Alliance. The Alliance, a partnership between the County Council, Imtech, Mouchel and Kier delivers the majority of highway services through a number of contracts. The Committee will also examine the outcomes from a Highways Maintenance Efficiency Plan Peer Review which took place during March 2015.

Value for Money Scrutiny Committee



Chairman

**Councillor Mrs Angela
Newton**



Vice-Chairman

**Councillor Mrs Jackie
Brockway**

The Committee continues to have quarterly and annual oversight of the Council's performance, budget management and customer satisfaction data. Scrutiny of this information is a key task for the Committee as it provides a full view of the Council's business and allows councillors to understand performance from different perspectives. Over the last year the Committee has had the opportunity to flag up concerns it has in relation to the Council's performance directly to the Council's Executive.

The Committee also receives quarterly and annual updates on the Council's Treasury Management performance. Scrutiny by councillors of the Council's Treasury Management performance is a statutory requirement and the Committee monitors those organisations the Council's lends money to and the Council's borrowing policy. Over the last year the Committee has sought and received assurance over the Council's choice of lending counterparts and the percentage return on investments made.

A key activity during the year has been scrutiny of significant new contract awards for support and property services. These 'Back office' services including information technology, people management and finance have been delivered externally for several years and a re-tendering was required under contract rules. The delivery of the Council's Customer Service Centre activity was also brought into the tendering process. The Committee has monitored the process throughout and as the new contract comes into effect members will be monitoring the transition period and the external delivery of existing and new responsibilities closely to ensure quality of service and value for money are maintained. Delivery of property services has also been re-tendered and again the Committee will have a role to monitor the new service provided.

In June 2014 the Committee adopted paperless working at meetings and has continued to follow meetings using electronic devices since then. The Committee has particularly benefitted from the use of the Modern.Gov 'app' which allows committee papers to be annotated electronically. Feedback from councillors on the Committee has been generally positive and it is hoped that other committees may wish to work in this way in the future.

Sub Committees

Corporate Parenting Panel



Chairman

Councillor David Brailsford



Vice-Chairman

Councillor John Hough

The Corporate Parenting Panel is an internal meeting which meets on a quarterly basis and reports into the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee. Its role is to scrutinise and monitor services provided for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. This includes receiving regular reports on fostering, adoption, residential homes, health, education, and the leaving care service provided by Barnardo's. The Panel also considers quarterly updates regarding the work of the V4C (Voices for Choices), which is Lincolnshire's Children in Care Council, from the V4C representative on the Panel.

Over the last year the Corporate Parenting Panel has received verbal reports from a number of the visiting members about the quarterly visits undertaken to their residential home. The Care Quality Commission inspection of health services for Looked After Children and Safeguarding in Lincolnshire has caused great concern to the Panel as the review highlighted a number of issues around the quality of health assessments for Looked After Children, a lack of capacity within safeguarding across the NHS in Lincolnshire and the availability of Blue Books which contained the health record of a Looked After Child. The Panel was pleased to hear at the March 2015 meeting that additional financial and human resources had been allocated for safeguarding by the Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Groups, and that the Blue Books had been relaunched and were now being distributed as part of the social worker pack.

The low educational attainment of Looked After Children has also been an area of concern for the Panel this year which will be closely monitored in future. The Panel anticipates that the educational attainment of Looked After Children will significantly improve in future following the appointment of a new Virtual Head of Looked After Children.

The Corporate Parenting Panel has also helped to compose the new Corporate Parenting Strategy which was approved by the County Council at its meeting in December 2014. Following the Strategy's approval, all the Council's scrutiny committees will be invited to appoint a Looked After Children / Care Leavers Representative at the June 2015 meetings to make sure that the Committee actively considers the potential or likely impact upon Looked After Children and Care Leavers of any policy, strategy, action or decision making carried out by the Committee.

