

Council Forum

27th July 2017

AGENDA

PART 1: 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 Annual Council meeting held on 18th May 2017.

5 **Declarations of Interest**

A form is attached.

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:

NJC PAY TO COUNCILS

This Council calls upon the government to end the unfair policy of pay restraint for public sector workers – if the government can find £1bn to “encourage “ the DUP to support the Conservative Party in Parliament, it can find the money to pay a decent wage to public sector workers who, on a daily basis, work to provide the vital front line services that the country depends on.

In particular, this Council sympathises with the background to the NJC pay claim for 2018, submitted by UNISON, GMB and Unite on behalf of council and school workers. This Council also welcomes the joint review of the NJC pay spine to remedy the turbulence caused by bottom-loaded pay settlements. This Council however is increasingly concerned regarding the impact of the drastic ongoing cuts to local government funding and the tough choices on services that are being left for local councils to make and therefore calls on the Government to provide the additional funding for this pay rise.

The Council fully supports the national bargaining arrangements and considers provision of funds to facilitate meaningful and fair negotiations is a reasonable expectation following years of real time cuts in public sector pay.

The Government needs to take responsibility and fully fund increases in pay; it should not put the burden on public sector employers such as local authorities whose funding has been cut to the bone.

- This Council therefore resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write to the LGA to make urgent representations to Government to provide adequate funding for the NJC pay negotiations and pay spine review and notify us of their action in this regard.
- Write to the Prime Minister and Chancellor calling for an end to further public sector pay cuts and request proper funding for public services.

Proposer: Cllr Jim Shorrocks

Seconder: Cllr Ron Whittle

9 Policy and Corporate Resources Committee

Report of the Chair and Vice Chair of Policy and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

10 Standards Committee Report

To inform the Council of the findings of a Hearing Panel held on 6th July 2017.

11 Reports of Executive Members with Portfolios

- 11.1 Leader.
- 11.2 Health and Adult Social Care.
- 11.3 Children's Services.
- 11.4 Environment.

- 11.5 Leisure, Culture and Young People.
- 11.6 Neighbourhoods Housing and Customer Services.
- 11.7 Resources.
- 11.8 Schools and Education.
- 11.9 Regeneration.

12 To consider any questions received from Members under Procedure Rule 11.

PART 2: ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE

There are no items to be considered under Part 2.

Harry Catherall
Chief Executive
19th July 2017

ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING
Thursday 18th May, 2017

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

RESOLUTIONS

1 Notice Convening Meeting

The Chief Executive read the notice convening the meeting.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Naushad Surve, Parwaiz Akhtar, Mustafa Desai, Salim Sidat and Roy Davies.

3 Election of the Mayor for 2017/2018

The Chief Executive asked for nominations for the Office of Mayor of the Borough for the ensuing Council year. Councillor Colin Rigby was nominated for Office and declared elected as the Mayor of the Borough for the 2017/2018 Municipal Year.

The newly elected Mayor then assumed the robe and Chain of Office, made and subscribed to the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took the Chair.

4 Election of the Deputy Mayor for 2017/2018

The Chief Executive asked for nominations for the Office of Deputy Mayor of the Borough for the 2017/2018 Council year. Councillor Pat McFall was nominated for Office and the Mayor declared her elected as Deputy Mayor of the Borough for the 2017/2018 Municipal Year.

The newly elected Deputy Mayor then received the Chain of Office and made and subscribed to the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

5 Tribute to the Newly Elected Mayor

Councillors Mohammed Khan and Derek Hardman paid tribute to the newly elected Mayor. The Mayor responded and returned thanks for his election.

6 Vote of Thanks to the Retiring Mayor and Mayoress

Councillors Phil Riley and Michael Lee paid tribute to the retiring Mayor and the Mayoress, for the dedicated work they had undertaken during their term of Office, making reference to the engagements they had attended and activities undertaken in support of the Mayor's chosen charity for the year.

The Mayor, Councillor Colin Rigby, presented badges to Councillor Hussain Akhtar and Mrs Shaheen Akhtar. Councillor Hussain Akhtar responded to the tributes received and reflected on the many key events of the Mayoral year and thanked all those people who had supported him during 2016/17.

At this point there was a short recess to allow the Mayor and guests to leave the meeting.

(The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Pat McFall, in the Chair.)

7 Minutes of the last Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Council Forum meeting on 20th April 2017 be agreed as a correct record.

8 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

9 Council Appointments for 2017/2018

The Chief Executive referred to his report on the allocation of seats and appointments to Council positions for 2017/2018.

The first draft of the Council Appointments list for 2017/18 was circulated.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That Council notes the appointment of the Executive Board Members;
- 2) That Council notes the Shadow Portfolio Members;
- 3) That appointments be made to the positions detailed in Paragraph 2, subsection 3;
- 4) That Council note the provisions relating to political balance, referred to in Paragraph 3; and
- 5) That decisions on the remaining appointment of Members to Committees be delegated to the Group Leaders to agree the appointments.

10 Appointments to various Groups and Panels for 2017/18

The Chief Executive submitted a report on the appointment to various Bodies, Groups and Panels for 2017/18.

The report advised that as there was a by-election on the 8th June for the Higher Croft Ward, proportionality calculations would be applied to the Outside Bodies list after that date and after the annual process outlined in Paragraph 4.1 of the report. When the Outside Bodies list had been agreed it would be submitted to the next available Council meeting.

Due to the need to make early appointments to the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority and the Lancashire Police and Crime Panel, the Leader moved that the status quo continue in terms of membership for those two bodies, this proposal was seconded by Councillor Phil Riley.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That in the first instance, (as is usual practice) each of the organisations listed on the outside bodies, and partnership bodies list is contacted to establish;
That their Terms Of Reference / Articles Of Association have not changed and still require Council representation in the same capacity, for the same tenure, and what added value will be mutually brought by such engagement. Subject to which;
- 2) That in the event the Political Group nominations are available before the Annual Meeting the nominations, be confirmed as the Council's representatives to serve until the end of the current Municipal Year; or if a longer period of office is shown, until that date; unless during the Municipal

- Year the Leader amends the appointments to take account of changed requirements;
- 3) That fifteen Members be appointed to serve on the panel of Members to deal with Appeals;
 - 4) That appointments to the list of representatives on various Bodies, Groups and Panels be delegated to Group Leaders for decisions; and
 - 5) That the existing members for the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority and Lancashire Police and Crime Panel be re-appointed for the 2017/18 Municipal Year.

11 Constitution Update

A report was submitted that advised Members that the Constitution Article 14 and Part 3 Section 16 had been updated. The amendments related to changes to the Chief Officer structure of the Council and inclusion of a section on the Common Seal of the Council.

RESOLVED – That the amendments made to Article 14 and Part 3 Section 16 of the Constitution be approved.

12 Electoral Review 2016-17 Warding proposal revisions

Members received a report on suggested revisions to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) draft Warding arrangements for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, which were out to consultation until 19th June 2017.

RESOLVED - Overall the Local Government Boundary Commission have agreed with most of the suggestions made by the Council in its formal submission in January. However, whilst the Council supports the majority of the proposals, there are some areas where further changes are suggested as outlined below. It is recommended that:

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE COMMISSION

1. Central

We support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations but would like the Commission to consider a name change to Blackburn Central.

2. Ewood/Blackburn South boundary

The boundary commission have referred to the fact that the Heights Free School is situated off Heys Lane and should therefore be in Ewood ward as this is the residential area nearest to it. This fails to recognise that The Heights Free School provides alternative education for young people at risk of not reaching their potential and does not specifically serve local residents.

It would appear that the Heights Free School and Eden School have been considered as schools supporting the Ewood Ward – We would ask the Commission take into account that both schools are specialist schools that support the whole of the Borough not just the Ewood Ward. Heys Lane is the natural Boundary between these wards, with significant future planning activity coming forward as we speak.

3. Ewood / Mill Hill and Moorgate / Livesey with Pleasington

Ewood/Livesey with Pleasington boundary: The draft recommendations place both sides of Gib Lane into Ewood (at present both sides are in Meadowhead). We would ask that the Commission take into account that a new housing development is being constructed immediately behind the properties on the west of Gib Lane and that some of its access will be from Gib Lane. It is therefore more logical for the West side of Gib Lane to be moved into Livesey with Pleasington. We will provide photographs of some of the existing new developments.

4. Darwen Rural

Notwithstanding the Commissions draft recommendations refer to Park Street, which should actually refer to Park Road – we support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft geographical recommendations. However we wish to suggest a change of name to the 'Darwen Rural' ward: Feedback from residents suggests that the ward would be better suited to a name making less reference to any local towns. People in Edgworth, Belmont and Chapeltown consider themselves most closely associated with Bolton, whilst people living in the southern part of the current Whitehall ward do not consider themselves to be rural. A more appropriate name would be 'West Pennine'. This reflects the geographical situation of the ward, encompassing the largest part of the locally important landscape area the West Pennine Moors'.

