

Building a better community for all

Overview and scrutiny
Annual Report
2009 / 2010



Introduction



Councillor Ron Bell
Chairman of the Policy, Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Councillor Joe Best
Vice Chairman of the Policy, Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Once again, it is my pleasure to introduce the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report. This year, we have adopted a slightly different approach for the report format. The Scrutiny Committees have remained the same and are aligned to cabinet member portfolios. For this year's report you will be able to see at a glance how each Committee has contributed to the Council's strategic goals and objectives, by way of key achievements and key improvements that have been implemented as a result of scrutiny recommendations.

The Policy, Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee provides a strategic overview and steer for the work of all the scrutiny committees. During the past year it has conducted an in-depth review of the scrutiny process and how that process is conducted in Blackpool. The report and recommendations, which contain a new and up to date scrutiny protocol have been endorsed by the Council's Executive. They will provide a welcome degree of clarity as to how scrutiny is carried out in Blackpool, as well as continuing to ensure that the scrutiny process adds value to the overall aims and objectives of the Council.

I hope that you find this annual report interesting and informative. It has been designed to highlight the effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny and provide a snapshot of the work of the Committees. If you would like to find out more, all Scrutiny Committee meetings are open to the public and the support officers will be pleased to supply you with more information. Contact details are listed at the end of this report.

I would like to sincerely thank everyone who has contributed to the scrutiny process during the past year, in particular the Councillors who have volunteered their time to take part in the various scrutiny working group meetings.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ron Bell', written over a light-colored background.

Councillor Ron Bell.

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2009/10



Chairman:
Councillor Sue Fowler

Vice Chairman:
Councillor Roger Stansfield

The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee is aligned to *Goal 4 of Blackpool's Corporate Plan: Improve the Health and Well-Being of the Population* which aims to reduce health inequalities and encourage healthy lifestyles and emotional wellbeing across the whole population.

Key Achievements

- Undertaken an extensive joint scrutiny review into Preventing Childhood Obesity with the aim of introducing measures to combat the rising levels of childhood obesity within Blackpool.
- Approved the protocol for joint working with Blackpool Local Involvement Network (LINK) and regularly monitored the development of the LINK.
- Followed closely the development of the three new Primary Care Centres within Blackpool and undertook a visit to the Whitegate Centre to view the new facilities and assess the service provision that will be available to patients.

- › Undertaken a development session to better understand the role of National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) and the value of NICE guidance in the scrutiny process.
- › Received positive feedback from the Care Quality Commission for comments submitted on NHS Trusts as part of the 2008/2009 Annual Health Check.

Key Improvements

- › Achieved Scrutiny Development Area Status for health inequalities and formed a joint scrutiny working group with several other Local Authorities within the Lancashire area to conduct an evaluation and consultation exercise on the introduction of minimum pricing of alcohol. The purpose of the review is:
 - To obtain views on minimum pricing of alcohol from a wide range of stakeholders and the general public through a series of meetings and a public stakeholder event; and
 - To feedback findings to Central Government to inform the current debate on the topic.
- › Attended a World Class Commissioning workshop run by NHS Blackpool and responded to a Stakeholder Survey to provide input into the identification of the key health priorities for Blackpool.
- › Contributed to the development and enhancement of community health related services through regular monitoring of the implementation of the remaining recommendations contained within the Health, Leisure and Community Learning Scrutiny Action Plan.

Adult Social Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2009/10



Chairman:
Councillor Kath Rowson

Vice Chairman:
Councillor Sue Ridyard

The Adult Social Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee is aligned to *Goal 4 of Blackpool's Corporate Plan: Improve the Health and Well-Being of the Population* which aims to safeguard adults at risk of harm and ensure that quality services are in place to enable vulnerable adults and older people to live independently.

One of the key achievements highlighted below relating to the Workstep Programme also impacts on *Goal 1: Improving Blackpool's Economic Prosperity – creating jobs and opportunities for local people and reducing Worklessness* and *Goal 3: Improving Skill Levels and Educational Achievement in fostering a workforce with the vocational skills to meet the needs of Blackpool's economy*.

