

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Thursday, 12 October 2017

Time: 18:00

Venue: Meeting Room A

Address: Blackburn Town Hall

AGENDA

Information may be provided by each Executive Member relating to their area of responsibility

Part 1- Items for consideration in public

- 1 **Welcome and Apologies**
- 2 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**
Executive Board Minutes 10 August 2017 5 - 12
3. **Declarations of Interest in Items on this Agenda**
If a Board Member requires advice on any items involving a possible Declaration of Interest which could affect his/her ability to speak and/or vote he/she is advised to contact Phil Llewellyn at least 24 hours before the meeting
Declarations of Interest 13 - 14
- 4 **Equality Implications**
The Chair will ask Members to confirm that they have considered and understood any Equality Impact Assessments associated with reports on this agenda ahead of making any decisions
- 5 **Public Forum**
To receive written questions or statements submitted by members of the public no later than 4.00 p.m. on the day prior to the meeting.
- 6 **Questions by Non-Executive Members**
To receive written questions on any issue submitted by Non-Executive Members no later than 4.00 p.m. on the day prior to the meeting.
- 7 **Youth MP's Update**
To receive an update from the Youth MP's along with any issues they would like to raise.
- 8 **EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORTS**
Verbal updates may be given by each Executive

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8.1	Leader (Chair of the Executive Board)	
8.2	Health and Adult Social Care	
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	<u>PART 2 – THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC MAY BE EXCLUDED DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS</u>	
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	Household Waste Recycling Centres Strategy P2	

Date Published: Monday, 09 October 2017
Harry Catherall, Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE BOARD

10th August 2017

PRESENT

COUNCILLOR:

Mohammed Khan
Arshid Mahmood
Andy Kay
Maureen Bateson
Damian Talbot
Jim Smith
Mustafa Desai

PORTFOLIO:

Leader
Neighbourhoods & Prevention Services
Resources
Children's Services
Leisure, Culture and Young People
Environment
Health and Adult Social Care

EXECUTIVE MEMBER

John Slater

NON-PORTFOLIO

Leader of the Conservative Group

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Ummaih Shah Youth MP, Aliyah Shah and
Elle Walsh, Deputy Youth MP

	Item	Action
1	<u>Welcome & Apologies</u> The Leader of the Council, Councillor Mohammed Khan welcomed all present to the meeting, Apologies were received from Councillors Phil Riley and Dave Harling.	
2	<u>Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th July 2017</u> The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board held on 13 th July 2017 were agreed as a correct record.	Approved
3	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> No Declarations of Interest were received.	
4	<u>Equality Implications</u> The Chair asked Members to confirm that they had considered and understood any Equality Impact Assessments associated with reports on the agenda ahead of making any decisions.	Confirmed

	Item	Action
5	<p><u>Public Forum</u></p> <p>No questions were received from members of the public had been submitted.</p>	
6	<p><u>Questions by Non-Executive Members</u></p> <p>No questions were received from Non-Executive Members.</p>	
7	<p><u>Youth MP Update</u></p> <p>The Youth MP and the Deputy Youth MPs updated the Executive Board as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ummaih had attended the annual Youth MP sitting in Liverpool last weekend where she had the opportunity to meet 220 Youth MP's from across the U.K. Guest speakers included John Bercow and Oldham MP Jim McMahon who had organised a private members bill to be voted on to lower the voting age to 16 which would take place on Friday 3rd November. Ummaih had contacted Kate Hollern MP to ask for her support with this for the young people of Blackburn with Darwen. • A meeting with Alison from the WISH centre to discuss ideas for the Takeover Day in November, a short video would be produced to raise awareness of Domestic Abuse which would be shown at the event. • Young carers attended a forum session last week and participated in one of the YSP's youth work curriculum sessions on Democracy. • Elle would be shadowing Councillor Bateson the day after the meeting for a tour around the Off for Fun holiday schemes across the Borough. • A recent event in the library on shaping the future of health and social care across Pennine Lancashire. • Over 200 people had attended Darwen Youth Festival which was a great success and it is hoped the Festival would be held again in 2018. • Preparations would commence the following week for the "Make Your Mark" campaign which until mid-October, YPS would be visiting all Secondary Schools, Colleges and Youth Organisations to promote this campaign where young people 	Noted

	Item	Action
	<p>would have the opportunity to vote on one of 10 top issues affecting them. These results will be collated nationally and debated in the House of Commons in November.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits from September to meet young people in various youth clubs and projects and them carry their views through to the Executive Board and the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee. <p>Councillor Talbot advised that Kate Hollern would be happy to meet the Youth MP's about votes for 16 year olds and he suggested that they also contact Jake Berry MP for his views.</p> <p>Councillor Desai indicated that the Health and Adult Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be interested in meeting the Youth MPs and discuss their views on Health and Adult Social Care in Pennine Lancashire.</p> <p>Councillor Maureen Bateson suggested that in terms of the Domestic Abuse video referred to it would be interesting to know the impact on young people who lived in a home where domestic abuse occurred ie, the "non-victims"</p>	
8.3	<p><u>Children's Services Update</u></p> <p>Councillor Maureen Bateson verbally reported on requests for the Free Summer Lunch packs which had continued to be in high demand with 1500 free lunches being provided every day and thanks were passed to the volunteers and a questionnaire would be issued on the importance of the project.</p>	Noted
8.5	<p><u>Leisure, Culture and Young People Update</u></p> <p>Councillor Damien Talbot (reminded) members of the "Walk in the Park" event at Bold Venture Park on the 12th August 2017.</p>	Noted
8.7	<p><u>Transport for the North: Incorporation as a sub-national Transport Body</u></p> <p>It was reported that Transport for the North was an evolving partnership of Local Transport Authorities, combined Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships across the North of England acting collectively and working with the Government, Highways England, HS2 and Network Rail to develop a Northern Transport Strategy in support of the Government's wider Northern Powerhouse agenda.</p> <p>The purpose of the report was to ask for consent to the making of Regulations by the Secretary of State to establish TfN as a Sub-</p>	

	Item	Action
	<p>National Transport Body under Section 102E of the Local Transport Act 2008. The consent of each Constituent Authority was required to the making of Regulations by the Secretary of State.</p> <p>The Executive Board was also asked to approve in principle the transfer of Rail North Limited to TfN, following its inauguration and the signing of a new Rail Franchise Management Agreement with TfN replicating as far as possible the arrangements entered into in respect of Rail North Limited.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the Executive Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approves the making by the Secretary of State Regulations under section 102E of the Local Transport Act 2008 to establish Transport for the North as a Sub-National Transport Body; 2. Approves the transfer of Rail North Limited to Transport for the North so that it can be subsumed within transport for the North; 3. Approves the transfer of a new Rail Franchise Management Agreement with Transport for the North replicating as far as possible the current Rail North Limited Members Agreement; and 4. Agrees to the continuation of the payment of the current funding for Rail North Limited to Transport for the North after its inauguration. 	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p>
9.1	<p><u>Corporate Revenue Budget Monitoring Report Quarter 1 2017/18</u></p> <p>The Executive Board received a report on the overall revenue financial position of the Council, highlighting any significant issues and explaining variations in the first quarter of the financial year.</p> <p>Actual revenue expenditure at 30th June 2017 in relation to cash limited budgets across all portfolios was £23.151 million, which is 22.56% of the current budget. Further details relating to the financial position of each portfolio were outlined in Section 6.</p> <p>General fund unallocated reserves were forecast to be £6.192 million at 31st March 2018 based on information available.</p> <p>Based on the information currently available, Earmarked reserves available for discretionary use within the Council were forecast to be £15.445 million at 31st March 2018 compared with a balance of £13.874 million at 31st March 2017, with a further £17.282 million of other reserves held mainly in relation to schools.</p>	

	Item	Action
	<p>RESOLVED</p> <p>The Executive Board is asked to approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The portfolio cash limit adjustments outlined in Appendix 1; • The earmarked reserves position shown in Appendix 2; and • The variations to revenue expenditure, as listed in Section 6, giving rise to a forecast balance of £6.192 million in the unallocated General Fund revenue reserve at 31st March 2018. 	<p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p>
9.2	<p><u>Corporate Capital Budget and Balance Sheet Monitoring Report 2017 – Quarter 1 30th June 2017</u></p> <p>Members received report on the overall financial position of the Council in respect of the capital programme as at 30th June 2017, highlighting issues and explaining variations in the first quarter of the financial year.</p> <p>The projected aggregate cost of the Councils capital investment for 2017/18 had now increased from £17.884 million, as approved by Finance Council on 27th February 201, to £38.946 million. The net variation of £21.062 million (detailed in Appendix 2) reflected;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requested variations to the programme following the finalisation of the outturn position for 2016/17 (£9.837 million) and • Variations made to reflect the approval of programmes during the first quarter of the year (£11.225 million). <p>As at 30th June 2017, the capital expenditure across the portfolios was £1.57 million (4.03% of the current projected spend).</p> <p>The estimate of capital receipts expected in 2017/18 is £2.557 million; to date £170,000 had been received.</p> <p>RESOLVED - The Executive Board is asked to approve the capital programme as per Appendix 1, together with the variations shown in Appendix 2.</p>	<p>Approved</p>
9.3	<p><u>Introduction of Supporting Small Business Relief, Business Rate Relief for Pubs and the Local Discretionary Relief</u></p> <p>The March 2017 budget announced three separate measures to assist businesses that had faced increases in business rate bills following the revaluation of all business properties in the country. The announcements included;</p>	

Item	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional support for small businesses facing large increases; • A one year £1000 discount for pubs and, • £300m of extra funding for local authorities to provide a local discretionary relief to those facing increases in their business rate bills. <p>Blackburn with Darwen would be receiving the following funding to be awarded through its local scheme:</p> <p>2017/18 - £176,000 2018/19 - £86,000 2019/20 - £35,000 2020/21 - £5000</p> <p>The criteria for providing financial support for small businesses and for pubs had been prescribed by Government and was contained in Appendix A. The local discretionary policy for those business facing increases in bills was developed in consultation with the Executive Member for Resources.</p> <p>The report outlined the approach to be taken in respect of the small business rate support and the £1,000 business rates discount for pubs and it also details the criteria to be applied in the administration of the Councils own local discretionary relief scheme.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>The Executive Board is asked:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To approve the new Business reliefs and discount policy outlined in Appendix A; 2) To delegate to the Director of Finance and IT, in consultation with the Executive Member for Resources, the authority to approve the amendment to the Councils Business Rates Relief policy to include the provision for implementing any future Government announced relief or discount; and 3) To delegate the setting of the discretionary relief amounts in 2018/19, 2019/20 & 2020/21 to the Executive Member for Resources. <p style="text-align: center;">Signed at a meeting of the Board On the day of (being the next ensuing meeting Of the Board) Chair of the meeting</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p>

**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: **EXECUTIVE BOARD**

DATE: **12TH OCTOBER 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)

EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



REPORT OF: Executive Member for Health and Adult Social Care

LEAD OFFICERS: Director of Public Health (Please Select)

DATE: 12 October 2017

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED: Health and Adult Social Care

WARD/S AFFECTED: All

KEY DECISION: YES NO

SUBJECT: Annual Report of the Director of Public Health, 2016/17

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Director of Public Health has a duty to produce an Annual Report, which is traditionally a professional statement about the health of local communities and increasingly an important vehicle by which Directors of Public Health can identify local issues, flag problems and report progress. The report is publicly accessible and a key resource to inform local inter-agency action for health and wellbeing.

The 2016/17 Annual Report for Blackburn with Darwen is set out in two parts;

1. Health as a Social Movement describing the major cultural change required to address current health and wellbeing challenges and,
2. The Integrated Strategic Needs Assessment (ISNA) Summary Review setting out the environmental and social context of Blackburn with Darwen as a place and associated impact on the wellbeing of the population.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Board is recommended to;

- 1) Note the content of the Public Health Annual Report 2016/17
- 2) Support the recommendations of the report including the approach to improving health and wellbeing by supporting social movements for health

3. BACKGROUND

Under the Health & Social Care Act 2012 (section 31), the Director of Public Health has a duty to write an Annual Report on the health of the local population. Within the same section of the Act, the Local Authority has a duty to publish the report.

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The Public Health Annual Report is traditionally a professional statement about the health of local communities and, increasingly an important vehicle by which Directors of Public Health can identify local issues, flag problems and report progress. The Report, which should be considered alongside the local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, is publicly accessible and a key resource to inform local inter-agency action for health and wellbeing,

The report this year is set out in two parts: Health as a Social Movement and the Integrated Strategic Needs Assessment (ISNA) Summary Review.

The first section of the Report highlights how social movements can energise the major cultural change required to address current health and wellbeing challenges. A social movement for health refers to “*a persevering, people-powered effort to promote or resist change in the experience of health, or the systems that shape it*” (Nesta 2016) and can have transformative effects on society (as has been shown by the success of the HIV and disability rights movements, for example).

A social movement for health is needed now because the existing model of health and social care service delivery is no longer fit for purpose to address the current causes and patterns of disease, and citizens are asking for much deeper involvement in choices related to their health and wellbeing. Indeed, Simon Stevens, Chief Executive of the NHS, states in the [Five Year Forward View](#) that large scale social movements are ‘mission critical’ for the future of the NHS. The work reflected in the report is also being developed as part of the Pennine Lancashire (health and care) Transformation Programme.

The ISNA Summary Review forms the second part of the report and documents the social and environmental context of Blackburn with Darwen as a place and the impact these factors have on the physical and mental wellbeing of the population collectively, and as individuals. This section begins with a profile of the borough’s population and local economy with subsequent sections arranged under the three themes of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy: ‘Start Well’, ‘Live Well’ and ‘Age Well’. The ISNA demonstrates the scale of our challenge – doing more of what we have always done will not be sufficient to secure the improvements in health and wellbeing that people aspire to and are demanding – reinforcing the need to fully embrace the power of social movements for health.

The ISNA Summary Review was strongly commended by the Health and Wellbeing Board Peer Review team in 2015 and inclusion of an updated version in the latest Public Health Annual Report broadens its exposure.

3. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

The report makes the following key recommendations for adoption by the Council and its partners;

Recommendation 1 – Becoming a ‘Changemaking’ Place

Improve working culture and practices by adopting and encouraging the three ‘changemaking’ values:

- **Creativity** - ideas and initiative cannot be the sole reserve of a few senior individuals but must be encouraged and valued by everybody.
- **Self-determination** - freedom and willingness to respond quickly and creatively giving employees license to act on their own initiative and to try new approaches without waiting for permission
- **Collaboration** - effective collaboration across departments and with external partners and the public will extend changemaking values, build trust and prevent duplication of efforts.

Recommendation 2 - Work With Communities To Support The Growth Of Social Movements For Health

- Develop strong and sustained networks: recognise the importance of and support shared learning through communities of interest and other networks beyond time-limited programmes of work
- Identify and support organisational and community social movement 'champions' to promote social movements for health within their formal and informal networks
- Create learning and development opportunities in support of - and in the spirit of - social movements for health
- Deliver a rolling programme of celebration and learning to include an annual Festival of Strengths

Recommendation 3: Embed Social Movements In Practice

- Identify and develop exemplar social movements, in order to create real-world examples of communities mobilised for health and care
- Understand and demonstrate 'what works' through continuous engagement and evaluation.
- Support and encourage spread of movements, by developing approaches that could be scaled, adapted and adopted in other communities.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Public Health Annual Report is intended to influence local priorities and plans for improving health and wellbeing.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications of this report for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council or their partners.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Under the Health & Social Care Act 2012 (section 31), the Director of Public Health has a duty to write an Annual Report on the health of the local population. Within the same section of the Act, the Local Authority has a duty to publish the report.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no resource implications of this report for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council or their partners.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. [\(insert EIA link here\)](#)

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

The Public Health Annual Report is a professional statement of the Director of Public Health and not in its own right subject to consultation.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION:	1
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Laura Wharton
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DATE:	14 th August 2017
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Report also shared with the Health & Wellbeing Board 26th September 2017

BACKGROUND PAPER:	
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EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF: Executive Member for Children's Services

LEAD OFFICER: Director of Children's Services

DATE: 14th September 2017

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED: Children's Services

WARD/S AFFECTED: All

KEY DECISION: YES NO

SUBJECT: Fostering Service Quarterly Report - Quarter 1 April 1st to 30th June 2017

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides information to the Council's Executive Board on the management and performance of the Local Authority's Fostering Service.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:
Notes the quarterly report which is available on the Council website.

