

# Annual Report

## 1. Introduction

Welcome to the annual scrutiny report, which highlights the key scrutiny activities and developments in North East Lincolnshire Council during the 2019/20 Municipal Year. The report provides a summary of the work undertaken by scrutiny in 2019-20 and outlines future work programmes.

This year's scrutiny work has been overshadowed and abruptly curtailed by the Covid-19 pandemic, impacting on finalisation of a number of important matters such as the review of enforcement services. However, it is anticipated that scrutiny will play a key role in monitoring the council's approach to recovery from the pandemic, not just for our communities but also for the local economy.

In addition to our scheduled scrutiny meetings a number of working groups and workshops have been held. Residents, partners and stakeholders have been involved in a wide range of topics such as school exclusions, food banks, a designated gypsy and traveller stopover site, partnership working to improve the health and wellbeing of the local population, and public realm improvements in the resort of Cleethorpes. This work has been overseen by the Executive and Scrutiny Liaison Board, comprising the Chairs of the five scrutiny panels, the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council. The Board coordinates task and finish scrutiny activity, which this year has focused on detailed examination of adult social care charging policy and enforcement activities across the organisation.

Members have again been keen to 'see things for themselves' and have undertaken a number of panel meetings in the community as well as 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.

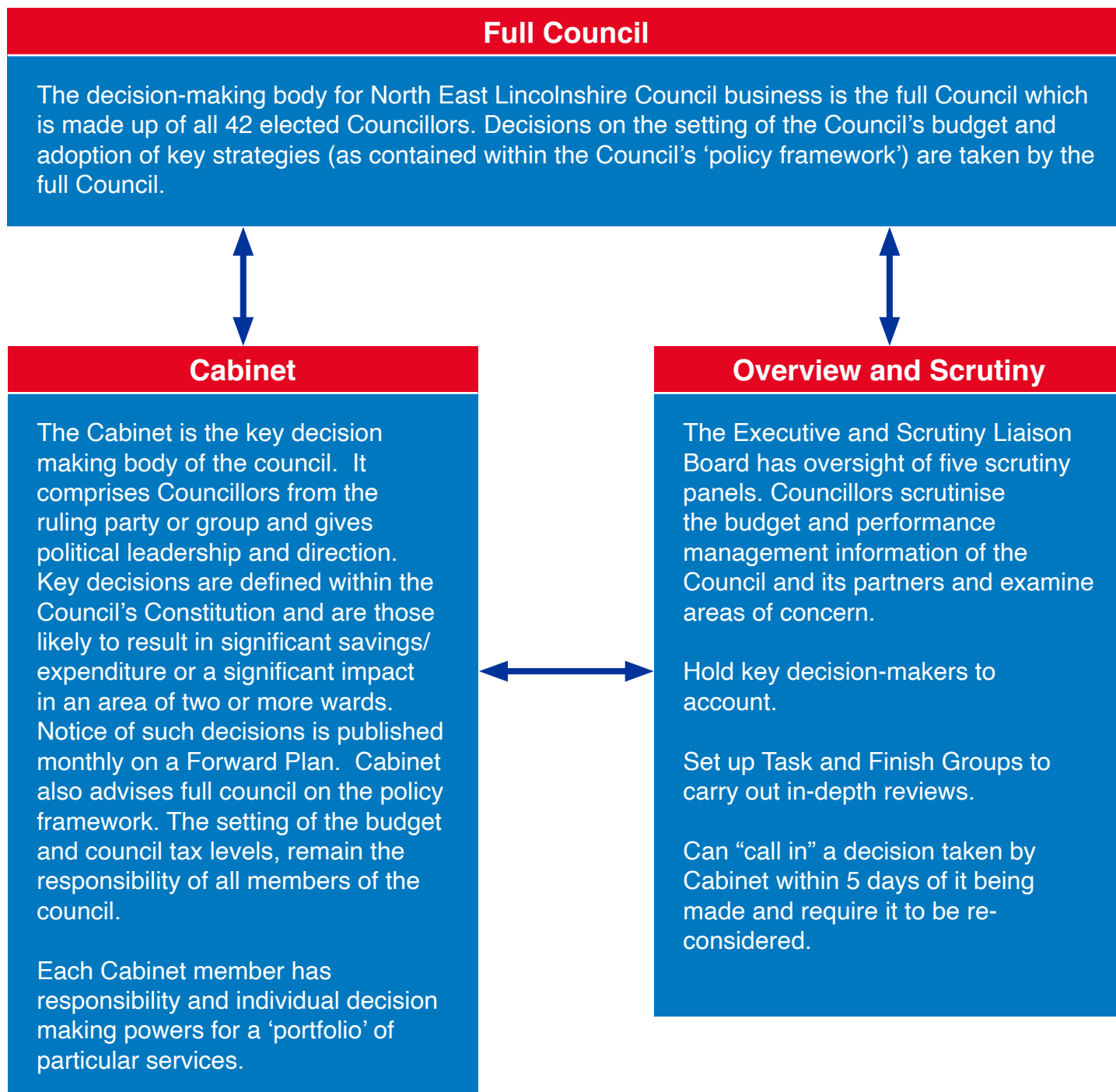
There has been a continued focus on scrutiny of the Council's planned activity which supports the outcomes framework and associated performance. Scrutiny has a key role within the Council's governance arrangements to support effective delivery of the outcome framework and provide challenge, as appropriate, to make sure that the basis for decisions being taken by the Council are robust and this work will resume in the next Municipal Year. Key areas of focus during the coming year are expected to include the response to the pandemic, monitoring of improvement within children's services, the refresh of the Economic Strategy, the review of enforcement activities, the council's response to establishing a climate emergency, the Humber Acute Services review and our strategic approach to tourism.