5. **Billinge and Beardwood / Shear Brow and Corporation Park**

Shear Brow/Billinge and Beardwood. The BwD proposal recommended that a straight line was drawn along Revidge Road. This was to correct the current boundary which cuts in and out along the length of the highway. This was arrived at by using the Commissions statutory criteria of

- Delivering electoral equality for local voters;
- Interests and identities of local communities; and
- Effective and convenient local government.

The Boundary Commission proposal effectively argues for the current boundary line to be retained. We wish the Commission to consider the following two points: We cannot see the rationale for properties between (approx.) 401 Revidge Road and 539 Revidge Road to be placed into Beardwood and Billinge, whilst the other properties on the north side of Revidge Road are claimed to fit better with Shear Brow and Revidge. Secondly - the BwD proposal has better equality of electors than the Boundary Commission draft recommendation, which has Billinge and Beardwood at – 9%.

- **Audley and Queens Park**
Support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations
- **Wensley Fold**
Support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations
- **Bastwell and Daisyfield**
Support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations
- **Roe Lee**
Support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations
- **Blackburn South East**
Support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations
- **Blackburn South and Lower Darwen**
Support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations
- **Little Harwood and Whitebirk**
Support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations
- **Darwen East**
Notwithstanding the fact that Ellison Fold is actually two properties not one, we support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations

- **Darwen West**
Support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations
- **Darwen South**
Support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations

6. That the Chief Executive be authorised to formally submit the proposal on Council Warding arrangements from May 2018 to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England for their inclusion as early as possible in the next round of consultation.

13 Revised Year Planner 2017-18

A revised Year Planner for 2017-2018 was submitted for information, which reflected several changes to meeting dates as a result of the General Election, as well as other changes.

RESOLVED – That the revised Year Planner 2017-18 be noted.

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

MAYOR

COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS FOR 2017/2018

This is the pro-forma for appointments in 2017/2018

The Executive Members and Assistant Executive Members

| EXECUTIVE BOARD | | |
|--|---------------------------------|---|
| Leader of the Council and Chair of Executive Board | Mohammed Khan | |
| The following appointments have been made by the Leader of the Council: | | |
| Deputy Leaders of the Council | Phil Riley (senior) Andy Kay | |
| Vice Chair of Executive Board | Phil Riley | |
| PORTFOLIOS | Executive Member | Assistant Executive Member |
| Health & Adult Social Care | Mustafa Desai | Brian Taylor Shaukat Hussain Faryad Hussain |
| Children's Services | Maureen Bateson | Pat McFall Julie Gunn |
| Neighbourhood & Prevention Services | Arshid Mahmood | Suleman Khonat |
| Schools & Education | Dave Harling | Shiraj Vali |

| | | |
|---|---------------|--------------------------------|
| Leisure, Culture & Young People | Damian Talbot | Iftakhar Hussain Zamir Khan |
| Regeneration | Phil Riley | Jamie Groves Quesir Mahmood |
| Resources | Andy Kay | Salim Sidat Vicky McGurk |
| Environment | Jim Smith | Jane Oates Parwaiz Akhtar |
| The remainder of appointments are for completion by the Group Leaders. | | |
| Opposition Member on Executive Board | | |
| John Slater | | |

4. Appoint Members of Committees

| Committee | Labour | Conservative | Liberal Democrat |
|--|--|---|-------------------------|
| Policy & Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Membership 11 Chair Jim Shorrock Vice-Chair Kevin Connor | Jim Casey Shaukat Hussain Sylvia Liddle Jim Shorrock Naushad Surve Julie Gunn Carl Nuttall | Kevin Connor Keith Murray Neil Slater | David Foster |
| Regeneration & Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny | Peter Hollings Yusuf Jan-Virmani Suleman Khonat Jim Shorrock | Derek Hardman Neil Slater Konrad Tapp | |

| Committee | Labour | Conservative | Liberal Democrat |
|---|---|--|-------------------------|
| Committee Membership 11 Chair Naushad Surve Vice-Chair Salim Mulla | Naushad Surve John Wright Tasleen Fazal Salim Mulla | | |
| Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Membership 11 Chair Sylvia Liddle Vice-Chair Abdul Patel | Parwaiz Akhtar Shaukat Hussain Sylvia Liddle Vicky McGurk Brian Taylor Jane Oates Abdul Patel Eileen Entwistle | Julie Daley Michael Lee John Pearson | |
| Health & Adults Overview and Scrutiny Committee Membership 11 Chair Ron Whittle Vice-Chair Tony Humphrys | Tony Humphrys Jane Oates Salim Mulla Naushad Surve Dave Smith Ron Whittle Pat McFall | Paul Marrow Jacquie Slater Julie Slater | Karimeh Foster |
| Call In Committee Membership 9 Chair Kevin Connor | | (Committee convened under proportionality rules 6:2:1; as and when comprised of none Executive Members). | |
| Planning & Highways Committee Membership 15 Chair Dave Smith Vice-Chair Carl Nuttall | Jim Casey Jamie Groves Iftakhar Hussain Zamir Khan Suleman Khonat Stephanie Brookfield Carl Nuttall Jane Oates Phil Riley | Imtiaz Ali Derek Hardman Keith Murray Jacquie Slater | |

| Committee | Labour | Conservative | Liberal Democrat |
|--|---|--|-------------------------|
| | Dave Smith Yusuf Jan-Virmani | | |
| Licensing Committee Membership 13 Chair John Wright Vice-Chair Jim Casey | Jim Casey Shiraj Vali Peter Hollings Iftakhar Hussain Shaukat Hussain Tony Humphrys Pat McFall Stephanie Brookfield John Wright | Imtiaz Ali Denise Gee John Pearson | Roy Davies |
| Audit and Governance Committee Membership 6 Chair Salim Sidat Vice-Chair Vicky McGurk | Jim Casey Vicky McGurk Salim Sidat Ron Whittle | Keith Murray | David Foster |
| Standards Committee Membership 9 Chair Tasleen Fazal Vice-Chair Michael Lee | Vicky McGurk Stephanie Brookfield Julie Gunn Zamir Khan Tasleen Fazal Pat McFall | Michael Lee Julie Slater | |
| Health & Wellbeing Board Membership 4 Chair Mohammed Khan | Maureen Bateson Mustafa Desai Mohammed Khan | Julie Slater | |

APPOINTMENT TO GROUPS AND PANELS

| Committee | Labour | Opposition |
|--|---|-------------|
| Appeals Panel Membership 15 | | |
| Chief Executive's Employment Committee Membership 4 | Andy Kay Mohammed Khan Phil Riley | John Slater |
| Chief Officer's Employment Committee Membership 4 | Andy Kay Mohammed Khan Phil Riley | John Slater |

The Membership of the Chief Executive and Chief Officer Employment Committees is the Leader of the Council, the two Deputy Leaders and the Leader of the Opposition.

The appointments within Political Groups

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| LABOUR GROUP | Councillors |
| Leader | Mohammed Khan |
| Deputy Leaders | Phil Riley, Andy Kay |
| CONSERVATIVE GROUP | Councillors |
| Leader | John Slater |
| Deputy Leaders | Denise Gee (Senior) Derek Hardman |
| LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP | Councillors |
| Leader | David Foster |
| Deputy Leader | Roy Davies |

| Shadow Cabinet | Shadow Executive Member | Shadow Assistant Executive Member |
|---|--------------------------------|--|
| Health & Adult Social Care | Jacqui Slater | Imtiaz Ali |
| Children's Services | Julie Daley | John Pearson |
| Neighbourhood & Prevention Services | Julie Slater | Neil Slater |
| Schools & Education | Denise Gee | Lynn Perkins |
| Leisure, Culture & Young People | Jean Rigby | Paul Marrow |
| Regeneration | Derek Hardman | Kevin Connor |
| Environment | Konrad Tapp | Paul Marrow |
| Resources | Keith Murray | John Slater |
| Opposition Committee Spokespersons | | |
| Planning & Highways | Derek Hardman | |
| Licensing | John Pearson | |

| LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Leader | David Foster |
| Deputy Leader | Roy Davies |
| Liberal Democrat Spokespersons | |
| Health & Adult Social Care | Roy Davies |
| Children's Services | David Foster |
| Neighbourhood & Prevention Services | Roy Davies |
| Schools & Education | David Foster |
| Leisure, Culture & Young People | Karimeh Foster |
| Regeneration | Karimeh Foster |
| Resources | David Foster |
| Environment | Roy Davies |
| Planning & Highways | David Foster |
| Licensing | Roy Davies |
| Standards | David Foster |

Appendix 3

Note: As a matter of record the following Members have undertaken training in these disciplines and are therefore able to sit or substitute on Planning and Highways or Licensing Committee during the next Municipal Year 2017/18:

The following Members are eligible to attend meetings of the Planning and Highways Committee:

Planning and Highways

Councillors Ali, Brookfield, Casey, Connor, Entwistle, Gee, Groves, Hardman, Jan-Virmani, Khan Z, Khonat, Liddle, Mahmood Q, Marrow, Murray, Nuttall, Oates, Pearson, Perkins, Slater Ja, Slater J, Slater Ju, Riley, Smith D, Smith J, and Whittle.

