

# Annual Report

## Introduction

Welcome to the annual scrutiny report, which highlights the key scrutiny activities and developments at North East Lincolnshire Council during the 2016/17 Municipal Year. The report provides a summary of the work undertaken by the five scrutiny panels in 2016-17 and outlines future work programmes.

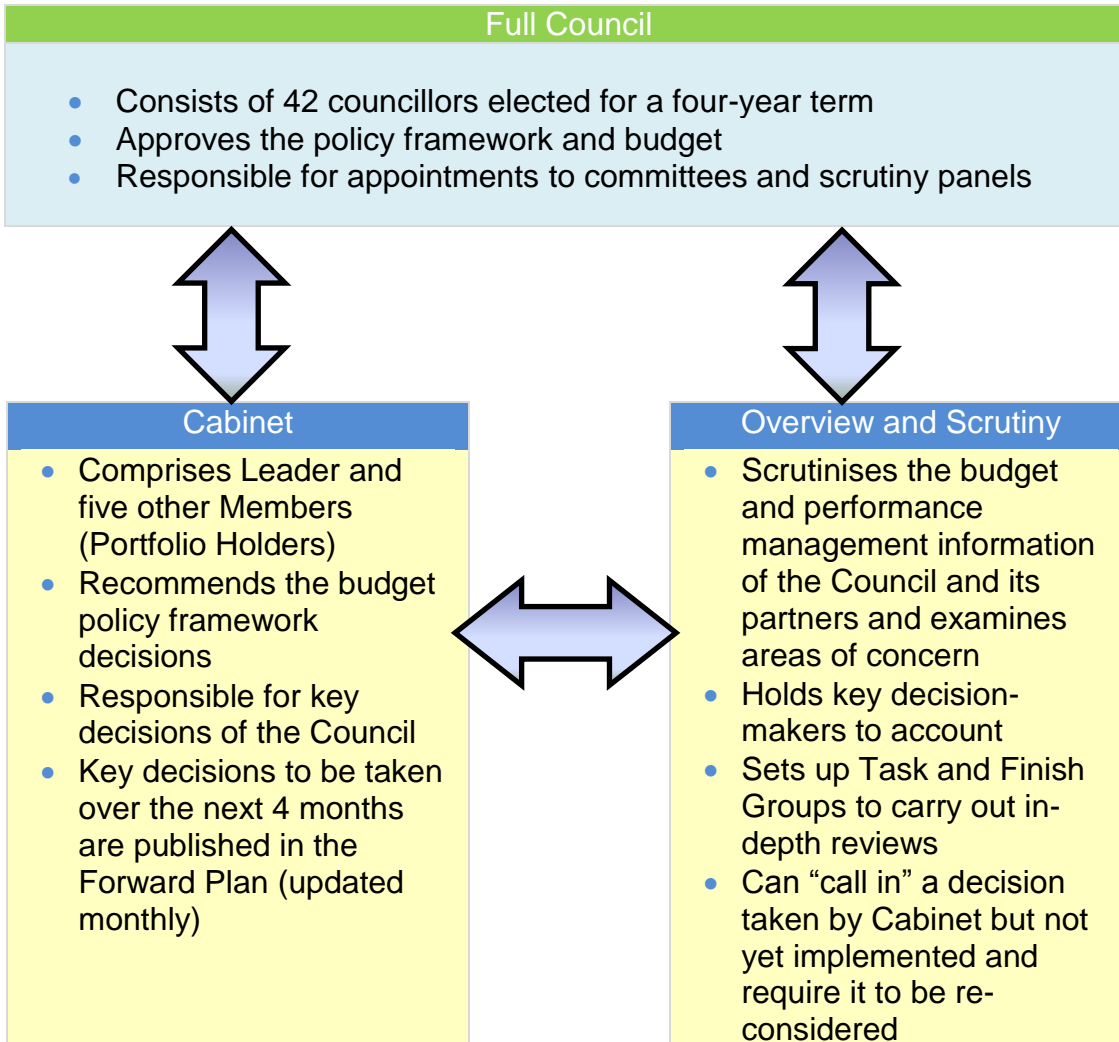
In addition to our scheduled scrutiny meetings a number of themed meetings, working groups and workshops have been held. Residents, partners and stakeholders have been involved in topics such as autism diagnosis, flood risk at the Humberston Fitties Chalet Park, offender management, junction improvements and the Grimsby Ice Rink. All Elected Members were invited to take part in a budget consultation workshop prior to the formal consultation at panel meetings on the Council's budget and priorities. Members have been keen to 'see things for themselves' and have held panel meetings across the Borough, and undertaken a number of site visits and information gathering visits to partners and community groups to inform their debates. The panels have continued to inform Cabinet decision-making, through both pre-decision scrutiny and the call in mechanism; further details of which can be found within this report.

