

# Council Forum

Thursday, 20 April 2017

18:00

Council Chamber, Blackburn Town Hall,

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## AGENDA

### PART I: ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PUBLIC

- 1 **Chief Executive to read the notice convening the meeting**
- 2 **Prayers by the Mayor's Chaplain**
- 3 **Apologies for Absence**
- 4 **Minutes**  
To receive and confirm the Minutes of the Finance Council meeting held on 27th February 2017  
**MINUTES Finance Council 27th February 2017** 5 - 16
- 5 **Declarations of Interest**  
A form is attached.  
**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FORM** 17 - 18
- 6 **Mayoral Communications**
- 7 **Council Forum**  
To consider questions from members of the public received under Procedure Rule 10.
- 8 **To consider motions submitted under Procedure Rule 12. One Notice of Motion has been submitted under Procedure Rule 12 as follows:**

*'This Council calls on the Government to abandon its 'National Funding Formula' proposals, and to make a commitment to maintaining schools' funding so as to ensure both sustainability and the quality of our children's education.*

*On average every primary school pupil in England stands to lose approximately £400 in funding and every secondary school pupil stands to lose approximately £550 per pupil. Many schools in Blackburn with Darwen will lose considerably more than these averages. Children across our borough will lose out as a result of these proposals and this*

*Council condemns the short-sighted failure to recognise the importance to the economy of investing in our next generation’.*

Proposed by: Cllr Dave Harling,  
Seconded by: Cllr Damian Talbot.

<b>9</b>	<b>The Mayoralty 2017/18</b>	
	Report of the Leader	
	<b>The Mayoralty 2017-18</b>	<b>19 - 20</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Treasury Management Update re: Payment of Employer Pension Contributions to the Lancashire Local Government Pension Fund</b>	
	Report of the Director of Finance and IT.	
	<b>Treasury Management Update - Payment of Employer Pension Contributions to the Lancashire Local Government Pension Fund</b>	<b>21 - 24</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Policy and Corporate Resources Committee</b>	
	Report of the Chair and Vice Chair of Policy and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
	<b>Policy and Corporate Resources Committee</b>	<b>25 - 26</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Reports of Executive Members with Portfolios</b>	
<b>12.1</b>	<b>Leader</b>	
	Leader	<b>27 - 30</b>
<b>12.2</b>	<b>Children’s Services</b>	
	Children's Services	<b>31 - 32</b>
<b>12.3</b>	<b>Environment</b>	
	Environment	<b>33 - 34</b>
<b>12.4</b>	<b>Leisure, Culture and Young People</b>	
	Leisure, Culture and Young People	<b>35 - 38</b>
<b>12.5</b>	<b>Neighbourhood and Prevention Services</b>	
	Neighbourhood and Prevention Services	<b>39 - 40</b>
<b>12.6</b>	<b>Resources</b>	
	Resources	<b>41 - 42</b>
<b>12.7</b>	<b>Schools and Education</b>	
	Schools and Education	<b>43 - 44</b>
<b>12.8</b>	<b>Regeneration</b>	

	<b>Regeneration</b>	<b>45 - 48</b>
<b>12.9</b>	<b>Health and Adult Social Care</b>	
	<b>Health and Adult Social Care</b>	<b>49 - 50</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>To consider any questions received from Members under Procedure Rule 11.</b>	

**PART 2: ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE**

Date Published: Monday, 10 April 2017  
Harry Catherall, Chief Executive



**FINANCE COUNCIL**  
**Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

**PRESENT** – *The Deputy Mayor Councillor Rigby C., (in the Chair), Councillors: Ali, Bateson, Brookfield, Casey, Connor, Daley, Davies, Desai, Entwistle, Foster D, Foster K, Gee, Groves, Gunn, Hardman, Harling, Hollings, Hussain I, Hussain S, Jan-Virmani Y, Kay, Khan M, Khan Z, Khonat, Lee, Liddle, Mahmood A, Mahmood Q, Marrow, McFall, McGurk, Mulla, Murray, Nuttall, Oates, Patel, Pearson, Rigby J, Riley, Shorrocks, Sidat, Slater Ja, Slater Jo, Slater Ju, Slater N, Smith D, Smith J, Surve, Talbot, Tapp, Taylor, Vali, Whittle and Wright.*

**RESOLUTIONS**

**63 Notice Convening Meeting**

The Chief Executive read the notice convening the meeting.

*At this point of the meeting a minute's silence was observed in memory of Councillor John Roberts.*

**64 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Akhtar H, Akhtar P, Fazal, Hussain F, Humphrys, Johnson and Maxfield.

**65 Minutes of the Council Forum Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2017**

**RESOLVED** – That the Minutes of the Council Forum meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> January 2017 be agreed as a correct record.

**66 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Ron Whittle declared an interest in Agenda Item 8 – The Robustness of the 2017/18 budget and the Recommended Level of Reserves in respect of 6.4.1(Pensions – Council representatives on LCC Pensions Committee).

**67 Mayoral Communications**

The Deputy Mayor reminded Members that tickets for the Mayor's Ball were available from the Mayor's Office.

**68 Treasury Management Strategy, Prudential Indicators, and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy 2017/18**

Members were reminded that the Council was required to approve a Treasury Management Strategy before the start of each financial year. It also had to set Treasury and Prudential Indicators and a Policy for determining a “prudent” level of Minimum Revenue Provision for repayment of debt which was consistent with the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

**RESOLVED** – That Finance Council:

- a) Approve the proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2017/18, including Treasury Management Indicators, as outlined in Appendix 1;
- b) Approve the proposed Prudential Indicators for 2017/18, as outlined in Appendix 2; and
- c) Approve the proposed policy for determining the Minimum Revenue Provisions (MRP) for repayment of debt as outlined in Appendix 3.

**69 The Robustness of the 2017/18 Budget and the Recommended Level of Reserves**

Members received a report which advised that Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 placed a statutory requirement on the Council’s Chief Financial Officer to report on:

- a) The robustness of the estimates within the overall budget, and
- b) The adequacy of the proposed level of financial reserves

In setting the Budget for 2017/18, Council was required to have regard to this report when making its budget decisions.

The information provided was to assist Members in their review of the overall Revenue Budget and Capital Programme and to provide assurance to them that financial advice had been provided throughout the budget setting process.

**RESOLVED** – That Finance Council note that:

- a) An overall assessment of the current budget and the assumptions on which this was based, as well as future budget proposals, savings plans and activity forecasts, had identified that whilst there were risks, the overall budget provisions were considered sufficient to meet the Council’s legal responsibilities and obligations; and

- b) A review of risks, mitigations and contingencies had also been undertaken alongside the review of reserves and provisions.

Finance Council was recommended to consider the assessment by the Director of Finance and IT of;

- c) The robustness of the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2017/18 (as outlined in the report of the Executive Member for Resources); and
- d) The adequacy and recommended level of proposed financial reserves be noted.

**70 Revenue Budget 2017/18, Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme 2017-2020**

The Executive Member for Resources, Councillor Andy Kay, on behalf of the Labour Group, presented proposals for the Budget Strategy, the proposals for the Revenue Budget 2017/18, and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the Capital Programme for 2017-20.

The Council, like most local authorities across the country, was experiencing an ongoing period of unprecedented financial pressure and challenge as a result of the Government's extended programme of austerity, combined with significant increases in demand for public services.

The balanced budget for 2016/17 and MTFS approved at Finance Council on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 was predicated on some very challenging assumptions including;

- Delivery of the balance of the £26.0m savings programme agreed in September 2014 (£10.2m)
- Delivery of a further 'in-year' savings programme of £3.6m in order to balance the budget in 2016/17
- Development of a £15.0m savings programme during 2016/17 to be fully delivered by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018, including workforce and commercial strategy reviews
- An increase in Council Tax for the first time in 5 years by 1.99%, with further assumed increases of 1.99% in each of the following years through to 2019/20
- Introduction of the Adult Social Care Precept of 2% in each of the years through to 2019/20

As 2016/17 has progressed, further pressures had emerged that were not built into the MTFS, including;

- rising demand in Adult Social Care and Children's services, with increases in both the volumes of people using these services and in the complexity of their needs
- the impact of the increase in the National Living Wage on social care providers which has ultimately increased the costs borne by the Council for which there has been no extra government funding.
- increases in pay and non-pay inflation and in the cost of employer pension contributions
- the impact of continuing Welfare, Education and NHS reforms

To address these pressures, both earmarked and unallocated reserves in 2016/17 had been used, but as some of these additional costs were of a recurring nature, they required further support in 2017/18 and beyond and as such would need to be met from further savings.

Much progress had been made since the last Finance Council to develop, agree and implement a savings programme to close the budget gap to which all teams, departments and portfolios had contributed. This culminated in the £15.0m efficiency programme presented to, and approved by Council Forum on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016.

Given that the Government was currently developing mechanisms to significantly change the way Councils were funded from 2020 onwards, the MTFS presented would focus on the period to 2019/20 until more clarity was provided on this over the next 12 months.

The paper set out the Labour Group's proposed Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and associated Council Tax level for 2017/18 together with the MTFS for the period 2017-2020 based on a review of the existing assumptions and data to reflect the most current information available.

Barring exceptional circumstances, and subject to the normal statutory consultation process for the Local Government Finance Settlement, the Government expected the provisional figures to be the amounts presented to Parliament each year. As such the MTFS includes Government funding based on the Secretary of States' proposed allocations up to 2019/20.