The following Members are eligible to attend meetings of the Licensing Committee:

Licensing Training:

Councillors Ali, Bateson, Brookfield, Davies, Gee, Humphrys, Hussain I, Hussain S, Kay, Khonat, Marrow, Pearson, Perkins, Slater Jo, Vali, Whittle and Wright.

**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: 27th July 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 OF THE POLICY AND CORPORATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**COUNCILLORS JIM SHORROCK
KEVIN CONNOR**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
DIRECTOR: DENISE PARK.**

DATE: 27th July 2017

First round of meetings

All Overview and Scrutiny Committees have held their first round of meetings for 2017/2018 municipal year. Executive Members have taken the opportunity to present their top five priorities and three risks for the forthcoming year. Using this as a guide, along with their own priorities, Members of each Committee have agreed outline work programmes for 2017–18 as outlined below.

Health and Adults OSC

Topics

- 1) Prevention - Hold meetings with the CCG (September) and ELHT (October) on their work/role in trying to prevent poor health in the Borough.
- 2) Priorities of the ELHT for the remainder of the year (October meeting)
- 3) Elderly Services – topic to be scoped further.

Task and finish Groups

- 1) 54 Contracts – Members to look and understand savings made in public health.
- 2) Health Visitors – for Members to look at the service provided and available.
- 3) Mental Health – self harm focusing on social media and digital bullying (joint meeting with C&YPOSC).

Regeneration and Neighbourhoods OSC

Topics

- 1) Community Safety - looking at road safety, Prevent and break down in Community relations. (topic to be scoped further).
- 2) Key risk/priority – Growth Agenda – focusing on industry.
- 3) On line digital Gateway – environment portfolio access to services (topic to be scoped further).

Task and finish Groups

- 1) Key Risk – failure to deliver Highways DfT level 3 (September time to ensure deadline is met).
- 2) Car Parking –income targets (November onwards).

Children and Young People's OSC

Topics

- 1) OFSTED visit- outcomes
- 2) Implications of changes to funding arrangements to schools and what department doing to mitigate against risk
- 3) Management of volunteering and community asset based approach to service management; resilience and support
- 4) Proactively managing resources to support prevention agenda; family group conference, creative solutions

Task Groups

- 1) CSE & Prevent- an update
- 2) Serious case reviews presented to LSB
- 3) Refresh charges; looking to develop a family offer for the most deprived
- 4) Mental Health – self harm focusing on social media and digital bullying (joint meeting with the H&AOSC)

Policy and Corporate Resources OSC

Topics

- 1) Mid-term budget update (December meeting)
- 2) IT security and Data Protection
- 3) Organisational development- how the council will look post May 2018- pre decision

Task Groups

- 1) Welfare reforms. A presentation from Andy Ormerod in advance of Shelter being invited to the meeting (info to Members in advance)
- 2) Data protection training
- 3) Health, safety and wellbeing

The first Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group of the municipal year was held on the 10th July 2017. It was pleasing to see a high turnout of Members attending the group in the previous year and in this first meeting. Members are reminded that Corporate Parenting is everyone's responsibility and I look forward hopefully seeing the attendance grow throughout the year.

Looking forwards each Scrutiny Committee will use the summer months to undertake task and finish groups outlined above. I look forward to updating Council at the next Council Forum of the work that has been completed.

Jim Shorrock
Chair

Kevin Connor
Vice Chair



| | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| REPORT OF: | MONITORING OFFICER |
| TO: | COUNCIL FORUM |
| ON: | 27th JULY 2017 |

SUBJECT: STANDARDS COMMITTEE – HEARING FINDINGS

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To inform the Council of the findings of a Hearing Panel held on 6th July 2017 in respect of Councillor Imtiaz Ali.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

This report is for information

3. BACKGROUND

The Standards Committee has a role in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by councillors/members.

The Council Constitution sets out how matters such as complaints received in respect of alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members should be addressed and handled ('Arrangements for dealing with complaints about the Code of Conduct for Members' – Part 5, Section 1 refers).

A complaint was received following the reporting in the Lancashire Telegraph on 6 September 2016 regarding the conduct of Councillor Ali and the use of his Facebook account.

This matter was investigated in accordance with the above referenced 'Arrangements for dealing with complaints about the Code of Conduct for Members'

On 8th February 2017 the full Standards Committee under Part II received the Investigating Officers report and the Monitoring Officer sought a view from the Committee in respect of the report, following full consideration of the matter. The Committee resolved to recommend the Monitoring Officer report the Investigating Officers findings to a Hearings Panel.

On 15th March 2017 the full Standards Committee received a report from the Monitoring Officer to establish a Standards Hearings Panel for the local hearing of complaints against Members.

The Standards Committee resolved:

1) That a Sub-Committee be established, constituted in accordance with the Council's Arrangements for dealing with complaints where Council Members had failed to comply with the Code ("the Arrangements"), to act as a Hearings Panel for the local hearing of complaints against Members;

2) That the Standards Committee delegates to the Hearings Panel the function to determine complaints, referred to it under the Arrangements; and

3) That the draft procedure for the Hearings Panel be approved, with the final version to be signed off by the Chair.

On the same Agenda the Standards Committee also resolved to:

Nominate the Members of the Standards Committee to form a Hearing Panel to consider the matter of the Complaint into the conduct of the Councillor Ali.

The full Standards Committee nominated Councillors, Vicky McGurk, Julie Gunn and Julie Slater alongside independent member Paul Fletcher who it would be proposed chair the Hearings Panel.

4. STANDARDS COMMITTEE HEARINGS PANEL

The Hearings Panel of the Standards Committee subsequently met on 6th July 2017 and found that Councillor Ali had breached the Code of Conduct by using language which could be interpreted as `abusive` and thereby breaching paragraph 3.1[b] of Part 1 of the Members Code of Conduct, which clearly states that Members must not *"bully or be abusive to any person"*. The Panel also found that Councillor A breached Paragraph 5 of the Code, which states that Members must not conduct themselves in such a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing their office or the Council into disrepute.

The Panel took the following 4 actions in respect of this, as provided for under Paragraph 13 of the `Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints about the Code of Conduct for members in the Constitution:

- 1 The Panel requested this report be presented to the Council Forum for information.
- 2 The Panel findings to then be published in respect of the conduct.
- 3 A recommendation is made to the Group Leader by the Panel that the Member be removed from committees until the end of the calendar year.
- 4 The Monitoring Officer be instructed by the Panel to arrange appropriate training for the Member.

Since the meeting on 6th July the Panel has approved the attached for publication on the Council's website to fulfil outcome 2 above.

In respect of outcome 3, the Conservative Group Leader, Councillor John Slater has confirmed that Councillor Ali will be removed from committees as set out in the recommendation from the Hearing Panel.

The Monitoring officer is also reviewing appropriate training for the Councillor Ali which he is expected to undertake in the near future to fulfil outcome 4.

The complainant was informed of the outcome of this outcome to their complaint on 7th July 2017.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Standards Committee has a role in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by councillors. In this case, a Code of Conduct breach was identified and action has been taken in accordance with the Council Constitution.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The statutory provisions for the Standards Framework are set out in the Localism Act 2011. The Standards Committee's role, functions and powers are contained in the Council's Constitution.

In accordance with Article 9 of the Constitution, the Standards Committee's function includes adopting such procedures for Hearings Panels and determination of any complaints referred by the Monitoring Officer.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None

9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

None

10. CONSULTATIONS

The Council's arrangements for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct have been discussed and agreed by the Standards Committee and are set out in the Council's Constitution.

Contact Officer: David Fairclough, Monitoring Officer, Director for HR Legal & Corporate Services (01254 585642)

Date: 14 July 2017

Background Papers: Member Complaint – Councillor A 2016



DECISION NOTICE

Reference: ()

Hearings Panel: 6 July 2017

Subject Member: Councillor Imtiaz Ali

Complainant: Mr A Mahmud

Complaint

A complaint was received following the reporting in the Lancashire Telegraph on 6 September 2016 regarding the conduct of Councillor Ali and the use of his Facebook account.

The Complainant claimed that Councillor Ali made a statement on his Facebook account that included a phrase in Punjabi, which allegedly was homophobic in nature and grossly offensive, and therefore breached the Code of Conduct. An investigation was undertaken by an Investigation Officer (nominated by the Monitoring officer). At its meeting on 8 February 2017, the Standards Committee recommended to the Monitoring Officer to refer the complaint to Hearings Panel for determination in accordance with the Council's *'Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints about the Code of Conduct for Members'* ("the Arrangements").

On 15th March 2017 the full Standards Committee appointed the members to the Hearing Panel, comprising of three elected members of the Council and one Independent Member, in accordance with the Arrangements. .