Key Achievements

- › Undertaken a scrutiny visit to an Independent Living Centre to assess the equipment and adaptations available for vulnerable adults.
- › Approved the protocol for joint working with Blackpool LINK and established a working group to consider a formal referral from LINK following concerns raised by service users during the change of mental health service provider.
- › Contributed to a joint scrutiny led by Lancashire County Council that made recommendations which called for the safeguarding of adults to become a statutory responsibility and a review of the representation on Safeguarding Adults Partnership Strategic Boards. Recommendations were also made to specific organisations relating to onward referrals, issuing of guidance to ensure patient confidentiality and sharing of best practice between hospital trusts.

Key Improvements

- › Reacting to concerns raised by Sheltered Housing tenants, a review of the lettings policy for general needs tenants living above sheltered housing was undertaken with the following changes made:

- Increase in the age criteria for tenants;
 - More robust checking procedures for prospective tenants; and
 - More stringent monitoring and swifter addressing of unacceptable behaviour of tenants.
- Carried out a review into the Workstep programme which has ensured that:
- Clients continue to be supported at the same level of financial subsidy until new arrangements are put in place;
 - Joint working between the Council and Job Centre Plus providing a single point of access for all potential Workstep clients; and
 - The Committee's Workplan includes regular monitoring of the situation whilst there is provider uncertainty around the future status and holder of the contract.

Culture, Communities and Business Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2009/10



Chairman:
Councillor David Owen

Vice Chairman:
Councillor Peter Evans

The Culture, Communities and Business Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is aligned to *Goal 2* of Blackpool Council's Corporate Plan, which is to "*Develop a Safe, Clean and Pleasant Place to Live, Work and Visit*". This aims to create a safer, cleaner and greener Blackpool while developing thriving and active communities.

The Key Improvements indicated below also assisted with other goals within the Corporate Plan. The reviews into the Council's Taxi Licensing and Landaus policies impact on *Goal 1* – "*Improve Blackpool's Economic Prosperity*" and the review into the Customer First service has contributed to *Goal 5* – "*To ensure Blackpool Council is an Efficient and High Performing Organisation*".

Key Achievements

- Undertaken a review of each new and existing application for Service Level Agreement funding that had been submitted by voluntary organisations against the Council's corporate priorities and to ensure that optimum value for money, service delivery and performance was being achieved.
- Submitted a number of recommendations for the Council to implement an enhanced and consistent monitoring framework that will be applied to Service Level Agreement contracts across the Council. These were fully approved by Executive and will be incorporated into the new Service Level Agreement contracts for the 2010/11 financial year.
- Approved the protocol for undertaking the new statutory requirement to scrutinise the activity of the Community Safety Partnership, BSafe Blackpool.
- Carried out a site visit of Carleton Cemetery and Crematorium to review the outcome of the Council's investment in the provision of enhanced facilities and services.
- Held a meeting at the Grundy Art Gallery to review how the development of arts in Blackpool has achieved a positive contribution to the Council's corporate priorities.

Key improvements

Throughout the year, the Committee has monitored the implementation of recommendations from the following scrutiny reviews:

- Reacting to concerns regarding the standard of Blackpool's taxi fleet and the customer service provided by taxi drivers, numerous improvements are now in place relating to vehicle safety, vehicle emissions, driving standards and hospitality.
- The customer service experience delivered by the Council's Customer First Centre, leading to an improved service for people contacting the Council either in person or by telephone.

- In respect of the review that was undertaken into the landaus (horse-drawn carriages) that operate along the Promenade to ensure that they were safe and provided a pleasant experience for visitors, a number of changes to the Landaus Licensing Policy were recommended and approved. These have led to improvements in customer service, improved passenger safety and the cleanliness of the Promenade by making it compulsory for all landaus to be fitted with a manure trap.

Tourism and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2009/10



Chairman:
Councillor Robert Wynne

Vice-Chairman:
Councillor Julian Mineur

The Tourism and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee is aligned to *Goal 1* of Blackpool Council's Corporate Plan, which is to "*Improve Blackpool's Economic Prosperity*". This aims to create high quality, all year-round reasons to come to Blackpool, while promoting enterprise and improving transport and accessibility.