*Helen Isaacs, Statutory Scrutiny Officer  
Director for Communities  
May 2020*

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## 2. Scrutiny in North East Lincolnshire



Please note that decisions regarding certain functions are determined by 'regulatory' committees of the council such as the Planning Committee and the Licensing and Community Protection Committee. Such decisions do not fall under the remit of Scrutiny. There is co-ordination between Scrutiny and the Audit and Governance Committee on matters of mutual concern.

## Overview

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, including 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 Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel – Councillor Oliver Freeston

Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel – Councillor Henry Hudson

Economy Scrutiny Panel – Councillor Lia Nici

Communities Scrutiny Panel – Councillor Paul Silvester

Tourism and the Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel – Councillor Keith Brookes

## 3. Scrutiny

### Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel

The panel received an update on the outcome of Ofsted's focused visit to North East Lincolnshire's children's services. The panel will have an important role in the ongoing monitoring of the resulting improvement plan.

Throughout the year the panel received a number of questions from the public raising their concerns about the effectiveness of the Autism Spectrum Conditions access pathway. The panel was consulted on a new approach, which was subsequently agreed by Cabinet. The panel then considered a call in of this decision. Whilst agreeing to release the decision for implementation, the panel agreed that an update on progress with the new approach be received at a future meeting to ensure that outcomes for the children and young people were being met.

The voice of the child has continued to be a focus of the panel because of the importance of understanding the key issues that affect young people in our area. The panel noted that knife crime and mental health were the top two issues voted for by young people in North East Lincolnshire. Members were keen for young people to be involved in decision making and continue to provide updates at full Council meetings. They also welcomed that officers would continue to follow up the results with schools, academies and colleges in order to track what they were doing to tackle the concerns raised by young people within their schools. Some members offered to report to the governors of the academies in their wards.

The panel were updated on the number of school exclusions that were going through the behaviour and attendance collaborative. Members were concerned about the increase in exclusions, both permanent and fixed term. As a result, they attended a workshop in February, 2020, where officers presented exclusion statistics in more detail from schools across the borough. Members were able to discuss the cause of the increase and the wider impact on pupils who were excluded.

