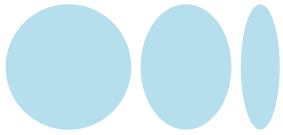




# ELEVATE EAST LANCASHIRE

*June 2005*





# 1. The Project

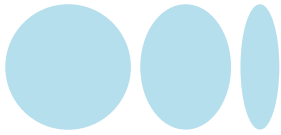
The task for Livesey/Wilson Associates has been to engage in what might be called “Blue Sky Thinking” or “Imagineering”; to come up with a series of proposals on a cultural/social/infrastructure level to accompany the vital work of Elevate in renewing and reinvigorating the housing stock of East Lancashire.

Our thoughts have been about past, present and future.

Our theme is aspiration, hope, the creation of possibilities for all.

This is not a list of To-Do’s; it is rather a series of thoughts, ideas and proposals to feed the minds and ambitions of all those dedicated folk who work for the betterment of the people of East Lancashire.

- **It IS a Wish List, a series of 'consummations devoutly to be wished'.**
- **It IS a Mission Statement and waves a flag that we will describe later.**
- **It IS a Discussion Paper; it is hoped it will inform and provoke the public servants who are tasked with looking after their public.**



## 2. The Big Idea

### *The Fashion Tower*

Only something concrete and truly impressive will have the power to talk inwardly to the people of East Lancashire and outwardly to the people of Britain telling them that something is happening in what has for half a century been presumed to be in steady decline.

This region must be talked about; by the people of East Lancashire and by the chattering classes; Chinese whispers that tell the world that this once great valley is on the way back. Appearance in colour supplements is a slight thing unless you are a B-list celebrity; but it encourages business to invest and move in.

That something concrete is a building; they are always the great signifiers, from Stonehenge to the Guggenheim in Bilbao.

We propose as the prime complement to the Housing Pathfinder work in East Lancashire a Landmark Building that restores pride and focus to one of the great regions of Britain.

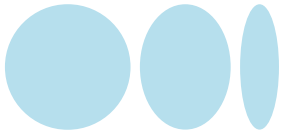
“The perception from history cannot be overcome and must not be erased; it is in fact the foundation and capital of the brand. It could be enshrined passively or celebrated actively. We propose a crucible not a museum.” (Peter Saville)

The East of Lancashire has forgotten why it is there; it is there because it shaped the world. While Manchester was the heart and Liverpool the lungs of the Industrial Revolution, Lancashire was the muscle and should not be embarrassed to remember how it created the modern world.

Some have commented that the past is a problem for East Lancs; that it denotes failure of some grand sort. Does that mean we forget; we do not believe so; “the past makes me presently aware for my future” to quote a contemporary black Manchester poet

All human beings love towers, going up them and looking out and down. Niagara Falls must be one of the most amazing natural sights known to man. It now has two monstrous towers to successfully encourage even more visitors.

The core of the Fashion Tower would celebrate the textile industry, not in the direct “artefact” way we do with our wonderful museums at Helmshore and Styal, but rather in the way Imagination celebrates the brewing of Guinness in the Storehouse in Dublin, already renowned as Ireland’s busiest tourist attraction.



## The Big Idea

### *The Fashion Tower*

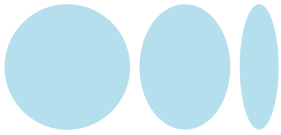
The Tower will remember that the past, the industrial revolution, was the product of the present and future; the child of fashion, of a worldwide desire for the clean coolness of cotton to replace the rough surfaces of wool and hide. Fashion is precisely the future so while remembering the past we will celebrate that future and the creativity of our young designers, a vital part of the post industrial economy.

We have had a long conversation about the project with Ralph Ardill of Imagination who designed the Storehouse for Guinness; an Oldham lad originally, he was extremely excited by the prospect of The Fashion Tower and suggested he would prefer to take an old mill and reuse it to make this statement rather than a new-build. He also loved the idea of making the other bits of the building educational and SME based.

Beyond the central/vertical story of The Industrial Revolution as Art Installation ascending to the finest bar in England's North West, looking out over Pennine Lancashire, the floors would contain incubators for new fashion-based businesses and a school of textile and fashion design, another outpost of the new wing of Pennine Lancashire University (see later chapters). Ralph changed our original proposal for a retail centre and we agree that education and SME development is the preferred use of the other sections of The Fashion Tower

He did however suggest one shop in The Fashion Tower which would sell singular and exclusive items designed only for this shop by Northern fashionistas, Vivienne Westwood, Betty Barclay, Wayne Hemmingway, Matthew Williamson, maybe even Stella Mac whose dad, of course, comes from Liverpool. One product each would be simple to arrange.