At the March 2015 meeting, the Panel considered the Ofsted Inspection report of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and the action plan in response to the recommendations contained in the Ofsted report. The Panel was pleased to see that the adoption service received an "outstanding" rating. In addition, the Ofsted report highlighted that

"The local authority is an active and aspirational corporate parent. There are well-established links between the Corporate Parenting Panel and the scrutiny committee for children's services, with the chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel reporting to alternate committee meetings. The panel chair and members seek to actively hear the voices of children and young people through attendance at a variety of forums and events."

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel have attended previous BIG Conversation events and have been invited to attend the BIG Conversation 7 event in May 2015 to work with looked after children and care leavers to reach a shared agreement on three new priorities for action together in 2015. The FAB! Awards in March 2015, which celebrate the achievements of Looked After Children and care leavers, were attended by the Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel and all members of the Panel will be invited to next year's FAB! Awards.

Going forward, the Corporate Parenting Panel will continue to closely monitor the work being undertaken to raise the educational achievements of Looked After Children and also the implementation of the engagement plan in the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards Scrutiny Sub Group



Chairman

Councillor Ron Oxby



Vice-Chairman

Councillor Mrs Helen Powell (until January 2015)

The Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards Scrutiny Sub Group is an internal meeting which meets on a quarterly basis. Its role is to scrutinise and monitor the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB). The Sub Group reports to the Adult Scrutiny Committee on adult safeguarding matters and to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on safeguarding children matters.

In relation to the LSCB, over the last year the Sub Group has considered reports on the outcomes from Serious Case Reviews and a number of audits undertaken of child protection plans, Section 11, and the Pre Birth Protocol. The Sub Group has also received quarterly updates on the current situation regarding Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Lincolnshire and visited the new SAFE Hub based at Grantham Police Station in January. This Hub brings together the Police, Children's Services, Health and Youth Offending Team to co-ordinate work and share information on

CSE. The Sub Group also considered the outcomes from the Ofsted inspection of the LSCB at its January meeting, which highlighted that

"There are well-established scrutiny arrangements which enable elected members to provide challenge to both the Children's and the Adults Safeguarding Boards."

In relation to the LSAB, the Sub Group has considered a number of reports over the last year including the Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, Human Trafficking, the Care Act, Making Safeguarding Personal which is a new sector led initiative to develop an outcomes focus to safeguarding work, and Safeguarding Adults Reviews.

Over the coming year, the Sub Group will continue to monitor CSE and will also be receiving the Children Board's new neglect strategy and the outcomes from a number of Serious Case Reviews and Safeguarding Adults Reviews.

Training and Development

A series of development opportunities for scrutiny councillors have been provided over the last year.

Peer Mentoring for Scrutiny Committee Chairmen

The Council's Councillor Development Group has recognised the importance of the role of chairing a meeting and there is an on-going programme of peer mentoring for scrutiny committee chairmen. This process allows a chairman to receive advice and support from an experienced councillor from another part of the country. There are currently three scrutiny committee chairmen participating in this on-going programme.

Understanding Financial Information

One of the most complex areas of scrutiny work is around understanding detailed financial information. Development sessions were run in the autumn of 2014 and were delivered by an external facilitator with over 20 years' experience of local government finance. The sessions explored the development and management of a budget and considered the types of questions that councillors could ask to satisfy themselves that budgets are being properly managed. The sessions were well attended and feedback showed that levels of understanding rose considerably as a result.

Successful Meetings

In February of this year development sessions were offered entitled 'Successful Meetings'. The sessions were run by an experienced external facilitator and covered a variety of areas to assist councillors to further improve their contribution to meetings. The session also considered the recently introduced right to film public meetings and use social media. These sessions were well attended and feedback was again very positive with the majority of councillors stating that their understanding had increased considerably as a result of attending.

Looking Ahead

The Council and the Councillor Development Group continue to recognise the importance of developing its councillors and this will include scrutiny development. It is intended to continue with the peer mentoring programme for chairmen subject to continuing positive feedback from those who have participated. The Audit Committee has benefitted from development led by the Council's Head of Audit around constructive challenge and it is planned for this development opportunity to be offered to scrutiny councillors over the coming months.

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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