There has been an increased focus towards scrutiny of the Council's outcomes framework and the associated commissioning programmes such as the Smarter Neighbourhoods project and the Culture, Heritage, Sport, Leisure and Tourism programme. Scrutiny will have a key role within the Council's governance arrangements to support effective delivery of the framework and provide challenge, as appropriate, to make sure that the basis for decisions being taken by the Council are robust. It is therefore essential to ensure that there are effective overview and scrutiny arrangements in North East Lincolnshire, reflecting the current priorities of the Council and its partners, and contributing positively to good governance. It has been noted that scrutiny of cross-cutting issues within the current panel structure has become increasingly complex and the demand for working groups to focus on particular issues has provided a challenge within a six-weekly panel schedule. A review of the current scrutiny arrangements was therefore conducted. This has resulted in proposed changes to the titles and remit of the panels together with a move to bi-monthly panel meetings with a view to making sure that scrutiny is best placed to effectively monitor and support the delivery of the Council's priorities.

*Helen Isaacs, Statutory Scrutiny Officer  
Director of Governance, Democracy and Community Engagement*

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## 2 Scrutiny in North East Lincolnshire



N.B. There are also non-Executive decision making committees (eg. Planning and other regulatory committees)

## Overview

Overview and scrutiny is a process that enables Councillors who are not Members of the Council's decision-making process to review and scrutinise matters affecting local people.

The role of Elected Members performing the overview and scrutiny function is to:

- Review and report on issues that affect the economic, environmental and social well-being of local people;
- Act as a check and balance to the Council's decision makers, examining and reviewing decisions;
- Consider the work of public bodies operating outside the Council but which affect local residents, for example, local health services;
- Contribute to the development of future policies and strategies that will help improve services for local people;
- Involve local people in council decision making.
- Scrutiny is carried out using a number of methods, such as panel meetings, working groups and select committees, but in all cases the process is non-political and Members from all groups participate.

## Our Panels

Our panels and chairs this year were:

Children and Young People – Councillor Ian Lindley

Health – Councillor Melanie Dickerson

Regeneration, Housing and Environment – Councillor Phillip Jackson

Safer and Stronger Communities – Councillor Stan Shreeve

Tourism, Leisure and Culture – Councillor David Hasthorpe

### 3 Scrutiny panels

#### Children and young people scrutiny panel

After a period of high exclusion rates, the panel has dedicated time to looking at pupil exclusions and examining local trends. To build on this work, in addition to its termly reports, panel members have revisited both the primary and secondary Behaviour and Attendance Collaborative. Numbers of permanent exclusions have fallen recently but the panel continues to keep its options open regarding an in depth review should numbers begin to rise. Members continue to be concerned about high numbers of exclusions and low numbers of diagnosed special educational needs and disability (SEND) pupils. Proposals for an Emotional, Social and Behavioural Difficulties (ESBD) school in North East Lincolnshire have also been explored.



School engagement remains high on the panel's priorities. Following member visits to Oasis Academy Wintringham, Oasis Community Trust representatives returned to address the panel in September giving reassurances about its governance

arrangements and community representation. A recent Ofsted inspection report and Summer exam results were celebrated. The panel also visited Reynolds Primary Academy and Laceby Acres Primary Academy. Members of the panel would like to thank all staff and pupils at the schools they visited during 2016/17 for extending a warm welcome and sharing

*"I am delighted with the commitment that this panel has shown over the past year in scrutinising key areas of children and young people's services, particularly those supporting our most vulnerable young people. This level of Scrutiny is vital if we are to continue to deliver improved outcomes for all of our children and young people in NEL"*



*Councillor Ian Lindley  
Chair*

their hopes and aspirations with them.