Please be reminded, we believe that we learn not only from the successes of our home city of Manchester, but also the failure; the Bar at the Top of The Fashion Tower would be designed by an architect of international repute. East Lancashire will have learnt the Bilbao lesson even if its big southern neighbour of Manchester has not.



## Two Other Buildings

We know that the various initiatives we propose need to be spread along this great valley.

### *Goal*

Amongst other considerations for us has been the role of Lancashire in the creation of the most popular and important pastime in the world.

The Museum function is well served by Preston FC but there is an absence of a theme park/interactive celebration/visitor attraction for Football which would sit perfectly in this region with its excellent motorway access.

Ten years ago Livesey/Wilson Associates worked on just such an attraction for the Globe Mill in Accrington – an entrance tunnel where your footfall makes the sound of stud on concrete, an Imax surround video of the Shrove Tuesday Football match, and a horde of other interactive ideas stolen from the various amazing North American “sports museums” in Cooperstown, Cleveland and Toronto.

We believe this kind of operation could be achieved with an international partner like NIKE or with a local partner like JJB or JD Sports and be created as the first of an international roll-out.

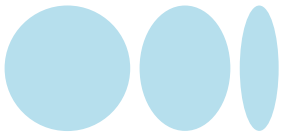
### *Extreme*

The North West has no Extreme Sports centre; our friend PY Gerbeau, has just taken his Extreme Indoor Ski slope, well established in Milton Keynes, to Newcastle and Castleford.

Why not the North West with its 7M catchment area.

There is nothing like it in the entire North West conurbation.

We believe we should try to persuade the Extreme folk to open in the North West. Extreme would complement The Rossendale and Pendle ski slopes, not compete. We believe that bringing such a concept as Extreme to the North West is just the job for East Lancashire and feeds into the SUV lifestyle proposals which feature later in this document.



## 3.Branding

### *Pennine Lancashire*

We know that the disparate elements of East Lancashire need a flag to march behind, a unifying symbol to lead them to top of the mountain known as “successful regeneration”.

We believe that flag is a brand called Pennine Lancashire.

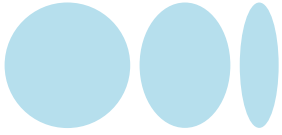
Preliminary discussion with brand experts has met with approval; they mutter about the “upmarket connotations” of the word Pennine.

We just believe in the Truth of the Epithet. “It does what it says on the tin” and as someone said to us in the course of our inquiries in East Lancashire, “Anything with a compass direction in the title is a bureaucratic concept not a place.”

We also like the way two letter acronyms work so well; LA and KL being prime examples; the most successful rebranding of recent years has been to turn Milton Keynes, the suburb with the plastic sheep, into MK, the new hip retreat for London.

And the classic iambus/dactyl construction, two syllables followed by three is why it works so well verbally, if you forgive this small piece of “prac. crit.”

Welcome to Pennine Lancashire.



## 4. Pennine Lancs Squared

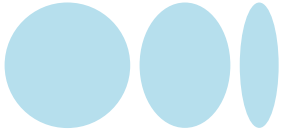
The most significant thing you can do for a town and Pennine Lancs is a linked succession of towns, is to create a public space at the centre which animates the entire town; we envisage the creation of new radical hard/soft spaces in each of the great towns along the valley.

Employing the likes of Martha Schwartz, whose Exchange Square is the true flowering of the new Manchester (and who is already being consulted by Blackburn), Andrew Grant who is developing the public spaces of New Islington in Manchester, or the brilliant Edinburgh based team of Grossmax, we could encourage the international greats of public space design to up their act as they battle unofficially with their peers.

We believe that Arts Council and Lottery grants will be available for developing such a never before seen collection of great public architecture.

There's public art and then there's public art; a successfully designed Piazza or Square not only decorates a town but as in the case of Exchange Square, Manchester, brings a whole section of a town to life. It slows the pace of people moving through the town; encouraging them to hang out and interact.

In a decade's time art and architecture students from all over the world will come to Pennine Lancashire to study public art in action; while the specialisation in public space architecture might become a centre of excellence and special discipline taught at the new campus of Pennine Lancashire University.



## 5. The Transformation of Everyday Life

### *The Canal Must Be Revisited*

We must encourage the development of Canalside cool (Canal culture) as in Deansgate Locks; destination restaurants cafes and bars.