3. BACKGROUND

The Fostering Service Regulations 2011 and the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services requires the Council Executive to:

- a) Receive written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the Fostering Service every 3 months;
- b) Monitor the management and outcomes of the services in order to satisfy themselves that the Service is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children; and
- c) Satisfy themselves that the provider is complying with the conditions of registration.

The report has been written to address the issues identified above. It will be taken into account by OFSTED in inspecting the Service.

This Report is for the first Quarter of 2017- 2018, covering the period from 1st April to 30th June 2017, and provides an overview of the Service.

4. KEY ISSUES

1. Whilst the number of children entering care in Quarter 1 reduced from the previous Quarter, the increase across the region in recent months has put the availability of placements under great pressure. In-house foster placements are generally full with only baby placements available and

searches for independent agency foster placements have little success. This has pushed adolescents in particular into residential placements prematurely, and these are scarce and costly. Overall, the number of children in mainstream foster care placements has remained constant and the numbers in agency placements and family and friends placements have increased.

2. Feedback from children and young people in mainstream foster placements continues to be positive.

3. The recruitment of mainstream foster carers remains challenging. To improve this, the Service has appointed a new Marketing and Recruitment Officer with the skills set needed to run effective digital campaigns and events. However, the successful candidate has been working a long notice period and is not due to start until September. This has meant that no one has been leading on recruitment for several months.

There has been a natural reduction in the number of in-house carers through retirement and resignations, and the Service has been unable to replace them in sufficient numbers. However, the loss of mainstream carers has been partly offset by the increase in family and friends carers.

4. The capacity of the Fostering Service has been stretched by the significant increase of family and friends assessments with challenging court deadlines. The Team members have improved their skills in this area of work.

5. Placement stability continues to be good and better than the England average and slightly better than this time last year.

6. Engagement with foster carers is good with regular Foster Carer Association meetings and a foster carer champions group helping to sustain positive relationships.

7. The number of allegations against foster carers and the number of specific incidents are low. There is a higher than usual number of missing from home incidents but 10 of these relate to one young person.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

No policy implications identified.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications identified.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

This report is required to meet statutory requirements as outlined in section 3.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

No resource implications identified.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

None.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION:	1.0
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Alyson Hanson – Service Leader, Placement Services
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DATE:	4 th August 2017
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	Fostering Service Quarterly Report 1 st April to 30 th June 2017 – Quarter 1
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Fostering Service Quarter 1 Report

1st April to 30th June 2017

Executive Report



Quarterly reports to the Executive Board are a requirement of the Fostering Service to meet Standard 25.7 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services. They are a key part of the documentation considered by OFSTED when conducting a Service inspection.

Introduction

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's Fostering Service aims to ensure that:

- The best foster carers are recruited for our children;
- All placements receive high quality support, effectively targeted according to need;
- Children are found permanent families without delay; and
- Children and young people in foster care achieve the best possible outcomes.

Children in our Care in Foster

The number of children in our care (CioC) decreased slightly in Quarter 1 from 375 at the end of March 2017 to 363 at the end of June. 67% (245) of children in our care are in foster care and 40% (146) are placed with in-house foster carers. Compared to the same period in 2016 there has been a decrease in the number and percentage of children in in-house foster placements and an increase in the percentage and number of children in family and friends placements. The percentage and number of children in agency placements has barely changed.

	30th June 2016	30th June 2017
Number of Children in our Care	346	363
Number of CioC in Foster Care	233 (67%)	245 (67%)
Number of children in in-house foster care placements	148 (43%)	146 (40%)
Number of children in family and friends foster care	32 (9%)	50 (14%)
Number of children in independent fostering agency placements	48 (14%)	49 (13%)
Number of children placed with other local authority carers	5(1%)	0

In House Placements

Male	88
Female	58

Age break down of children in foster placements

Age	Mainstream	Family and Friends	Independent Fostering Agency
0 to 2	23	9	6
3 to 6 years	19	16	0
7 to 10 years	31	9	13
11 to 15 years	48	13	24
16 and 17 years	25	3	6
Total	146	50	49

Babies and very young children generally require short term placements as they proceed to legal permanence relatively quickly. Fostering for Adoption and concurrent placements are also used for babies, therefore the turnover of placements is high and availability of foster carers for this age group is good. The older age groups require permanent placements, the throughput is slower and the need for carers is greater. The largest group of children we currently have in care are in the 11 to 15 years age group. There has been a shortage of foster placements across the region for this age group for some time. The increase in the number of children coming into the care over the last 12 months in the region has put the availability of foster placements under great pressure. Independent agency searches are frequently negative with no offer of placements even for younger children. The

effect of this is that some young people are being pushed prematurely into residential placements. Some of the pressure has been offset by the increase in the number of children cared for by family and friends.

New Referrals in Quarter 1

Month	No children	Sibling groups	0 to 5	6 to 11	12+	Placed in-house	Placed Independent Fostering Agency	Placed in Residential	Didn't come in
April	11	2	4	4	3	3	1	1	6
May	16	2	6	6	4	7	4	1	4
June	13	2	6	3	4	6	1	3	3
Total	40	6	16	13	11	16	6	5	13

Feedback from children in foster care

The feedback received from children in foster care is generally positive. Their views are obtained from:

- Participation in the Voice and Junior Voice groups;
- The work of the Participation Champions in the Service;
- The Investing in Children assessment process;
- Participation in staff recruitment (interviews) and foster carer training;
- Contributing to the annual review report of the foster carers looking after them;
- A support group for birth children and grandchildren; and
- Social worker feedback for foster carer reviews.

Children, young people and their social workers made the following comments about placements when contributing to foster carer reviews in Quarter 1:

Children and young people said:

"I am happy about my placement; it is the one I always wanted. I get on with everyone and enjoy spending time on the farm."

"They are loving and caring but we don't see our Mum and Dad a lot and get told things that might upset us".

"I like everything. They are like my new Mum and Dad."

"People care about me no matter what".

"They treat me like their own kid and they always got time for me".

Social workers said:

"Y is too young to verbally express his views, however upon observation he appears happy and settled in his placement. He has a positive relationship with both of his carers and will seek them out for emotional warmth. Y is always observed as smiling and giggling during visits."

"J is doing really well, she is making good progress, really focused and settled. S is also amazing. She's a happy gorgeous girl. She's making good progress but more importantly her attitude to learning has improved massively. She just genuinely seems happy. A' like the girls is a lot more settled and on task a lot more at school."

"C has struggled to accept that he is not returning to his mother's care. C is presenting now as happy, able to laugh and joke with people. R provides the children with a loving, caring, stable environment. She has the children's best interest at the fore front of her mind; she is very child focussed in her approaches to caring for the children."

“C has been placed with S and D for over four years and they have provided him with a secure, settled and positive experience of family life. C has made positive progress in all areas of his development since this time, particularly in becoming more open, confident and able to express his views.”

Birth Children said:

“The last year has gone well and L has come a long way with the help and support we have given him, in particular my Mum.”

“It’s been a mix of good and bad days. Although mainly good, the bad can become very bad very quickly. It’s been an emotional year and I hope the next year isn’t as crazy.”

“The last year has gone alright, I feel supported.”

Promoting Children’s Health, Emotional Development, Education & Leisure

Foster families are provided with pre and post-approval preparation and training on the importance and availability of health, education and leisure services to enable them to help children achieve their potential and enhance their emotional wellbeing.

Looked After Children and young people are encouraged to participate in a variety of activities in which they can succeed and are supported in achieving better outcomes. All local Looked After Children and care leavers are provided with a Be Active card, which enables them to access free sport and leisure activities within the Borough. Foster carers are also provided with a MAX Card, which offers heavily discounted access to a range of leisure parks and facilities around the North West. This is funded by the Fostering Service in partnership with the Foster Carer Association.

Children in foster care have regular medicals at the statutory frequency appropriate for their age. There is a Designated Nurse for Looked After Children, who takes an active role in following up health issues and assisting with health promotion work. Foster carers have a Health Passport for each child they care for in which they or the child records all of the child’s health details. Public Health funding for 18 months has enabled the appointment of a specialist nurse to work with ‘hard to reach’ Looked After Children and care leavers.

There are currently 16 Looked After Children registered as having a disability in foster care. 12 of these children are in in-house foster care placements. Foster carers are provided with the relevant training and support to meet the specific needs of the child they have in placement.

In relation to emotional wellbeing, Looked After Children have access to Clinical Psychology and related services through the East Lancashire Child and Adolescent Service (ELCAS) also known as Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). The new Revive Service is a partnership between Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council’s Children’s Services and East Lancashire Hospital Trust to provide emotional health support for children known to the Local Authority and is based at Duke Street. It has been up and running for 6 months and delivers consultation to foster carers, training and direct intervention on emotional health and well-being. The Service has worked with 46 children in our care since its inception with many of the interventions ongoing. Feedback from foster carers following a consultation is very positive. The Team has delivered training to foster carers on self-harm and a new 10 week course delivered by the Team called APP (Attachment and Positive Parenting) commenced in April 2017 and recently concluded. Evaluations are very positive

As well as mandatory First Aid training, foster carers also receive training on a variety of health-related issues including ‘Infectious Diseases in Childhood’ and ‘Managing Medicine.’ Phase 1 of a ‘Healthy Homes’ training package for carers has been developed.

In line with Standard 8 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, the Department has, and implements, a written education policy prepared in partnership with the Education Manager for Children in Our Care. The Virtual Head’s role is to oversee that the educational needs of all Children in our Care are being met and that levels of achievement and aspiration among our children and young people are raised. Termly briefings are held with a group of social workers, managers and Designated Teachers and Head teachers to consider ways to improve achievement and attainment.

The Pupil Premium allowance, previously paid to schools to support Children in our Care to achieve in school, is now managed by the Virtual Head with a system in place to administer and ensure the money is spent appropriately to further their educational achievements. The Virtual Head quality assures all Personal Education Plans (PEPs).

The Virtual School is in place and the governing body has been established. 2 hours a week of additional tuition is offered to all young people in Year 11 to promote G.C.S.E. improvements. 10 young people are accessing this support currently.

The Education Manager sits within the Children in our Care Social Work Service and, where necessary, actively intervenes with schools to promote the needs of children in foster care. As part of the preparation and assessment process and through the Foster Carer Agreement, foster carers are set a clear expectation that they will promote and support children's educational attainment. The ways in which foster carers meet children's educational needs are monitored through the foster carer review process and supervisory visits. Foster carers regularly receive training 'Promoting Educational Achievement for Children in Our Care' and this course was delivered in January 2017.

SA Letterbox Club is in place for all Children in our Care from Reception to Year 6 to encourage reading at home. Age appropriate books and games etc. are sent out on a monthly basis. Feedback has been very encouraging from the children who have stated that they enjoy receiving their parcels. Extra tuition has been offered on a Saturday morning to all Year 6 Children in our Care to prepare for SATs at the Kip McGrath Centre in Blackburn. Unfortunately take up has been poor; however, extra tuition for Year 11 Children in our Care in English and Maths was well attended. GCSE results are published on 24/08/17 and last year there was clear evidence that the extra tuition improved results. SATs results are currently in the process of being validated.

Engagement with Children & Young People

Two members of staff from the Fostering Service continue to promote the participation agenda and set a number of priorities throughout the year. One member of staff attended the Leapfrog Research Project in conjunction with Lancaster University, which aimed to provide a range of tools to support the work and explore different ways of communicating with young people, gaining their wishes and feelings, and ensuring their voice is heard. Members of the 'VOICE' group continue to attend foster carers preparation training where they lead an activity with applicants and provide feedback, which contributes to the applicants' assessments. Young people have been involved in the recruitment of new staff during the Quarter. A new care leaver currently sits on the Fostering Panel.

The Fostering Service was awarded the Investing in Children Award in December 2016 and the report made a number of recommendations that the Service is taking forward.

During Quarter 1, a 'sons and daughters' group was arranged. An activity was scheduled to take place at Energy Trampoline Park in Preston on the 26th April but due to no uptake, this activity was cancelled. The support offer to 'sons and daughters' will be reviewed in light of this.

The Fostering Support service continues to deliver the Saturday morning club, which is held every fortnight at The Limes. The support group is aimed at 8-12 year olds in foster care and the young people are offered the opportunity to choose group activities. During Quarter 1, the group met on a fortnightly basis incorporating a craft morning, movie theme and popcorn event, games morning and a teddy bear picnic. 10 young people regularly attend.

Children in care have also been involved in several staff recruitment interviews including social workers, Advanced Practitioners and a Team Manager post.

VOICE Group

The Junior VOICE group (8 to 12 year olds) and the main VOICE group (12 to 16 year olds) now meet every month at Knott Street Community Centre and the majority of children who attend are in foster care. This venue was chosen as the facilities allow part of each session to be activity-based. Both groups have been involved in a number of consultation activities to inform and shape services. Members of the groups have been involved in a

research project with Lancaster University to design tools to improve how adults communicate with children and young people.

VOICE members continue to attend Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee, recently presenting the Leapfrog Tools project and Young Advisors Social Media Research. However, this is currently being reviewed to see how it can be made more inclusive, possibly using video technology.

The new Participation Strategic Framework has been published, which covers all young people, not just vulnerable children and young people. The priorities are linked to the Looked After Children Strategy.

The Revive Consultant Psychologist met with the Voice group in Quarter 1 to discuss how the team can improve their services for looked after children. He is going to do some further work with them.

There is a Care Leavers Forum that is well attended. A number of young people have undertaken Peer Mentoring training and are mentoring others through the 'Getting Ready for Adult Life' pack. Additionally, a Young Advisors Group which a number of care leavers attend has been working on a project on the impact of social media on young people. Members of the group have delivered Total Respect training to a multiagency audience of practitioners, Councillors and foster carers. Two care leavers recently received awards for their campaign work to improve the lives of children in care and care leavers.

Transitions

Children and young people in foster care are supported to make a positive transition to adult life and foster carers attend training on 'Transitions' which focusses on their role in developing young people's skills to live independently as they progress towards adulthood. The Children in Our Care Team and the Fostering Team encourage carers and young people to consider 'staying put' and the Leaving Care Service also delivers courses for foster carers to develop their understanding of this. The training has been positively evaluated by carers and most indicate a willingness to work with 'staying put'. Although finance causes carers the most concern, some are willing to receive housing benefit as part of their financial package and will consider changing their status to landlord. The Service has started some work to develop a 'staying close' option, which may be more suitable for a number of care leavers.

Young people are allocated a Leaving Care Worker at the age of 15¾ years. In Quarter 1, 12 newly referred young people were allocated a Leaving Care P.A. whose role includes compiling the Post 16 PEP, exploring Staying Put and other accommodation options, and completing a Pathway Plan. All accommodation is monitored and there is a referral system in place to evidence placement decisions.

The Leaving Care Service has achieved an increase in the number of supported lodgings providers this year, which increases choice for young people leaving foster care and residential placements in favour of semi independence. Participation levels continue to be good with young people delivering the Total Respect training and training for foster carers.

Care Planning

The Care Planning and Fostering (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2015 provide a revised definition of 'permanence' for Children Looked After including for the first time the definition of a long term foster placement. The responsibilities of the Local Authority in assessing the ability of the foster carer to meet the needs of the child now and in the future, and identifying any support services needed to achieve this are also set out. Local Authorities are required to achieve long term matching within reasonable timescales. The Regulations introduce new duties for ceasing to look after a child.

The Fostering Service

The Advanced Practitioner continues to work across mainstream and Friends and Family providing support and advice to the Team, and has been an invaluable support with consultations across services for Friends and Family as well as holding some complex cases.

A new Marketing and Recruitment Officer was recruited in Quarter 1. Unfortunately, they have needed to work a three month notice in their current role and will not be able to join the team until the end of Quarter 2. The recruitment task in Quarter 1 has therefore fallen to the two managers and team members, which has presented challenges given other workload pressures particularly around Family and Friends assessments.

Foster Carer Resource

	Total number of foster carers	Mainstream	Short breaks carers	Family and Friends carers
Quarter 1 2016/17	136	102	14	20
Quarter 1 2017/18	131	81	15	35

In the last 12 months, the overall number of carers has fallen with a significant decrease in the number of mainstream carers partly offset by the increase in the number of family and friends carers. The profile of the work of the Fostering Service is gradually changing due to the increase in the number of Family and Friends assessments and the requirement to support and supervise the growing number of Family and Friends carers.

Matching and Ethnicity

A White British brother and sister were placed together with Asian foster carers because the only other option was to place them separately with separate agencies. The children who are aged 16 and 14 years were consulted and agreed to the placement. They have since returned home but commended the foster carers, who made every effort to ensure their cultural needs were met including arranging a prom dress and a Limosine for the 16 year old's prom night.