The report also set out the other key issues for Resources in terms of the Local Government Finance Settlement, Core Spending Power, Settlement Funding Assessment, Revenue Support Grant, Local Share of Business Rates, Top Up, Council Tax, Local Council Tax Support, Housing Benefit Admin Grant, New Homes Bonus, Improved Better Care Fund and Adult Social Care Support Grant. Key issues also included the Dedicated Schools Grant and Education



Services Grant Funding, Public Health, Business Rates, Growth Agenda and Fees and Charges.

In terms of the key issues around expenditure, given the scale of the financial challenge throughout the course of 2016/17, Executive Members and Officers had continued to review all services and developed options to deliver budget reductions as part of the £15.0m savings programme.

The development of the approach, strategies and options to manage costs within the resources available was presented to Policy Council in December 2016 and key decisions were taken to alleviate and assist in closing the budget gap. Despite the efforts of Executive Members and Officers, the scale of the budget reductions required in 2017/18 and beyond, combined with those already implemented since 2010, would lead to more significant reductions in the services provided to residents of the Borough.

The breakdown of the £15m Savings Programme by portfolio and by savings type were summarised at Appendix C(ii).

As reported to Finance Council last year, given the scale of the funding reductions it was unfortunate but inevitable that there had been job losses, including compulsory redundancies, although through close working with staff and the Trades Unions these had been kept to a minimum. As the savings programme progressed, this would continue to be the case.

The Workforce Review Programme established in November 2015, had worked throughout 2016/17 to support the savings programme and would continue to do so until the summer of 2017. This had been a rolling programme extending to all portfolios, departments and teams and covering all roles and grades of staff, looking at 'job family' groupings and the impact on departments of the introduction and full utilisation of modern technology and new ways of working.

An overview of some of the most significant cost pressures was detailed in the report and covered:

- Apprentice Levy
- Portfolio Budget Pressures in particular in relation to Health and Adults Social Care, Children's Services and Environment
- Pensions
- National Living Wage

In light of the draft settlement for 2017/18, the financial constraints on the authority and the requirement to continue with further reductions in net expenditure each year, the Leader and the Executive Members would continuously review the allocation and use of resources. This would include

continued review of all expenditure and income budgets, of contractual commitments and property holdings and they would work with officers to implement the recommendations of the Workforce Review programme, set in the context of the Council's statutory responsibilities and corporate priorities.

A Capital Programme for 2017 to 2020 of £48.6m was also recommended to the Finance Council for approval as detailed at Appendix D. The programme recognised the importance of investment in the Borough and the impact that the schemes themselves would have on the regeneration and economic growth of the area in the future.

As noted in the report 'The Robustness of the 2017/18 Budget and the Recommended Level of Reserves', the Director of Finance and IT was recommending to Finance Council that the minimum level of Unallocated Reserves for 2017/18 was set at £4.0m.

For Council Tax the assumptions made within the budget proposals, in line with Government's assumptions for 2017/18, were that the Council would increase Council Tax in 2017/18 by 4.99% reflecting;

- 1.99% - general increase in Council Tax to cover increases in the cost of Council services
- 3.00% - to assist it in meeting expenditure on adult social care functions

The MTF5 2017 to 2020 has been reviewed and updated, incorporating the indicative funding allocations for 2018/19 and 2019/20 included in the Government's multi-year settlement "offer" which was accepted by the Council in October 2016 and including other projections, forecasts and assumptions as outlined in Appendix E.

The proposed revenue Budget Strategy would continue to focus on delivering the Council's priorities and will try to minimise the impact of spending cuts through the delivery of quality efficient and effective services to, and for, the citizens of this Borough, whilst ensuring the Council operated within the financial constraints imposed by central government.

Following debate there then followed a recorded vote, with Councillors voting as follows:

**For**

*Councillors: Bateson, Brookfield, Casey, Davies, Desai, Entwistle, Groves, Gunn, Harling, Hollings, Hussain I, Hussain S, Jan-Virmani, Kay, Khan M, Khan Z, Khonat, Liddle, Mahmood A, Mahmood Q, McFall, McGurk, Mulla, Nuttall, Oates, Patel, Riley, Shorrock, Sidat, Smith D, Smith J, Surve, Talbot, Taylor, Vali, Whittle, Wright.*

**Against**

*Councillors: None*

**Abstention**

*Councillors: Ali, Connor, Daley, Davies, Foster D, Foster, F, Gee, Hardman, Lee, Marrow, Murray, Pearson, Rigby C, Rigby J, Slater Ja, Slater Jo, Slater Ju, Slater N, Tapp.*

**71 Council Tax for 2017/18**

A report was submitted on the Council's requirement to set amounts of Council Tax before 11 March in the financial year preceding that for which it was set.

In setting its Council Tax requirement, the Council had to take into account any funding from reserves, income it expected to raise and general funding it would receive from Government as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement.

In setting its Council Tax requirement, the Council took into account any funding from reserves, income it expected to raise and general funding it would receive from Government as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement.

The Council was also required to set a basic amount of Council Tax for the financial year 2017/18. The Council Tax was set on the basis of:

- a) The precept on the Collection Fund issued by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire.
- b) The precept on the Collection Fund issued by the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority.
- c) The Borough Council's precept on the Collection Fund, which is dependent on two factors:
  - (i) Its Council Tax requirement, and
  - (iv) The precepts issued by the seven Parish / Town Councils.

The Council was recommended to approve the draft resolution setting the Council Tax for 2017/18, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report submitted.

Following discussion, Finance Council moved to a recorded vote, with

Councillors voting as follows:

**For**

*Councillors: Bateson, Brookfield, Casey, Davies, Desai, Entwistle, Foster D, Foster K, Groves, Gunn, Harling, Hollings, Hussain I, Hussain S, Jan-Virmani, Kay, Khan M, Khan Z, Khonat, Liddle, Mahmood A, Mahmood Q, McFall, McGurk, Mulla, Nuttall, Oates, Patel, Riley, Shorrocks, Sidat, Smith D, Smith J, Surve, Talbot, Taylor, Vali, Whittle, Wright.*

**Against**

*Councillors: None*

**Abstention**

*Councillors: Ali, Connor, Daley, Gee, Hardman, Lee, Marrow, Murray, Pearson, Rigby C, Rigby J, Slater Ja, Slater Jo, Slater Ju, Slater N, and Tapp.*

**RESOLVED -**

1. That it be noted that on 30th January 2017, the Council calculated the Council Tax Base for the year 2017/18 in accordance with regulations made under Section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the Act):
  - a) 33,911.43 being the Council Tax Base for the whole of the Council area (Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Act); and
  - b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates, as detailed in Appendix 2.
2. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2017/18 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
  - a) £392,201,388 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) (a) to (f) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
  - b) £345,142,900 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) (a) to (d) of the Act.
  - c) £47,058,488 being the amount by which the aggregate at 2 (a) above exceeds the aggregate at 2 (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the

formula in Section 31B of the Act).

- d) £1,387.69 being the amount at 2 (c) above (Item R) divided by the amount at 1(a) above (Item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
- e) £153,844.46 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (see Appendix 2).
- f) £1,383.15 Being the amount at 2 (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 2 (e) above by Item T (1 (a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.

3. That it be noted that for the year 2017/18 the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire and Lancashire Combined Fire Authority have issued precepts to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as indicated in the tables below.

4. That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the tables below as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2017/18 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

a) Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

<u>Part of the Council's Area</u>	<u>Valuation Bands</u>							
	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>H</u>
Eccleshill Parish	£938.76	£1,095.22	£1,251.68	£1,408.14	£1,721.06	£2,033.98	£2,346.90	£2,816.28
Livesey Parish	£927.35	£1,081.90	£1,236.46	£1,391.02	£1,700.14	£2,009.25	£2,318.37	£2,782.04
North Turton Parish	£932.76	£1,088.22	£1,243.68	£1,399.14	£1,710.06	£2,020.98	£2,331.90	£2,798.28
Pleasington Parish	£925.97	£1,080.30	£1,234.63	£1,388.96	£1,697.62	£2,006.28	£2,314.93	£2,777.92
Tockholes Parish	£944.94	£1,102.43	£1,259.92	£1,417.41	£1,732.39	£2,047.37	£2,362.35	£2,834.82
Yate and Pickup Bank Parish	£936.85	£1,093.00	£1,249.14	£1,405.28	£1,717.56	£2,029.85	£2,342.13	£2,810.56
Darwen Town Council	£930.99	£1,086.16	£1,241.32	£1,396.49	£1,706.82	£2,017.15	£2,327.48	£2,792.98
All other parts of the Council's area	£922.10	£1,075.78	£1,229.47	£1,383.15	£1,690.52	£1,997.88	£2,305.25	£2,766.30

## b) Major Precepting Authorities

Precepting Authority	Valuation Bands							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Lancashire Police Authority	£110.30	£128.68	£147.07	£165.45	£202.22	£238.98	£275.75	£330.90
Lancashire Combined Fire Authority	£43.67	£50.94	£58.22	£65.50	£80.06	£94.61	£109.17	£131.00