This is all part of the American urbanist Richard Florida's approach to creating the modern desirable lived in area, bohemian, cool etc.

Please do not think the idea of name-checking Richard Florida is redundant for poor old East Lancashire; Florida's greatest example of the Bohemian thriving town, and the most moved-to place in all America is Seattle. Yes it's got Microsoft in the hills and Meg Ryan in the movie, but that's now. Twenty years ago, with Boeing in decline, Seattle was washed up and someone famously graffiti'd on the Interstate sign going South; "Would the last one out please turn off the lights."

And just look at them now.

And for further encouragement please note the climate in Seattle is slightly wetter, slightly colder and slightly foggier than Pennine Lancashire.

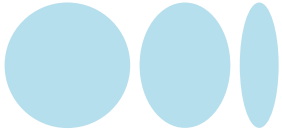
They have the water in the Sound, we have the canal.

Forget Seattle, in Skipton the canal is a major and thriving attraction. Does this only work in Yorkshire?

British Waterways must be involved at the start.

To date the regeneration of the Leeds Liverpool canal has not fully realised its leisure/arty potential; it will be Pennine Lancashire's job to push that forward.

It is only with this "bohemian culture" you create the living environment for "The Creative Class" - the only way forward for the old smokestack towns and surely East Lancashire is the world repository of the smokestack town.



# The Transformation of Everyday Life

## *Housing for artists, creatives and young professionals*

We believe that Pennine Lancashire can become the Silverlake - a dull hilltop suburb of Hollywood that has become their Hampstead - of Greater Manchester, attracting young professionals with starter dwellings for the young creative/middle classes.

We do not want to tamper with the unique identity of Pennine Lancashire but all our conversations in the region have surprised us by not being defensive about this proposal; they know that the people of the new Manchester will not swamp them but say it could balance out some of the perception problems the region has.

There is a real role for East Lancs to be somewhere that the creative young of the North West are proud to live; creative young people cannot afford to live in the lofts of the new Manchester but, they can afford to live in the Mill Lofts of the new Burnley, surrounded by canal culture and creativity.

We're not forcing something here; artists are already moving to Bacup and Ramsbottom is already a desirable suburb for young creatives in Manchester. It will take very little to move this momentum just over the mountain.

We also believe that it is not necessary to do full on architect designed dream-lofts which are in fact apartments made, expensively, to look like Manhattan Lofts.

Manhattan Lofts are in fact much simpler, essentially whitewash and fresh pine floors, full stop. This could be a prime experiment in Pennine Lancashire.

The other experiment which we believe should be investigated is eco-housing and new forms of sustainable dwellings; again preferably on the canal side and again attracting the attention of the chattering classes by being a UK first.

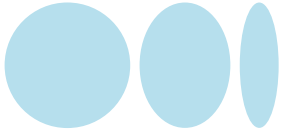
## *The SUV lifestyle*

Pennine Lancashire is perfectly equipped for the new outdoor sports and fitness culture.

We can build on the facilities already in place; from the two ski-slopes, the second on the back of Pendle hardly known of beyond the back of Pendle.

There's the Mary Townley Horse riding circuits, the Ice-rink in Blackburn; a lot more can be done for cyclists, turning our hills and dales into a two wheel paradise; and housing market renewal may result in spaces for small, specially designed extreme sports venues featuring skateboarding, BMX, roller-blading and artificial rock climbing.

The Playground for Greater Manchester and the people of Pennine Lancashire; why not?



## 6.Events

### *Chaumont to Gawthorpe*

An event strategy is vital to a vibrant new region.

We don't understand the presence of two competing and equally successful Blues festivals; They need not be joined - we're sure the personalities involved would find that tough - but the PL co-ordinators must find a symbiosis and help them to work together. These Blues festivals are unique and should be encouraged and we would suggest an involvement with "The House of Blues" franchise in the US.

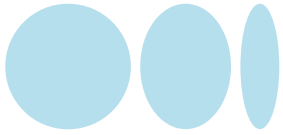
Our main proposal for a fresh event would be for a gardening event; the most popular of popular art forms and reflecting the great natural inheritance of the people of Pennine Lancashire.

Britain has its many garden festivals, but none which focus on state-of-the-art modernism in garden design; for that you have to go each autumn to Chaumont on the Loire.

We believe we can help create a British version of the Chaumont Festival and centre it in the grounds of Gawthorpe Hall.