One of the Key Improvements indicated below, in respect of the Street Trading scrutiny review, also contributes to *Goal 2* – "*Develop a Safe, Clean and Pleasant Place to Live, Work and Play*".

Key Achievements

- Completed a detailed and comprehensive review of Blackpool's retail economy with the aim of co-ordinating partnership working and enhance service delivery within the Town Centre area. The Committee's 12 recommendations which were approved by Executive have already had a positive impact on enhancing the public realm and making the Town Centre a more pleasant and inviting area for visitors, residents and businesses.
- In response to a number of complaints from anglers, the Committee has started to explore the possibility of implementing a permit scheme along the parade area of the Lower Walk to see if this could alleviate access issues, while still ensuring that the parade is a safe, pleasant and inviting area for pedestrians.
- Commenced an investigation following concerns relating to decreasing levels of funding to the Illuminations through Promenade collections, business donations and the sponsorship of features. The Committee has started to explore potential income-generating measures for the Illuminations budget.
- Enhanced partnership working with the private sector in order to share information and ensure that collaborative working across the whole borough is achieved for the tourism and regeneration sector. The Committee has so far received presentations from Pleasure Beach Blackpool, Hilton Blackpool and the Blackpool Business Leadership Group.
- Continued to monitor the preparation and co-ordination of the annual Switch On ceremony through the Illuminations Switch On Working Group.

Key improvements

Throughout the year, the Committee has monitored the implementation of recommendations from the following scrutiny reviews:

- Reacting to concerns raised regarding the number of illegal street traders and beggars in Blackpool Town Centre, a review was undertaken to assess new enforcement measures that could rectify the issues, with the following changes made:
- Significant reduction in the occurrence of illegal street trading within the Town Centre.
- Launched Operation Anchor 2 in conjunction with partner agencies including Lancashire Constabulary and the Council's Benefit Fraud service, to issue Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and tackle more effectively prolific and aggressive illegal street traders.
- Benefit Fraud team started more robust and regular checking on the benefits status of beggars as part of Operation Night Safe.

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2009/2010



Chairman:
Councillor Sylvia Taylor

Vice-Chairman:
Councillor Nicola Best

The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is aligned to Goal 3 of Blackpool Council's Corporate Plan, which is to *'Improve Skill Levels and Educational Achievement.'* This aims to raise young people's aspirations whilst improving educational achievement and basic skills and to provide quality learning spaces and approaches.

Key Achievements

- › Undertaken an extensive joint scrutiny review with the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee into Preventing Childhood Obesity with the aim of introducing measures to combat the rising levels of childhood obesity within Blackpool with a focus on healthy meals and opportunities for sport and exercise.
- › In response to concerns raised with the Committee regarding operation of Youth Clubs and access to provision for young people, an in depth review into the topic commenced in December 2009. Areas of focus for the ongoing review were the availability of positive activities, role of the youth worker and access to youth provision across Blackpool. The recommendations will hope to ensure wider access to positive activities and enrichment opportunities for the young people of Blackpool.
- › Ratified a series of principles which would form the basis of a coherent, consistent policy to be implemented across all Blackpool schools to manage term time leave

Key Improvements

- › In ensuring continuous progress against objective 3.1 *'Improve education achievement and raise the aspirations of all Blackpool's children and young people'* the Committee has continued to monitor and provide feedback in relation Ofsted Inspection reports for educational establishments and children's homes.
- › In line with objective 3.4 *'Improve the provision of quality learning spaces and approaches'* the Committee has actively monitored progress of the Building Schools for the Future programme, paying particular attention to issues such as transformational learning and use of local labour and creation of apprenticeships.

Statistics

The following information is a breakdown of scrutiny facts and statistics for 2009/10:

- › Number of scrutiny recommendations established during 2009/10 – **42**
- › % Approved by Executive – **86%**
- › Number of Executive decisions considered – **63**
- › Number of cabinet Member decisions considered – **187**
- › Number of Call-ins – **4**

Contact

If you want to know more, or have any suggestions for scrutiny, contact us in Democratic Services on Tel 01253 477054 or Email: scrutiny@blackpool.gov.uk