## c) Aggregate Council Tax

Part of the Council's Area	Valuation Bands							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Eccleshill Parish	£1,092.73	£1,274.84	£1,456.97	£1,639.09	£2,003.34	£2,367.57	£2,731.82	£3,278.18
Livesey Parish	£1,081.32	£1,261.52	£1,441.75	£1,621.97	£1,982.42	£2,342.84	£2,703.29	£3,243.94
North Turton Parish	£1,086.73	£1,267.84	£1,448.97	£1,630.09	£1,992.34	£2,354.57	£2,716.82	£3,260.18
Pleasington Parish	£1,079.94	£1,259.92	£1,439.92	£1,619.91	£1,979.90	£2,339.87	£2,699.85	£3,239.82
Tockholes Parish	£1,098.91	£1,282.05	£1,465.21	£1,648.36	£2,014.67	£2,380.96	£2,747.27	£3,296.72
Yate and Pickup Bank Parish	£1,090.82	£1,272.62	£1,454.43	£1,636.23	£1,999.84	£2,363.44	£2,727.05	£3,272.46
Darwen Town Council	£1,084.96	£1,265.78	£1,446.61	£1,627.44	£1,989.10	£2,350.74	£2,712.40	£3,254.88
All other parts of the Council's area	£1,076.07	£1,255.40	£1,434.76	£1,614.10	£1,972.80	£2,331.47	£2,690.17	£3,228.20

## Town and Parish Council Precepts

Parish / Town Council	2016/17			2017/18				Council Tax Increase / (Reduction) CT Band D 17/18 less 16/17 £
	Tax Base	Precepts	Council Tax	Tax Base	Precepts	Grant	Council Tax	
		£	Band D £		£	£	Band D £	
Eccleshill Parish	92.55	2,328.00	25.15	93.16	2,328.00	413.50	24.99	(0.16)
Livesey Parish	1,851.65	14,629.00	7.90	1,859.20	14,629.00	1,371.00	7.87	(0.03)
North Turton Parish	1,668.45	28,310.00	16.97	1,693.33	27,069.00	1,241.00	15.99	(0.98)
Pleasington Parish	256.00	1,450.00	5.66	249.72	1,450.00	0.00	5.81	0.15
Tockholes Parish	208.75	7,018.52	33.62	211.13	7,233.46	146.00	34.26	0.64
Yate and Pickup Bank Parish	133.23	3,040.00	22.82	137.35	3,040.00	260.00	22.13	(0.69)
Darwen Town Council	7,258.30	98,095.00	13.51	7,353.32	98,095.00	23,905.00	13.34	(0.17)
<b>TOTAL / AVERAGE</b>	<b>11,468.93</b>	<b>154,870.52</b>	<b>4.64</b>	<b>11,597.21</b>	<b>153,844.46</b>	<b>27,336.50</b>	<b>4.54</b>	<b>(0.10)</b>

Signed at a meeting of the Council  
on the                      day of  
(being the next ensuing meeting of the Council) by

MAYOR





**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN  
ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA**

**Members attending a Council, Committee, Board or other meeting with a personal interest in a matter on the Agenda must disclose the existence and nature of the interest and, if it is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or an Other Interest under paragraph 16.1 of the Code of Conduct, should leave the meeting during discussion and voting on the item.**

**Members declaring an interest(s) should complete this form and hand it to the Democratic Services Officer at the commencement of the meeting and declare such an interest at the appropriate point on the agenda.**

MEETING:                      **COUNCIL FORUM**

DATE:                              **20<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2017**

AGENDA ITEM NO.:

DESCRIPTION (BRIEF):

NATURE OF INTEREST:

DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY/OTHER (delete as appropriate)

SIGNED :

PRINT NAME:

(Paragraphs 8 to 17 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the Council refer)





**REPORT TO: COUNCIL FORUM**  
**FROM: LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**  
**DATE: 20<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

**PORTFOLIOS AFFECTED: All**

**WARDS AFFECTED: All**

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<b>TITLE OF REPORT</b>	<b>THE MAYORALTY 2017/18</b>
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### **1. PURPOSE**

To consider recommendations relating to the office of Mayor and Deputy Mayor for 2017/18.

### **2. NOMINATION TO THE MAYORALTY**

2.1 Annual Council formally appoints Members of the Council to the office of Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the forthcoming Municipal year. The Member appointed to the position of Deputy Mayor is normally appointed to the office of Mayor in the following year.

2.2 A report on the appointment of the Mayor is submitted to Council Forum annually, and in the event that the proportionality of the Council changes going forward in a way that would affect the nomination of Mayor for a particular year, a report on this matter would be submitted for Council's consideration (note: in 2018 there will be all –out Elections, so the position will need to be reviewed then).

2.3 It is the turn of the Conservative Group to nominate the Mayor, who in line with usual practice would usually be the serving Deputy Mayor, which in this case is Councillor Colin Rigby. It is also recommended that Council Forum agree the nomination of Deputy Mayor for 2017/18.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 That in line with the usual practice of the Deputy Mayor in current year serving as Mayor the following year, Councillor Colin Rigby OBE be nominated to serve as Mayor in 2017/18; and

3.2 That the Council Forum nominates the Deputy Mayor for 2017/18.

**Mohammed Khan**  
**Leader of the Council**

**CONTACT OFFICER:**  
**Phil Llewellyn, Executive and Councillor Support Manager, Tel: 01254 585369**





<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF FINANCE &amp; IT</b>
<b>TO:</b>	<b>COUNCIL FORUM</b>
<b>ON:</b>	<b>20<sup>th</sup> April 2017</b>

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**SUBJECT: Treasury Management Update re: Payment of Employer Pension Contributions to the Lancashire Local Government Pension Fund**

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## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

Council Forum approves the Treasury Management Strategy and receives updates during the year on Treasury Management activity. The purpose of the report is to provide an update to Council on the option to be taken, following the triennial valuation of the Local Government Pension Scheme, to pay the annual deficit contributions for the next 3 years, as one upfront payment; in doing so the Lancashire Pension Fund will provide a discount for the early payment.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Council is asked to note the payment of the annual deficit contribution due for 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 in advance at the end of April 2017.

## **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

As an employer the Council makes pension contributions to the Local Government Pension Fund based on the rates that are set, following the triennial actuarial valuation of the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council pension scheme, and notified to us by the Lancashire County Pension Fund. These Employer contribution rates are set for three years and the new rates, following the 2016 valuation, commence from 1st April 2017.

The contributions we make consist of two elements;

- the first is a % rate applied to the individual salary costs of current BwD employees who have opted into the pension scheme (this is called the future service cost element)
- the second is an annual lump sum payment, made to reduce the value of the BwD pension scheme deficit. The annual payment is intended to recover the deficit over a number of years which, following the recent valuation, has been agreed at 19 years.

The Lancashire Local Government Pension Fund has outlined a range of potential payment options for employers to consider for the next 3 years including:

1. monthly payment of both of the above elements in each of the three years;

2. a lump sum payment in April 2017 of one or both elements for that year only, with payment of the other element monthly;
3. a lump sum payment in April 2017 of one or both elements for all three years;
4. some variant of the prepayment options above e.g. prepay the deficit contribution in full for all three years with the % contribution paid annually up front in each year;

The amounts involved are substantial but result in different levels of pension contribution payments dependent on the option taken as discounts will be applied for early payment.

We have considered the options and concluded that it is not appropriate to make an advance payment of future service contributions, given our staffing establishment is reducing as a result of the workforce reviews and delivery of our savings programme. Such apayment would be based on our current estimated payroll costs whereas the actual contributions to be paid, if made monthly, will be lower given the reductions in staff numbers.

The deficit payments however are fixed payments for the 3 years and are due irrespective of the size of the establishment; as such, payment in advance of the 3 annual payments that are due is financially beneficial due to an early payment discount, as outlined below;

<b>Impact of payment</b>	<b>2017/18 £'000</b>	<b>2018/19 £'000</b>	<b>2019/2020 £'000</b>	<b>TOTAL £'000</b>
<b>OPTION A</b>				
Payable each year if we pay monthly	4,773	4,773	4,857	14,403
Plus Interest cost based on 3 month rolling borrowing (range from lower and higher interest rates)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>NET COST</b>	<b>4,773</b>	<b>4,773</b>	<b>4,857</b>	<b>14,403</b>
<b>OPTION B</b>				
Payable each year annually in advance	4,673	4,673	4,755	14,101
Plus additional interest cost based on 3 month rolling borrowing (range from lower and higher interest rates)	13 – 18	22 – 51	24 – 60	59 – 129
<b>NET COST</b>	<b>4,686 - 4,691</b>	<b>4,695 - 4,724</b>	<b>4,779 - 4,815</b>	<b>14,160 - 14,230</b>
<b>OPTION C</b>				
Payable three years up front	13,507	-	-	13,507
Plus additional interest cost based on 3 month rolling borrowing (range from lower and higher interest rates)	58 – 79	62 – 146	21 – 54	141 – 279
<b>NET COST</b>	<b>13,565 - 13,586</b>	<b>62 – 146</b>	<b>21 – 54</b>	<b>13,648 - 13,786</b>

There is no requirement to take out a specific loan to fund the payment. Payment of the pension deficit is already built into the Council's cashflow forecast and is in line with the Treasury Management Strategy agreed at Finance Council on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2017 i.e. to continue to maximise the use of daily cashflow, utilising short term borrowing as required to accommodate the peaks and troughs of cashflow requirements. The interest costs outlined above reflect the estimated impact of the change in the deficit payment profile on short term cashflow borrowing costs; they have been calculated using an estimate of both continued low interest rates and also costs arising if rates were to rise.

In summary therefore, advance payment in April 2017 of the 3 annual deficit payments due in 17/18, 18/19 and 19/20 would generate a saving to the Council of between £617k and £755k over the three year period.