Foster Carer Recruitment

A new fostering recruitment campaign was launched on 8 May 2017 at the start of national Fostering Fortnight. The aim was to target new carers for hard-to-place children with complex needs, teenagers and siblings. At the end of Quarter 1, there were 5 prospective foster carer assessments in progress, one of which has since withdrawn.

Local radio 2BR was used as the main platform to raise awareness of the need for more carers with an on air and online campaign running throughout two weeks. This activity was supported with local events, press opportunities and ongoing social media activity.

There were 72 enquiries in Quarter 1, 12 of which converted to expressions of interest.

Activities included:

- Fostering family walk event around Entwistle Reservoir;
- Press release and photo-call;
- Information stands in the Mall on both Mondays of the Fortnight;
- A Team Talk article was posted on the Council's intranet to share the information with Council staff to widen the pool of potential foster carers; and
- The two events generated a total of nine direct positive enquiries on the days.
- The Lancashire Telegraph was invited along to the first Mall event. A photographer came along to take pictures and create a buzz;
- Information and the photo-call at the second Mall event were sent to the Lancashire Telegraph telling the story of a foster carer. This resulted in a full-page news article in the Lancashire Telegraph;
- 2BR Radio and Facebook campaign;

- Adverts created using real foster carers' voices to highlight their own experiences on the local radiostation 2BR that were aired to listeners across East Lancashire;
- Images posted throughout the Fortnight via social media;
- Regular online, social media activity on Facebook and Twitter using the hashtags; and
- a Health and Community Guide Advert was placed.

Proudly, our social media activity won the campaign praise nationally. We were highlighted as an example of good practice on GovUK – a social media channel highlighting what it describes as 'the best social media data from government communications across the UK' cited as: 'great government communication'.

Fostering Fortnight analytics

Let's Foster Facebook

34 Facebook posts created and posted,
33 shares,
162 likes,
5 comments,
27,000 impressions - the number of people reached, and
85 link clicks through to the website.

Twitter @blackburndarwen

11 tweets,
71 retweets,
72 likes, and
7,052 people reached.

Let's Foster website

Over the two week period from 8-22 May, there were 512 page views (people directly visiting the website to view information). This is a comparatively large upturn in visitor numbers – compared to a normal weekly average of just 7 page views per week.

Regional Campaign

The regional 'You Can Foster' recruitment campaign has been live since September 2016 and has helped generate enquiries via the You Can Foster website.

Fostering Service Managers and the Strategy Officer have been involved in the development of this campaign to ensure that Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council derives full benefit. The campaign is prioritising recruitment at a local level through targeting of P.R., digital marketing and additional local activity. Discussions are currently taking place to further develop this campaign depending on collaborative funding and working from Local Authorities.

Foster Carer Retention

During Quarter 1, the Service received 7 Family and Friends foster carers resignations. Five of these were successful in obtaining a Special Guardianship Order (SGO), one was a short break carer for a connected person which was no longer required and another was a disruption where the family made a decision that fostering was impacting too much on their own family.

Two mainstream foster carers resigned following allegations. In each case, the foster carer's review was presented to the Fostering Panel with the recommendation to deregister the carers. This was endorsed by the Agency Decision Maker. The loss of the two carers represents the loss of 4 placements overall.

Five Family and Friends assessments were presented to the Fostering Panel over the Quarter, four of which were approved. One assessment was not completed due to the applicant not complying with having a medical.

Assessment

Statutory guidance for fostering assessments is that they should be completed within 8 months, which is generally achieved. The quality of assessments remains good and is monitored by the Fostering Panel.

Foster Carer Training

The Foster Carer training programme currently provides a range of training courses covering the Mandatory Fostering Standards, specialist training on relevant topics, safeguarding training, Health and Safety training and Support Groups for carers.

The new conference style training is delivering more focussed learning for carers, which is specifically tailored to their requirements and allows them to attend one training day and cover multiple topics. It is anticipated that this will increase attendance and improve evaluation feedback whilst offering a more time-efficient option for carers.

Training completed 2017 / 18

Training completed April – June 2017

Training name	Sessions to be covered	Places offered	Places utilised
Foetal Alcohol Training	Foetal Alcohol Training	25	14
Conference 3	Managing allegations Positive care and control Risk assessment	60	45
Paediatric First Aid	Paediatric First Aid	13	13
Paediatric First Aid	Paediatric First Aid	12	12
Foster Carer Support Group	Foster Carer Support Group	7	Information awaited

Comments from Carers

- It is always helpful to refresh your memory, you always take away something extra
- I found all of the course very useful and informative
- Excellent course, well delivered!
- Better awareness of the support available
- All of the conference was very informative
- All was informative
- Everything was interesting
- All topics were covered well

In 2017 / 18 the training proposal is to hold six conferences which includes a specialist disability conference.

Fostering Panel

The relatively new Panel Chair and Advisor are both developing well in these roles. The Panel has continued to function effectively.

Panel Business

In April, the Panel heard 5 Family and Friends fostering assessments including 2 Regulation 24 assessments, 1 first annual review and 3 review reports of carers following allegations. In May, the Panel heard 2 reviews and 2 resignations, and in June another 3 reviews. 4 Exemptions were noted and reviewed over the Quarter. One new exemption has been made this Quarter.

The Panel Chair report card indicates that:

Both Panels operate very well; the administration has continued to be excellent for both the main Fostering and Review Panels. All papers required beforehand are received in a timely fashion, as are the minutes that are created afterwards.

The Fostering Panel advisor has continued to provide very secure and confident information and agency advice. The Fostering Panel is well attended. Panel members are well prepared for their duties on the day(s) and contribute very well to the discussions. Children and young people are continuing to attend matches, at least for some of the matches, and this remains positive and working well.

Panel Advisors have worked well to improve the quality of paperwork presented to both Panels. The working environment at the Livesey All Age Centre also remains very suitable.

The quality assurance feedback from the Fostering Panel has been extremely positive. Panel members commented on a number of excellent examples of detailed, analytical and well-presented reports by social workers.

Annual appraisals of Panel Members were completed in Quarter 1 by the Panel Chair and Panel Advisor.

The Annual Fostering Panel Training day took place in June. This was well attended by Panel members as well as the fostering team social workers. The training covered a variety of topics from the role of a Panel member, Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards, presentations by guest speakers on Domestic Violence, Safeguarding, legal updates and trends and psychological support to children and foster carers.

Review Panel

During Quarter 1, 17 foster carer reviews were presented to the Annual Review Panel and 11 carers attended. 6 carers returned evaluation forms indicating that their experience of attending Panel was positive.

One foster carer commented in relation to the support they received from their supervising social worker; "Excellent, when required she is there and always friendly." Whilst another carer stated that; "Our Supervising Social Worker has been an excellent support and we hope to continue this support as long as possible".

Complaints

Within this Quarter, there were 2 complaints.

The first complaint was received from a young person in relation to two social workers. The young person complained that two social workers made false allegations about her and shared them with the Police. The complaint was forwarded on to Customer Care and is still being investigated.

A further complaint received was from a Headteacher raising concerns in respect of a foster carer. The Fostering Team Manager responded to the complaint in writing. Issues were raised with the carer and direct work is to commence imminently.

Compliments

During Quarter 1, 3 compliments were received. One compliment was received from a Leaving Care Social Worker commending foster carers on the care afforded to a young person and the values instilled in the young person.

A further compliment was received from the Leaving Care Service commending foster carers for their support with 2 vulnerable young people.

In June, a further compliment was received from foster carers commending the support received from their Supervising Social Worker. The foster carers stated that their 'social worker was very good with us and she explained everything and always kept us informed. She was very supportive and was always at the end of the phone if we needed her. A credit to your team'.

Allegations

During Quarter 1, there were three allegations. All three allegations were fully investigated and the correct procedures followed involving full strategy meetings led by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Specific Incidents and Restraints (including Bullying, Serious Illnesses and Accidents)

There were 2 serious illness and accidents reported during Quarter 1.

There was a minor accident involving a young child, who tripped over a toy. The foster carer noticed that the child was struggling to weight bear and made the decision to seek further medical advice. The child attended A&E and was x-rayed and no injuries were noted. The following day, the child was fine and no further treatment was required.

There were no incidences of bullying during Quarter 1.

There was a further A&E attendance following a young person appearing unwell and disclosing to their foster carer that they had taken an overdose. The foster carers sought medical advice and accompanied the young person to the A&E department. The young person was admitted to hospital, provided with treatment and remained there for a period of 2 days.

Offending by Children and Young People in Foster Care

One young person in foster care has been involved with the courts in Quarter 1 having pleaded guilty to an offence. He was sentenced to a Youth Rehabilitation Order and continues to live in foster care having made good progress.

Missing From Home

8 young people (16 incidences of missing from home) were reported during Quarter 1. 10 of these incidents relate to one young person. In all cases the correct missing from home procedures were followed and all young people returned to their placements safe and well. Procedures for young people who go missing include 'return home' interviews which are conducted by the Engage Service. This allows young people to talk to someone independent about why they have been missing and for the service to identify issues of concern.

Exemptions

Exemptions have to be made when 4 or more children reside in the same foster placement. There were 3 exemptions in place during Quarter 1. Two of these remain in place within separate fostering households that continue to support sibling placements of four children. The third exemption supported a parent and child placement and ended recently.

Engagement with Foster Carers

Blackburn with Darwen has a Foster Carer Association (FCA), which meets regularly and has an Elected Committee. Members of the Committee meet senior managers and the Executive Member on a quarterly basis. The Chair of the FCA sits on the Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group. The FCA has its own website, which has been increasingly used to communicate messages and news. It was recently agreed that the Chair and Secretary will meet every Quarter with the Service Leader and Service Managers to discuss operational issues. A forum to consult foster carers on a range of issues is held twice a year, generally in April and October.

All foster carers are provided with membership of the Fostering Network and foster carers also have access to independent support commissioned from the Fostering Network to provide support and advocacy services in the event of complaints or allegations.

A small group of foster carers meet on a monthly basis. They are recruitment champions helping to drive recruitment forward and are involved with the planning of events, Skills to Foster preparation training, manning recruitment stands and events.

Family and Friends Foster Care

At the end of Quarter 1, there were 22 Family and Friends foster carers. There were 3 new approvals and 7 resignations. 4 resignations were due to obtaining Special Guardianship Orders, one carer ended their placement, one was a short break placement that was no longer required and one resigned due to the level of risk from the parents. This has meant a decrease of 4 Family and Friends households overall.

11 viability assessments were completed with the support of the Advanced Practitioner. This is a similar number to the previous Quarter.

There have been 7 ongoing full Family and Friends assessments from the previous Quarter including 3 Regulation 24 assessments and 2 full Family and Friends assessments. 3 Regulation 24 assessments went on to be approved. The 2 full Family and Friends assessments are due to attend Fostering Panel in July with recommendations for approval. In Quarter 1, a further 3 Regulation 24 assessments were requested, which remain ongoing. 2 full Family and Friends assessments were also requested and remain ongoing. In summary, the Fostering Team managed a total of 15 assessments.

Short Break Foster Care

15 short break carers provided 25 placements during Quarter 1. Short breaks carers provide support to parents, other placements and emergency placements. Carers are matched to children, who have a wide range of additional and complex needs. A support group is in place for short breaks carers and met in Quarter 1.

Training / Staff

All staff members have individual training and a development plan, which is linked to their annual appraisal and monitored during monthly supervision. A number of staff are in the process of undertaking 'Practice Educator' training, which will enable them to support student placements in future.

Placement Stability

The Department uses a definition of placement stability based on 3 or more placements in a 12 month period that is calculated on a cumulative basis over the year. At the end of 2016/17, 6.4% of Looked After Children had 3 or more placements compared to 9.8% for the same period in 2015 (lower is better). The average for England is measured against the figures for 2013/14 when it was 10.7%; the comparable authority percentage for the same year was 10.1%. At the end of Quarter 1, placement stability was marginally better than it was at the same time last year.

	April	May	June
LAC with 3 or more placements	0	0	8
Total number of LAC	367	370	363
% Stability of LAC placements Quarter 1	0%	0%	2.2%
%Stability of LAC placements 2016/17	1.4%	1.4%	2.3%

Disruption meetings are held in order to identify learning and inform future planning for any child whose placement has been disrupted. A number of managers across Children's Services have been trained to chair these meetings.

Fostering Support

The Fostering Support Service is now well established. The Service has been supporting a number of fragile placements and contributed to the improvement in placement stability performance. The Service offers an out of hours telephone support service, a monthly drop in for foster carers, short breaks where placements are at risk of disruption and outreach support to carers and young people. The Fostering Support worker is based between Duke Street and Adolescent Support Unit (ASU) where young people enjoy spending time, and there is a strong link to the Revive Team where a part time post is linked to the Fostering Support Service

During Quarter 1, there were four new referrals for emergency support for young people in foster placements. These were requests for a mixture of short breaks through the ASU at Lytham Road, outreach support and positive activities.

The Saturday Morning Club has been running every fortnight since 1st April. This is open to young people aged 7-11 years, who are in a foster placement; currently, we have 10 young people that have been attending regularly. Some of the activities have included arts & crafts, baking, cooking, outdoor play, and movie mornings. These have been requested by the young people and actioned by the staff.

Feedback from Foster Carers:

'The Fostering Support is supportive for both us as foster carers and the young person.'

'His Keyworker has a good understanding of the young person.'

Feedback from Young People:

'I get given choices when I am at Lytham Road.'

'It is a nurturing and caring place'.

'If I ask for something my keyworker will put everything into getting it.'

Commissioned Placements

The number of commissioned placements, fostering and residential increased in Quarter 1 compared to the previous Quarter. As the numbers of children coming into the care system across the North West region has increased, there is a significant pressure on the availability of all types of placement. There is a particular shortage of fostering placements as local authorities are all struggling to recruit carers for priority groups causing an over reliance on independent fostering agencies. The availability of placements via independent agencies in both the fostering and residential sectors is also under great pressure with some agencies reporting that they are receiving around 100 referrals a day, a demand which is impossible to meet. Some older children are being placed through necessity in the residential sector when a foster placement would better meet their needs.

Budget

Current placement pressures in-house and across the independent fostering agency landscape is placing the commissioning budget under great pressure as increasingly adolescents are pushed into costly residential placements due to the lack of foster placements across the region.

Priorities for 2017/18

1. To recruit to the new Marketing and Recruitment Officer role and develop a new recruitment strategy for the year ahead. The recruitment of carers for older children, complex needs and parent-child placements remains the priority.

Quarter 1 update – The new Recruitment and Marketing Officer has been appointed and will take up the post in September.

2. Team development – the Team has a number of new Supervising Social Workers. The nature of the work in Fostering has changed significantly from that of assessing and supervising mainstream carers to family and friends work. A team development plan is required that takes account of both.

Quarter 1 Update – A new team development plan is in place. A team development day is planned for Quarter 2.

3. Engaging with foster carers – whilst the FCA is an active body, there are a large number of additional carers with whom the Service needs to engage and communicate. The Service needs to develop a more effective communication strategy for ensuring that all carers can be kept up to date with developments, messages and opportunities to be more involved with the Service. This will include the further development of the regular Fostering Forum.

Quarter 1 Update – The Director of Children’s Services, Executive Member and Service Leader met with the FCA Committee during Quarter 1 and a Fostering Forum was held in May. Issues raised are in the process of being addressed.

4. To continue to meet the training needs of all foster carers ensuring that all carers attend mandatory training in particular.

Quarter 1 Update – The 2017/18 conference plan is outlined in the main body of this report. Carer attendance continues to be monitored by the Service.

5. To continue to develop the Fostering Support Service to help maintain good placement stability rates. This will include the recruitment of additional short breaks foster carers who can also contribute to keeping the number of children and young people entering the care system as low as possible.

Quarter 1 Update - The Fostering Support service continues to support fragile placements with activities and short breaks for a number of young people, and consultation and advice for carers via Revive, ASU, supervising social workers and other professionals. The Saturday morning club is well attended. The on-call service tends to be under-used and the Service needs to ensure that placements facing difficulties and challenges are identified early.

6. Link fostering into the Adolescent Strategy alongside residential services and consider creative ways to improve placement sufficiency for adolescents.

Quarter 1 Update – The Adolescent Strategy is being developed. A letter went out to foster carers in Quarter 1 asking for expressions of interest by adolescent foster carers, who may want to join the residential peripatetic list. The idea is to allow foster carers to learn from residential staff, form relationships with young people in residential care and enter into shared care arrangements for some of those in our own children’s homes. The hope is that some young people may ultimately be able to return to full time foster care. A response from foster carers is awaited.