The Food Festival is already a success and needs to be supported and grown. made very much a parallel culture event, celebrating cuisine and produce from both the sub-continent and Lancashire.

Clearly a creative culture in Pennine Lancashire requires a degree of restaurant and bar provision; the Manchester Food and Drink Festival has been essential in promoting just such a culture in that city. (A culture, by the way, which did not exist as recently as 1990; it was 1992 when Paul Heathcote began the dramatic changes in Manchester's food landscape.)



## 7. Chic Sheds

On the gardening theme we believe we can develop the already popular allotment provision in the region.

Perhaps create a stylish shed for everyman and everywoman who wants one.

The one reason that allotments usually look shabby is the ramshackle shed that is the centrepiece.

British Steel might well be interested in designing a steel frame and do colourful powder coating; maybe a domed roof not a hipped roof.

Designed by Philippe Starck maybe; not only is it good looking but the media coverage, local media coverage, will popularise the allotment system.

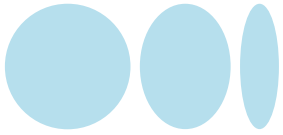
It is a way of promoting the gardening revolution and making a statement about PL's approach

Brighton have done exactly this with their Beach Huts and renovated a dowdy 19th Century image.

Another vital aspect of promoting gardening and the cultivation of home grown produce is to begin to "eat" into the junk food culture that has left the women of East Lancashire with a five year shorter life span than the UK average.

Hand in hand we suggest another School of Excellence in the region concentrating on Gardening Design. This facility would work with the excellent Myerscough College

There's an English gardening school in London, there should be one here.



## 8.Pride

We have experienced one great up and one great down in the course of our work for Elevate.

The “down” was watching a report about the Panopticons on Look North West. As well as the usual vox-pops of the “what is this modern art rubbish?” there was the frightening attitude of one woman who said “This would be alright for Manchester, but not us.”

“We’re not worthy, we’re not worthy”

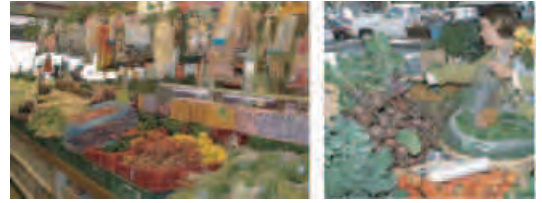
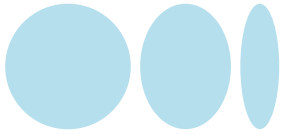
We have to make the folks of Pennine Lancashire feel they are the equal of anyone.

The “up” was a wonderful moment. Buying our habitual copy of Interiors, the world’s leading interior design magazine, for a plane flight.

There it is - suddenly, staring you shockingly in the face - an advert for a wall covering firm and at the bottom of the page the locations it sells from; “Amsterdam, Lille, Moscow New Jersey, Toronto, Warsaw, Blackburn.”

That’s more like it; pride, we make international quality goods and our home town exists internationally.

God bless Graham and Brown.

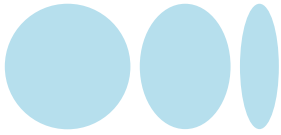


## 9. Food

In employment terms, the manufacture of food products and beverages is Lancashire's second largest manufacturing industry behind aerospace.

Build on your strengths. Grow the food festival; grow the Lancashire produce group, show off the cuisine from the sub-continent. Build a new Curry Mile (cf. Rusholme) on the underused canal.

Focus on remaking Accrington as the market town it used to be; Lancashire food and Asian food, with a special market for the products of Pennine Lancashire's allotments.



## 10. Regional Links

Manchester is the de facto major city region after the downfall of the devolution program in the North East.

Pennine Lancashire needs to be consciously part of this city region.

These days, the marketing of Manchester jumps from Manchester to the Lake District; in future Pennine Lancashire should be part of the offer.

It should be part of the offer to the new BBC folk; it's not just loft apartments on the Irwell, you can live in a loft apartment for half the price in Pennine Lancashire. And be surrounded by some of the most beautiful and dramatic scenery in Britain.

The problem to be solved is access and with "The Wall", the irresolvable traffic jams that hit you at the M60 in rush hour, public transport is the only way to connect people and place.

The main link will always be to Blackburn but that train line is often single track and needs rethinking and improving.

But we do not believe that Blackburn should be the hub for the whole of P.L. Blackburn is already on the up and will grow well with or without some of these proposals being implemented. Our concern is also with the other end of the Valley.