The Hearings Panel conducted the hearing at public meeting on 6 July 2017, chaired by the Independent Member and considered representations from the Investigation Officer and Councillor Ali. Councillor Ali in support of his case also produced documentary evidence from two translation/interpretation services at the meeting, Connect Interpreting and Translation Service Ltd and FH Language Solutions Ltd. This evidence was considered alongside the Investigation officer's report and findings, which also included documentary evidence from an independent interpretation/translation service, Lancashire Interpretation & Translation Services. There was no evidence to suggest that the phrase was homophobic from these independent sources.

Decision

The Hearings Panel found that the phrase in Punjabi used by Councillor Ali on his Facebook account was not homophobic as alleged. This finding concurred with the Investigating Officer's report. However, the Hearings Panel did find that the language used by Councillor Ali was abusive and also considered to be offensive to any person reading it. Accordingly, the Panel found that Councillor Ali had breached the following provisions of the Code of Conduct for Members by the use of language on his Facebook account:

- *"You must not:.....bully or be abusive to any person"* (Paragraph 3.1[b])
- *"You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or the Council into disrepute."* (Paragraph 5).

In view of its findings of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct for Members, the Hearings Panel under Paragraph 13 of the Arrangements resolved that the following sanctions in respect of Councillor Ali be taken:

1. To publish the Hearings Panel's findings in respect of Councillor Ali's conduct;
2. To report the Hearing Panel's findings to the Council for information;
3. To recommend to Councillor Ali's Group Leader that he be removed from any committees or subcommittees of the Council until end of the calendar year;
4. To instruct the Monitoring Officer to arrange appropriate training for Councillor Ali.

Reasons for the decision

Although it was noted there was inconsistency in his responses to questions related to the posting on his Facebook account and the quotes attributed to him in the press at the time, Councillor Ali during the investigation and Hearing accepted responsibility for posting the phrase in Punjabi on his Facebook account.

The Council expects the highest standards of conduct from its Councillors and in breaching the Code of Conduct Councillor Ali had fallen far short of the required standard. The Hearings Panel viewed these matters seriously and concluded the language used was abusive and also the Councillor by his actions had brought the Council into disrepute. Therefore, the Hearings Panel determined that it was appropriate to impose the above sanctions.

Notice of the decision

This Decision Notice will be sent to the Complainant and the Subject Member. The decision will also be reported to the next meeting of the Standards Committee.

Appeal

Subject to judicial review or a decision of a Local Government Ombudsman, there is no right of appeal against the decision of the Hearings Panel.

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR MOHAMMED KHAN

Date: 27th July 2017

National Festival of Making 2017

The National Festival of Making that took place on 6th-7th May saw over 30,000 people flock to Blackburn town centre to enjoy the celebration of makers and making.

Visitors who came from all over the UK, enjoyed two days of demonstrations, workshops and performances as well as a collection of art installations, held at a variety of venues around the town centre including Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery and The Making Rooms.

Volunteers helped ensure the festival, backed by Arts Council England, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Superslow Way and Blackburn with Darwen Council, ran smoothly by acting as visitor guides and welcoming people to the town.

As a recognition of their hard work, over 100 people of all ages and from all backgrounds, who signed up to help throughout the weekend attended a special reception in the Council Chamber at Blackburn Town Hall on Monday, July 3.

The volunteers did a fantastic job and quite rightly were recognised for their contribution to what was a wonderful event. The Festival of Making brought people together from all walks of life and was a great example of what we can achieve when we all work together.

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. The National Festival of Making is amongst one of the many examples of our efforts.

Since April's Council Forum, I would like to update you with events which have brought people together to celebrate the community. They include The Fusion Awards in May 2017, where volunteers, professionals, charity workers and entrepreneurs were recognised and awarded for their fantastic work at the annual community recognition awards ceremony.

Towards the end of May, communities came together across the Borough with events to celebrate national Refugee Awareness Week ranging from exhibitions, drama pieces and the sharing of stories.

In June, people from all faiths and none gathered to remember loved ones at the Let Us Remember annual memorial day. Around 100 people attended the emotional

service where people were invited to plant a plaque with a tribute for their loved one. A tree was also dedicated as a mark of remembrance.

Held in memory of MP Jo Cox, people from all over the borough united to mark The Great Get Together, 16-18 June. Events were held to celebrate everything that we all have in common and to bring communities closer together.

To mark Srebrenica memorial Day, on 13 July, schools, agencies and the community united against hatred at a special service to commemorate the Srebrenica Genocide of 1995. At the event over 100 peace messages were written as a mark of unity.

The Great British High Street Party

On Saturday 15th July Blackburn celebrated its double win in the national Great British High Street Awards. A commemorative plaque to celebrate Blackburn's victory in the Great British High Street Awards was unveiled. A big thank you to Blackburn BID and the local businesses for their support and the council will continue to support this special partnership.

Lancashire Governance and the Northern Powerhouse

I would like to congratulate our Rossendale and Darwen MP Jake Berry on his recent appointment as the new Northern Powerhouse Minister, I'm sure he will support both Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire with opportunities to influence and benefit from the Government's Northern Powerhouse agenda.

Health and care transformation

Blackburn with Darwen Council continues to play a key role in health and care developments and any proposed changes, both on a Pennine Lancashire and a Lancashire and South Cumbria footprint.

The financial challenges are still daunting, through the pressures and demands on our services, but it is important we and residents, help to shape the plans so we have the confidence that proposals are right for this borough.

Locally, the Together a Healthier Future team has held a number of engagement events including sessions at Darwen Vale school, the Older People's Forum, in partnership with Blackburn Healthwatch and the Carers Service.

A further public event is scheduled for Wednesday, August 9 at Blackburn Central Library for a 1pm start. I would be grateful if you could help promote this event to your constituents.

All members are welcome to attend but I have asked the Together a Healthier Team to organise another briefing for members in the Council Chamber over the next few weeks to update members. I will circulate the details once I have them. You can find further details about the library event at www.togetherahealthierfuture.org.uk.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH & ADULT SOCIAL CARE COUNCILLOR MUSTAFA DESAI

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING DIRECTORS:
DOMINIC HARRISON (HEALTH)
SAYYED OSMAN (ADULT SOCIAL CARE)
DATE: 27th July 2017**

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

LOCALITY TEAM CO-LOCATION

A team of social workers, Reablement staff and Independent Living Services (ILS) representatives have co-located to Darwen Health Centre to form a Darwen multi-disciplinary team. Staff will share office space with colleagues from a range of disciplines including district nursing, the rapid assessment team, mental health services as well as the voluntary sector. The multi-disciplinary team meet weekly to discuss cases referred from the practices' GPs for individuals who need additional health and social care support to remain at home. The move will enable colleagues from the neighbourhood teams to become more involved with social work and clinical staff, enhancing our asset based approach and the development of a joint working model.

Further planning is underway to agree joint locations for North, East and the West teams over the next few weeks and months, following a similar model.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

A joint approach is being developed with colleagues in Prevention, Neighbourhoods and Learning Services to encourage a growth in the recruitment and use of volunteers for people receiving adult social care.

The first pilot is being developed in one locality to begin with, having particular emphasis on people with a learning disability and older people. A workshop has been set up with representatives from Lancashire Volunteer Partnership (LVS), community connectors, adult social workers, health colleagues in integrated neighbourhood teams and reablement. As individuals express a desire to work with a volunteer, referrals will be channelled through the wellbeing service through our partnership with LVS who will recruit and support the volunteer and offer ongoing oversight to the volunteer and person receiving support. Going forward we will embed this arrangement in neighbourhoods so that we can ensure that it becomes part of the local support available to individuals and their carers.

APPLE GARDEN AND BALMORAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

Work is progressing well with the new housing developments for people with Learning Disabilities and Autism. The roofs have now been completed and internal fit outs works are beginning. Balmoral will be available for new tenants from the end of August and Apple Garden will be available from November. Open days will be arranged for stake holders and prospective tenants nearer the completion dates.

DELAYED TRANSFER OF CARE PEER REVIEW

An Executive Team of NHS and Social Care Leaders has been established to provide support and challenge to local systems, drawing upon the learning, best practice and experience from organisations and systems that are performing well. The visit to Pennine Lancashire took place on the 14th June and senior officers attended from the local authority. The focus of the visit was primarily on levels of delayed transfers from hospital. The team, however, worked to a framework of four key lines of enquiry; leadership, culture, improvement plans and community capacity.

Although the formal feedback is not yet available, the informal feedback was very positive. The reviewers found examples of good practice and were complimentary about system leadership and the capacity to drive positive change. They also made suggestions in relation to areas for improvement which will be incorporated into existing system improvement plans and overseen by the A&E Delivery Board.

HEALTH

BEST START IN LIFE

Giving every child the 'best start in life' is a priority of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and a key public health goal, with a strong evidence base.

Healthy Child Programme: Public Health Nursing Service

Following a competitive tendering process, Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust is now working in partnership with the Council, East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust and voluntary sector providers, to deliver a new, fully integrated, 0-19 years Healthy Child Programme. In April this year, building on previous achievements in the Borough, NHS health visiting, school nursing and their skill mixed team co-located within Little Harwood, Audley, Darwen and Livesey Children's Centres to work alongside Local Authority Children's Services and Education colleagues. This is the first phase of the model, and the council is working closely with the Clinical Commissioning Group to identify other children's and family services that could be aligned, to promote a more joined up collaborative health and wellbeing offer for children, young people and their families.