Legal advice has been obtained by Lancashire County Council at the request of the Lancashire Chief Finance Officers Group; the majority of the local authorities in Lancashire have adopted one or other of the options provided by the Lancashire Local Government Pension Fund.

Discussions have also taken place with our external auditors, Grant Thornton, and an appropriate accounting treatment for the transaction, along with the supporting narrative required in the statutory accounts, has been established.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The proposals outlined in the report are in line with the Treasury Management Strategy and will contribute to the savings programme required to deliver the 2017/18 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy; all of these reports were approved by Finance Council on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The cost to the Council of the pension payments, both in terms of the future service contributions and the pension deficit payments, have been included in the 2017/18 Budget and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017/2020.

The financial implications of changing the payment profile of the pension deficit payment are outlined above.

#### **6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Under the Local Government Act 2003, local authorities must determine their levels of capital investment and associated borrowing. The Prudential Code has been developed to support local authorities in taking these decisions, and the Council is required, under Regulation 2 of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 (as originally published), to have regard to the Code when carrying out its duties under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003. The legal advice obtained by LCC states that the proposal to offer an advance contribution discount is permissible under relevant legislation in respect of both elements of the contributions (referred to above).

#### **7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

There are no additional resource implications as a direct consequence of this report.

#### **8.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

The decisions to be taken do not change policy and do not require any further consideration in respect of equality issues.

## 9.0 CONSULTATIONS

The payment of the pension deficit has been incorporated into the 2017/18 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy for the three years to 2019/20 which were subject to consultation.

### CONTACTS:

Chief Officer: Louise Mattinson, Director of Finance and IT

Contact Officer: Ron Turvey, Deputy Finance Manager

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Version: 3.0



## **REPORT OF THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR OF THE POLICY AND CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**COUNCILLORS: Jim Shorrock  
Kevin Connor**

**LEAD CHIEF OFFICER:  
Denise Park**

### **Municipal year and Annual Review**

We have reached the end of a very successful municipal cycle for Scrutiny. This year has seen Scrutiny continue to utilise pre-decision scrutiny and a more collaborative and appreciative approach by each Committee. This has ensured that the Corporate Plan is delivered and the Executive held to account to ensure best use of resources in challenging circumstances.

The progressive work of Scrutiny Members over the last few years throughout a period of unprecedented austerity has ensured that the Council has been able to focus on key lessons learned to assist with the delivery of its services whilst ensuring value and best practice in everything it does.

As Members will be aware, the Annual Review of Scrutiny was to be held on the 12th April 2017, has been moved. A new date will be announced shortly and I hope as many Members as possible are able to attend. To allow Members to contribute to the review of the Scrutiny year and consider future challenges facing the Council and the Borough. I will present the outcomes of the annual review at the June Council Forum meeting

### **Policy and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee;**

Since the last meeting of Council, the Committee has held a meeting to monitor and challenge the Council's workforce review/saving targets. The Committee received a detailed presentation on how the Council was progressing on its savings targets, continued challenges and difficult decisions that are having to be made, Members will continue to work with the Executive Member over the coming months looking at options open to the Council.

At the last meeting of the Committee, Members also received an update on the Council's budget position, and how departments were progressing against identified saving targets and an update on universal credit.

### **Health and Adults Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Since the last meeting of Council, the Committee received detailed briefings on the Sustainability and Transformation Plan, Local Development Plan from Public Health leaders and Programme Leaders for these plans, and on Collaborative Approaches to Integrated Volunteering Pathways from the Director of Adult Commissioning and Personalisation and the Director of Prevention and Localities both in Committee and by way of task and finish groups, and on the back of this information, felt that it was very important that

these two key areas of work are followed throughout the next municipal year as part of an ongoing work programme.

The Health & Adults Overview and Scrutiny Committee has now completed its work programme for this Municipal Year, with Members agreeing a series of Recommendations at their final meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> March, which will be distributed to the relevant Executive Member accordingly.

### **Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee;**

The work of the Committee has now been concluded after a busy year, at the last meeting Members considered the progress of the Council's growth agenda and growing the Boroughs economy.

The Committee considered the challenges Council faced in trying to achieve its income targets through the growth agenda and what strategies were available to Officers. The Committee also looked at potential future developments and potential developments (investment plans) for the Borough and the Impact of government legislation on business rates.

### **Children & Young People's OSC**

At its final meeting, the Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee met some of the Youth MP candidates, and agreed that the new Youth MP and their shadow cabinet have their own item on the Committee's agenda throughout the new Municipal year, through which they can bring to Members attention key areas of concern from the perspective of young people.

The Committee has completed its work programme, and a series of Recommendations has been sent to the relevant Executive Members and partner organisations. Each portfolio will be invited back in the new Municipal year to report back progress made. Members also felt that there was some key issues that would continue to affect young people, and agreed that mental health would remain as an ongoing work programme area for the new Municipal year.

## REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR MOHAMMED KHAN

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> April 2017

### **National Festival of Making**

On Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> of May Blackburn will host the first national Festival of Making. As one of the original Northern Powerhouses it is only fitting that we now celebrate and showcase the best of British innovation and making within the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Blackburn town centre, Cathedral Quarter and venues in the town centre will play host to a number of different exhibitions and events and the festival is expected to bring a lot of people into the town.

This event will not only show case making but also showcase the new Blackburn with Darwen and this will be an excellent opportunity to show the rest of the North West and the UK just what is available within our borough. There are number of local businesses from both Blackburn and Darwen that are engaged, supporting and delivering content and activity over the weekend.

I can also confirm that the BBC are committed partners of the event, contributing to the festival programme and live segments of many popular BBC programmes are planned to come from Blackburn, so it is essential that the perception of our town is positive.

In the run up to the festival a big Your Call clean-up is planned for the week before and I would urge ward councillors and community organisations to get involved.

I invite all members to attend the festival and promote our borough as the great place that we know it to be.

### **Health and Social Care Transformation Update**

Thanks to all members who attended the recent councillors briefing on the local and regional plans to change health and care. I hope members found it useful. It is important for us all to have a good understanding of what the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) means for Blackburn with Darwen, what it means for the Council, especially in terms of our budget and how we, as elected representatives, can shape and influence it.

I have previously voiced concerns on whether what is happening is being explained in a way people can understand. The issues are complex and sometimes the language used to describe them is not simple enough. I am pleased to see that Healthier Lancashire and South Cumbria has published an easy to understand guide to the challenges in health and care for the region and how organisations are working together to create solutions to tackle them. This is available at [www.healthierlsc.co.uk](http://www.healthierlsc.co.uk)

There has also been a lot of good work on a local level, through Together A Healthier Future programme, to encourage people to get involved in the process. A three minute video can be found on [www.togetherahealthierfuture.org.uk](http://www.togetherahealthierfuture.org.uk). The video updates on the conversations the local change programme has been having with people and what the next steps are.

I am also very pleased to see Dr Chris Clayton being appointed Chief Officer for the Together A Healthier Future Programme following Sally McIvor's departure. I wish him well in his new role and look forward to working with him.

It is very clear there is a huge financial challenge for the region to overcome. The work both locally and regionally is aimed at meeting that financial challenge. However, given the significant funding pressure, it may prove impossible to close the £570m gap and therefore I once again urge fellow members to lobby the Government when possible.

## **Shadow Lancashire Combined Authority**

I'm sure members will share Lancashire Leaders' increasing frustration at the Government's lack of response over progress to create the Lancashire Combined Authority. A letter was sent to the Secretary of State Sajid Javid more than two months ago but we are no clearer on what direction the Government wants to take.

Members will be aware that the Combined Authority was due to be formally created at the start of April, however the Government are clearly focussing on Brexit and pushing through existing devolution deals which has unfortunately held up the process for Lancashire.

However, despite the slow progress from the Government, Leaders have been collaborating and there is real positivity amongst Lancashire council that we can achieve great things for the whole of the County.

We have been able to make progress on shaping future improvement to transport links, influencing Transport for the North and the local skills agenda following the Area Review of Further Education. We have also attracted one of the largest Growth Deal 3 allocations in the country, with millions of pounds coming to Blackburn with Darwen to go towards the Pennine Gateways project that will deliver key improvements at three of our main gateways into Blackburn off the M65 at junctions 4, 5 and 6. In addition the Combined Authority has secured over £600,000 as part of the Government's One Public Estate programme and most recently, as a Combined Authority have submitted a bid to become a Place based pilot for Sport England with £130m available for up to 10 areas.

We will continue to press the Government for answers but in the meantime Leaders will work together to make sure Lancashire has a voice at Downing Street and is a key part of the Northern Powerhouse.

## **Social Integration**

Promoting and supporting social integration is a key priority for this Council. I believe the most valuable thing we can do as a Council is to continue to have some of the best opportunities for people to get together, mix and enjoy themselves and as a result break down barriers.

That's everything from helping schools to successfully link up, to supporting high quality events and major cultural activities to running sports and leisure and youth facilities.

Another way we are doing this is supporting people who do make the borough a better place. In February, I was delighted to be invited to the One Voice Awards dinner to present the Council Leader's Award to a very deserving winner. The award acknowledges people that have promoted community cohesion through leadership.

Chris Seddon was this year's recipient. She was nominated for her work supporting the refugee community and the Blackburn YMCA. She has also served as a governor of a local school for 30 years as well as volunteering for a wide range of community activities.