We had thought that a connection to Burnley, would be impossibly expensive until the East Lancs Partnership introduced us to the Todmorden Curve. The train from Victoria, Manchester to Yorkshire goes to Todmorden and then Hebden Bridge. You can change at Hebden and go straight back up to Burnley. A short stretch of line, costing less than a million we are told, would join the Victoria line to the Hebden-Burnley line and hey presto, direct access by the Pennine Lancashire Express.

In an ideal world this would be not a train but an LRT tram.

In an ideal world they would already be building the extensions to Oldham and Rochdale.

This is not an ideal world and a train service would still be enough to change the position of Burnley, Nelson and Colne in the Manchester City Region.

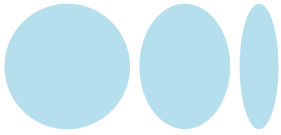
There is a bus service but it stops too often and provides unacceptable journey times of one and a half hours. Needs to have a non-stop variable.

And we believe more attention should be paid to the automotive gateways to Pennine Lancashire.

The Cut on the A56 is just what it says, a gash.

It should be landscaped and we thank Urban Strategies for pointing out the remarkable talents of Landscape artist, Andy Galsworthy, and this new school of radical landscape architecture who specialise in this kind of work.

Also coming down off the moors from the Rawtenstall direction into Burnley, the only thing that tells you that you are arriving somewhere is the Truck Run Off Lane looking like an empty tarmac field. There are ample opportunities as you come off the mountains to landscape and announce – with pride – that you are entering Burnley in Pennine Lancashire.



## 11. The Pennine Lancashire Campus

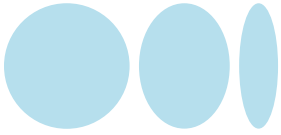
We wish we'd had this idea but we didn't and take our hats off to Urban Strategies.

The vital complement to the Creative, New Age lifestyle has to be fashionable seat of Higher Education. Efforts to bring a new campus of the University of Central Lancashire to the region should be an essential part of any regeneration plan.

Throughout our document you will find reference to centres of excellence that reflect the themes of the new Pennine Lancashire, from Fashion and Design to Gardening and Cookery.

Clearly there are other areas which would come naturally. Does Britain have a School of Community Cohesion, establishing best practice for troubled parts of the country; do we have a specialist school for Public Space architecture?

A Pennine Lancashire campus - be it a branch of the University of Central Lancashire, the new University of Bolton, the Royal College of Art from London or MIT from Boston, is a vital proposal, integrally connected to the development of this region and its people.

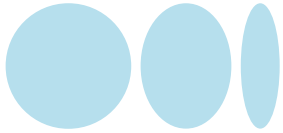


## 12. Community

On the question of community cohesion we have thought long and hard and although musing on a Museum of Enrichment to celebrate diversity, in the end felt that such an idea was just too “in your face”.

Instead, the theme of community runs throughout this report and is an integral part of each of the ideas presented. Building on Pennine Lancashire’s strengths, and the residents’ pride in their history and future, means building on the diversity inherent in the population.

Particular ideas to strengthen community ties are in the sections on IT and Little League proposals in the following PL Initiatives section.



## 13.P.L.Initiatives

Finally we believe that the Pathfinder work can be complemented in this new Pennine Lancashire by a group of PLI's - Initiatives in various areas which implement radical policies almost as trials, in our special area. Amongst the initiatives we are suggesting:

### *A Bookkeeper for All*

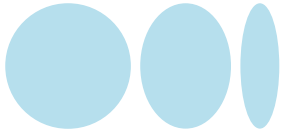
This is our major contribution to creating an enterprise culture in the region. There are thousands of people with ideas and ambition. What they have in abundance is the precise opposite of the other thing they need. A restless, creative, mind usually balks, not at risk taking, but at filling in the P&L accounts, at doing all the paper work required by government.

This PLI would provide every entrepreneur who wanted it with a bookkeeper, half a day a week, provided by Government.

### *Little League*

Sport is a major force and gives cogency to the undirected lives of some young people. This example of structured youth sport from America has not been tried in Europe much to our shock. Soccer, Cricket, Basketball, Netball, Rugby League.

The possibilities are enormous including using some of the opened up land in the central areas to build mini stadia, playing areas with bleachers for maybe 100 people and to build a major Stadium – only 500 people, we're not talking Wembley – as a focus for the PL Little League finals. As Andrew Waite points out in his submission to this report, competitions, not just in sport but in design or poetry or gardening, involve people and make them interact with other people often from other communities.