It's a Poor Do!

Poverty in childhood is a key determinant of poor outcomes, both for children and the adults they will become. Blackburn with Darwen has both significantly higher levels of child poverty than the national average, and a track record of working hard to ameliorate its impact. The third It's a Poor Do! conference organised by Together Lancashire was held in Blackburn in May, chaired by the Director of Public Health, with speakers from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Many examples of local good practice were provided, and much of the discussion around tackling child poverty centred on better collaboration across sectors and organisations at a local level and for political will and adequate funding at national level to address the underlying determinants of child poverty. The Public Health team is working closely with Together Lancashire on a range of topics to address local poverty, including currently developing a multi-agency Food Poverty Network as part of the Eat Well action plan.

Whole School Mental Wellbeing

Half of all mental health conditions develop before the age of 14. 1 in 10 children aged 5 to 16 have a diagnosed mental health disorder and 1 in 4 are at increased risk of future mental ill-health, making schools a key setting to promote mental wellbeing. St. Thomas's Pupil Referral Unit for children and young people with behavioural problems recognised their need is even greater and has piloted a whole school approach to building personal resilience and mental wellbeing, and to share the learning with other schools. Action has included the development of a whole-school Wellbeing Strategy, supported by Lancashire Mind, developing the emotional health and resilience curriculum with support and resources from Young Minds, and staff training, including Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) and Safetalk suicide awareness, both of which the Public Health Department has committed to continuing to commission, as a collaborative partnership with schools across the Borough.

WELLBEING SERVICE NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Prevention and early intervention has a key role to play in reducing demand for more intensive, and expensive, health and care services. A major plank of that approach locally is the Council's integrated Wellbeing Service. As well as advice, guidance and practical support with exercise, stopping smoking or drinking less, the service also helps deal with issues such as housing, employment and money because these problems can affect emotional and physical health just as much. After picking up a national award in April for 'transformation in health and social care' in May, the Wellbeing Service went on to take the runner-up spot in the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Shared Learning Award.

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

The number of cases open to Children's Social Care has stabilised over the past 6 months to between 1,700 and 1,800, but remains over 200 higher than 18 months ago. We continue to cope with the higher level of demand through a contract with an external agency providing an extra social work team.

The number of Children in Care is 368 and has remained at this level over the past 6 months which is 30 higher than the equivalent period 12 months ago. The most pronounced rise has been in the number of children subject to Child Protection plans, which stands at 342 – an increase of over a third across the past year. Over 450 children are being supported by Early Help services, with half of the lead professionals co-ordinating support for children and families being drawn from school staff.

COMMUNICATIONS PASSPORT

The Communication Passport tool for children and young people with disabilities has been relaunched at Apple Trees Hub following consultation with young people. The passport is used within Children's Social Care to share information and involve children and young people in their care planning arrangements. The new design and format will appeal to a broader age range, and cater for those who want to communicate through drawings.

OFSTED SINGLE INSPECTION FRAMEWORK

Additional dates for Ofsted inspections under the Single Inspection Framework (SIF) have been released this month; up until recently, the 10th July was expected to be the last inspection date for SIF inspections of local authorities. However, 6 additional dates have now been released: 11th and 25th September, 9th and 30th October and 6th and 13th November. We are one of the last 6 authorities who have not been inspected under the current framework. The next 6 months will see the last 6 authorities inspected, a number of the 28 inadequate authorities re-inspected and also some pilot inspections of the new framework that will commence in January 2018. Of the 134 published inspection reports, a third of local authorities achieved a good or better inspection judgement. Just under half were judged to require improvement and a fifth were inadequate.

SUMMER ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Free nutritious meals for children will be provided through the Children's Centres network over the school summer holiday period. Lunch boxes will be provided by the charitable organisation 'Kingdom Outreach' and meals will be prepared by local volunteers and delivered to each children centre each day over the holidays for those children who have registered. Families can eat together and there will be a full calendar of fun activities to encourage families to participate and this will give staff the opportunity to engage with children and families who do not normally access children's centre services.

Young People's Services has developed a varied programme of summer activities for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities throughout the six week summer holiday period for children aged 5-8 years. Furthermore, for the 8-19 age group there is an Additional Needs Scheme for children with more moderate needs who can participate in

small group activities and a Complex Needs Scheme for children and young people who need 1:1 supervision.

NORTH WEST LEAVING CARE FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT

The Blackburn with Darwen Leaving Care team was proud to host the 2017 North West Leaving Care Football Tournament, following their undefeated win in 2016. 9 teams from across the region were cheered on by more than 50 supporters at the 5 a side event at Witton Park on 29th June.

The Blackburn with Darwen Team comprises of 7 young men, aged 16-21, who are currently supported by the Leaving Care team. The team has been undergoing weekly training and matches since March which paid off with the team winning the runners up trophy after a narrow 1-0 defeat in the final to Wirral. Congratulations to all who took part.

COMMUNITY REPARATION CELEBRATION EVENT

The positive contribution of young people within local communities whilst carrying out Community Reparation has been acknowledged at a celebration event on 26th July organised by Child Action North West. The event allows this group of young people to show how they have turned their efforts to achieving positive outcomes in their community.

After completing their reparation hours young people are offered the opportunity to return as volunteers to achieve a recognised accreditation (ASDAN) for volunteering their time in support of others.

30 HOUR FREE CHILDCARE OFFER UPDATE

A communication and marketing plan is well underway to promote the 30 hour free childcare offer. Activity includes a strong digital campaign using staff payslips, bulletins and Facebook which has worked well alongside promotional posters, leaflets and t-shirts and attendance at the Race for Life event in June.

Data drawn from the successful parent application dashboard as of 11th July shows that 373 parents have made a successful 30 hour eligibility claim. Of these successful applications, 128 have been submitted to the Local Authority for validation in readiness to take up a place in September 2017. Blackburn with Darwen officers were informed at a regional event in June that Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council is 5th in the league table for completing validation checks.

To date 131 providers locally have expressed an interest in delivering the 30 hours which includes the borough's children centres, 2 Nursery Schools, Childminders and Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) early years providers.

FOSTERING RECRUITMENT

Foster Care Fortnight - Foster carers, their children and staff from the Council's Fostering team marked the start of Foster Care Fortnight in May with a 'walk and talk' event around Entwistle Reservoir. Photographs from the day were used as part of the service's online campaign to raise awareness of the need for more carers in the borough. During the fortnight, local radio 2BR was used as the main platform to raise awareness and this activity was supported with local events, press opportunities and ongoing social media activity. The campaign won praise nationally as an example of good practice on the social media

channel 'GovUK' as *'the best social media data from government communications across the UK'* and *'great government communication'*.

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School (QEGS) Uganda appeal - The Council's Let's Foster service supported the effort to collect clothes to send out to children in Uganda. Around 20 school children from QEGS headed to Uganda on 4th July with local radio station 2BR, taking donations of clothing, shoes, glasses and underwear for orphaned children and raising money to pay for building work at the school and for teacher accommodation.

Locally we have many children who are waiting for a foster family and hope that by linking in with this campaign it will help raise awareness, both of the need for more people to consider fostering and also the global need to help children living in these difficult conditions.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

COUNCILLOR JIM SMITH

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
DIRECTOR: MARTIN EDEN
DATE: 27 JULY 2017**

YOUR CALL

We have had a strong start to the year for 'Your Call' environmental clean-up events. In April and May, we have supported 28 events which were attended by 575 volunteers, of which, 284 volunteers were new and had never previously taken part in an environmental clean-up.

This compares very favourably to the previous year where we supported 19 events which were attended by 429 volunteers, of which, 312 were new volunteers.

GREEN WASTE

The number of subscribers to the service has continued to increase, over 13,000 residents have now signed up to the green waste collection service. As expected, green waste tonnages have reduced this year, however they have only reduced by 20% when compared to the tonnage we received from 27,000 properties that had access to a green waste collection service last year.

NOISE CONTROL

The Council's Public Protection service has been working behind the scenes to help ensure that recent events in the Borough have been safe and enjoyable for all.

Officers monitored noise in Witton Park at the Easter Fair in April and the Restricted Forest event in May, and were able to confirm that noise levels stayed within guidelines; this evidence will support the Council in maintaining a regular schedule of events at the park, and enable it to counter any unjustified complaints.

Council officers were also involved in the recent Elton John concert at Blackburn Rovers. Again, noise monitoring equipment was deployed to ensure that noise levels remained within agreed limits, which they did. Officers have also been involved in the event at the stadium, in their capacity of safety at sports grounds inspectors – this was to ensure that the agreed event plan was followed by organisers, and to monitor the safety of the crowd. That the event passed off safely and enjoyably, was due in no small part to the diligent planning of the organisers, Blackburn Rovers, and the authorities.

JOINT PARKING AND TRAFFIC OPERATION

On Friday evening, 9 June 2017, parking services took part in a joint parking and traffic operation in the Blackburn area with Lancashire Police Constabulary.