7. Continue to monitor compliance with Fostering Regulations and Standards.

Quarter 1 Update – Monthly auditing of case files continues and the Fostering Service managers quality assure Panel reports, assessments and reviews.

**Alyson Hanson
Service Leader, Placement Services
1st August 2017**



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Children's Services
LEAD OFFICERS:	Director of Children's Services (Please Select)
DATE:	12 October 2017

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Children's Services
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WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
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KEY DECISION:	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
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SUBJECT:	Development of the NoW Regional Adoption Agency
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Adoption NoW Regional Adoption Agency (the RAA) will create a single regional service operating across six Local Authority areas in partnership with Caritas Care and Adoption Matters.

This paper sets out the proposals for operational and governance processes of the RAA in more detail. The RAA will provide a flexible and resilient service that will allow for the sharing of best practice between members with the primary aim of improving services and achieving the best outcomes for children.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

Notes the content of the report and agrees the proposals for the formal establishment of the Adoption NoW Regional Adoption Agency and the proposed creation of a Regional Adoption Agency Steering Committee.

Notes the development of the finance model for the RAA.

2. BACKGROUND

In its January 2013 publication: Further Action on Adoption: Finding More Loving Homes, the Coalition Government outlined a vision of a new adoption system, particularly focusing on the adopter recruitment challenge. It set out that a system is needed where there were fewer organisations recruiting and assessing adopters with most of these organisations operating at a much greater scale.

Since then, the Adoption Leadership Board and Regional Adoption Boards have been introduced, there has been a growth in regional collaboration and consortia arrangements and a significant increase in the number of adopters approved.

In June 2015, the Department for Education issued its publication: Regionalising Adoption. This set out the Government's aim for "*all children with an adoption plan to find a loving, stable home as quickly as possible.*" The view expressed was that the national system was not working well enough for children waiting to be adopted, particularly for children that are harder to place. Regionalising

Adoption also indicated that further development of the adoption support market is needed so that the right services are available to adoptive families wherever they live. The Government's stated position was that they want all local authorities to be part of regional adoption agencies by the end of this Parliament. £4.5m of start-up funding was made available to support partnerships wishing to be early adopters to take forward their proposals.

In addition to the proposal to provide start-up funding, the Government indicated that it intended to bring forward legislation in the Education and Adoption Bill to compel unwilling local authorities to join Regional Adoption Agencies. In these circumstances, it seemed therefore to be sensible to look to develop a coalition of willing local authorities and voluntary partners in the North West.

The Government subsequently legislated to provide powers in the Education and Adoption Act 2016 to require local authority adoption services to regionalise where they were not making voluntary plans to do so by 2020. Planning is required to have started by 2017 with entry into a regional adoption agency being completed by 2020.

Partnership Development

As a result of discussion between Adoption Leads from a number of agencies, a partnership emerged comprising two Voluntary Agencies, Caritas and Adoption Matters North West and the Blackburn with Darwen, Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, Oldham and Tameside Local Authorities. The partnership initially operated as the West Pennine Regional Adoption Agency but, following substantial consultation, has been rebranded as Adoption NoW.

Approval was given by the Leaders and Lead Members and Directors of Children's Services of the six Councils and the Chief Executives and Board Chairs of the VAA's for the development of an RAA bid. The bid was successful and funding was provided by the DFE to promote the development of the RAA.

The initial RAA proposal set out a plan to build on the strengths of the individual partners and on existing collaborative working arrangements. All participant agencies have been active members of Adoption 22, the consortium of North West adoption agencies which has worked together to match children and prospective adopters across the region. There have been existing collaboration arrangements within the group on recruitment, preparation and training of adopters and there are existing, productive partnerships with Caritas Care and Adoption Matters on Fostering to Adopt and Concurrent Planning. The very successful Adopt North West recruitment programme has been hosted by Bolton. Blackburn with Darwen, Rochdale and Bolton Councils have been amongst the very best performing Local Authorities nationally for performance in the proportion of children leaving care through adoption. A partnership between Caritas Care and Adoption Matters operates the successful regional Centre for Adoption Support.

3. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

The learning from best practice and innovation in each of the participant agencies and from other Regional Adoption Agencies will be embedded in the practice of Adoption NoW, with a particular focus on improving availability of adopters and addressing the current difficulties in placing harder to place children. In the medium term, it is expected that increased efficiency in the recruitment of adopters within Adoption NoW will generate cost savings for participant Local Authorities, though the initial aim is to focus on improving the quality of services.

Aims and Objectives

The Adoption NoW Regional Adoption Agency (the RAA) will create a single regional service operating across six Local Authorities areas in partnership with Caritas Care and Adoption Matters.

The RAA will provide a service which has the flexibility and resilience to adapt and manage the needs of children for adoptive placements, the supply of adopters to meet those needs and provide placement choice and high quality adoption support services. The RAA will maximise the contribution that adoption can make to achieving legal permanence and the best possible outcomes for children by building on partners' individual and collective expertise and strengths. The vision is to "achieve timely adoption for each child with an adoption plan, regardless of age, ethnicity, disability or sibling status; promote identity and provide lifelong support to everyone involved in the adoption".

The RAA aims to create a distinct regional agency, focusing on positive approaches to permanence; build on existing excellent practice and innovation; drive outstanding performance; and ensure that the voice of adopted children and of adopters shapes the service design and delivery. The RAA will achieve and support as many adoptions as possible within the region; maximise flexibility, effectiveness, and efficiency of resource use; and ensure the quality and sustainability of adoption services in the sub region.

The RAA's initial focus will be recruitment, assessment and training of adopters, improving family finding and matching, including maximising opportunities through concurrent planning and fostering to adopt and developing an improved range of post adoption support.

Governance

It is proposed that a Regional Adoption Agency Steering Committee is established to oversee and monitor the development and progress of the RAA. The Steering Committee will comprise of one representative from each Voluntary Adoption Agency Board and the Lead Member for Children's Services from each Local Authority (or their designated deputy). The Steering Committee will meet quarterly and the Regional Adoption Agency Board will provide progress reports to the Committee on all aspects of the RAA.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The RAA steering committee will be responsible for policy development.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

To date Department for Education (DfE) grant funding has been utilised to develop and set up the RAA.

The RAA propose to adopt a three stage approach to the financial model in the short, medium and long term and this model will enable partners to further develop the approach to combine adoption resources over a period of two full financial years. The model allows for a gradual transition of resources from LAs to the RAA over a two and a half year period and further agreement on the allocation of any surplus/deficit within the RAA. Based on our estimated current levels of operational expenditure to be combined initially, Blackburn with Darwen's share of the RAA surplus/deficit would be in the region of 19% of the RAA total from 18/19 onwards. Full establishment of the RAA finance model is expected by April 2020 and colleagues from the partner LAs are working closely to finalise the model.

Under the current model of Adoption a system of interagency fees exists, which are payable between Local Authorities when placing a child with an adopter from another Local Authority. In the medium term, it is expected that increased efficiency in the recruitment of adopters within Adoption NoW will generate cost savings on interagency fees for participant Local Authorities.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

A legal agreement has been developed, which sets out the arrangements for the provision of adoption services in the RAA.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

A Regional Adoption Agency Board which includes the six Local Authority Children's Services Assistant Directors and the Chief Executives of the two Voluntary Adoption Agencies was established at the beginning of the RAA application process and has overseen the development of the RAA. The Board is chaired by the Director of People Services from the host authority (Bolton Council). A Regional Adoption Agency Manager has been appointed and she has begun the development of an Operational Group containing service leads from each agency.

The Board will be responsible for the strategic development, leadership, performance and evaluation of the RAA. The Board will also be responsible for the co-ordination of the appointment of staff. RAA staff will be seconded from local authorities, or co-located from voluntary agencies.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

The Regional Adoption Agency breadth of consultation includes staff, service users and young people and this will continue to be the case as the Authority transitions towards the RAA.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION: 2.0

CONTACT OFFICER: Jackie Gower

[Page 42 of 96](#)

DATE:	29 th September 2017
BACKGROUND PAPER:	NoW Governance Structure & Functions

NoW Governance Structure & Functions

Structure and Functions

The core business of the Regional Adoption Agency is to deliver the following services :-

1. Provide a high quality and efficient family finding service for children who have a plan for adoption.
2. Services for adopters to include :-
 - a) Delivery of an effective recruitment strategy for adopters that results in a supply of adopters to meet the needs of 60% rising to 80% of the RAA's children.
 - b) Prepare, assess and approve prospective adopters in line with statutory timeframes.
3. Provide adoption panels to meet the need of the six local authorities
4. Support the panels through the role of a panel advisor and advise and support the Agency Decision Maker in each authority in the process of deciding that a child should be placed for adoption and matching a child with adopters.
5. Provide adoption support services for adopters and adopted children / adults.
6. Host regional adoption agency commission for birth parent support.
7. For those authorities who hold children's adoption cases in their adoption teams then to support them to continue to do so within the RAA.
8. To support each of the six local authorities in care planning and considering adoption as a permanent option for children at the earliest opportunity.

These service will be delivered under three work streams :-

1. Care planning and family finding
2. Adopter recruitment and assessment
3. Adoption support

The main tasks within these areas are as follows :-

Care planning / family finding

- Find families for all the children who have a plan for adoption
- Utilise the RAA IT system to link potential families with children
- Utilise national and local methods for family finding such as activity days, exchange days, Linkmaker, National Adoption Register etc. Prepare and support children in these events as required.
- Provide support to help social workers prepare children for adoption and in some cases provide a worker to do that preparation.
- Provide a worker to attend early care planning meetings in each local authority to advise on permanence options and in particular in relation to early permanence.

- Advise children's social workers in the process of preparing paperwork for SHOBPA (Agency decision to adopt) and matching.
- Providing a duty system to ensure that there is always advice available on issues relating to adoption
- For those authorities that hold children's adoption cases, supporting them to continue to do so.
- Provide information and court statements (as required) to advise courts about availability of families and prospects of successful adoption for children.

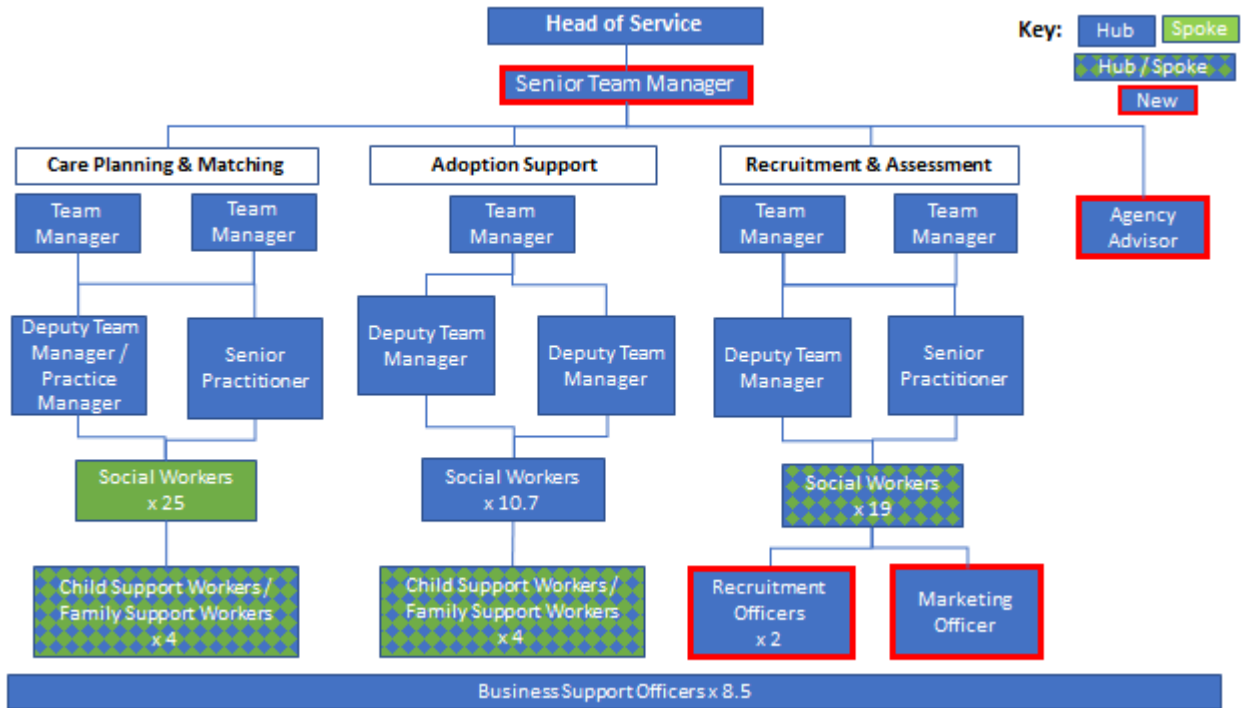
Adoption Support

- Respond to all requests for support received from adopters – this may be to offer advice, signpost to another service, provide a short intervention or provide a full assessment of need that may lead to therapeutic work or other forms of support being offered.
- Support the process of 'adoption support fund' applications
- Support staff with therapeutic skills to utilise those skills effectively within the RAA.
- Provide a range of adoption support events across the RAA including social events, training events, groups for children and adopters.
- Commission some therapeutic support services (on a case by case basis).
- Ensure that referrals to local authorities are made when thresholds are met for 'child in need' or 'child protection'.
- Provide support to adult adoptees seeking information about birth relatives and / or wishing to access their adoption records.
- Support birth parents with letter box arrangements and promoting access to independent birth parent provision.

Adopter assessment and recruitment

- Deliver against an effective adopter recruitment strategy
- Build on existing data and develop RAA data to evidence 'what works' in recruitment across the region.
- Develop specialist recruitment services for Asian heritage adopters.
- Provide recruitment events, activities and advertising campaigns
- Develop and maintain an effective web site for the RAA
- Provide a duty system to respond effectively and efficiently to prospective adopters
- Provide preparation groups for prospective adopters
- Assess and approve adopters within the required timeframe
- Support adopters through the process of being approved at panel, finding a child and that child being matched and placed through to the making of the adoption order.

The following staffing structure is proposed to support delivery of those functions.





EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF: Executive Member for Environment
LEAD OFFICERS: Director of Environment and Leisure
DATE: 12 October 2017

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED: Environment
WARD/S AFFECTED: All
KEY DECISION: YES NO

SUBJECT:
Award of the contract for the management of household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) 2017-2022

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report recommends the award of the above contract.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board: approves the above 5 year contract awarded to the highest scoring bidder, taking into account price and quality.

3. BACKGROUND

The requirement for the provision of a Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) service is a statutory duty on the local authority, acting in its capacity as a Waste Disposal Authority (WDA). The OJEU tender process was completed via the Chest procurement portal (with the Council Procurement team). The evaluation was based on a 60%price and 40% quality model.

Under direction and guidance of the Council's Procurement section and in consultation with colleagues in legal and finance, the Council issued an OJEU notice via the Chest, inviting bids to manage and operate the Council's 2 HWRCs, following the expiry of the existing contract. Bids were required to be submitted on or before 19th May 2017.

The contract covers all aspects of day to day management of the Council's 2 HWRCs, plus arranging for the transport and disposal/recycling/recovery of all materials from the centres (with the exception of non-recyclable landfill and green waste, where the Council has existing contracts).

Two bids were received and evaluated by a panel of officers. Both bids were evaluated and scored according to the evaluation matrix. The unsuccessful bidder's submission was considered but after scoring, was rejected based on MEAT (most economically advantageous).

Evaluation Process and Model

Following the receipt of tenders from 2 bidders an evaluation exercise was carried out by Officers

from within the Environment Department, supplemented by colleagues from Procurement.

Tenderers needed to satisfy the financial, company information, technical, equal opportunities, environmental, and health and safety questions that make up the Company Questionnaire, before being considered for the full evaluation process, which then scores their submission on price and quality. An element of the specification relates to achievement by the contractor, of the diversion of materials away from landfill. In essence, below 68% diversion and a fine is imposed on the contractor, above 72% and a bonus is paid.

Tenderers were asked to price for the full contract term, broken down for each year of the contract, with options available for differing hours and days of operation.

Bidders were also required to price separately from the management fee, for the disposal of inert waste. This was due to Lancashire County Council (and others), who have been able to secure financial savings from managing the amounts of inert material coming in to their sites. If the Council wished to take up this option at any time in the future, the contract needed to have the flexibility to pass some of these savings back to the Council.