Elective home education (EHE) in North East Lincolnshire has been an ongoing feature in the panel's work programme and they welcomed the work in carrying out annual assessments for children who were home educated. However, members were concerned that the numbers were rising and they wanted to understand the increase and if there were any trends in the

*"The Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel was very active during 2019/20, meeting frequently throughout the year. Following robust examination and debate around key issues, appropriate recommendations were made to Cabinet which significantly influenced the direction and implementation of policy. My thanks go to all public attendees, panel members and officers for their diligence and contribution"*

Councillor  
Oliver Freeston  
Chair





data. Members recommended that the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Young People, in conjunction with portfolio holders across the region, write to the Government and ask them to review the DfE statutory guidance for EHE, to give an increased level of support to local authorities in order that the increased numbers of students with distinct complexities in the cohort could be appropriately supported.

The lifelong learning element of the panel focused on the numbers of young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEETs). The panel received the latest figures and looked at how they compared with neighbouring authorities. The panel was pleased with the work that was going on with the cohort of young people and welcomed the work going on within schools and colleges to get pupils job ready.

In July 2018, the Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group were inspected jointly by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission in respect of our services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The panel received a briefing on the progress to date on the resulting written statement of action. Members stressed that every child had a right to support so that they were on a level playing field with their peers. Members agreed that regular progress updates should be included in next year's work programme on the SEND inspection written statement of action.

Other areas that had been scrutinised this year included:

- Children's Social Care Statutory Complaints.
- Local Safeguarding Children Board – Annual report
- Virtual Heads Annual Report

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

- SEND written statement of action
- Additional Needs Pathway
- Improvement Plan arising from Ofsted's inspection of North East Lincolnshire's children's services

## Communities Scrutiny Panel

This year the panel committed to holding some meetings out in communities and visited the Grimsby Neighbourhood Centre in the East Marsh ward and Immingham's Bert Boyden Centre. The panel already have plans to continue this into the 2020/21 municipal year and are looking to parish councils for suitable venues.

The panel was consulted, pre-Cabinet on several important policy matters. This included the council's draft housing strategy and a key policy on public facing closed circuit television (CCTV). The panel welcomed the close partnership working in delivering these important pieces of work.

Homelessness and rough sleeping remain a key focus for the panel and the Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities (and former Chair of this panel), gave the panel an assurance that it remained a priority for him also. His report on a new homelessness and rough sleeping strategy was presented to the panel prior to being commended to Cabinet in December 2019. Officers were able to evidence where the findings and recommendations of the working group had been incorporated into the strategy. Members provided challenge on the impact of the demolition of the multi-storey flats on single persons accommodation, empty homes, 'housing first' and hostel provision in North East Lincolnshire.

Food banks remained in the panel's work programme and in October members received a detailed briefing on the provision of food banks and current food poverty in North East Lincolnshire. Members scrutinised on current assessed need, the complex nature of food poverty, hidden food poverty, seasonal pressures and new provision in the borough. The panel was reassured that the authority's approach was based on best practice elsewhere.

The panel has been involved in the development of a new waste strategy from its first considerations. This culminated in a draft local waste strategy and consultation report and presentation to members in February 2020. Members had queries answered on 'special' collection arrangements for flats and apartments; capacity of lidded recycling bins; as well as information, advice and guidance. The panel's comments were noted.

Arson had been included in the panel's work programme and was considered via a detailed report in November. The presentation was a collaboration between the council, Humberside Police and Humberside Fire and Rescue Service, who's officers attended the meeting. Members had their

*"I would like to thank officers for their professional and unflinching support of the panel. We have tackled some challenging topics this year and I am particularly proud of the way all members have worked together as a team to challenge and make improvements to high profile services. A prime example being the panel's evaluation of progress since the street scene working group. Now tasked with scrutiny of the Council's and partners' response to the COVID-19 pandemic, I feel fortunate to have continuity in membership as this panel moves into a new municipal year"*

Councillor  
Paul Silvester  
Chair





questions answered about wheelie bin fires, field fires, rough sleepers, derelict buildings and burning waste after dark.

This panel had commissioned a select committee in 2018/19 to look at the street scene. Hence, a special meeting in December was dedicated to considering a 12-month update on progress made on the 19 recommendations and findings. Each of the recommendations from the select committee was considered in turn. Everyone, including officers; partners; parishes and community groups had worked hard to get the panel to where it was, with just six recommendations remaining for the panel to monitor as part of its forward work programme.