Chris is a worthy winner of this award. She has done much good work over the years to promote community togetherness. She has led efforts to build bridges between different communities.

Chris is one of many people in Blackburn with Darwen who show this borough is a friendly and neighbourly place to live. Of course we have challenges, most areas do. But volunteers like Chris are doing their bit and bringing people together.

My pledge to people like Chris, to the good neighbours and community groups who make Your Call happen and make this borough a better place, is this – this Council will support you.

### **Northern Powerhouse Conference**

In February, Manchester hosted the second annual Northern Powerhouse Conference and I am delighted to report that Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council was well represented at this event promoting our Capita place based partnership and also through the Lancashire LEP and Combined Authority stand. The Northern Powerhouse represents the future in terms growth and development and I feel that it is only right that the Council flies the flag for our towns and our people at events like this.

Being part of the Northern Powerhouse conversation is essential in terms of our own growth and prosperity. By promoting and attracting new investment and business opportunities or by the opportunities opened up through greater devolution and public sector reform.

I was pleased to see our Council's Chief Executive, Harry Catherall, deliver a powerful speech to the conference on the successes of working together in partnership to achieve positive local outcomes, particularly the role of this Council in staying the course on key projects when others would not.

Our attendance at this summit not only shows the Councils commitment to benefit from the Northern Powerhouse but also our ambition to grow and develop along with the rest of North by taking up the opportunities available us.

### **National Industrial Strategy Consultation**

I welcome the publication of the Government's Industrial Strategy Green Paper. Industry and manufacturing are at the heart of our communities and contribute much to the shared heritage of both Blackburn and Darwen. Today we still the help and support more manufactures locate here.

As a consultation exercise the publication of this Green paper allows us as a local authority to give our views on the Governments policy intentions and I can inform members that as an authority we have, alongside Lancashire County Council and Blackpool Borough Council submitted our response.

I feel that the challenges of the coming months and years, especially with the uncertainties of Brexit, we cannot wait for this strategy to be implemented if we are to ensure future growth and economic prosperity.

Members will note that in recent years the Local Authority along with partners from the Local Strategic Partnership, the Lancashire LEP and the HIVE have all been working hard to help formulate and implement our Plan for Prosperity and growth plans. This strategy and any other positive actions which helps us locally from central government will be greatly welcomed.

I look forward to the publication of the Industrial Strategy White Paper later this year and I hope this Conservative Government has listened to our feedback from a place with a very long track record of being a hub for manufacturing and innovation.

### **New East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive**

I welcome the appointment of Miranda Barker as the new Chief Executive of the East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce, following the retirement of Mike Damms.

I know Mike will be missed not just by Local Authorities but the wider business community. His support to businesses and his championing of East Lancashire over his many years of service has been crucial to the successes of our economic growth and development.

Blackburn with Darwen Council looks forward to working with Miranda.



## **NUMBERS OF CHILDREN IN CARE & CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE INFORMATION**

There has been a general rise in demand across the board in Children's Services from Early Help (there are now 417 CAFs), right through to the numbers of children in care. The commission with Skylakes has had the desired effect with a considerable reduction in caseload numbers which is leading to a more timely response for our children and families. To reduce caseloads further to an acceptable level, the department is continuing to implement the social work team remodel and recruit experienced social workers.

We continue to see a rise in the number of teenagers open to the department. This group tends to have more complex issues and while we have our outstanding and nationally recognised Adolescent Support Unit, children entering care from this group are much more likely to go into more expensive agency placements and this is putting a pressure on commissioned placement budgets.

As at 4<sup>th</sup> April there are 376 children in care, 324 children subject to Child Protection Plans and 722 children with Child in Need plans. The total number of open children's social care cases has fallen to 1818, in January it was 1840, up from 1778 in October & 1686 in July. 34 children have been adopted since April 2016, and 18 children are placed in adoptive placements.

Across the financial year 2016/17, 3,780 local children and young people have been open to Children's Social Care (10% of the whole 0-19 year old population), of which 2,145 children (57% of all those worked with) were successfully de-escalated and closed to Children's Social Care during the year. Domestic violence, mental health, substance misuse and alcohol abuse, often in combination, remain the key drivers for new work for Children's Social Workers.

## **REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY (RAA) UPDATE**

The department's Head of Service for Permanence has been appointed Head of Service for the Regional Adoption Agency and will lead the regional consortium which comprises of Caritas Care, Adoption Matters, Bury Council, Bolton Council, Rochdale Council, Tameside Council, Oldham Council and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. A Regional Adoption Agency update will be shared with the Council's Executive Board in June.

## **ADOLESCENT SUPPORT UNIT IS 'OUTSTANDING'**

Following a recent Ofsted full social care inspection, the Inspector judged the Adolescent Support Unit as outstanding in all areas. In report states that *"Without a doubt, the interventions of this service have been successful in enabling young people to continue to live with their parents and have prevented a vast majority of them from becoming looked after."*

When speaking with Inspectors, the young people praised the work of the service commenting that the unit was a safe, caring and nurturing place to be. One young person said, *'I really like the staff and I enjoy coming here. I feel safe and the staff have helped me to be more positive about myself. I'd give this place ten out of ten, and I wouldn't change a thing.'*

## **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY – 8<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

The Children's Centre network played an active role in the celebration of this year's International Women's Day. Activities included supporting women to take care of their mental health, wellbeing and safety with breastfeeding celebrations, breast cancer screening and personal safety talks. The children and their parents and carers took part in an 'important women in my life' creative play session and enjoyed afternoon tea.

Similarly, Parents In Partnership (PIP) joined forces with the Apple Trees Disability Hub to provide a wealth of information on the local support services available for mothers and female carers in the borough. Mini-makeovers were on offer including nail painting, henna painting, threading, and head and hand massage. The event was a timely opportunity for families who have recently signed up to the Disability Links Information Services to visit Apple Trees and meet the staff who may support their child.

## **INVESTING IN CHILDREN UPDATE**

In Blackburn with Darwen, 21 council and commissioned services have achieved the Investing in Children Membership Award in recognition of good practice and active inclusion and dialogue with children and young people to bring about change. Since the last Council Forum report the following services have gained accreditation: Independent Reviewing Officers; Fostering Service; Children in Our Care and Leaving Care.

2017 is the 21st anniversary of the Investing in Children organisation and to celebrate and champion this work, a North West event is being held in Blackburn at Livesey All Age Centre on Saturday 20th May.

## **EARLY HELP & EARLY INTERVENTION UPDATE**

The Children's Centre network is proactively promoting the take up of the 30 hours per week free childcare with local businesses to attract working parents of 3 and 4 year olds. The scheme is being rolled out in September 2017 and from April the Early Years and Early Help service will be holding information workshops for early years education providers to help prepare for the delivery of the offer. It is expected that 343 children in Blackburn with Darwen will be eligible to access the offer between the Autumn 2017 and Spring 2018 terms.

Capital grant funding has been secured to create additional places capacity to support the 30 hour offer. Projects at Audley Childrens Centre, Little Harwood Children's Centre, Longshaw Nursery & Childcare Centre and Stepping Stones Nursery will be complete by November 2017.

## **HEALTHY CHILD PROGRAMME 0-19 SERVICE**

A number of services have joined together under the team name 'Healthy Child Programme' and transferred into the Council's Early Help service this month (April). The new contract brings together a range of health and wellbeing services for children and young people to provide seamless and timely support for local parents, carers and families, based on the national Healthy Child Programme best evidence guidance of what works.

The programme sees the Council and Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust working alongside partners including East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust and the Families Health and Wellbeing Consortia to deliver services including health visiting, school nursing, specialist infant feeding and other third sector services. Team members will be based at four of the boroughs Children's Centres: Little Harwood; Audley; Darwen and Livesey.



## **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT**

**COUNCILLOR JIM SMITH**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
DIRECTOR: MARTIN EDEN  
DATE: 20 APRIL 2017**

### **WASTE**

The Council's alternate weekly collection service has settled, with the service now also offering the removal of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment plus textiles as part of the recycling week collections. Tonnage details are not yet available from our contractor Biffa.

Tonnages of residual waste from the burgundy bins is continuing to reduce, since the introduction of the alternate weekly collection service, from October 2016 to February 2017, some 10,907 tonnes have been sent for treatment for energy from waste, as opposed to the same period 2015/16, where 12,267 tonnes were sent for treatment. This constitutes a 12% reduction.

Kerbside recycling tonnages for the period from the introduction of the alternate weekly service, have seen 5,352 tonnes presented by residents in their grey recycling bin, against a tonnage of 5,591 tonnes for the same period 2015/16. This constitutes a 4% reduction in the recycling tonnage presented. Contamination of the grey kerbside recycling bin is continuing to be monitored, with any contamination being addressed with householders.

The garden waste subscription service has commenced and at the time of writing, there are over 10,400 households that have signed up to the service, with over 8,000 taking advantage of the discounted service offer of £20. Tonnages for the garden waste collection service are seeing a better quality of material being presented, with minimal contamination in the garden waste recycling bins.

### **YOUR CALL**

For the current financial year, we have seen some 126 Your Call community clean up events held, with 2,457 volunteers attending, of which 1,334 had not attended a Your Call clean-up event previously. Comparison with the same period for 2015/16 saw 113 events held, with 2,898 volunteers attending, of which 1,596 had not attended a Your Call clean-up event previously.