The tender documents did not allow bidders to submit variant bids.

The evaluation of bids was based upon a 40% quality, 60% price split. This split was designed to reflect the fact that :-

- a) the service is high profile amongst residents and as such service quality is important
- b) price is also an important criteria because of the need to deliver the service within tight financial constraints

The impact of the new contract for residents

The opening hours will remain unchanged. The contract does allow the provision of a transfer to a new HWRC facility, should one become available during the term of the contract.

Contract performance management

The contract requires the Contractor to provide the Council on a regular basis a wide variety of information. This is recognition of the Council's duty of care and strategic objectives in other areas. For example health and safety compliance, staff training and development, site licence compliance etc.

Moreover, landfill diversion from the sites will be closely monitored (see specification targets outlined above). Any bonus payments made to the contractor for landfill diversion above 72% will be contained within the waste disposal budget, as a saving will be made in landfill disposal to offset increased recycling.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

The Council require a supplier for the provision of the above statutory service. An OJEU tender process has been carried out through the CHEST procurement system, with the price/ quality model identified as a 60/40 split and includes for business continuity plans formed part of the evaluation process.

Describe the impact of this subject on our partners – none, the service will largely continue in its present form, at both sites, aside from there being an increase in the recycling target, which will require the contractor to increase the recycling rate.

Issues arising from Inspections or Audits – the contractor is required to provide data in a form and quality, which the Council is required to report to government. Health, safety, and environmental issues are comprehensively covered in the specification and evaluation process.

Other issues

The service will continue to be provided at both sites within the Borough, as it is at present. The Council is aware that both sites may no longer fit for purpose and a separate project is under way to identify site that meets the existing and future needs, not only for the service users, but the Council's wider corporate objectives.

The service addresses many environmental issues of the Council, principally resource recovery and reduced carbon emissions from reduced need for landfill.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None. The procured service is part of the Council's statutory legal obligation as a Waste Disposal Authority (WDA).

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is an existing budget for the service. A budget pressure has been raised for the service, as a result of the procurement exercise.

Bidders were asked to price for the full term of the contract.

The value of the service is in the region of £747,000 per annum at present, with the cost for 2017/18 likely to be £852,000, if the contract commences 1st October 2017, some £105,000 over budget. The annual cost will vary in the future, in line with the submitted price per contract year and of course contractor performance over the 72% recycling target or below the minimum 68% recycling target (bonus payment due or fine levied for under and over performance, which will not cost the Council any extra, as there will be savings in the waste disposal budget for over performance and under performance fines will offset any cost for additional waste disposal).

The highest scoring bidder scored highest overall in terms of price and on quality.

Affordability

The table below identifies the affordability of the service (under the cost centre 6376 previously DDE 309)

2016/17 contract management cost	2017/18 contract management cost	2017/18 cash limited budget
£672 000	Previous contract price to end September 2017 : £378,000 New contract price October 2017 to March 2018 : £474,000 Combined cost for 2017/18 =£852,000	£747,300

The costs for the contracted service (including an assumed 3500 tonnes per annum of construction waste for disposal), per annum for future years is:-

- 2018/19 - £946 948
- 2019/20- £970 642
- 2020/21 - £994 895
- 2021/22 - £1 019 762

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposed arrangement is compliant with Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Procurement Procedure Rules.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None. The contract will be managed as previously, by existing staff. No further resources are required.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

The Council is a signatory to the Lancashire Municipal Waste Management Strategy, which has been produced and revised, incorporating extensive consultation with, stakeholders, although it is due for review in the next 12 months.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION:	1
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Tony Watson, Head of Environment and Public Protection
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DATE:	10th August 2017
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	Held with the author of the report
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EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Resources
LEAD OFFICERS:	Director of HR, Legal and Corporate Services
DATE:	12 October 2017

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	ALL
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
KEY DECISION:	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

SUBJECT: CLOSURE OF COUNCIL CHARITY: HARRIET HOLT TRUST

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To address the issue of a dormant charity held by the Council, Harriet Holt Trust and to seek authorisation to close all business, dealings and the accounts for the Trust.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

- note the background and options available to the Council relating to this Council's charity that has been dormant for a number of years;
- authorises the closing of the charity and the account of the Harriet Holt Trust;
- to apply to the Charities Commission to make a direction as to the transfer of funds for a dormant bank account under the provisions of the Charities Act 2011
- and in doing so to enter into discussion/consultation with other charities that may be eligible to receive the funds from the Harriet Holt Trust, or as directed by the Charities Commission and;
- approves the distribution of the monies to such charity/charities who have been identified as having the same aims and purpose

3. BACKGROUND

The Council is the trustee/part trustee of five inactive charities/trusts that are no longer in operation or meeting the purpose they were initially set up to achieve. The five charities are:-

Harriet Holt Trust
Common Goods Trust,
Garstang Lecture Fund,
Henrietta Kenyon Bequest,
Poors Land Charity

Over the years these charities have gradually become redundant. This now unfortunately means that whilst funds are available in each of the accounts the charities themselves are inactive. For most of the charities, the purpose for which they were set up has become obsolete therefore restricting

spending of the monies held in the accounts. With others the reason for the inactivity has largely been due to a lack of presence of trustees to conduct business. As a result monies have remained in accounts for numerous years with accrued interest. Three of these charities are registered with the Charities Commission whereby annual accounts are submitted yearly being a resources strain on the Council.

Given that the charities are dormant no further monies have been injected into or spent from the accounts for almost 15 years, in some cases it may have been even longer.

Collectively there are sums of approximately £81,851 held in the accounts. Given this lack of activity it is now considered appropriate for the Council to consider options for utilising the dormant funds for good causes in the Borough.

Given the differing nature of each of the dormant accounts it is intended that separate reports will be presented for each charity.

The first account reviewed is the Harriet Holt Trust.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

The Harriet Holt Trust is not a registered charity. It has been clarified however that it was established for the benefit of blind people in Darwen. The funds were transferred from Lancashire County Council in the financial year 1998/1999 and since then the Council has accounted for the Trust.

In reviewing the history of this account, the Council made contact with the Charities Commission and Lancashire County Council to try to establish the Harriet Holt Trust's status as a charity or otherwise. The Charities Commission has confirmed that it holds no records of the Trust being a registered charity. Lancashire County Council have also confirmed that they do not hold any record relating to this account.

The Charities Act 2011 provides that "charity" means an institution which is established for charitable purposes only. A 'charitable purpose' is a purpose which is for the 'benefit of the public' and for other purposes including 'the advancement of health or the saving of lives', 'the relief of those in need because of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage' (amongst other reasons set out in the legislation).

It can be established in this case that the Harriet Holt Trust was established for charitable purpose being for the benefit of blind people in Darwen.

The Trust however has never been registered as a 'charity' and this may have been due to not meeting the income threshold required to register as a charity. (If a charity has below £5,000 income it does not need to be registered with the Charities Commission). Unregistered charities are able to make decisions without involvement from the Charities Commission as they are required to follow the procedure set out in their Governing Document (a document approved by all the trustees setting out the rules intentions and procedure for that charity).

In this case the Harriet Holt Trust is not registered as a charity; however there is also no Governing Document that has been found to date. This causes a concern for the Council as the lack of a Governing Document means there is no knowledge of who the trustees are, particularly if a resolution is required of any sort, and what the required procedure would be to close the accounts.

Following the advice of the Charities Commission it is recommended that given the absence of registration and the lack of a Governing Document that the Trust should be treated as an 'unincorporated charity'. This provides for the Council to apply to the Charities Commission, under the Charities Act 2011 to request a direction to be made in relation to this as a dormant account. Under

these arrangements following making reasonable enquiries and where the Council is unable to locate the charity or any of its trustees, it may seek a direction as regards closing the account.

For the Harriet Holt Trust this is considered to be the most viable option for the Council i.e. transferring the funds of the account in an ethical and prudent manner, under the direction of the Charities Commission.

There are currently monies in the sum of £7,717.55 held in the charity's account which have not been added to or drawn from for a number of years.

In respect of the Harriet Holt Trust it is therefore considered that the best option is to:-

- a) Close the account
- b) Apply to the Charities Commission to make a direction relating to the dormant account
- c) Transfer monies to another local charity/charities operating in Darwen that perform the same purpose.
- d) If for whatever reason, the Charities Commission do not make a direction or are not able to make a direction then the matter will be referred back to members of the Executive Board Committee to discuss further alternative options.
- e)

In this respect it has been identified that the Blackburn and District Blind Society provide welfare services to the blind and partially sighted within Blackburn with Darwen, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley. It is suggested a transfer of the funds from the Harriet Holt Trust to this Charity with a stipulation that the funds be used to provide welfare services to the blind and partially sighted in Darwen, would be reasonable.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Council supports a range of services in the local community and transferring money from a dormant charity account to support local services reflects the Council's objectives of improving health and wellbeing of all persons in our community.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial costs to the proposals to transfer money from a dormant account to a local charity as set out in the report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

As Harriet Holt Trust has a charitable function which is for the benefit of the public, the Council needs to be mindful of the ethos of a charity when disposing funds.

An unincorporated charity can be closed and the assets transferred to other charities that carry out similar work or have similar objectives. Section 268 of the Charities Act 2011 enables trustees of a charity, by resolution, to transfer all property of a charity to another charity or two or more charities as specified in that resolution. The trustees have to be satisfied that it is expedient in the interests of furthering the purpose in which the property is held and that the purposes of the charities are similar.

The resolution must be passed by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the charity trustees who vote on the resolution. Notice is also required to be sent to the Charities Commission who may direct that publicity is given to the proposed transfer, they may ask for additional information or may object to the proposal.

Additionally there are provisions in the Charities Act 2011 at section 107 that allows the Charities Commission to make a direction where accounts are dormant and the trustees are unknown, to transfer funds to another charity.

The Council will apply for a direction and in the event that a direction is not made by the Charities Commission, a further report will be presented to members to discuss further. The process of applying for a direction is crucial and sensible at this stage given the lack of a Governing Document. Once this option is exhausted the Council will be able to consider alternative suitable options.

Any transfer of funds will be subject to consultation and discussion with the receiving charity and also checking the activity of the receiving charity and work history.

All existing debts and liabilities will need to be cleared before the remaining assets are transferred.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The legal processes required will be funded from within existing resources and once completed the transfer will result in a small resources utilisation saving within the Financial Services Team which is factored into the current restructuring programme.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

Consultation has been made with Lancashire County Council and the Charities Commission.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION: 1

CONTACT OFFICER: David Fairclough and Rabia Saghir

DATE:	4 th September 2017
BACKGROUND PAPER:	Review of Charities Accounts.



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF: Executive Member for Resources

LEAD OFFICERS: Deputy Chief Executive

DATE: 12 October 2017

**PORTFOLIO/S
AFFECTED:** ALL

WARD/S AFFECTED: All

KEY DECISION: YES NO

SUBJECT: Blackburn with Darwen Digital Strategy

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The attached Digital Strategy sets out the Council's approach to addressing the challenges of delivering technology across the organisation, and ensuring that the maximum benefit is derived for the Council, its workforce, partners, customers and residents.

It is the Council's ambition that where possible, all services and interactions should be capable of being delivered digitally, although we do recognise that not all customers of the Council's services may be able to use digital methods independently. To address this, the Council will adopt an approach of 'assisted digital'. The digitalisation of services will vary from service to service, and accordingly departments will need to consider where and how they will provide this digital assistance to their customers.

We will review our existing processes and practices to ensure we make best use of the technology available whilst also ensuring that our digital services are delivered in user-friendly ways.

The Strategy aligns with the 6 key priorities of the Council in order to make more efficient use of tightening budgets and to continue delivery of quality services to the citizens of the borough. The strategy outlines four separate strands, covered further below;

- Digital Customer,
- Digital Workforce,
- Digital Partners and
- Digital Borough

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

- Notes the report and the attached Digital Strategy document.

3. BACKGROUND

[Page 59 of 96](#)

The introduction of new digital technologies across all areas of our lives has fundamentally changed

how we use services, how we work, how we interact through and how services are delivered to us. The Council understands that it has to change to keep pace with this digital shift and the expectations of its citizens, workforce and partners. Indeed, the Council sees that it has a duty to lead and help support this technological and cultural transition within the borough and the wider society.

These new developments offer huge potential for the Council in respect of working more effectively as an organisation and in supporting residents in the new digital age.

The financial climate within which the Council operates is also a significant driver in our approach to digital. The adoption of this strategy across the council will reduce waste and duplication that can result from the traditional channels of contact. It will also enable services and processes to be reviewed to make best use of available technologies and deliver digital services in user-friendly ways to improve the customer experience.

This report and the attached strategy outlines the approach to be taken by the Council in respect of digital transformation now it has committed to working and delivering services in ways which keep pace with modern technology. The 4 strands in the strategy are:

Digital Customer

“Enabling customers to access the services and information they need online.”

The Council will provide services and information online to members, customers, partners and businesses through a number of key mediums including the web, online accounts, forms, apps and social media.

Digital Workforce

“The Council will recruit, support and develop employees with the necessary digital skills to allow technology to be used effectively within the organisation, ensuring that value for money is maximised and services are delivered efficiently.”

Modern technology and solutions will be delivered to staff to support efficiencies within the organisation. As part of the implementation of technology, staff will be given the support to develop skills to use it effectively.

The Council will develop a culture of embracing and using technology at every opportunity with Directors and Heads of Service promoting modern working within their respective areas.

Digital Borough

“The Council will engage with partners using digital platforms in order to collaborate and deliver services to our customers.”

Modern digital services will be delivered to citizens to support efficiencies and to enable them to consume services at a time that suits them. As part of the implementation of digital services, citizens will be given the support to develop skills to use it effectively.

Digital Partners

“The Council, in conjunction with partners, will actively support and provide citizens with access to online facilities and the necessary digital skills to allow them to fully engage in the digital world.”

Collaborative working with partners in the 3rd sector, business and other public sector organisations is increasing with requirements to provide ‘joined up’ services to the customers. To meet these challenges, digital platforms for secure sharing of data, communication and interoperability of systems are a key enabler for these new services.

A New Approach

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The Council has been delivering digital solutions for a number of years and has endeavoured to ensure that these support a common goal. However, there has been a realisation that a lack of dedicated resources to drive the programme has resulted in the pace of change being slower than is required. In addition, the support for staff and services to change and the ability to measure the impact of change has also been missing.

Given these constraints, a new assisted digital approach will be taken in order to co-design digital services with customers, staff and partners. This approach will also give the programme governance with Management Board acting as the sponsoring group and the Deputy Chief Executive chairing the Programme Board. Updates will be provided to Members through the Executive Member Resources reports. Any changes requiring decision will be made by senior officers, relevant Executive Members or Executive Board as required.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

Given the size of the programme there are a number of risks which are documented in the Programme Initiation Document. However, the key risks are highlighted below

- Lack of resources to deliver the programme and work streams;
- Lack of buy-in by leadership, members and staff;
- Resistance to change, and;
- Lack of digital leadership and skills within the Council.

It should also be noted that there is a significant risk to the Council's ability to continue delivering the current range of services if this change programme is unsuccessful.

These risks are monitored, managed and mitigated where possible through the programme board governance.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The adoption and implementation of this strategy will require departments to carefully consider policy implications in their respective areas.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding was allocated within the 2017/18 Budget approved by Finance Council in February 2017 to a reserve to support digital transformation. If any additional funding is required arising from specific recommendations made in the implementation of the Digital Strategy, such requests will be scrutinised and considered as part of the project prioritisation process and approvals sought in line with the Council's financial procedures.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Delivery of individual projects related to the strategy will require individual Equality Impact Assessments to ensure services are equally accessible to all.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

At present, the Digital Programme has seconded two business analysts to undertake reviews with departments and document digital roadmaps. Any further resource requirements will be considered by the Programme Board.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the

EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

Whilst public consultation has not been sought on the strategy, a number of detailed discussions have taken place with departments within the council and with key stakeholders organisations within the Borough.

Consultation and communication with staff, trades unions, members, service users and partners will be a key element of the projects delivered under this strategy to ensure digital services are delivered in the most appropriate way going forward..