New Government policy on attainment has made some local attainment trends difficult to challenge. Meanwhile the panel acknowledged that whilst standards in local schools were reasonable, accelerated improvements were required based on this year's validated results. The authority meets regularly with the regional schools commissioner and offers support and training in monitoring performance to all schools and academies.



A number of proposed large housing developments identified within the draft local plan prompted the panel to gain assurances that the authority was accurately forecasting pupil place predictions. In addition, alternative funding sources were being explored for education contributions.

Other areas that have been scrutinised this year include:

- Children's social care statutory complaints
- Child and adolescent mental health services
- Safeguarding / Local Safeguarding Children Board – outcome scorecards.
- Youth Provision
- Child friendly cities
- Budget monitoring .
- Carer's support strategy

The panel welcomed co-opted Members from Youth Action, Parent Governors and the Church of England Diocese. The panel is still seeking parent governor representatives and is keen to fill these positions.

The panel has requested that the following work be carried forward into next year's scrutiny work programme:

- Autism Working Group
- Exclusions
- Pupil Place Planning
- SEND
- Home education



## Health

The Health Scrutiny panel monitored the actions from the Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Trust (NLAG) Care Quality Commission inspection throughout the year to track the progress of the actions from the inspection.

The panel held a meeting to raise its concerns and express disappointment about the Home from Home Service that had been withdrawn from the Diana Princess of Wales hospital. The panel made a recommendation to look for alternative ways to deliver the service and will receive an update in the next municipal year.



The Sustainability and Transformation Plan for the Humber Coast and Vale is emerging and the panel have been updated on the plan and the work to date. This will form part of the work programme next year.

*“The Panel has robustly challenged many Health Care providers regarding the quality of provision for residents of North East Lincolnshire, giving plaudits when appropriate and expressing concerns over inadequate performance”*



*Councillor Melanie Dickerson  
Chair*

The panel has continued to work closely with Healthwatch, identifying areas where their work overlaps as well as the potential for joint working. Examples of joint working included on the reduction in the number of IVF cycles and, most recently, the concerns about the East Midland Ambulance Service (EMAS) performance. The unprecedented call levels had placed extreme demands on the ambulance service and social care

providers. The panel heard about the new national programme being rolled out and requested EMAS come back to the panel at a later date to feedback on how the new system was working.

The panel received briefings on Adult Social Care direct payments, urgent and emergency care provision and an explanation about social prescribing and its benefits.

In addition, the panel considered:

- the adult safeguarding annual report
- the carers strategy
- the ethical and pragmatic decision making policy.

The following work will be carried forward into next year's scrutiny work programme:

- Sustainable transformation plan
- CCG quarterly reports
- Transport and accessibility of health

services

- Home from home service
- NLAG CQC Inspection





## Regeneration, environment and housing scrutiny panel

Key aspects of the panel's work were allocated to working groups and these are detailed in a separate section of this report.

The panel paid particular attention to transport and highways matters. This included the updating of the Local Transport Plan and proposed junction improvements within the borough. The latter was also the subject of a call in. The panel raised concerns about the design of the junctions and they felt pedestrian and cyclist safety was paramount in any new junction improvement.



Regeneration and economic growth plans were examined by the panel, including Grimsby and Cleethorpes Town Centre development plans which were welcomed by the panel. The ambitions for the borough and the infrastructure projects which had already been delivered were acknowledged.

There were four call ins considered by the panel throughout the year. The potential closure of the public conveniences in Cleethorpes was referred to a working group for in-depth analysis and discussion.

Cabinet's decision to increase the seasonal closure of Humberston Fitties Chalet Park from two months to four months due to flood risk was called in. After hearing representations from chalet owners, council officers, the Environment Agency and the external company who had produced the flood risk assessment, the panel referred the decision back to Cabinet for re-consideration and the panel's recommendation to retain the two month closure was accepted.