A detailed update on progress with the local cycling and walking strategy prompted much interest. Members brought their own experiences to inform the debate and members were particularly keen that children, young people and schools should be engaged with during the consultation period.

The panel's views were sought on a proposed depot rationalisation and development of a single site to improve community recycling facilities in North East Lincolnshire. All members were in support of the review and thought the proposals formed a timely and welcome review of facilities that were no longer fit for purpose.

At a special meeting, the panel considered a call-in on a decision by the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport relating to bereavement services fees and charges. Following a lively debate, the decision of the portfolio holder was released for immediate implementation.

This panel is the council's designated Crime and Disorder Committee and has used this platform to scrutinise a review of the Community Safety Partnership arrangements in North East Lincolnshire. Partnership representatives from youth offending services, public health, community safety, Interserve (Community Rehabilitation Company), National Probation Service, Clinical Commissioning Group and Humberside Police attended to respond to questions and challenge.



# Scrutiny annual report 2019-20

In addition to the priority outcomes in the panel's terms of reference, the panel have also scrutinised:

- Financial monitoring reports and provisional outturn report.
- Partnership performance
- Derelict buildings (via a question to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport)

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

- Bring to recycling sites
- Community engagement/VCS gap analysis
- Monitor delivery of CCTV strategy via annual report.
- Monitor Cabinet recommendations from the Enforcement Scrutiny Working Group

## Economy Scrutiny Panel

Another busy year for the Economy Scrutiny Panel; there have been nine panel meetings and three workshops.

Topics such as South Humber Industrial Investment Programme (SHIIP) and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) necessitated a different approach and the panel held in-depth workshops on each topic to explore issues. From the LEPs, the Chief Executives of both Greater Lincolnshire LEP and Humber LEP attended to speak to members and answer questions. There was also a joint workshop with Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny colleagues. Members of the panels continued their joint work to scrutinise a review of the Council's Economic Strategy. The panels were able to evaluate and comment on the findings in the Local Economic Assessment and suggest how this may influence the emerging strategy. This work will inform a further review, reflecting the impact of the pandemic, which will take place in the new municipal year 2020/21.

Over the year, three call-ins were heard by the panel on the regeneration partnership review, a gypsy and traveller designated stopover site and strategic highways infrastructure (Tollbar roundabout). These were debated and Cabinet's decisions were eventually released for implementation. Finding a location for a gypsy and traveller designated stopover site has arguably been the most contentious issue for the panel this year. The item has appeared on several agendas and has warranted a special meeting. Ward councillors and representatives from local business have

*"The Panel's approach to SHIIP and our networking event with both the Humber and Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnerships were particular highlights for me; and something new for the panel. Thanks must go to my Deputy, Councillor Hasthorpe, for taking the reins post- December and also to the panel members for another industrious year of enthusiastic influence on progress, performance and policy."*

Councillor  
Lia Nici  
Chair





attended to make representations to the panel. While Cabinet's decision to commence a technical consultation was released for immediate implementation, it is expected that this issue will remain on the panel's radar.

The Local Transport Plan delivery plan and capital investment programme forms an important element of the panel's work programme. The panel had first sight of major capital schemes and took an opportunity to comment and influence recommendations to Cabinet.

A global focus on climate emergency was reflected by the panel with a watching brief on the council's energy and carbon programme. Heat networks were the biggest challenge in the borough but there was an intention to progress this via a feasible scheme as part of the South Humber Industrial Investment Programme (SHIIP). The panel will continue to monitor progress and development of the council's ambition to be carbon neutral by 2050.

The panel's comments and recommendations on the Housing Strategy Action Plan were submitted to Cabinet following a thorough challenge on the draft strategy. Members questioned aspects relating to empty homes, 'hollowing out', links to the Greater Grimsby Town Deal, housing growth and housing adaptation grants.

The panel strengthened its scrutiny of the Council's strategic partnership with Engie via a new performance report and the emerging improvement plan from the recent partnership review. Members raised issues relating to the remaining contract period, a previous scrutiny review, 'pay as you go' rates, accountability, meaningful performance indicators and specialist expertise. The Portfolio Holder and Director of Economy and Growth committed to improve communications and referral systems for ward councillors including a training session for all Elected Members.