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION:	1.0
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Andy Ormerod and Shane Agnew
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DATE:	5 th October 2017
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	Digital Strategy
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DRAFT

Blackburn with Darwen Council Digital Strategy 2017/2020



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Background

The introduction of new digital technologies across all areas of our lives has fundamentally changed many things, from how we purchase services, how we work, how we interact through to how services are delivered to us. The Council understands that it has to change to keep pace with this digital shift and the expectations of its citizens, workforce and partners. Indeed, the Council sees that it has a duty to lead and help support this technological and cultural transition within the borough and the wider society. Reviews will seek to make best use of the technologies available whilst also ensuring that our digital services are delivered in user friendly ways. This digital strategy sets out a vision and commitment which will support the key Council objectives of

1. Council objectives of Creating more **jobs** and supporting business growth
2. Improving **housing** quality and building more houses
3. Improving **health and well-being**;
4. Improving outcomes for our **young people** – education and skills
5. Supporting and helping the most **vulnerable people**
6. **Making your money go further** – supporting households in difficult financial times through efficient and effective use of Council tax.

Key Drivers

The drivers for implementing a digital strategy are detailed below and are led by the changing environment within the Council and its interactions with citizens and partners taking into account the wider changing technological advances in delivering services.

- **Access to digital systems:** greater demand for citizen access to systems from any location 24/7
- **Value for money:** Reductions in the Council budgets
- **Shared Services:** An increase in capability and options to share services with other Authorities/ Partners will mean citizens need to be as digitally enabled as possible to react to changing service delivery models.
- **Digital Exclusion:** Citizen digital skills gap which could impact future service delivery models and disadvantage some sections of society.

Current Picture

Digital technology and the opportunities it provides have become a key consideration in service planning and policy development across the Council. There have been a number of digital projects delivered to modernise the organisation and assist staff with service delivery. These include technologies to improve workforce mobility, customer digital interaction and communications. The Council website was last reviewed and refreshed in 2012 with the ownership now delegated to individual service areas and the number of service areas using online forms has steadily increased month on month. Whilst there has been progress made in the provision for customers online, the contact through this channel remains the lowest compared to other more traditional methods of contact such as telephone, email and face to face.

The Council continues to explore and respond to the rapidly increasing demands of collaboration and partnership working. Collaboration with partners has already started across a number of key services including: Children's Services, Public Health, Lancashire Care Foundation Trust and Clinical Commissioning Groups.

There have been a number of digital and change programmes delivered to modernise the organisation and assist citizens with service delivery however the pace and breadth of these changes has meant that a number of services are yet to fully engage with a digital approach.



Strategic Strands

Digital Customer

“Enabling customers to access the services and information they need online.”

The Council will provide services and information online to members, customers, partners and businesses through a number of key mediums, including the web, online accounts, forms, apps and social media.

Customers and businesses will be able to access our transactional services 24 hours a day, from any location and from any device. These online services will be designed to ensure that they are accessible, user-friendly, responsive to customer needs and make best use of the technologies available. The information and data will be more accessible through online Council channels, increasing accessibility and transparency.

The Councils target is to provide online functionality for all of its services. This will include:

- The provision of clear, concise and up to date information on all services offered by the Council;
- The provision of smart online forms for all service requests or applications;
- The provision of contact email addresses for all services areas, and Online payment facilities.
- The utilisation of the Council’s app, telephone forms or other suitable channels, and;
- The provision of assistance to those requiring support with digital channels.

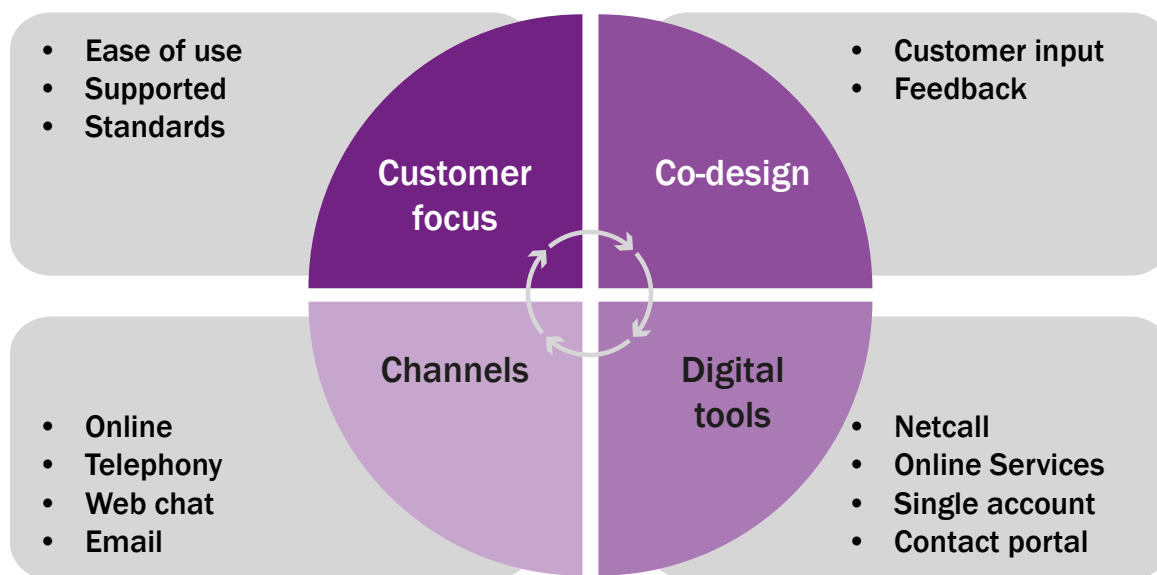
How we will achieve our Digital Customer vision

Delivering services online and through digital means will be the first option for Council services, with the website, social media, and the customer portal becoming the primary means for contacting the Council. This approach will drive the customer contact from traditional channels such as, face to face, postal and telephone contact, to online delivery which meets the expectations of our customers through improved processes and better user experience and delivers departmental savings through cheaper and more efficient channels.

We recognise that not all users of the Council’s services may be able to use digital services independently. To accommodate those individuals, the Council will adopt an approach of ‘Assisted Digital’. Departments and service areas should consider how they will provide this assistance at the same time as they are digitally transforming their services.

Strategic Strands

Digital Customer



Priorities	What we will do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » We will embed into services the regular review and updating of information online, ensuring the website is user-friendly and up to date. In addition, the Council will continue to investigate opportunities for building upon our existing usage of social media and digital information provision. » The Council will look to fundamentally review all customer requests as per the digital agenda and look to develop services in the digital age. » Services will also consider options for integration into back office systems in order to maximise efficiencies and savings. » Where appropriate, the move to online solutions for customers will also be supported by departments through an 'assisted digital' approach. » Council departments will develop and adopt robust measures of customer data to be used as business intelligence to measure digital progress and to inform policy development, service planning and transformation of services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Increase the availability of digital access to transactional, advice and information services across the Council » Redevelop the website to have a focus on simplified transactional forms, access to local and personalised information and improved opportunity to feedback to the services » Develop a social media approach that allows for a greater range of interaction between the Council services and the customers » Work towards a single account for citizens to allow access to Council services » Expand the number of services available online to citizens and businesses » Implement standard approaches to call handling across the Council services » Ensure assistance is available for those who need it.

Strategic Strands

Digital Workforce

“The Council will recruit, support and develop employees with the necessary digital skills to allow technology to be used effectively within the organisation, ensuring that value for money is maximised and services are delivered efficiently.”

Modern technology and solutions will be delivered to staff to support efficiencies within the organisation. As part of the implementation of technology, staff will be given the support to develop skills to use it effectively.

The Council will develop a culture of embracing and using technology at every opportunity with Directors and Heads of Service promoting modern working within their respective areas.

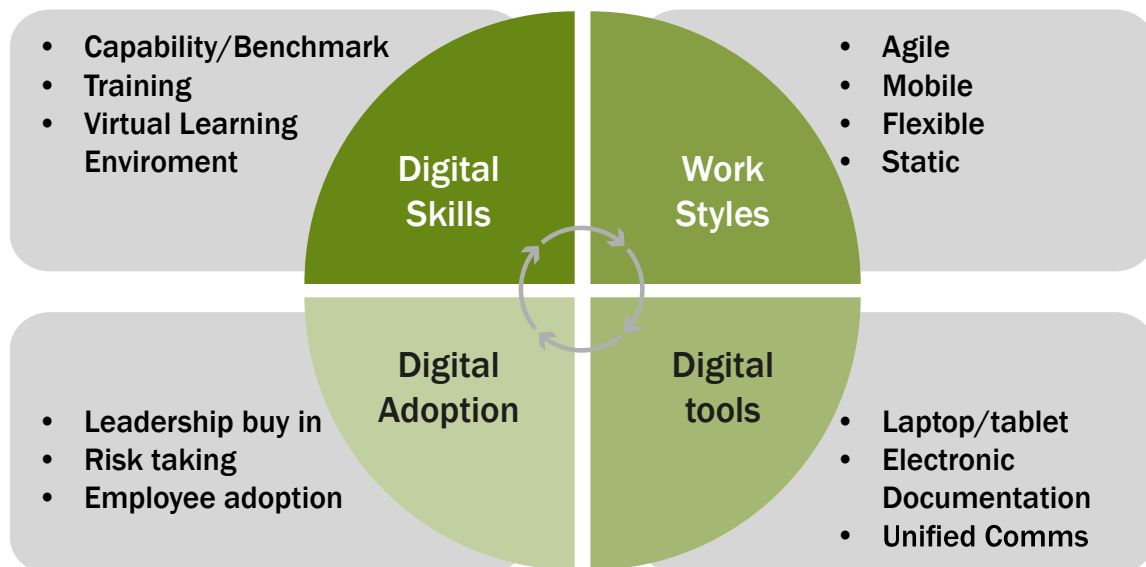
How we will achieve our Digital Workforce vision

Following the introduction of key IT projects, the challenge facing departments is to move beyond basic uses of email and telephone and the adoption of a new culture where technology is exploited and used to it fullest. Internal staff communication and online fulfilment will be enhanced using digital tools and the HR, Payroll and Finance Services will also continue to develop and deliver enhancements ensuring self-service options available to staff are maximised.



Strategic Strands

Digital Workforce



Priorities	What we will do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Develop a digital workforce which is mobile using the most appropriate technologies to support service delivery » Employees can use the standard digital tools offered » Employees to have the digital applications they need over and above the standard applications » Create digital champions within the portfolios/departments » Reduce the cost of service delivery via digital engagement » Ensure employees have adequate capabilities and skills in digital service delivery to enable greater efficiencies and improved services to the customer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Establish a baseline ICT requirement for all applicants at recruitment and selection stage Ensure employees have adequate ICT capabilities and skills by undertaking a skills analysis » Deliver digital training through complimentary methods in order to maximise impact (I.e. online e-learning). » Internal employee communication and online fulfilment will be enhanced by the launch of the new 'intranet'. » The HR and Payroll Service will continue to develop and deliver enhancements to employee and manager self-service » Develop 'digital champions' to locally support the development of employee skills. » Develop metrics in order to measure the impact of this strategy » Establish and communicate best practise use cases of existing technology and how it is being used to meet workforce needs.

Strategic Strands

Digital Borough

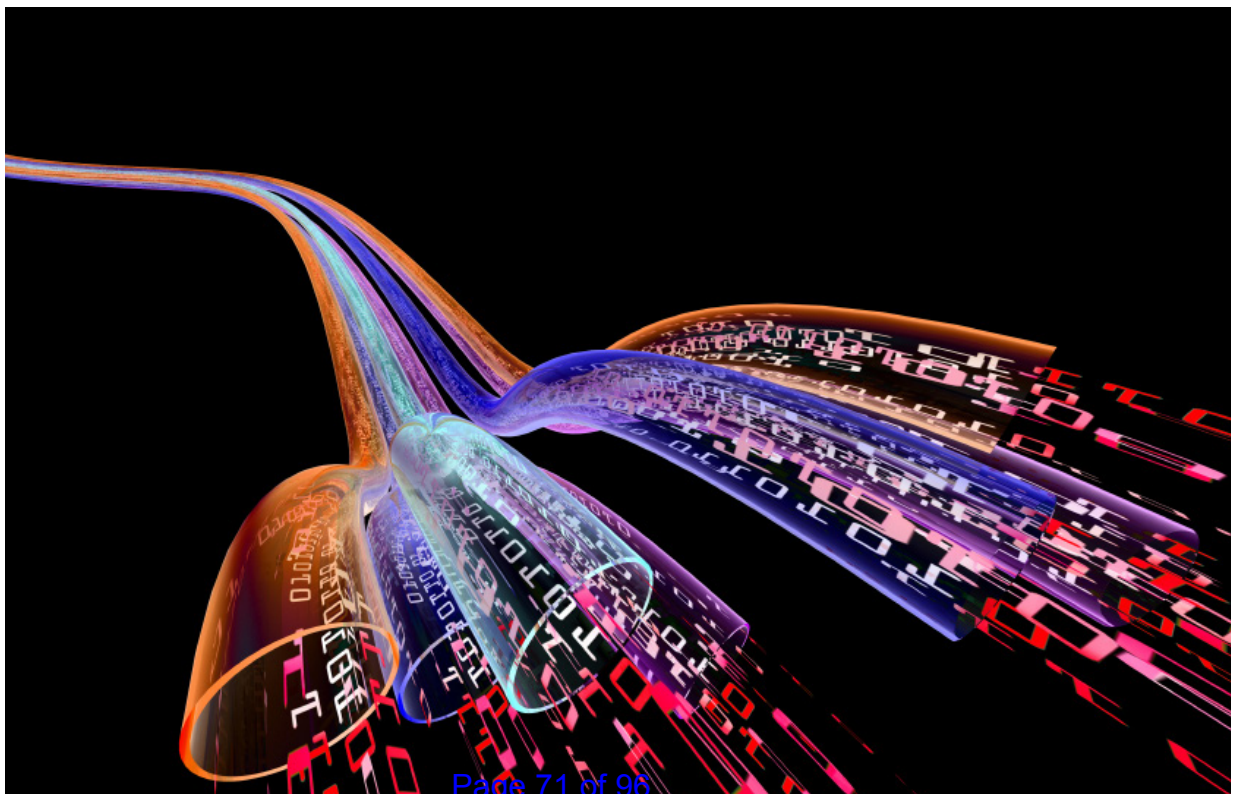
“The Council, in conjunction with partners, will actively support and provide citizens with access to online facilities and the necessary digital skills to allow them to fully engage in the digital world.”

Modern digital services will be delivered to citizens to support efficiencies and to enable them to access services at a time that suits them. As part of the implementation of digital services, citizens will be given the support to develop skills to use it effectively.

How we will achieve our **Digital Borough** vision

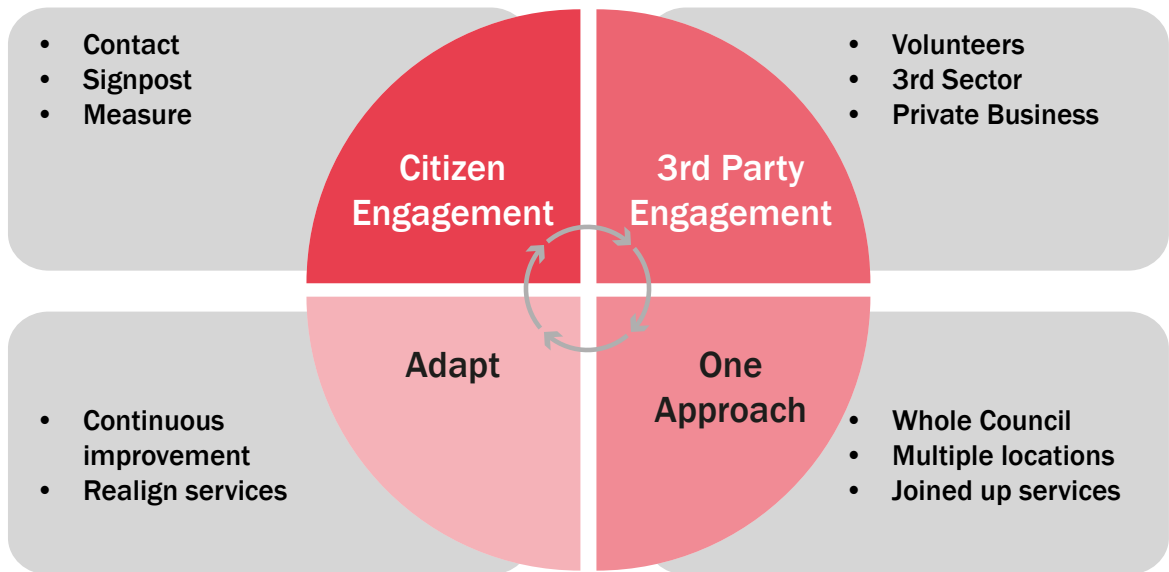
In a world where there is an increased drive towards digital service delivery, the Council needs to ensure that they support their citizens to ensure that they have all barriers to digital engagement removed. Research suggests that there are four key barriers, and more than one may affect individuals at any one time:

1. **access:** the ability to connect to the internet and go online
2. **skills:** the ability to use the internet and online services
3. **confidence:** a fear of crime, lack of trust or not knowing where to start online
4. **motivation:** understanding why using the internet is relevant and helpful.