The panel monitored the performance of the Regeneration Partnership and provided suggestions for improvement. The panel welcomed the reducing number of

*"The panel takes a leading role in scrutinising progress and contributing to policy on the key areas of economic development, highways and customer-facing neighbourhood services"*



*Councillor Philip Jackson  
Chair*

casualties on NEL's roads but challenged the rate of progress against peer-group highways authorities.

The panel also considered:

- the housing assistance policy
- the green space strategy
- the highways strategy.
- an update on the work of Develop NEL
- continued monitoring of the Saltmarsh in Cleethorpes
- the process for reclaiming the cost of damage to street furniture
- A18 Road Closure
- the proposed Shoreline Housing Partnership Merger

The following work will be carried forward into next year's scrutiny work programme:

- South Humber Inward Investment Programme
- Gypsy and Traveller provision
- Local Transport Plan
- Bereavement Services
- Energy Services Company
- Environment policy
- Highways Schemes



## Safer and stronger communities scrutiny panel

During the year the panel's focus has widened to include issues relating to the 'stronger' element of the panel's terms of reference.

A common theme throughout the year has been developing relationships with external partner organisations who contribute to the priority outcomes of this council, including:

- Humberside National Probation Service and Offender Management Humberside
- Humberside Police
- Sector Support NEL
- Neighbourhood watch NEL
- Citizen's Advice NEL
- Voluntary Action NEL
- Women's Aid
- Rape Crisis

The newly elected Police and Crime Commissioner, Keith Hunter, accepted the



panel's invitation to attend its September meeting. Although only in post since May, Mr Hunter gave Members a clear account of what he wanted to achieve during his term of office. The panel were particularly impressed with plans to delegate more funding to local crime reduction

partnerships, bringing policing decisions closer to communities. The Commissioner re-visited in March 2017 and was able to show progress on his plans and reassure the panel of his commitment to neighbourhood policing.

The panel had the opportunity to input into the refreshed Community Safety Partnership Plan in July 2016. As a result of strong recommendations being made to partners, there is now a commitment to developing cross-partner processes for sharing information to support crime reduction.

*"The panel has devoted time and energy in hearing from public sector and voluntary organisations providing support for our communities. We look forward to using this research to sponsor greater community cohesion and partnership working"*



*Councillor Stanley Shreeve  
Chair*

The October meeting focussed on offender management and Members took an opportunity to visit the local probation service offices and met with offenders.

The following issues have also been debated:

- Community Safety Partnership performance reports
- Customer access strategy
- Voluntary community and social enterprise sector
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)
- Neighbourhood Watch arrangements

This panel is the council's designated Crime and Disorder Committee and has used this platform to continue its challenge on domestic abuse. The committee met in April 2017 and heard that partnership resources had been significantly increased. NEL would have three independent domestic violence advisors, an increase from just one. The post of domestic violence co-ordinator had also been re-established. The committee focused on robust answers to ten key questions scrutinising services to support victims of domestic abuse and received sound assurances from the partnership. Members committed to visit the 'families first' team to see first-hand how the authority supports the most vulnerable families.

As part of its work, panel members have visited partners 'on-site' to see first-hand the nature and context of the services aimed at tackling domestic abuse in North East Lincolnshire:

- Humberside Police public protection unit
- Observation of multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC)
- Blue door (Rape Crisis)
- Women's refuge

The following work will be carried forward into next year's scrutiny work programme:

- Smarter neighbourhoods programme
- Anti-social behaviour
- Voluntary community and social enterprise sector
- Domestic Abuse
- Violent crime
- Trading Standards



## Tourism, leisure and culture scrutiny panel

The focus of the Panel's work this year has been the Culture, Heritage, Leisure, Sport and Tourism commissioning programme and each of the programme's workstreams. This included current and planned support for the tourism sector in North East Lincolnshire, the developing culture strategy and the proposed closure of the Grimsby Leisure Centre Ice Rink (including a call in of the decision taken by Cabinet). The panel was particularly interested in the future of the archives collection and requested a visit to view the collection.