Officers from the Council and the Police patrolled areas around and within the town centre between the hours of 5.00pm and 9.00pm. In total, the Council issued 79 PCNs for parking offences and the Police also issued 9 Traffic Penalties for more serious traffic offences

There are two more joint parking and traffic operations planned in June as part of our sustained joint working to improve parking and traffic standards with the Borough.

SATURDAY CAGES

The Council has re-commenced the springtime waste removal service in areas across the borough, for a period of 12 weeks, with the service ending late June but planning to recommence late autumn. The service sees a number of caged vehicles arrive at predetermined sites, where residents local to the area, will have received notification of the arrival time and date, in advance. Residents can then take their bulky waste to the collection site, where Council staff remove and load the items.

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

COUNCILLOR DAMIAN TALBOT

PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
DIRECTOR: MARTIN EDEN
DATE: 27 JULY 2017

ARTS AND HERITAGE SERVICE

***Music of Courtly India* – Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery hosts British Museum Partnership Spotlight loan.**

From 30 June until 26 August visitors to Blackburn Museum can see on loan from the British Museum in London, works made in India for courtly patrons including stunning ragamala paintings dating from 1610 and an ivory sarinda instrument from around 1700.

This loan to Blackburn coincides with the 70th anniversary of Indian Independence and partition. *Music of Courtly India* runs alongside *India's Gateway*, a photographic exhibition at Blackburn Museum that aims to capture life in both Gujarat and Mumbai, areas that through trade and migration have developed strong links with the UK and in particular East Lancashire as a result of the textile industries of the past. *Music of Courtly India* is accompanied by a free talk by Dr Imma Ramos, the British Museum's curator of the South Asia collections on July 20 from 5:30-7:30pm.

LEISURE, HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Walk in the Park 2018 - A second year of National Charities Partnership funding (Tesco, British Heart Foundation and Diabetes UK) has been secured following last year's successful family event in Witton Park. This year there will be events at Witton Park on 15th July and Bold Venture Park on 12th August. As well as introducing new extended walks around the parks there will be lots of FREE family fun activities.

Witton Park Events - The athletics season is now in full swing with local schools and colleges using the track for curriculum training, after-school athletics clubs and sports days. Blackburn Harriers have also been busy hosting a Mid-Lancashire Athletics competition, a Youth Development League meeting (lower age group) and also an evening Open Track and Field meeting – all of which have been well attended. The Ribble Valley horse show started their monthly programme in April, which will run until September. These events continue to be very well supported and are popular with both attendees and spectators alike. Other events in the park have included a celebration event for Couch to 5k; 'Walk a Mile' event organised by BwD Carers service; a charity fun run in aid of the Manchester victims and 3 book-themed, family fun toddler trail activity days .

British Cycling 'Ride Active' pilot project;

The borough has been successful in a bid to be a host for British Cycling 'Ride Active' pilot project; one of only two areas selected. Ride Active focusses on the important social aspects of exercise and will offer cycle training in a fun and flexible way aimed at encouraging inactive people, people who have just learnt to pedal but are wobbly, people lacking confidence to cycle and people who have not cycled for some time. Pilot project will start July 2017 for 12-16 weeks.

LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

Summer Reading Challenge - This year's national scheme for 4 - 12 year olds, running from 1st July to the end of September is called 'Animal Agents'. Children read six books during the summer holidays and win various prizes and awards along the way. Those who complete the scheme will also receive a certificate and a medal. As well as being great fun, the scheme helps children to keep their reading and literacy skills 'sharp' during the long summer holidays. In addition to the usual marketing the scheme will be promoted in school assemblies in the run up to the end of the summer term.

VENUES

KGH and DLT have seen a varied programme of entertainment over the last quarter. Comedy has come in the form of the regular monthly comedy clubs (both KGH and DLT) and through nationally acclaimed acts such as Jon Richardson and Omid Djalili. Live music was represented by Paul Weller, Toyah, You Me at Six and S2S and Kaluki attracted 4,200 people for a weekend of dance music. The Halle Orchestra played "Chopin" and "Dvorak" and The Vienna Festival ballet put on their production of Cinderella. Children's entertainment Milkshake Live over May half term was a well-attended afternoon. KGH also hosted 2 boxing events in the Concert Hall including a successful charity evening.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

The Easter holiday programme was delivered from Monday 10th April to Friday 21st April 2017. A wide variety of activities took place across the Borough, for age ranges from 5 – 19 years.

- Play/Youth projects – every afternoon at leisure centres and community centres.
- MUGAs – every evening at six venues across the borough (2 in each neighbourhood area).
- Programme of Positive Activities – including: Barge and Activity residentials, powerboating, sailing and water fun sessions at Queens Park.

The Leisure Inclusion team also offered full and half day provision for Children with Disabilities at Kaleidoscope Youth Centre. Activities included dance & movement, cooking, Easter arts & crafts, boccia and sensory activities. All other generic youth provision throughout the borough remained open for the duration of the holiday period.

OFF FOR FUN 2017 – Summer Programme

The Off for Fun Summer Programme will commence on Monday 31st July and run until Friday 25th August. Brochures and publicity materials have been distributed to all primary schools within Blackburn with Darwen, Community Centres, Leisure Centres, Libraries, Town Halls etc. In addition, information has also been circulated via the weekly Headteachers bulletin.

A wide variety of activities are available, across the Borough, for all age ranges from 5 – 19 years.

Activities include:

- Play/Youth projects – every afternoon at leisure centres
- MUGA's – every evening at eight venues across the borough
- Programme of Positives Activities – including: Barge and Activity residentials, adventure days, cycling and water fun sessions at Queens Park

Throughout the holiday period, the Leisure Inclusion team will also offer all day provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities at Kaleidoscope Youth Centre. Furthermore, for the 8-19 age group, there is an Additional Needs Scheme for children with more moderate needs who can participate in small group activities and a Complex Needs Scheme for children and young people who need 1:1 supervision. Activities will include dance & movement, cooking, arts & crafts, boccia, sensory activities and trips.

All other generic senior youth provision throughout the borough will be open for the duration of the holiday period.

COMMUNITY ASSETS

Following health and safety concerns about the poor condition of the car parks at Greenfields Community Centre and Bangor St Community Centre, the car parks were re-surfaced during week commencing 19th June 2017 to ensure the centres continue to remain accessible and safe for all users.

Lead volunteer Doreen Mitchell retired in April 2017 from Ivy Street Community Centre after volunteering in varying capacities for nearly 30 years since the centre opened in 1988. She has helped to manage the centre for the last four years and has now stepped down from her management position but will continue to help other volunteers if required.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND PREVENTION

**COUNCILLOR
ARSHID MAHMOOD**

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

Neighbourhoods

ESiF Bid 2016 - Strengthening Communities

A Public and Voluntary Sector partnership programme to boost volunteering across Lancashire is being led by BwD. Using an asset based approach the programme provides those furthest from the labour market with meaningful volunteering opportunities and puts them on a pathway towards work. It builds personal resilience to give individuals long term solutions to worklessness which, in turn, will keep them out of costly statutory interventions.

Delivery partners are Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Council, Police, BwD CVS, LACVS and One Lancashire.

The value of European funding for the programme is £1.2 million with an additional £800,000 in match funding from partners. BwDC has contributed £286,500 of the match funding and 50% of delivery will take place in the Borough. Approval for the project was received in May 2017 and subject to satisfactory contract negotiations delivery will commence in June 2017 through to December 2019.

Lancashire Volunteer Partnership in Blackburn with Darwen

Funded through the Police Innovation Fund the programme supports vulnerable people across the county by engaging and offering public sector volunteering opportunities. It is already operating successfully in Lancashire where 2121 volunteers currently support a range of council services including Adult Social Care, Children's Centres and Neighbourhood Services. The programme provides a central resource to recruit, promote and manage public sector volunteers with a system to track and monitor progress (Better Impact)

LVP is now being rolled out in BwD and a Community Connector has been seconded to the Constabulary to lead this work and co-ordinate the activity of the 995 volunteers currently operating regularly in BwD. Directors have also agreed a campaign to recruit new volunteers with a focus on prevention and stepdown in Adult Services. This will begin in September 2017. For a flavour

of the opportunities available follow the link www.lancsvp.org.uk

DCLG Communities Fund – we have been successful in obtaining £70,000 from DCLG as part of their Communities Fund Programme. Project “Connecting Communities” is supporting 54 Local Authority led Community projects aimed at delivering solutions to entrenched social issues. Our project in BwD will focus on prevention and step down from Transforming Lives. The fund will support the work we are developing with our Community Connectors and aim to expand the role beyond our neighbourhood staff to other public sector and voluntary sector partners. Led by Emma Coster, key partners are CVS and the voluntary organisation, “Locality” who will act as critical friend and give both strategic and operational support.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/multi-million-pound-boost-for-community-led-services>

DCLG funded Talk English Volunteer Project

Phase 3 of the Talk English project has successfully been completed with targets and outcomes exceeded at the end of March 2017. Further DCLG funding has been confirmed for Phase 4 of the Project which will run from April 2017 to March 2018 with 313 learners taking part in:

- 13 ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes
- 25 Volunteer ESOL teachers to be recruited, trained and supported
- 13 Talk English activities to be held of which 3 are to run for a minimum of 20 weeks.