Strategic Strands

Digital Borough



Priorities	What we will do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Develop a digital borough which affords all citizens the opportunity and access to engage with the digital world » Develop and promote online facilities for residents of the borough » Support citizens in the use of standard digital services offered. i.e. web forms » Create digital champions within key customer facing departments » Reduce the cost of service delivery via digital engagement » Ensure citizens have adequate capabilities and skills in order to access digital service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Establish a baseline of digital support across the borough, both the Councils offerings and key partners » Ensure citizens have adequate digital capabilities and skills by undertaking a skills analysis and reviewing in conjunction with current and future needs and service delivery models. » Deliver digital training through complimentary methods in order to maximise impact (I.e. online e-learning) in collaboration with our partners » Create 'digital champions' across Council services and partnerships » Develop the 'digital champions' to locally support the development of citizen skills. » Develop metrics in order to measure the impact of this strategy » Link to current best practice, national digital trends and initiatives such as the national Libraries strategies.

Strategic Strands

Digital Partners

“The Council will engage with partners using digital platforms in order to collaborate and deliver services to our customers.”

Collaborative working with partners in the third sector, business and other public sector organisations is increasing and providing ‘joined up’ services to the customers. To meet these challenges, digital platforms for secure sharing of data, communication and interoperability of systems are a key enabler for these new services.

How we will achieve our **Digital Partners** vision

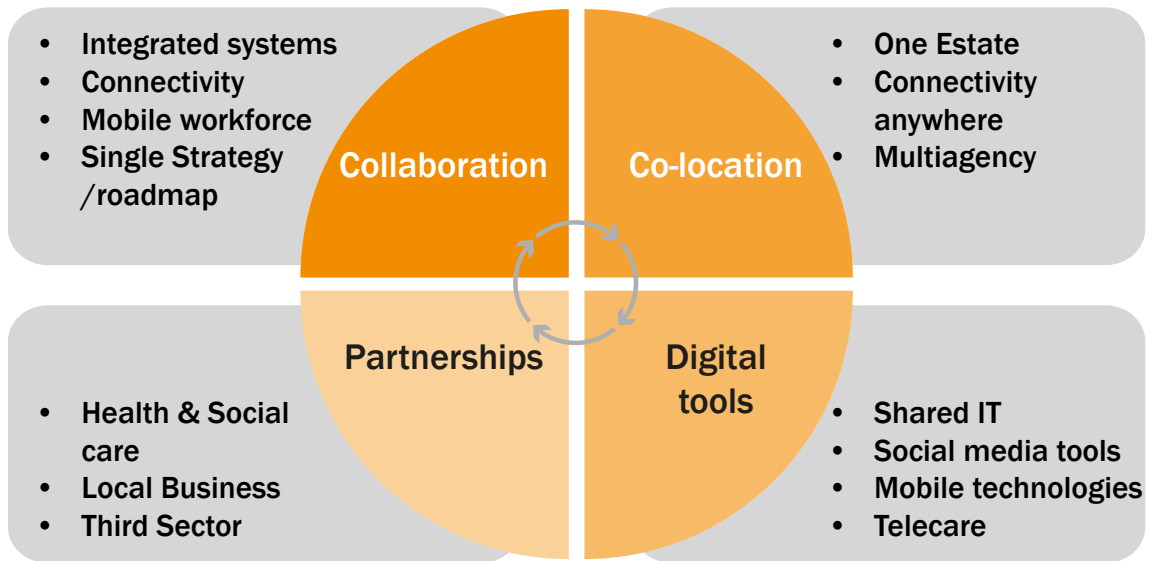
Partnership working is critical for building strong, effective relationships within and across our organisations. Within the Council this means taking a joined-up approach to designing and delivering integrated services for the benefit of service users. Excellent communication and multi-disciplinary team working are key elements to successful partnership working within an organisation and fundamental to ensuring a streamlined approach to the delivery of services.

The development of high quality, co-ordinated services across different settings and sectors requires our organisation and partners to work collaboratively with each other. This will include working across organisational boundaries between statutory, voluntary, community and independent sectors. Through the use of collaboration platforms, digital enablement of Localities will ensure that partners are able to access and share relevant digital systems in order to deliver better outcomes for the citizen.



Strategic Strands

Digital Partners



Priorities	What we will do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » To work closely with partners to build digital approaches to service design and implementation of digital collaborations » To adopt digital approaches as an integral part of all business development » That the workforce is able to evolve in terms of technological advances » To ensure that digital training service is fully available and utilised by the organisation » To ensure that the business exploits existing digital investment where appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Using social media tools and linking up with established digital communities to assist in decision making and policy development. » We will build on existing partnerships through the Chamber of Commerce and the Hive to reach out further to our local businesses and ensuring that we maximise the impact of local innovation and growth. » Work closely with partners in health and social care across Pennine Lancashire to build on existing digital approaches. » Review existing local strategies and approaches in conjunction with emerging regional and national developments. » Look with partners to develop online self-assessment options for citizens. » Develop in conjunction with partners an integrated, multi-agency case management system. » Promote digital health and social care solutions for citizens; i.e. telecare/ telehealth. » We will continue to build digital partnerships across* primary secondary and further and higher education to promote innovation.

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* The voluntary sector.



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF: Executive Member for Regeneration

LEAD OFFICERS: Director of Growth and Development

DATE: 12 October 2017

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED: Regeneration

WARD/S AFFECTED: All

KEY DECISION: YES NO

SUBJECT: Growth Programme Progress Update

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council has an economic Growth Programme to support the long term financial sustainability of the Borough. To deliver this Growth Programme the Council has identified currently 176 sites across the Borough with projects planned to be implemented over the short, medium and long term.

Delivery of these private and public sector projects will generate many benefits to the Borough, including:-

- Additional tax revenues to support the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- Accelerate economic activity to create employment opportunities for residents;
- Support growth and vitality in the town centres of Blackburn and Darwen;
- Generate financial benefits from strategic land receipts; and
- Extend the choice and range of new family housing to attract new residents into the Borough.

The Growth Programme identifies sites across the Borough which utilise private or public sector land and cover employment, housing and town centre developments.

This report provides a summary of progress to date following management changes implemented in February of this year with the introduction of strategic support from Capita.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board note progress of the Growth Programme.

3. BACKGROUND

In order to deliver the Growth Programme the Council has invested in a new Growth Team which promotes Council owned sites for development and works with the private sector in bringing forward private sector sites.

The Growth Team also leads on all strategic planning functions, leads the pre-app process for major applications and administers the Section 106 process.

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A range of initiatives have been developed to support in delivering the Growth Programme, which include:-

- A programme and pipeline dashboard with 14 key programmes of work covering 176 projects across employment, housing and town centres;
- Procurement of a Contractor & Development Framework to be used for delivering a variety of projects covering construction, civil engineering and developments which will commence in January 2018;
- Implementation of new s106 procedures to rigorously test developer's viability appraisals. This will ensure the Council receives the correct amount of funding to support education, affordable homes, green infrastructure and highways;
- Programme for disposing key strategic housing and employment land; and
- Programme of strategic highways infrastructure delivery.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

The progress of the Growth Programme to date is detailed below with updates on key sites and overall planned delivery numbers. A strategic overview of the key sites are shown on the attached plan.

- The **14 key programmes** are divided into two programme themes; Place (9 programmes) and Thematic (5 programmes) across employment, housing and town centres sectors, which forecasts a total of 9374 new housing units and 3950 jobs based on delivery of 176 projects.

Theme	No. of Strategic Programmes	Projects (Public & Private)	Estimated No of Jobs created	No of Housing Units
Place	9	86	3150	5954
Thematic	5	90	800	3420
Total	14	176	3950	9374

- **Strategic Programmes**

- **Place**

1. Blackburn Town Centre Developments
2. Darwen East Development Corridor
3. Darwen Town Centre Developments
4. Ewood Business Park
5. Furthergate Business Park
6. North Blackburn Development Corridor
7. South East Blackburn Growth Zone
8. Wainwright Way Commercial Units
9. West Blackburn Development Corridor

- **Thematic**

10. Affordable Housing
11. Empty Homes
12. Infill Commercial Sites
13. Infill Housing Sites
14. Specialist Housing

- **A total of 297 housing units for the year 2016/17 were delivered** (see table at the end of this section)
 - 70 private dwelling
 - 30 affordable homes
 - 30 converts
 - 167 empties brought back into use.

- **In the first half of 2017/18, 4 sites have now completed in full generating 81 housing units.**
 - Former Mill Hill Resource Centre – 23 units
 - Fosse Close / Newfield Drive – 36 units
 - Shadsworth Hub – 16 units
 - Former Belmont Bleachworks – 6 units.
- **There are 6 key developments on site which will yield 786 units upon completion.**
 - Parsonage Road – 85 units
 - Gib Lane West (Kingswood, Wainhomes and Story Homes) – 450 units
 - Shorey Bank – 119 units
 - Ellenshaw - 46 units
 - Eclipse Mill – 51 units
 - Red House Gardens - 35 units.
- **7 private owned key developments sites, yielding 994 units will come forward in the next 12 months.**
 - Lammack Road –75 units (received planning)
 - Albion Mill –105 units (received planning)
 - Whinney Lane - 270 units being promoted by Wainhomes
 - Roe Lee Farm - 33 units being promoted by Millers
 - Cranberry Lane - 135 units (pre-app stage)
 - Former SAPPI site (phase 1) - 250 units (outline planning stage)
 - Pole Lane North – 126 units (received planning)
- **Council owned key housing and commercial developments sites coming forward in the next 12 to 24 months.**
 - Roe Lee, housing site – 150+ units (tenders being evaluated)
 - Tower View, Darwen – small housing development site
 - Fenisccliffe, Blackburn – small housing development site
 - Alaska Street, Blackburn, affordable housing scheme
 - Griffin, Blackburn – affordable housing scheme
 - Dock Street, Blackburn – new commercial development site
 - Old Bank Lane, Blackburn – 500 space car park at Royal Blackburn Hospital
 - Whitebirk Industrial Estate - Pets Choice manufacturing facility
 - Whitebirk Industrial - Hippo Cars garage and maintenance facility
 - Wainwright Way (Phase 1), Maple Grove appointed and schemes being developed
 - Salisbury Road, Darwen – small housing development site
 - Fishmoor Drive, Blackburn – affordable housing development site
 - Former Waves Site - new cinema and leisure use development
 - Former 3 Day Market, Darwen - new public realm scheme being developed. Following demolition the commencement is scheduled for early 2018.
- **4 Private key commercial developments on site or coming forward in the next 12 months**
 - Accrol, new 100,000sqft commercial units nearing completion on Roman Road
 - M65 Junction 4, new commercial units on Commercial Way (Phase 1)
 - Chubb systems, new commercial development at Shadsworth Industrial Estate
 - Eurogarage offices, Haslingden Rd – new offices and 2 drive through restaurants
- **Key Infrastructure – schemes to promote growth with support from the LEP Growth Deal**
 - **Growth Deal 2**
Darwen East Development Corridor – scheme commencing in March 2018 and will support bringing forward housing developments within East Darwen.

- **Growth Deal 3**

- 1) North Blackburn – improvements to the Ramsgreave/Brownhill corridor to support housing growth along the corridor.
- 2) South East Blackburn – widening and improvements to the Haslingden Road corridor together with a new link road across the Blackamoor site to open up for housing and employment uses.
- 3) Furthergate – completion of new link road and associated junction works to open up land for employment uses.

- **Employment & Town Centres Forecasts – Pipeline of Jobs and Floor Space Summary**

Theme	No. of Projects	Estimated No of Jobs created Job	Gross Floor Area (m2)
Employment	55	2890	135,000
Town Centres	19	1060	15,000
Total	71	3950	150,000

- **Housing Completions to date with 3 Year Forecast**

	Delivery	New Private	New Afford	Converts	Demo	Empties
2012/13	191	86	131	6	-32	0
2013/14	377	78	159	6	-18	152
2014/15	420	148	60	5	0	207
2015/16	209	62	14	23	0	110
2016/17	297	70	30	30	0	167
2017/18	280					
2018/19	475					
2019/20	490					

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Blackburn with Darwen's Corporate Plan 2016 to 2019 has a priority to accelerate the growth agenda, creating local jobs for local people and securing outcomes from capital investments. There is also a commitment to deliver the growth plan priorities for industry, town centres and housing.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Whilst there may be financial implications for individual projects, which are reported separately, there are no financial implications for this progress update report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Whilst there may be legal implications for individual projects, which are reported separately, there are no legal implications for this progress update report.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Whilst there may be resource implications for individual projects, which are reported separately, there are no resource implications for this progress update report.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

The Growth & Development Board has been consulted during the development of the Growth Programme.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

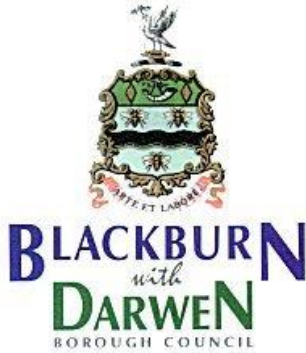
12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION:	0.01
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Simon Jones
	Growth and Development Programme Director
DATE:	07/09/2017
BACKGROUND PAPER:	

EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



REPORT OF: Executive Member for Resources

LEAD OFFICERS: Deputy Chief Executive

DATE: 12 October 2017

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED: ALL

WARD/S AFFECTED: Shear Brow Sunnyhurst

KEY DECISION: YES NO

SUBJECT: Accommodation Strategy Update

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To update on the next phase of Council's accommodation strategy.

Since 2010 the Council has been downsizing, and as part this, has been routinely reviewing its core accommodation sites to rationalise property and reduce costs.

The previous phase of the Council's accommodation strategy involved the refurbishment of 10 Duke Street that enabled the Council to vacate three leased properties; the Exchange, the Innovation Centre and the Beehive.

Earlier this year approval was granted for the refurbishment of the Davyfield Road bungalow site to provide staff accommodation and emergency/civil contingency resilience in the event of a town centre building network failure.

The next phase is outlined below.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

1. Note that the next stage of the Council's accommodation strategy is commencing.
2. Note that detailed feasibility reports and concepts will be carried out for both Blackburn and Darwen Town Halls to ascertain the costs of refurbishing and remodelling the internal space of the facilities, to help support the business case.
3. Note that further reports will be brought at a future date.

3. BACKGROUND

The Council's core staff accommodation sites comprise of Blackburn & Darwen Town Hall's, Tower Block and 10 Duke Street.

As the Council's workforce has decreased so has the occupancy of the accommodation buildings,

which currently stand at:

- Blackburn Town Hall (excluding second floor meeting space) – 59% occupied
- Darwen Town Hall (excluding meeting space) – 60% occupied
- Tower Block – 57% occupied
- Duke Street – 92% occupied

There is scope for rationalisation to reduce costs and improve services.

The refurbishment of 10 Duke Street has already demonstrated how a building can be modernised to maximise space utilisation, reduce occupancy costs and improve services and productivity. The move to Duke Street allowed the Council to vacate three leased buildings; the Exchange, the Innovation Centre and the Beehive.

Detailed condition and structural surveys have been carried out on Blackburn Town Hall and the Tower Block.

Both buildings are deemed to be structurally sound and recent stonework, window and roof restoration have rendered Blackburn Town Hall externally watertight. However, both require internal investment to bring them up to current standards and maximise available floorspace. Darwen Town Hall has not yet been surveyed.

The data identifies that not all buildings are required.

The review will take account of the availability of office accommodation at the Bungalow at Davyfield Road depot. The Bungalow is currently being refurbished and it will provide out-of-town accommodation for up to 120 staff from appropriate teams and touch down space for staff who need to access a Council building without having to travel back into the town centre during peak times. The object is to ensure the building can provide for future agile working practices. The Bungalow's location on the edge of town ensures that the building can provide emergency/civil contingency resilience in the event of a town centre building network failure.

The proposal is to undertake a piece of work that will look critically at both the potential for, and cost of, internal modifications at the Blackburn and Darwen Town Halls to increase capacity and modernise the office accommodation.