In addition to these the following were also considered:

- Ross Tiger
- Lincs Inspire performance reports
- Quarterly Resources reports
- Cultural Strategy
- Pilgrim Fathers (Mayflower 400 Project)
- Cleethorpes Railway Station Clock Tower
- Public Conveniences
- National Armed Forces Day evaluation



The following work will be carried forward into next year's scrutiny work programme:

- Culture, Heritage, Leisure, Sport and Tourism commissioning programme including:
  - Libraries Consultation (expected May 2017)
  - Cultural Strategy
  - Playing Pitch Strategy
  - Sports Facility Strategy
  - Tourism Strategy
  - Lincs Inspire Contract Variation/Amendment

*“The work of this panel focusses on the WHOLE of North East Lincolnshire as the area grows its economy. All Members will ensure that North East Lincolnshire continues to offer a broad appeal to both residents and tourists alike “*



*Councillor David Hasthorpe  
Chair*



- Archives
- Parks for People (September 2017)
- Feasibility Study for Scartho Site
- Mayflower 400 Project (Pilgrim Fathers)
- Services provided by Lincs Inspire including performance monitoring
- Public Art



## 4 Scrutiny working groups

Working groups are appointed to investigate issues in more detail and report their findings and recommendations back to the panel. Working groups are still required to scope the piece of work and identify clear objectives and benefits of the review, but there is no requirement to hold formal, public meetings. The investigation may be on a 'task and finish' basis where the review is time-limited, or carried out over a longer period.

Over the last twelve months, the following issues have been reviewed via working groups:

- Smarter neighbourhoods
- Autistic spectrum conditions diagnosis pathway
- Public conveniences
- Grimsby Leisure Centre ice rink
- Bereavement services
- Gypsy and traveller designated stopover site

Further information about each review can be found below.

### Smarter neighbourhoods working group

A working group was set up consisting of Members of the Regeneration, Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel and the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Panel to look in detail at options to contribute to around £4m of savings across services such as waste collection, environmental enforcement and grounds maintenance.

The panel looked at the waste and recycling services the Council provides and were asked to consider a set of options with varying frequency of collection and size of refuse bins with three stream box collections of varying collection frequency for further discussion and costing.

The working group visited York on the 30 January 2017 to find out about the York City, Ryedale and Harrogate Councils joint venture for waste collection to observe waste and recycling collections and disposal.

The working group spent time considering the annual budget available for grounds maintenance, enforcement and street cleaning. They reviewed what the service priorities were for the year 2017/18

The group split into sub groups to review play areas, bowling greens and litter bin provision. This work fed back into the scrutiny report. The panel considered the recommendations made by the working group and made recommendations onto Cabinet which included reduced capacity for refuse disposal, by either reducing the bin size or the frequency of the refuse collection, and the provision of adequate capacity for recycling within budget constraints, including the retention of the box containers.

This work will continue into the 2017/18 municipal year.

## Autism spectrum conditions diagnosis pathway working group

The council received a petition in September 2016. After a lengthy debate council asked scrutiny to investigate a number of issues raised by parents of children with suspected Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC). The ASC working group is made up of nine Elected Members from two scrutiny panels; Health Scrutiny Panel and Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel.

The working group want to make sure:

- children and young people in NEL receive a timely and accurate clinical diagnosis of neurodevelopmental conditions (if they want one).
- pathways to support for diagnosed ASC and other related conditions are accessible.
- roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are clear and defined.

To do this the working group is talking to parents and carers of children with diagnosed or suspected ASC and to schools to find out what their experiences are relating to diagnosis and support. They will do this before interviewing professionals and bodies and before making recommendations to decision makers. The working group held its inaugural meeting in November 2016 to scope the work. It met again in December, January and March. In January Members of the working group also met with parents from the parent participation forum. The current pathway for ASC diagnosis is under review and it is likely that this working group will continue into the 2017/18 municipal year.

## Public Conveniences working group

A working group was formed following a call in of a decision made by Cabinet to close a number of public conveniences throughout the borough.

The working group looked at the latest position with the public convenience portfolio. They discussed the paddle gate and barriers and expressed their concerns about the impact of vandalism.

Discussions were held around the current 30p tariff and the proposed reduction to a 20p charge.