An update on our Greater Grimsby Town Deal prompted questions from members on the Kasbah grant scheme, the West Haven Maltings building and capital costs. A report from the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Skills and Housing brought the panel up to date with a final scheme layout for the Garth Lane site and Fredrick Ward Way public realm improvement scheme. The panel supported recommendations to Cabinet.

The panel received reports and challenged on the following:

- Cashless access to public conveniences
- Heritage assets at risk
- Quarterly finance monitoring reports
- Outcomes progress reports

The following work remains of interest to the panel and will be carried forward into next year's scrutiny work programme:

- South Humber Inward Investment Programme
- Economic Strategy (refresh 2019)
- Energy Programme
- Housing Zone Action Sites / Playing Pitch Strategy
- Gypsy and travellers' designated stopover site

## Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel

The panel continued to monitor the Humber, Coast and Vale Health and Care Partnership, which is a collaboration of health and care organisations working together to improve the health and wellbeing of the region's population. The panel received its 'Partnership Plan' ahead of its sign off in November 2019. Concerns were raised about the shortage of health professionals, but the panel was reassured by the opportunities across the Humber to share resources and the work taking place with young people in schools to signpost them to the careers and skills they would need to work in the NHS. Members also welcomed the work going on around mental health and felt it was a step forward.

The Chief Executive of Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust (NLAG) attended a panel meeting to provide an update on the progress being made against the Care Quality Commission Improvement Plan. Members were impressed with the turnaround since the last inspection, especially with the openness and transparency culture. A further inspection had been carried out by the CQC and the outcome progress would be monitored through the panel's work programme for 2020/21.

The panel were consulted on the proposed changes to the IVF policy. While the panel welcomed the proposal, there were reservations over the no smoking element. However,

*"I would like to thank my fellow panel members and officers for their contribution to what proved to be a very interesting first year as chairman .*

*The panel has maintained its focus on the health and well being of our residents and welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the review of adult social care charging. I look forward to finishing the work programme that was unfortunately cut short due to the Covid-19 pandemic."*

Councillor  
Henry Hudson  
Chair





assurances were provided that it was in the best interests of the patients to be smoke free in order to achieve the best chances of treatment success and wider health benefits for mother, baby and the family.

The Director of Public Health Annual Report focused on place: what makes a healthy place and how it contributed to the health and wellbeing of North East Lincolnshire. The panel were concerned about air quality, particularly in the town centre; the high number of fast food restaurants and the links to obesity; and high levels of poverty in the deprived wards that impacted on health. This report will be used as a reference document when the panel look at their work programme for 2020/21.

In addition, the panel considered reports on:

- Adult Social Care performance
- Outcomes progress
- Safeguarding Adults Board annual report
- NHS 10 year plan

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

- Care homes use of A&E and the red bag scheme
- Humber Acute Services Review
- East Midland Ambulance service performance across North East Lincolnshire
- CCG commissioning intentions
- Social prescribing
- Early identification of cancer and whether enough is being done to encourage people to take up screening programmes, the screening statistics, survival rates, waiting times and if there are any clusters of specific cancers across the borough.
- Population health management (Accelerated Programme)

# Scrutiny annual report 2019-20

- NLAG update on the report published in January 2020 following the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection that took place in September 2019.
- Outcome of the Adult Social Care Charging Policy consultation (see Working Groups section of this report).

## Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel

For some time now panel members have wanted a more evidence-based approach to challenge on matters within its terms of reference. Members want to be able to determine whether outcomes for citizens and visitors to the area are improving. This year they have succeeded.

A 'dashboard' of relevant performance indicators and other data adds to financial monitoring and outcomes progress reports scrutinised by the panel. Reports were presented in August and December 2019.

Another matter closely tracked by this panel was resolved with the announcement of the appointment of a resort manager for Cleethorpes. The panel had lobbied for this post for over a year.