Brian Mercer Trust Fund

£40K has been secured from the fund for a small grants pot for BwD community groups to access with the remit of boosting their capacity to recruit and support volunteers. £10K of the fund is to be earmarked for equipment which groups may need to support their activity.

East Lancashire Hospital’s NHS Trust STAR Awards 2017 Volunteer of the Year Award

Carol James, a Macmillan Community Cancer Information and Support Volunteer has scooped a **prestigious** accolade at the **East Lancashire Hospital’s NHS Trust Star Awards 2017**. Carol was awarded the **Volunteer of the Year Award** for her supportive work at the Macmillan Information Point at Burnley General Hospital.

Since joining the East Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen Macmillan Community Cancer Information and Support Service, Carol has excelled and supported the establishment of volunteer service delivery at Burnley General Hospital Information Point.

BwD Wellbeing Service – NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) Shared Learning Awards 2017

The Wellbeing Service is the single point of access for all referrals from either professionals (health and wider) or individuals who may require some support or intervention on a wide range of health issues.

We were selected as 1 of only 4 Shared Learning Award finalists from over 70

entries from organisations across the NHS, Local Authorities, and the health and social sectors more widely.

The NICE Shared Learning Awards celebrate the best examples of NICE guidance being used to improve standards of care and create innovative, effective local programs.

We got the opportunity to showcase and present our work at the NICE Annual Conference in Liverpool and demonstrate how we used NICE Guideline PH6 Behaviour change: general approaches to influence how the service was developed and is delivered.

Community Safety Service

Road Safety:

Blackburn with Darwen's Road Safety Plan 2017-20 is set to be formally launched on Monday 17th July at Blackburn Fire Station. The plan sets out the borough's priorities, and current and proposed action over the next three years. In light of several high profile road safety incidents in 2016 a significant focus has been placed on further innovation and investment across our enforcement, education and engineering programmes. The plan is our commitments as a partner of the Pennine Road Safety Partnership, the body through which Road Safety Activity is co-ordinated and chaired by Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service. Through the actions outlined the council and its partners are confident we will see further reductions in accidents and injuries on BwD and East Lancashire's roads.

Crime and Ant-Social Behaviour:

Blackburn Business Against Crime was the recipient of a national award for partnership working at the prestigious national business crime conference for its work with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council in supporting vulnerable individuals within the town centre. The work which balanced bespoke support to meet underlying needs of individuals as well as necessary activity to support the local town centre to prosper. The partnership was praised for bridging the often difficult balance between protecting and supporting adults with complex needs who can have a detrimental impact on trade when their actions are anti-social. The award, received by Ronnie O'Keefe on behalf of Blackburn Business Against Crime is one of several the revitalised town centre has received in recent months.

Housing

The new Selective Landlord Licensing scheme for Darwen has been approved and designated. Licence applications from private landlords are being processed and fees are coming in. We are planning pro-active engagement with landlords to ensure they comply with licence requirements and conditions and bring properties up to the required condition and service

standards as needed.

The Council has prosecuted a landlord failure to carry out repairs required under an Improvement Notice. The work required included general repairs, providing heating in the bathroom, remedying penetrating dampness, replacing glazing to boarded up windows and the back door, repairing the electric shower etc. The repairs had been outstanding since the tenant moved in. The defendant was found guilty in his absence and fined £4753. At the same time as he was served with the Improvement Notice the owner was also served with a remedial notice to install a carbon monoxide detector and smoke detectors. He failed to do so and following installation of them by the Council he was sent a Penalty Charge Notice. Generally landlords comply with Improvement Notices, but the case acts as a warning of the penalty for not doing so.

A bid has been made to government to sustain the Council's support for temporary accommodation and English language tuition and training for asylum seekers and refugees. Recent cuts in mainstream government funding have put pressures on these services.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES – 27th July 2017

COUNCILLOR ANDY KAY

PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
CHIEF OFFICER: DENISE PARK

Benefits

The key performance indicators improved significantly over the financial year 2016/17, with the average processing times for new claims and changes in circumstance coming down to 15-16 days and 2-3 days respectively. A significant part of this improvement has been as a direct result of the move to greater online self-serve by customers. In the next few weeks the final online form will be made available on the web for benefit claimants. This new form will allow all benefit applications from hostels to be made online.

Council Tax and Business Rates

In order to ensure all recovery options are available to the council, an agreement has been reached with a firm of solicitors to assist with bankruptcy proceedings against those companies and individuals for whom all other recovery options have been explored and yet who still have large unpaid arrears. Whilst it is expected that the number of cases will be low, this new development will allow for some accounts who have failed to pay arrears over a long period to be resolved.

Customer Services

Over a number of months the telephone directory has been reviewed and updated to allow the introduction of an automated switchboard. This solution will be deployed over the next 2 months and therefore eliminate the majority of switchboard calls requiring customer service involvement.

Audit & Assurance

The Annual Internal Audit Opinion and the Risk Management and Counter Fraud Reports were considered by the Audit & Governance Committee at their meeting in June; these reports provide assurances around the extent and strength of the processes in place to provide sound internal control and governance arrangements and in turn, inform the 2016/17 Annual Governance Statement for the Council that is required as part of the Annual Statement of Accounts.

Financial Services

The new Financial Management Systems have been live now for over three months and we have just produced the first financial monitoring statements from them with new style reports for budget holders to review. We are continuing with Phase 2 of the project to develop the systems further to deliver efficiencies both within the Finance Team and across the wider Council, including budget setting and year end forecasting.

IT

IT continue to implement new and upgraded systems to delivery efficiencies and service improvements including;

- Phase 2 Finance system
- Public Access solution for Libraries
- Planning System
- Till replacement at KGH and leisure sites
- Phase 2 Revs and Bens digitisation
- Replacement Leisure booking system

HR

The HR service now has 39 SLAs in place for the provision of payroll services, 25 for HR consultancy and 39 for health and safety for schools in the Borough. In addition, an e-learning offer has been made available to all schools.

With the introduction of the apprenticeship levy, there is a key focus on the recruitment of apprentices to roles, as well as linking the development of existing employees to apprenticeships.

Health, safety and well-being continues to be a priority ensuring that the Council is compliant with all health and safety legislation and proactively manages employee attendance. New occupational health provision commenced in April 2017, along with a new employee assistance programme.

Coroners Service

Legal Services are supporting the project to merge 3 Coronial areas in Lancashire-this includes all Coronial areas within the wider County except Blackpool. We are working in close liaison with Lancashire County Council to ensure all relevant procedures are followed and practical steps are taken to facilitate the move and deliver efficiencies.

Legal

During May and June the department delivered this year's regulatory training for elected members on planning and licensing committees as well as training on the member's code of conduct.

Corporate Services

The Democratic and Governance team once again delivered a successful Elections Service for the General Election on 8th June 2017. In support of them many staff from across all council services volunteered to work on elections and these were also supplemented by a number of casual employees. All contributed to the success of the process, and maintenance of our excellent record of running efficient and effective elections in this Borough.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS & EDUCATION

COUNCILLOR DAVE HARLING

PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING

DIRECTOR: LINDA CLEGG

DATE: 27th July 2017

PROVISIONAL SATS RESULTS

Early indications of Primary school performance in 2017 is that there has been marked improvement at the end of Key Stage 2, in line with the national pattern, which saw a rise of 8% in the main measure (children at the expected level in Reading, Writing and Maths). Further analysis will be shared in the next Council Forum report.

FESTIVAL OF VOICE

The Blackburn with Darwen Music Service took part in the borough's Festival of Voice in June and July which opened with a Gala Concert at King Georges Hall on 22nd June. The festival is a summer programme of activities and performances across the local area and is a collaboration between the Council's Music Service, Blackburn Cathedral and BBC Radio Lancashire. The Music Service's annual Big Sing and Mini Sing events featured in the programme alongside new initiatives.

A whole singing challenge was launched as part of the festival. All schools received a newly commissioned song entitled 'Go to The Park' which encouraged children and their families to explore their local parks and open spaces. Primary schools were invited to sing the song during the festival and a live broadcast was aired on BBC Radio Lancashire with three schools performing in the studio with other schools tuning in to sing along as one choir.

CAREERS FAIR FOR ALL AGES

The careers fair 'Blackburn with Darwen is Hiring' will take place within Blackburn Cathedral and surrounding outside spaces on the 14th September. The event will run from 10.00am until 4.00pm and is targeted at young people over the age of 15 within schools, further education or higher education, and those not currently engaged in employment, education or training from within the borough and beyond. The event is also open to adults who may be actively seeking employment or who are looking to upskill or explore new opportunities.