Recommendations were made to Cabinet for a procurement exercise to be carried out at the earliest opportunity in order to minimise the need for closures.

## Grimsby Leisure Centre Ice Rink Working Group

At the panel's meeting on the 25th January 2017, a call in relating to the closure of the Grimsby Leisure Centre Ice Rink was considered. The Panel agreed to establish a Working Group to review the Business Proposal from the Ice Rink Community Group and see if it was a viable option to keep the Ice Rink open.

The cross party working group took place on 22nd February 2017 and received representations from the Ice Rink Community Group and Lincs Inspire Limited.

The working group reviewed the business plan, and sought clarification on aspects of funding, maintenance, structural changes,

building and business running costs, working relationships, and budget constraints.

The working group felt that given the Community Groups apparent appetite to follow the Community Asset Transfer route, the Community Group be encouraged to engage with the process and also for Lincs Inspire Limited to engage in dialogue as the current lessee of the building, for the community group to formulate a sustainable and resilient business plan to capture all costs of structural and other alterations required, so as to permit further evaluation. Its conclusions were duly reported to Cabinet and the community asset transfer route is currently being progressed.

## Bereavement Services working group

Following an update on the Bereavement services project at a meeting of the Regeneration, Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel, it was felt a working group should be set up to look more closely at the proposed procurement.

The working group reviewed the market brief and councillors were asked to comment and give their feedback.

The comments from the working group were fed back into the market consultation document and were included on the agenda for the Regeneration, Environment and Scrutiny Housing Scrutiny Panel which gave support to a consultation process to start via the website and with key stakeholders.

The project will continue to report progress through scrutiny during 2017/18.

Gypsy & Traveller Designated Stopover Site working group

A working group was set up by the Regeneration, Housing and Environment Scrutiny Panel to review the list of potential sites for a gypsy and traveller designated stop over site. The working group recommended five sites to the panel and this resulted in the panel making a recommendation on its preferred site to Cabinet, prior to an anticipated decision in the new Municipal Year.



## 5 Get involved in scrutiny

One of the key roles of scrutiny is to work on behalf of residents to address the issues that are causing concern to people who live and work in the borough. We are using this report to tell you what we have done and we want you to tell us what you think we should be doing next. Please use the contact details at the end of this report if you would like us to focus on a particular issue in future.

All agendas and minutes of scrutiny panels as well as reports from scrutiny working groups are available by following the links on our website – [nelincs.gov.uk](http://nelincs.gov.uk)

This report is also an opportunity to say thank you to everyone who has contributed to the scrutiny process over the past twelve months. To be able to function effectively, scrutiny relies on the invaluable knowledge and expertise of witnesses. Last year a wide range of individuals and organisations assisted us in our work, including:

- Service users
- ENGIE
- Police and crime commissioner
- Crime reduction partnership
- Blue door (rape crisis team)
- Women's Aid – refuge
- York City Council waste team
- Sector Support NEL

- NHS Trust
- Parent Participation Forum

But we are not content to leave it there...

Members of the public are :

- Welcome to attend scheduled scrutiny panel meetings to observe local scrutiny in action. To find out what is being discussed and what to expect please have a look at the website or contact the scrutiny team.
- Encouraged to make suggestions for future scrutiny reviews by contacting your local councillor or the scrutiny team. You can do this by email, post or telephone.
- Able to approach councillors with your views on specific issues so that these can be added into the debate on the scrutiny panels
- Able to speak on specific issues, with the prior permission of the panel chair.

Scrutiny cannot promise to form the same conclusions as you do but your comments will be acknowledged and considered.

Sometimes we receive correspondence that raise issues outside of scrutiny or the council's remit – should this happen we will forward your comments to the relevant department or organisation and ask them to provide you with a response.

If you would like further information about scrutiny, please use the contact details below:

Scrutiny and Democratic Services  
North East Lincolnshire Council  
Municipal Offices  
Town Hall Square  
GRIMSBY  
DN31 1HU

Tel: 01472 324121

Email: [democracy@nelincs.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@nelincs.gov.uk)

Website: <https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/councillors-and-democracy/decision-making/scrutiny/>