## P.L. Initiatives

### *Sound Investment*

Grants can be found to attract the creative community as in the Richard Florida scenario; our greatest creative industry is popular music; we only recently discovered that the Hollies came from Burnley and Nelson as well as from Salford.

That creative culture must be encouraged not just for itself, but for the fostering of the creativity culture that will replace the myth of the “dark satanic mills” (incidentally, a reference to Oxford and Cambridge, the mills that in Blake’s mind ground out enlightenment reason - not Ozzy and Colne. This easy put down that is a misreading of a poem written before anyone had built the bright shining redbrick mills of the 19th Century, will be firmly corrected in one corner of The Fashion Tower.)

The job of public intervention in the arts is to give our artists a route to market; for musicians that is finding them somewhere to play.

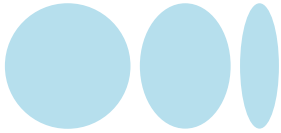
Every pub, bar and club in the country would put bands on on a Tuesday night (or even a Friday night) cause the band and their mates would put up the bar take by £50.00

The disincentive is that hire of PA and Lights costs around £200.00 and negates the investment.

We propose that PL could buy, with government/Lottery/Arts Council assistance approx 50 PA/Lights combos and install them in clubs and bars willing to run weekly gigs for young musicians, from rock to rap, from blues to bhangra.

The equipment would remain the property of PLI and if the club/pub/bar renege on its promise of providing a platform for young musicians, the equipment would be shipped to next place on the waiting list.

Further discussions have led us to ask exactly the same question as to what assistance of this kind can be found for youth theatre and dance groups and this could form part of the same initiative.



## P.L. Initiatives

### *Local Heroes*

A series of lectures and interviews with local folks who have made good; show the possibilities for the young people of PL.

A recent film showing and lecture by Blackburn's esteemed film director, Michael Winterbottom, shows just how affecting and infectious the sight of one of yours who now regularly walks up the red carpet at Cannes can be.

The task is to tell our kids there is hope, there are dreams that can be reached.

We would suggest two day visits allowing maybe two or three sessions spread along the valley, Celebrity Interview style, with Q&A's for the kids.

Hello Alistair Campbell, Vivienne Westwood, Krishna Guru-Murthy, Jeannette Winterson, Paul Abbott, the ubiquitous Mr. Hemmingway and a return trip from Michael Winterbottom for the Northern Premiere of his next film, "The Life and Times of Tristram Shandy."

### *Software and the Digital Economy*

We believe that developments in this area are vital to move PL gracefully and purposefully into the digital age.

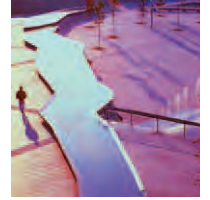
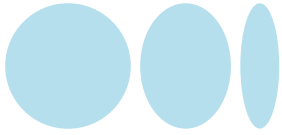
The role of intervention in this area is best summed up by an educational initiative taken by the Indian Government in the mid 1960's which turned a nation of bookkeepers into the software giant of the third world.

Also Philip Coen's espousal of the new world of Wi-Max is another interesting contribution in the Appendix section.

Peter Fowler, former Professor of IT at Liverpool University, states "The new technologies are key to economic success in the new century – those who are skilled in any one of those converged digital industries skillsets, each of which is increasingly underpinned by IT and the communications technologies, are primed for successful employment.

"Elevate has a real opportunity to build on the various pilot projects in the North West and understand that communications technologies – the access to broadband – together with the means of exploiting these for community cohesion – the creation of small groups contextualised in holistic partnerships – can act as transforming agencies for the housing estates it creates. And give the whole programme its USP.

It is much to be desired, however difficult, to force all new housebuilders to enable the new Pennine Lancashire homes with high speed connectivity. Inside toilets are not the holy grail any more.



## 14. The People in Charge

We did not know what to expect when we embarked on our round of meetings with executives from the various local authorities and organisations. How many scare stories are there of local politicians and civil servants being pen-pushers and time-servers for whom the idea of ambition is to hope their football team don't lose by more than two goals.

In fact we were shocked by the talent, imagination and resolve of everyone we met and would like to thank them for all their input. They all display an ambition for their people which is exemplary.

We do not believe the Pennine Lancashire Project needs any new committees or quangos merely a co-ordinating force to harness all their talents.

Put simply the executives and their lieutenants are gifted and committed, and as such the future looks rosy.

*Yvette Livesey and Anthony Wilson*