Along with a large number of employers representing a variety of sectors, post 16 learning and training providers will also be present. An interactive event is being planned to engage the audience and to offer 'hands on' experience of a rich variety of employment opportunities, including apprenticeships. A number of short workshops will also be on offer to support young people in the recruitment process, and to raise awareness of the wide range of employment opportunities in specific sectors.

GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE: EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

This year's annual Governors' Conference on 13th May at Blackburn Central High School chose Emotional Health and Wellbeing as the theme. 120 governors and invited guests enjoyed hearing from the two speakers, Luke Rodgers from FosterFocus, and Jo Siddle, Headteacher at St Thomas' Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). Luke gave a very personal account of his early years growing up as a child in care and the challenges he faced and Jo spoke about the difficulties and successes with managing emotional behaviour and the strategies in place at the PRU to support a whole school approach.

There are a number of Emotional Health and Wellbeing projects underway in the borough's schools. The local authority's Virtual School, which works to ensure that children in public care get the best possible support with their education, has teamed up with St Cuthbert's CE Primary and Lancashire Care Foundation Trust (LCFT) to develop an Adverse Childhood

Experiences (ACE) pathfinder project. The project has trained the professionals within the school in ACEs and the potential impact on children as they grow older. When communicating with pupils about behaviour, the staff focus on the 'why' and understanding the 'triggers' rather than seeing behaviour as a problem that they have to fix. Learning from the project is being developed into a programme to use with a wider group of primary schools.

Similarly, the EmBRACE (Emotional and Brain Resilience to Adverse Childhood Experience) pilot was initiated within Witton Park Academy secondary school in Autumn 2016. This is a whole school approach to increase awareness of the consequences of ACEs, and equips staff and pupils with the skills and confidence to use trauma informed strategies. EmBRACE is achieved by supporting senior leadership teams and providing evidenced-based tools that enable both staff and pupils to adopt an ACE approach.

HEADTEACHER CHANGES

Michael Duxbury, Headteacher at St Peter's RC Primary School will be retiring at the end of the Summer term and will hand over the leadership of the school to Ann-Marie O'Neil. Additionally, the Headteachers leaving or have left to pursue other opportunities are Steve Bladon from Cedars Primary School who will be succeeded by Nicola Truman and Vikki Milne at Holy Trinity who will hand over to Kathryn Bolton.

We wish the outgoing Headteachers well and thank them for their service to the children and young people of the borough and look forward to working with the new appointments in September.

OFSTED INSPECTIONS UPDATE

Since the last Council Forum update, seven schools have received confirmation of an Ofsted 'short inspections' judgement and all retained their 'good' overall effectiveness rating. The schools are; Brunel Nursery School, Blackburn Central High School, Longshaw Junior School, Intack Primary School, Feniscowles Primary School; St James' C of E Primary School and Darwen Aldridge Community Academy.

Eight schools have received full inspection judgements since March. Holy Trinity VC Primary School and Meadowhead Junior School both received 'requires improvement' judgements compared with a previous 'good' judgement.

St Luke & St Philip's CE Primary School, Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School and Eden School all had their first inspections since becoming Academies and all received a 'requires improvement' judgement.

There was change too at Our Lady of Perpetual Succour RC Primary School with the school improving on the previous 'requires improvement' and judged to be 'good'. Likewise, improved judgements were noted for St Barnabas & St Paul's CE Primary School and St Cuthbert's CE Primary school who both received 'outstanding' judgements. All reports can be viewed online at reports.ofsted.gov.uk.

LINKING CLASSROOM PROJECT

The School Effectiveness Team has secured a start-up grant of £7000 and funding of up to £20,000 for the next 3 years to build links between classrooms in Blackburn with Darwen to promote social cohesion. The team has exceeded the target of linking 14 classrooms and training will take place for engaged schools in September. The project includes training for staff on SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural) development, British values, relationships, cohesion, ethos and classroom resources connected to equalities, diversity, sense of belonging and identity.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION

COUNCILLOR PHIL RILEY

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

DATE: 27 JULY 2017

DARWEN THREE DAY MARKET SITE PROGRAMME

Following the decision to demolish the 3 day market building and wide consultation with Darwen residents, businesses and stakeholders on the future use of the site, a planning application has been submitted to demolish the building and implement a landscape proposal for the site. The landscape scheme responds to the consultation providing a flexible space for events, reflection and socialising including both green and paved areas which will reflect Darwen's identity and heritage. Over the next few months, the design will be worked up in detail with key stakeholders. There will be further opportunity for wider consultation before the scheme is finalised in Autumn prior to tendering and appointing a contractor.

Subject to planning approval, the demolition of the 3 day market building is planned to start in September with completion before the Christmas trading period begins. A temporary surface will be laid to enable a Christmas programme of events with the landscaping due to start first quarter 2018.

PLANNING PERFORMANCE IN 2017

The Planning Service are continuing to perform well and meet targets. The Council are measured by the Government on a 2 year rolling period currently up to the period ending 31st March 2017. The target for Major planning applications determined within 13 weeks and including Extensions of Time agreed with the applicants is 60%. The Council's performance for this 2 year period up to 31st March 2017 is 98%. For non-major applications, considered against the same 2 year rolling period, the target is 65% for applications determined within 8 weeks and including Extensions of Time agreed with the applicants. From 2018, this target is increasing to 70%. The Council's performance for the 2 year period up to 31st March 2017 is 83%.

HIVE AWARDS

The third annual Hive Awards were held in May and saw a record turnout at King George's Hall where 15 awards were handed out to a variety of businesses and individuals across the Borough. Of particular note were the Arte Et Labore Award which went to the recently retired Chief Executive of the East Lancs Chamber of Commerce, Mike Damms and the Chairman's Award which went to the Tauheedul Education Trust. The awards evening itself was a roaring success with a record number of tickets sold and King George's Hall proving to be an excellent venue.

LEADING PLACES PILOT

Following the formal signing in May of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Council, Blackburn College and Lancaster University to work jointly to

promote prosperity and skills across the Borough, partners submitted a bid to the Local Government Association (LGA) to become one of 6 new pilot areas to champion such collaborations. On June 1st formal notification was received that our bid had been successful and we are now a Leading Places Pilot. The Pilot provides advice and support and a small amount of extra resource to develop the collaboration and work on a specific project which in BwD's case will focus on developing healthier lifestyles. In addition to the support on offer Pilot status will provide partners with more profile, access to national agencies and government departments in developing policy and support packages, and tellingly will put us at the forefront of a key strand of the emerging National Industrial Strategy in developing new collaborations between institutions to develop places.

Royal Voluntary Service – Community Voluntary Transport

The Community Voluntary Transport Service has now launched in partnership with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and the Royal Voluntary Service. The scheme provides a flexible door-to-door alternative offering assistance and support to passengers and is currently being offered on an initial basis to Pleasington Cemetery. Feedback from users has been positive: *“The driver was very pleasant, professional, interesting to have a conversation with, really nice. We felt comfortable from the start. It was first class.”* The Council and the Royal Voluntary Service are continuing to look at different ways to promote the service, ensuring those in the local community are aware of this alternative transport provision.

Darwen East Development Corridor (DEDC)

The main objective of the new Marsh House Lane - Ivinson Road Link Road is to provide new highways infrastructure to enable the development of the designated housing site at Bailey's Field and Ellison Fold. However, key priorities within the project are to improve the local highway network and improve access to and from the eastern side of Darwen, to increase travel options between south east Darwen and the M65 Motorway, and to reduce congestion across Darwen whilst helping to bring forward sustainable growth in the Town. The Link Road has been designed as a neighbourhood road, with a 30 mph speed limit, 6 metre carriageway width, raised junction tables and sensitive landscaping. Road safety and visibility will also be addressed at associated junctions north and south of the new Link Road to improve conditions for all highway users. The Planning Application for the DEDC project is likely to be determined by the Council's Planning and Highways Committee in August 2017

NPIF Bid

The Council has recently bid into the Department for Transport's National Productivity Investment Fund for the Fabric Borders project. The £3m project will improve pedestrian and vehicular access between Blackburn Town Centre and development areas both North and South of Barbara Castle Way. The reconfiguration of vehicular and pedestrian access and egress routes will improve orbital route congestion, remove barriers and improve pedestrian flows between Blackburn Town Centre and residential / retail areas with a predominantly Asian Heritage population. Improved access to new development sites, under-utilised employment sites and emerging retail and cultural offers will also be delivered by the project which marks the next phase of Blackburn Town Centre's regeneration. The Council expects a decision from the DfT in Autumn 2017.

Elton John Park and Ride

For the Borough's first stadium pop concert which took place on the 10th June, the Council worked closely with Blackburn Rovers Football Club to provide a dedicated Park and Ride bus service. Transdev operated the service which shuttled to and from the concert between Feilden Street Multi Storey Car Park and Ewood Park. Details on the service were provided to every Elton John ticket holder and also through the local media in the run up to the event. Take up was very good with 535 passengers carried on the day, averaging 18 passengers per bus journey to the ground and 89 on the return trips. Good feedback was received from users on the day, and the successful and safe operation played its part in limiting congestion around the arena.