## **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR LEISURE, CULTURE AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

**COUNCILLOR DAMIAN TALBOT**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
DIRECTOR: MARTIN EDEN  
DATE: 20 APRIL 2017**

### **COMMUNITY ASSET MANAGEMENT**

In December 2016, HFT the operator of Greenfields Community Centre gave notice on their management of the centre. The Council was presented with the challenge of finding a new operator and ensure the group is ready to take over on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.

Following a public meeting held for all groups in January, the procurement process was completed and a community group, East Lancs Umbrella Society was successful in their bid to run the centre.

A number of new tenants and additional hire of the building has been secured in addition to introduction of a standard pricing policy for all groups. These measures have allowed the centre to grow income from approx. £35k up to £60k per annum; any surpluses will be re-invested into the centre and the local community. Training and handover is progressing well to support the volunteers to be ready to commence operations on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017. The surface of the community centre car park has been a health and safety concern and resurfacing will be completed as part of the asset transfer.

### **YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES**

This year's Blackburn with Darwen Youth MP Elections have been a great success. Seven Candidates stood for election and they were from a range of backgrounds, ages and gender. The successful candidate was Ummaih Shah who has spent a very productive year learning the role as last year's Deputy Youth MP. Ummaih's election manifesto has the following key aims for her forthcoming year and Blackburn with Darwen Youth Forum and Young Peoples Services will be working hard to support her on:

1. Work experience for Young people to build CV's and references.
2. Awareness of the effects of bullying.
3. More thrilling opportunities for young people.

The 2 elected deputy youth MP's are Ellie Walsh and Aliyah Shah. Ellie is a key member of BwD Youth Forum and has been heavily involved in Darwen Youth Festival and Take over challenge, amongst other campaigns and events, and has gained considerable self-confidence from leading and contributing to some key presentations to Health, Local Government and 3rd sector agencies. Aliyah was nominated by her school Witton Park and she is a keen campaigner on issues effecting young people. Aliyah is keen to pursue her manifesto issues through the youth forum on life skills, tackling mental health issues and helping students cope with exam pressures.

Ummaih, Elle and Aliyah along with 9 other young people form part of the central youth forum. They will be collectively campaigning on bullying, life skills, domestic violence and youth image to name a few and each young person will shadow an executive member throughout the next year.

## **LEISURE, HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

### **Memberships / Income**

Gym membership (Feb 2017) have exceeded the 7,000 mark and currently stand at 7097. All three main sites have seen growth since December 2016: WPA 1207 to 1301; BSLC 2674 to 2799 and DLC 2745 to 2949. This is excellent news and shows our strong positioning in the market. It does however continue to highlight the space pressures in the gyms – particularly at DLC and BSLC and also puts heavy demand and wear and tear on the equipment. We are working with procurement on a longer term equipment supplier arrangement. The equipment in all 3 main gyms will need replacing over the next 3 years so plans are being put in place to ensure that this can happen, including budget allocations for lease pay back.

### **Rescues and Resuscitations**

In the last month there have been 2 major incidents (one at BSLC and one at DLC) which have required full rescue and resuscitation. At BSLC a young lady collapsed unconscious in the gym at an extremely busy time with staff having to give CPR. At DLC an older man was rescued from the pool and given CPR on poolside. In this case the defibrillator was activated to give lifesaving shocks. In both cases the individuals concerned had a positive outcome albeit involving hospital treatment and staff at both sites reacted immediately with swift professionalism using the training and skills that are included in our weekly staff training sessions.

### **iESE award for Transformation in Health and Social Care**

The Council has won the award for 'Transformation in Health and Social Care' for re:refresh and the Wellbeing Service from the Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise. The award was in recognition of the Council improving services, utilising resources more effectively and achieving better outcomes for people accessing our services to improve the health of residents.

Refresh has enabled a 49% increase gym and swimming attendances, 0.8 million additional swim and gym attendances and has narrowed the participation gaps between Blackburn and Darwen compared to the Northwest and England averages. The Wellbeing Service has increased contacts by 400%; successfully combining public, private and 3rd sector services into a single point of access. re:refresh provides the launch pad for people to make changes and help themselves; reducing their need for other health and social care services.

## **LIBRARY SERVICES**

### **Darwen Library**

Excellent progress is being made to implement the new staff:volunteer blended model at Darwen Library. Jacquie Widdowson, Library Manager has done an excellent job leading the change process and in a relatively short space of time has recruited and inducted 14 volunteers with a further 5 open applications being processed. Of these 19 current / potential volunteers, 5 are also Friends of Darwen Library. It is encouraging that the volunteer group all seem very committed and able and between them have a range of interests and skills which will be of great benefit to the library service.

A volunteer fair was held in the library on Saturday 25th February. A number of volunteer application packs were handed out on the day with hopefully a few more recruits coming forward as a result. The fair presented an opportunity for visitors to meet current volunteers and find out about how they support the library and the events and activities they run. There was also singing from the community choir – Darwen Library Larks, showcasing of the craftwork completed by the Community Living Room group and 2 volunteers were around to talk about their experiences of volunteering for the Home Library Delivery Service. Some of the Friends of Darwen Library were also on hand to provide information about their advocacy work, fundraising, local history support sessions etc.

### **Venues**

The management team has been working hard to re-establish links with existing promoters and creating new relationships with those that have not previously booked shows in Blackburn or Darwen. This approach is showing results with a total of 209 ticketed shows already confirmed for 2017/18 compared to a total of 305 in 2016/17.

Raising the profile of KGH & DLT is a priority moving forward. Marketing budgets have been allocated for each show where previously there was none or very little allocation. We have made a noticeable improvement in audience/customer engagement through social media following the outsourcing to Square Cactus and we have gained an increased number of unpaid for column inches in Lancashire Telegraph through the generation of human interest stories linked to the programming.

We have secured twelve Asian weddings for 2017/18 with a further three weddings provisionally booked. Partnership working for Asian caterers is proving successful providing halal menus. KGH is also hosting a number of award ceremonies and gala dinners over the next few months including The Hive wards and The Mall Awards.



## **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND PREVENTION**

**COUNCILLOR  
ARSHID MAHMOOD**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
DIRECTOR:  
SAYYED OSMAN  
DATE: April 2017**

### **Community Safety**

- Blackburn with Darwen as part of a Lancashire wide partnership successfully applied to the Home Office's Violence Against Women & Girls Fund, obtaining £1.4m, the largest award nationally, to support services for survivors with complex needs. Working with local providers the programme will begin in April 2017 and focus on those in greatest need.
- The community safety team are targeting drivers who drive anti-socially in partnership with residents, loaning in car dash-cams to volunteers who live in Blackburn with Darwen and drive across the local area regularly. The volunteers will be able to upload any concerning footage to the team who will review it and look at if there is a need to enforce or offer education to local road users and vehicle owners. Those vehicles being used repeatedly in an anti-social manner risk being seized by the council using our powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour Police and Crime Act.
- Blackburn with Darwen as the lead authority on the multi area Organised Crime Programme have developed and rolled out a data sharing platform able to combine both the intelligence and enforcement tools and powers of over 40 local, regional and national agencies. The system called PAM now has buy in from HMRC, the Department of Works and Pensions and the National Crime Agency amongst others who work collaboratively with us to target all levels of organised criminality.

### **Housing**

- Homelessness Trailblazer to Prevent Homelessness of young people. The Council in collaboration with Lancashire County Council and the Pennine Lancashire Districts are preparing a range of projects to start delivery from the Spring. It's all about taking an innovative and new approach to preventing young people aged between 14 and 25 from becoming homeless in the first place. The project is worth £734k over 2 years for Pennine Lancashire.

- The Central Heating Fund :- the first time central heating project is in its final phase and remaining jobs will be completed in March and April.
- The new Selective Landlord Licensing scheme for Darwen has been approved and designation is in process. Over the next few months we will be engaging with landlords to raise fees and start the process of licensing and service improvements.

### **Neighbourhoods**

- As part of the development of the integrated localities workstream a new role of Community connector will be implemented. In total we hope to have 19 Community Connector roles between the council, Partners and third sector. The role is essential to early intervention and prevention, will provide 1:1 support building confidence to promote behaviour change. The role uses the 5 ways to wellbeing as key objectives, helping link people and communities to local asset based activity. The role will continue to support Your Call, manage volunteers and manage step down referrals from integrated neighbourhood teams.
- The council's aim to bring better co-ordination and to develop volunteering is gathering pace. Working with the Lancashire Constabulary we will be launching the pilot for the Lancashire Volunteering Partnership (LVP). The LVP will provide a Web based platform for the council to recruit, task, monitor and communicate with volunteers.



## REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES – 20<sup>th</sup> April 2017

COUNCILLOR ANDY KAY

PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
CHIEF OFFICER: DENISE PARK

**2017/18 Budget update** - The Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered his Spring Budget on 8<sup>th</sup> March which included an announcement of an additional £2 billion funding available to local authorities over the next three years to be spent on local adult social care services. For the council this will mean additional, non-recurring funding over the period of £6.857 million; 2017/18 in £3.589 million reducing to £2.186 million in 2018/19 and reducing to £1.081 million in 2019/20.

Local Authorities will have to work with NHS partners (much like the Better Care Fund) in determining how to utilise this money; at the time of writing we are awaiting further guidance on this

**Financial Services** - the new Civica ICON cash management system went live on 27th March replacing internet payments, touchtone telephone payments, Paye.Net, current e-returns, chip and pin devices and associated modules. The new system has also introduced PayPal as a new method of payment for customers.