Subject to the surveys, a report on the Tower Block will then be brought at a later date.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

There is an over-supply of Council accommodation for Town Hall staff. Modernisation of existing property, in particular the Blackburn and Darwen Town Halls, would increase capacity, improve service provision and reduce operational costs. Further surveys are required to establish what internal changes can be made to achieve these objectives and the cost of doing so. The risk of not taking action at this juncture is to continue to carry the considerable additional costs of empty accommodation.

Further consideration will be given to the long term future of the Tower Block, should it be deemed surplus to requirements, and reports will be provided on this to the Executive Board. If deemed surplus, future discussions with the Mall will be required on this matter.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Council's established Property & Procurement Policies will be followed. The Council's existing Agile Working Toolkit will be supported and the Council's Digital Strategy.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Costs will be ascertained to undertake the detailed feasibility and concept reports. The costs of funding these costs will be met from the earmarked Office Accommodation and Property Improvements revenue reserve.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The procurement of the detailed survey feasibility costings will comply with the Council's Contract & Procurement Procedure Rules & Public Contracts Regulations.
The Council owns the Freehold title for both the Old Town Hall and Darwen Town Hall.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The project will be managed by the Council's Property Team, with the Council's partner Capita providing technical support.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

No consultations are required at this stage.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION: 1

CONTACT OFFICER:	Lee Kinder
DATE:	27 th September 2017
BACKGROUND PAPER:	



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF: Executive Member for Regeneration
Executive Member for Resources

LEAD OFFICERS: Director of Growth and Development

DATE: 13th October 2017

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED: Regeneration Resources

WARD/S AFFECTED: Roe Lee

KEY DECISION: YES NO

SUBJECT: Roe Lee Land Disposal

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Executive approval was granted in January 2017 to prepare and offer for sale, the Council owned Roe Lee site for housing development. An options appraisal identified informal tender as the preferred route for disposal. An informal tender exercise was conducted during June and July to dispose of the site.

1.2 This report outlines the outcome of the Informal tender for the Council owned Roe Lee site and seeks approval to appoint the recommended preferred bidder for the site.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

2.1 Notes the outcome of the informal tender exercise.

2.2 Approves the appointment of the preferred bidder being 'Tender number 1'

2.3 Grants permission for Council officers to negotiate Heads of Terms to finalise the terms of the disposal

2.4 Delegates authority to conclude negotiations, including terms of any land sale and contracts to the Director of Growth and Development and Director of Finance and IT in consultation with the Executive Members for Resources and Regeneration to approve the final heads of terms.

2.5 Authorises the Director of HR, Legal and Corporate Services to complete the necessary legal formalities.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 During January 2017 executive approval was granted to carry out technical surveys on the Roe Lee site (Appendix A) to prepare it to be offered for sale for housing development via an informal tender.

Approval was also granted to initiate the sale of the site via informal tender and to appoint GL Hearn (a Capita partner company) as the sales agent.

3.2 A 'Data Room' was set up on the Council's website which contained all tender information along with a host of technical reports and surveys commissioned on the site by the Council.

- The tender was initiated on the 5th June with around 100 developers being e-mailed directly by GL Hearn with full marketing particulars and follow up calls.
- A 'Place Northwest' e-mail flyer was also sent out for the site to the full readership of 9,000 recipients. Out of which 4,636 readers opened the e-mail.
- The Council's data room recorded over 400+ visits during the tender period.
- Early interest was shown by a number of national house builders
- The Tender return date initially set for the 10th July was extended to the 31st July 2017 due to requests by developers because of the site complexity for carrying out due diligence.

3.3 The informal tender form required interested parties to:

- Make an offer for the housing site using the technical surveys provided but for bidders to carry out their own due diligence
- Offer to be conditional on planning but to exclude any S106 payments from the offer price
- Show proposed layout, house types and numbers.
- Demonstrate previous housing development experience
- Demonstrate financial ability
- Outline timeframe for development

3.4 The tenders have been evaluated in accordance with the criteria referred to under paragraph 3.3 above.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

4.1 The Council received six informal tenders by the closing date 12.00 pm 31st July 2017. Tenders were opened at 1.00 pm on the 31st July 2017 and all bids were compliant.

4.3 Following an evaluation of all tenders, Tender number 1 was selected as the best one. The selected bid meets the criteria set down in the tender conditions.

The offer represents the highest price following full evaluation of conditions of offer. Tender number 1 provides a good level of detail showing a scheme layout, house types, floor sizes and open space proposals which are in line with the Roe Lee masterplan.

4.4 For these reasons it is recommended that the Council accept the offer from Tender number 1 and appoint them as preferred bidder. The Bidder has provisionally accepted the conditions of sale and draft Heads of Terms in the tender documentation.

The draft heads of terms are as follows:

Vendor

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Purchaser

Tender Number 1

Description

Council owned land at Roe Lee (see attached plan)

Method of Disposal

Freehold subject to planning approval

Development Timescale

Still to be finalised but confirmed full build within the required 6 years

Costs

The purchaser will be responsible for the payment of the Council's surveyor's fees and legal costs to a maximum of £10,000.

Risk

The sale will be subject to planning approval, the developer plans to submit a planning application by January 2018.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The disposal is in accordance with the Council's disposal policy and will meet the strategic aims of the Council's Growth agenda

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Council will receive a capital receipt for the land.

The scheme will bring substantial inward investment to the Borough along with Council tax income on all new homes built.

Additional income will be received from New Homes Bonus in line with the Council's MTFS projections

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The disposal of the site via an informal tender is in line with the Council's disposal policy, it will satisfy procurement requirements and is supported by technical input from legal and procurement.

7.2 The Council will need to ensure appropriate best value considerations in disposal of land as part of any contractual agreements with developers.

7.3 The Council will look to safeguard its interests in ensuring that the land is developed in line with its future revenue benefit projections by agreeing a build programme with the developer.

7.4 Final Heads of Terms for the sale of the land and the completion of contractual terms will be presented to the Executive Members for Resources and Regeneration for approval. Given the size of the land disposal it will be expected that there will be a degree of minor adjustments to the documentation required which can and ought to be dealt with at Officer level.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The disposal will be led by the Growth team; Legal resources will be required to complete the legal formalities relating to the freehold disposal

Additional support will be required from Capita Property to carry out assessments of scheme proposals, deliverability and Heads of Terms.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA link here*)

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA attachment*)

10. CONSULTATIONS

Extensive stakeholder consultations have been undertaken during the course of developing a masterplan framework for the wider Roe Lee area. Further consultations will be undertaken in line with statutory requirements during the Planning process for the development.

Previous consultation has also been undertaken in the development of the Council's Local Plan and Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

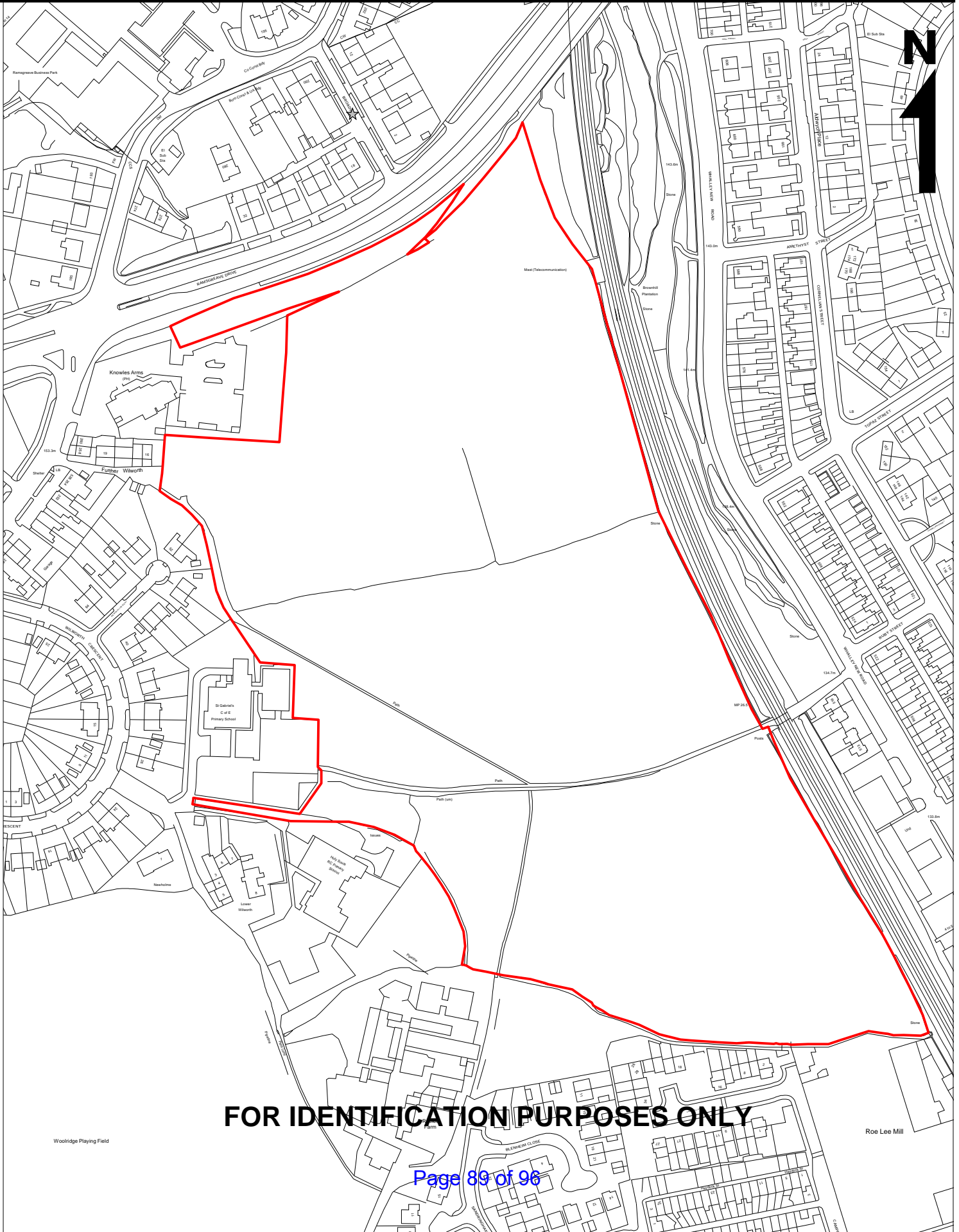
All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded and published if applicable.

VERSION:	1
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Subhan Ali, Strategic Development Manager (Housing)
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DATE:	11 th September 2017
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	Local Plan part one, Roe Lee Masterplan, Roe Lee Tender documents
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FOR IDENTIFICATION PURPOSES ONLY

AUDIT COMMITTEE
Tuesday, 13th June 2017

PRESENT – *Councillors Sidat (in the Chair); Casey, Whittle, McGurk, Murray, and D Foster.*

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Kay	–	Executive Member Resources
Karen Murray	–	District Auditor
Neil Krajewski	–	District Auditor
Louise Mattinson	–	Director of Finance and IT
Colin Ferguson	–	Head of Audit and Assurance
John Addison	–	Democratic Services Manager

RESOLUTIONS

13 Minutes of the meeting held on 13th June 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th June 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

At this point in the meeting the Chair requested that the External Auditors leave the room while the Director for Finance updated the Committee on the Appointment of External Auditors once the Councils current contract expired. It was noted that the Council had awarded its contract to Grant Thronton

14 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

15 External Audit: Findings Report 2016/17

The Council's External Auditors provided Members with a joint Findings Report for 2016/2017 and Value for Money report. The Findings Report summarised the outcomes from the 2016/17 audit, which was substantially complete. It also included messages arising from the auditing of the Council's financial statements and the results of the work External Audit had undertaken to assess Council arrangements to secure value for money in the use of resources.

It was reported that in terms of value for money, based on External Audits work, and having regard to the guidance on the specified criteria published by the Audit Commission, it was noted that External Audit were satisfied that in all significant respects the Council had put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2017.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That That the External Audit joint report on Value for Money for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and the Findings Report 2016/2017 be noted.
- 2) That the Director of Finance and the Audit Department be thanked for hard work and support during the external audit process.

16 Statement of Accounts 2016/17

The Deputy Chief Executive gave a presentation on the Statement of Accounts for 2016/17 and submitted a report summarising the main features of the document.

The Statement of Accounts outlined the main features of the Council's financial performance for the year ending 31st March 2017 and provided information relative to the Council's financial position at that date.

It was noted that Accounts and Audit Regulations 2016 require that the accounts should be considered and approved by Members prior to publication by the 30th September following the year to which they relate. This was to enable the Audit and Governance Committee to review and approve the accounts, having considered the issues raised by the auditors in the Audit Findings Report.

Members were reminded that the 2016/17 Draft Statement of Accounts was certified by the Director of Finance on 23rd June 2017, and subsequently published on the Council's website.

The Committee was informed that the Council's Better Care Fund (BCF) which was a pooled budget arrangement with Blackburn with Darwen Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), it was noted that the Council should only account for its share of income and expenditure. However, the accounts included the full amount of BCF deposited in the pooled fund as income, and the transactions to transfer funds to the CCG as gross expenditure. As a result both income and gross expenditure have been overstated, although there is no impact on the outturn position of the Council.

The Committee agreed to the approval of the accounts once the agreed changes relating to the Better Care Fund have been processed.

RESOLVED

- 1) That the Committee notes the outcome of the audit of the Council's financial statements and the Value for Money conclusion as

presented by Grant Thornton in their Audit Findings Report for 2016/17 (Minute number 15).

- 2) That the Committee approves the Statement of Accounts, including the annual governance statement for 2016/17.
- 3) That the Committee approves the letter of representation from the Director of Finance & I.T. to the external auditors.
- 4) That the Committee approves notes that the future change to the timescales for approval and publication in 2017/18.

17 Treasury Management Report – June to August 2017

The Deputy Chief Executive provided the Committee a report on the Treasury Management Quarterly report covering the period June 2017 to August 2017.

Members were reminded that the Council formally adopted CIPFA's revised Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services when they approved the 2017/18 Treasury Management Strategy at Finance Council in February 2017. The CIPFA Code, Investment Guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) and the Audit & Assurance review of Treasury Management activities, all Members recommend an enhanced role for elected Members in scrutinising the Treasury Management function of the Council.

The report summarised the interest rate environment for three months, borrowing and lending transactions undertaken and the Council's overall debt position. It also reported on the position against the Prudential Indicators established by the Council.

RESOLVED

That the Committee to note the Treasury Management position over the quarter from June 2017 to August 2017.

18 Draft Treasury Management Annual report 2016/17 and Mid-Year Review 2017/18

The Deputy Chief Executive provided the Committee with the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2016-17 and Mid-Year Treasury Strategy Review for 2017/18.

Members were reminded that as the body responsible for scrutiny of the Treasury Management function, they are asked to consider key issues in the Treasury Management Outturn Report for 2016-17 and Mid-Year Strategy Review for 2017-18, ahead of consideration by full Council.

RESOLVED

That the Committee approve the draft Treasury Management Outturn for 2016-17 and Mid-Year Strategy Review for 2017-18 and that it be submitted to the Council for approval on 5th October 2017.

19 Audit & Assurance–Progress & Outcomes to 31 August 2017

The Head of Audit & Assurance submitted a report which updated the Committee on progress and outcomes against the Audit & Assurance Plan 2016/17 in terms of outcomes achieved to date for the financial year.

Members were asked to consider and challenge the outcomes achieved to 31 August 2017 against the Audit & Assurance Plan. The report focused on a number of key areas in Audit & Assurance Plan, in particular:

- Growth Strategy Programme:
- Private Care Homes Contract Payments:
- Cyber risk
- Budgetary Control
- Payroll Core System

RESOLVED

That the Committee note the outcomes achieved to 31 August 2017 against the Audit & Assurance Plan, which was approved by Committee in April 2017.

20 Risk Management – 2017/18 Quarter 1 Review

The Head of Audit & Assurance provided the Committee with a report that detailed risk management activity that had taken place over the first quarter (1 April 2017 to 30 June 2017).

Members were reminded that the Council recognised that risk management was not simply a compliance issue, but rather a way of viewing its operations with a significant impact on long-term viability. It was noted that risk management helped to demonstrate openness, integrity and accountability in all of the Council's activities.

It was highlighted to Members that currently the top corporate risk was:

- High profile serious/critical safeguarding incident/case

RESOLVED

That the Committee note the progress made on the Corporate Risk Register as at the end of Quarter 1 2017/18; and the risk management activity that has occurred during the period.

Signed
Chair of the meeting at which the Minutes were signed
Date