The Chief Executive of Lincs Inspire attended the panel's August meeting to present up to date information on facilities and the range of services provided. Summer holiday activities were also described. Members questioned about library facilities, activities for people with disabilities, the remaining contract period and governance.

International Mayflower400 celebrations in 2020 will be echoed nationally and locally. Members heard that Immingham Town Council was already working with NELC officers to secure additional funding to develop an enhanced tourism offer for the borough and support next year's events. It was hoped to attract celebratory cruise ships to the port. Immingham museum was updating its museum displays in readiness.

The panel has kept up to date on a few long-standing items in its tracking report; central library, historic vessels and archives. All of these issues remain dependent upon and connected to development and progress on other larger programmes; the Greater Grimsby Town Deal, Cultural Development Funding and other external funding from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. The panel sought assurances that its comments and influence will be sought prior to any Cabinet consideration.

*"As chairman of the panel for the past year I am pleased to bring you this report. One of our major successes has been the appointment of an operational manager for the resort of Cleethorpes, something this panel has pressed for over a number of years. We have overseen the renewal of the highways around the resort and the new buildings on Sea Road. We look forward to carrying forward our monitoring and input in the regeneration of the Kasbah and the riverhead. Hopefully the threat of the Covid 19 virus will have declined very soon and we can carry on the good work that we were engaged in."*

Councillor  
Keith Brookes  
Chair



The panel was consulted on a new Council land use policy, with consideration by the panel being an important element of the two-month consultation period. The panel sought assurances that small charities and community groups would be protected from large fees and charges and requested an update report after the policy had been in place for 12 months.

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Skills and Housing sought the panel's comments on proposals for a scheme to improve the public realm and highways around Sea Road, Cleethorpes. The panel was largely in favour of the scheme and gained assurances on provision of temporary toilets, bus stops/shelters, coach drop off points, future uses, and traffic management. The panel's comments were noted and conveyed to Cabinet.

The authority had received a major grant award of £3.2m from the Department of Digital and Culture Media and Sport to deliver a cultural development programme. The panel considered a report providing detail on the strands of the scheme. Members challenged on public art, and plans for the St James' Square public realm and the Kasbah.

The panel has also received a requested update on the Council's playing pitch strategy. Regular monitoring of priority outcomes and quarterly financial reports has been undertaken.

In addition to priority outcomes within the panel's terms of reference, the following topics will be considered for next year's scrutiny work programme:

- Libraries
- Archives
- Delivery of the culture and heritage framework / cultural development programme
- Strategic approach to tourism



## 4. Scrutiny Working Groups

Working groups, like select committees are established 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. However, unlike select committees, 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 only issue to have been reviewed via a working group was Enforcement which came from the Communities Scrutiny Panel. Further information the review can be found below.

### **Enforcement Working Group**

A working group, established by the Communities Scrutiny Panel, met from November 2019 to February, 2020 to review aspects of street based enforcement activity in North East Lincolnshire. These included current enforcement activity, where teams were based, how they functioned and whether there was a more streamlined approach to service delivery to improve the handling of referrals and complaints. The review identified nine recommendations relating to integration, capacity, communication and technology.

Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic has delayed finalisation of the working group's report, but it is anticipated that this will be reported to the Communities Scrutiny Panel early in the new municipal year, prior to being submitted to Cabinet for decision.

### **Adult Social Care Charging Review Working Group**

A working group was commissioned by Cabinet, to provide recommendations in relation to adult social care charges. The working group considered which policy proposals should be put forward for public consultation.

Over the course of the working group, Councillors heard about the law and practice as it related to charging for adult social care, the opportunities for varying charges in adult social care and how charging would impact on the cost of adult social services to the council. Local case studies and comparisons with other local authorities were provided.

The working group's report was approved at a special meeting of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel in October 2019 before recommendations for consultation were made to Cabinet on the 6th November 2019. The outcome of the consultation is due to come back to the panel prior to final decision by Cabinet early 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
- Humberside Police
- Humberside Fire and Rescue Service
- East Midland Ambulance Service
- NHS Foundation Trust

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 service or partner organisation and ask them to provide you with a response.





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

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