The new Civica Financials and Purchasing system went live on 1st April. This means staff will no longer be using MasterPiece, ACE, P2P and other associated systems from that date, thereby delivering efficiencies through the use of an integrated system and by reducing many of the manual and paper processes currently in operation. The new system will also facilitate improved and timely access to finance information for budget holders; the development of new reports to facilitate this is now underway.

Training for both of the new systems has been delivered on-line, through the VLE (virtual learning environment).

The other key focus at this time is the 2016/17 year end closedown and production of the statutory accounts.

**Benefits** - The DWP has announced the schedule for the national roll out of the full implementation of Universal Credit. Each Local Authority has now been given a key date that will see the majority of new benefit applicants in the borough assessed and awarded Universal Credit. Blackburn with Darwen has been informed that it will adopt the full service from February 2018. Scrutiny received an update on Monday 27th March.

**Council Tax and Business Rates** – The new e-billing and online accounts for Council Tax and Business Rates payers have been successfully launched prior to annual billing. The promotion of these solutions will continue with customers being asked to use the online solutions whenever possible.

**Business Rates** – The revaluation of all rateable values and Business Rate liability has been completed with new bills, reflecting the change, issued in March. The revaluation and the changes to the legislation for small business rate relief have resulted in 3,263 accounts with nothing to pay following the award of full relief. Remaining businesses across the borough have seen both increases and decreases in Business Rate liability.

The March Budget produced three key announcements for Business Rates. For those Ratepayers worst hit by increases in Business Rates, a hardship fund will be created which will be administered by each council via its discretionary policy. In addition, pubs with a rateable value of less than £100,000 will be entitled to a £1,000 discount. Thirdly, any business losing existing small business rate relief will have their increase capped at £50 per month. The Government will be releasing further information concerning these changes in the coming weeks.

**Audit & Assurance** - following completion of a tender exercise for our insurance cover, the February Executive Board meeting approved the award of contract with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 of long term agreements for an initial period of three years, with an option to extend for a further two.

The annual internal audit plan for 2017/18 was approved by the Audit & Governance Committee meeting at its meeting on 11 April. The plan sets out the work that Audit & Assurance will carry out during 2017/18 to support the Section 151 Officer's statutory obligations to maintain and adequate and effective audit of the Council's accounting records and its systems of internal control, and enable an annual internal audit report to be produced in accordance with the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

**IT** – work continues to implement new and upgraded systems including the Finance system referred to above, a Public Access solution providing P.C access in key Council premises, a new Planning System, till replacement at King Georges Hall and other leisure sites and replacement of the Leisure booking system to allow self-service of bookings.

**HR** – The HR service is finalising the £500k budget reduction for the service which will see a reduction of 16fte posts delivering HR services to the Council. However, the number of redundancies has been mitigated significantly due to the increased number of schools buying the full range of HR & Payroll Services. The service continues to develop a digital first approach developing MY View further, an on-line health and safety reporting tool, on-line occupational health referrals, developments in e-learning, continued development of the HR intranet as a first point of contacts for all managers and employees and the introduction of netcall.

HR has continued to support workforce reviews and further downsizing to achieve the overall £13 million workforce savings. Priorities that have also been picked up are the introduction of the apprentice levy from April 17 and IR35 implications for off-payroll. The HR service is also working with the other 5 organisations to address the workforce implications of integrated health and social care across Pennine Lancashire.

**Legal** - In recent years law has required all deaths with a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS) authorisation in place, to be referred to the coroner because such patients were treated as detained by the state, triggering an inquest. In practice, this had an unintended effect and led to a large increase in the number of natural deaths referred to coroners, particularly by NHS Trusts, Care Homes and GPs. Where the death is not a natural one, a jury is currently required.

From Monday 3 April 2017 the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 is amended so that people under DoLS will not be considered 'in state detention'. Accordingly, coroners will no longer have a duty to investigate a death just because a DoLS was in place. Such deaths will only be reported to the coroner if the cause of death is unknown or there are concerns that the death was violent or unnatural as the position is with deaths not involving DoLS. Also, circumstances where a jury will now be required will be rare. This change will reduce the number of referrals to the coroner, the number of associated witness statements, inquests and cost to the Council.

Following consultation the Law Commission has also recently published its report related to this issue and is seeking to overhaul the DOLS regime. Reforms include proposed 'liberty protection safeguards' to streamline the process. The proposed scheme focus is on whether a DOL is necessary and proportionate at the stage where arrangements are devised. The safeguards would apply to hospitals, care homes, domestic settings and supported living.

## REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS & EDUCATION

COUNCILLOR DAVE HARLING

PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING

DIRECTOR: LINDA CLEGG

DATE: 20<sup>th</sup> April 2017

### SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

On the 1st March parents and carers of 1945 children residing in Blackburn with Darwen found out which secondary school their child will be attending in September as Year 7 pupils. Over 95% of local children received an offer of a place at one of their three preferred schools with 80.9% being offered their first preference. This compares favourably to 2016 when 92% of children received a place at one of their preferred schools and 74.7% received their first preference.

The Pupil and Admissions Team continues to support the drive for online services with over 88% of secondary applications being made online, up from 85.8% in 2016. The national offer date for primary schools is 16 April 2017.

### PRIMARY SCHOOL OFSTED INSPECTIONS

Three primary schools have had an Ofsted 'short inspection' since the start of 2017 with all three maintaining a judgement of 'good'. Short inspections are new, lighter touch, one day inspections for schools who have previously been judged good and the school receives half a days notice. For Brookhouse Primary the report commented that *"Children get off to a flying start to their time at Brookhouse because of high-quality provision in the early years."*

St Mary's & St Joseph's RC Primary School was praised for progress since the previous inspection visit with the Inspector stating that the school has *"improved the quality of writing across the school and in 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard by the end of Year 6 was above the national average."*

The inspector's also praised academic achievement at St Michael with St John CofE Primary School reporting that, *"Results over time, and evidence in the work of current pupils, both confirm that an increasing proportion of pupils are working above the expected standard for their age in writing and mathematics."*

### BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN SCHOOLS DANCE FESTIVAL 2017

The 12<sup>th</sup> Blackburn with Darwen Schools Celebration of Dance was staged on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017 at King George's Hall with 1000 pupils from 43 schools performing to an audience of 2000 family and friends.

The Access to Learning Service co-ordinated the event, and learning for the pupils included the experience of collectively participating in culturally diverse performances on a large stage, all of which helps to increase self esteem. The event was a fantastic showcase for the borough and a credit to the children and staff who worked hard to put on two great shows.

### INDEPENDENT ISLAMIC SCHOOL'S NETWORK

A school led Independent Islamic Schools Headteachers Network has been set up to support member schools and share ideas, plans and best practice. The network has representatives from both primary and secondary Independent Islamic Schools across Blackburn with Darwen and neighbouring local authorities.

Media Patel, the 'Prevent' Strategy Co-ordinator for the Council, and Ismail Adam, Link Education Welfare Officer for Independent Islamic schools were both instrumental in the establishment of group. The nominated chair is Yusuf Seedat, Headteacher of Islamiyah Girls Secondary School.

## PEACE CHARTER FOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Blackburn with Darwen High Schools have come together to develop a Peace Charter for a collective approach to community, including the rights of young people, asylum seekers, refugees and women. Pupils from Local Authority schools, Academies, Free schools, Faith schools and Independent schools have worked together to write the charter which was launched in January with the backing of Headteachers.

The Charter will be rolled out for partners across the local authority to sign up over the coming months with the launch of this second phase planned to coincide with 'Celebrate World Day' on 21st September.

A recent national study on 'Understanding School Segregation in England: 2011 to 2016' carried out by the Institute of Community Cohesion (iCoCo) Foundation, SchoolDash and The Challenge has called on the Government to address segregation issues in schools. The Peace Charter is one of many examples of Blackburn with Darwen schools working together to create the opportunity to get together and build relationships to increase understanding and tolerance.

The work going on in Blackburn with Darwen with regards to inter-cultural relations has been recognised nationally by Professor Ted Cantle, a leading voice in this field, who has said, *"Blackburn with Darwen has done more than most areas to build bridges between communities and, indeed, I have often quoted their campaigns and policies as good practice – this includes their 'Belonging to Blackburn with Darwen' campaign and their 'Investor in Cohesion' Toolkit. They have had a dedicated team of officers, committed councillors and supportive voluntary and business sectors."*

## NEW ARRIVALS SERVICE UPDATE

Blackburn with Darwen is seeing an increase in children arriving from overseas, the majority of whom speak limited or no English. The New Arrivals Team provides in school support for primary pupils with little or no English. They are reporting a growing number of Urdu speakers, after experiencing a significant drop in their reported numbers over recent years. However, just over half of the Urdu speaking pupils arrived into the UK via one or more European Union countries – mainly through Italy or Spain, although others have arrived via Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. Whilst these children have been exposed to other European languages for different periods of time, their schooling has commonly been frequently interrupted and so their own first language and cognitive and academic progress is often under-developed.

Between 1st September 2016 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 the New Arrivals Service provided language support to 31 new arrivals:

- 15 Urdu speakers arrived from Italy (6), Spain (4), Holland (1), Pakistan (4)
- 2 Punjabi speakers arrived from Spain and Italy
- 4 Romanian speakers arrived from Romania
- 3 Polish speakers arrived from Poland
- 2 Czech speakers arrived from Czech Republic
- 1 Italian speaker from Italy
- 1 Latvian speaker from Latvia
- 1 French speaker from France
- 1 Estonian speaker from Estonia
- 1 Farsi speaker from Iran

The team also specialises in promoting and supporting access to education for refugee and asylum seeking children and other new international arrivals, including the children of Central / astern European migrant workers and those of Roma heritage. Between 1st September and 31st December 2016 the team provided additional support to 36 asylum seeker and refugee children and their families.

## **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION**

**COUNCILLOR PHIL RILEY**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
DIRECTOR: IAN RICHARDSON**

**DATE: APRIL 2017**

### **NEW STRUCTURE**

A new departmental structure is currently being implemented to ensure that:

- The Council contributes fully to the emerging changes associated with the Combined Authority
- The Council maximises external funding as more and more funding becomes available through competitive initiatives
- The department makes its contribution to the corporate savings targets
- The Council delivers growth in housing and commercial floorspace

This new structure sees Brian Bailey heading up Strategy and Funding and Ian Richardson leading a new department associated with Growth and Development and incorporating the following sections:

- One Public Estate
- Corporate Buildings and Projects
- Development Management
- Building Control
- Highways and Network Management
- Transport Policies and Programmes
- Growth and Infrastructure
- Town Centres

The Growth and Development Department will place a heavy emphasis on creating a “can do” approach to developing and investing in the Borough.

### **CATHEDRAL QUARTER UPDATE**

Office lettings are close to completion with Govnet and Capita now occupying the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors and Organic Group recently occupying the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Further announcements for new tenants on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> floors are planned for this quarter once the leases are completed. There is now just half the second floor available and agents are progressing interest. Marketing for the ground floor restaurant and small retail unit has been relaunched at the end of March on the back of a very successful opening for Turtle Bay.

The office building was shortlisted for the British Council of Offices Awards for Excellence 2017 by BDP architects and it has also been shortlisted for the North West RICS Award for best commercial building which will be announced in May. Cathedral Square will also now host a flagship partnership event between the BBC and Festival of Making on May 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **ASSISTANCE TO INDUSTRY- LATEST AWARDS**

In Blackburn, grants have recently been awarded for property and signage improvements to 7 businesses in the town centre.

A number of small independent businesses have also come forward to open businesses which add to the development of Blackburn town centre's Food & Beverage offer which, unlike Darwen, has up to now been under represented.

Grants have been awarded to 10 businesses in Northgate, Darwen Street, King Street and King William Street extending life and animation to streets outside the Mall from daytime through to evening.

### **BUS SERVICES**

A number of changes are planned to both the borough's commercial and subsidised bus network. Travel Assist services in Darwen are changing from 24<sup>th</sup> April to give a more even spread of services to more areas of the Town on more days of the week. Spring Vale and Cranberry Close will get more services as will Darwen Health Centre.

Unfortunately the commercial TA5 and TA6 serving Royal Blackburn Hospital, North Road and Queens Park areas (introduced in January on a 3 month trial period) will be withdrawn from the same date, due to lack of patronage. Demand responsive services operated by Travel Assist and Dial A Ride will still be available to residents in these areas.

Shadsworth Shuttle evening and Sunday services operated by Transdev and serving Royal Blackburn Hospital will be reduced from the 21<sup>st</sup> May and will follow the daytime route along Haslingden Road. Service 4 evening and Sunday services to Mill Hill and Leyburn Road will be withdrawn. The 39 Pleasington Cemetery service will be withdrawn from 28<sup>th</sup> May 2017, to be replaced by a Volunteer Driver service operated by the Royal Voluntary Service. Drivers are now being actively recruited by RVS via the Council's Shuttle Newspaper.

### **HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE**

As the Council became Highway Authority back in 1998, claims for "slips and trips" became a major financial burden with around 500 claims per year costing the Council over £1.2m at the peak.

A policy driven highway inspection regime together with capital investment of over £10m through the Network Recovery Programme and a robust defence to all claims has, over the years, seen the desired effect of reducing this burden on the Council's budget. The 2016/17 fiscal year has seen the number of claims and the projected payouts being reduced to the lowest levels since the Council became unitary with only 50 claims being submitted and payouts totalling £140,000.

This highlights that Blackburn with Darwen is now seen as an authority that has a strong defence against third party highway claims.

The Council continues to pursue investment in the Highways Network and has submitted a challenge fund application for around £1.8m to fund investment in areas where full highway reconstruction is required which goes beyond what the Council would normally be expected to fund from mainstream funding.

### **DARWEN THREE DAY MARKET**

Options for the area currently occupied by Darwen three day market are being developed in close collaboration with the Darwen Partnership Board. These options aim to enhance the area and create flexible space that can respond to the varying needs of a busy Town Centre environment. Demolition of the former three day market building can only progress once planning consent has been granted for the future use of the area and this is expected to be in place by the end of the summer with demolition commencing in September 2017.







## **ADULT SOCIAL CARE**

### **NEW HOUSING SCHEME AT FORMER ALBION MILL SITE**

The decision to progress the development of the former Albion Mill site was ratified at the Council's Executive Board in February and developers are due to commence work at the site soon. The scheme is scheduled to open in late Autumn 2018 and will provide 50 extra care, 24 dementia and 35 intermediate care and short term apartments across the development as well as further community facilities including a gym, restaurant/coffee bar, IT suite and hair salon. Local people and volunteers will also be encouraged to use the facilities as part of the Council's drive to promote health and independent living amongst the local community in partnership with other agencies such as primary health and the Wellbeing Service.

A multi-agency project group has been established between the CCG and Council to develop and deliver the scheme – this includes a communication strategy to inform potential tenants, stakeholders and the wider public about the scheme and a procurement process to identify the organisations which will deliver the housing element and care and support to the individuals living in the scheme as well as the specialised therapy and enablement resources for the intermediate care apartments.

### **ADULT SERVICES WORKFORCE REVIEW**

The Adult Services workforce review is now complete and is currently being implemented across the department. Detailed information is being shared with staff groups via a combination of group briefings, individual conversations and written summaries. The workforce review has adhered to the nine overarching principles required of all reviews across the Council and has presented an opportunity for positive change. Relevant roles and management structures have been reviewed as a means to support the development of a highly skilled, flexible and agile workforce able to continue to meet statutory duties and growing demand pressures alongside the requirements of integrated working. Although the Adult Services workforce review represents significant change, no staff members are at detriment or risk of redundancy. The outcome of the review reflects an understanding that the ability to successfully recruit, retain and develop a motivated and appropriately rewarded workforce is key to the future direction of the department.

### **NEW MODEL OF CARE**

Adult Services are engaged in an emerging piece of work to develop a new model of care for the provision of all age support across both Blackburn with Darwen and Pennine Lancashire. This work will build upon the significant steps already taken towards developing an integrated service offer across health, social care and neighbourhoods. The wider partnership are working together to produce a joined up model of care which represents all aspects of support, care and treatment available both within local neighbourhoods and across wider footprints. The model will represent all levels of support, from universal services to specialist services and will represent the way in which people are able to step up and step down through different levels of support as required. The new model of care will reflect shared outcomes around supporting people to remain living independently at home for longer, supporting people to retain choice and control over the way their care and support is delivered, maximising community capacity and organising support as close to home as possible.

## **HEALTH**

### **EAT WELL, MOVE MORE, SHAPE UP**

Being active is one of the best ways to maintain or improve your health and can reduce the risks of you becoming ill from a whole range of conditions. It has also been shown to help reverse and reduce the effects of some conditions so it is never too late to start. More people than ever before are now participating in sport and physical activity in the borough, and local rates are now higher than both regional and national data according to the recent Active People Survey.

The Council's re:refresh programme was created to tackle low levels of activity, by offering local people the opportunity to access a huge range of leisure, health and wellbeing activities, that can help them to live longer and live better. In March the borough launched its 'Eat Well, Move More, Shape Up' strategy, to take these advances to a new level by developing an environment where physical activity and healthy eating is an easier choice for everyone throughout their lives.

### **ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES**

Getting the 'best start' is one of the key ways to a long and healthy life. Improving children's emotional health and wellbeing is a priority for the Blackburn with Darwen Children's Partnership 'Start Well' Board. Ground-breaking work in the borough has highlighted the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and if they do occur, the importance of effectively managing their consequences.

In February, a North West conference on ACEs showcased good practise examples from across Lancashire, included a number of local contributions. Lancashire Constabulary presented their Early Action approach to transform policing by becoming ACE-aware and by embedding REACH (Routine Enquiry about Adversity in Childhood) training and practice across their workforce, which was funded and facilitated by Blackburn with Darwen Public Health. Witton Academy presented their EmBRACE (Emotional and Brain Resilience in ACEs) programme. An animation on ACEs commissioned by Blackburn with Darwen Public Health was also launched, believed to be the first in the country to depict the long term impact of ACEs, in order to raise public awareness.

### **COMMUNITY GENETICS SERVICE**

The local genetic counselling service, which started in Blackburn with Darwen over 10 years ago with Department of Health development funding, has gone from strength to strength since Public Health commissioned an innovative community genetics outreach role in 2014.

Hosted by the Families Health and Wellbeing Consortium, the role aims to provide information and promote conversations in the community about genetic disorders in extended families, as well as train frontline health and care staff. After piloting in Pendle, the model was soon adopted by East Lancashire CCG, and recently also by Oldham Council and CCG, with four outreach workers now supervised by Blackburn's Genetic Counsellor, a former local Health Visitor.