

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Thursday, 11 January 2018

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**
14th December 2017 - Minutes 5 - 16
- 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 17 - 18
- 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

	Member	
8.1	Leader (Chair of the Executive Board)	
8.2	Health and Adult Social Care	
8.3	Children's Services	
8.3.1	Fostering Service Quarterly Report - 1 July 2017- 30 September 2017	
	Fostering Service Quarterly Report - 1 July 2017 to 30 September 2017	19 - 22
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8.4	Environment Leisure, Culture and Young People	
8.5	Update on Leisure Review	
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8.6	Neighbourhood and Prevention Services	
8.7	Regeneration	
8.8	Resources	
8.9	Schools and Education	
9	CORPORATE ISSUES	
9.1	Update on 11-17 Blakey Moor, Blackburn ("the property")	
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10	MATTERS REFERRED TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD	
	PART 2 – THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC MAY BE EXCLUDED DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS	
11.1	Update on 11-17 Blakey Moor, Blackburn ("the property")	
	Update on 11-17 Blakey Moor, Blackburn ("the property") P2	
	<u>PART 2 – THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC MAY BE EXCLUDED DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS</u>	

Date Published: Wednesday, 03 January 2018
Harry Catherall, Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE BOARD

14th December 2017

PRESENT

COUNCILLOR:

Mohammed Khan
Maureen Bateson
Damian Talbot
Phil Riley
Arshid Mahmood
Andy Kay
Mustafa Desai
Dave Harling

PORTFOLIO:

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

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 MPs

	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 Councillor Jim Smith.	
2	<u>Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th November 2017</u> The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board held on 9 th November 2017 were agreed as a correct record.	Approved
3	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> There were no Declarations of Interest submitted.	
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
5	<u>Public Forum</u> There were no questions submitted by Members of the Public.	
6	<u>Questions by Non-Executive Members</u> There were no questions submitted by Non-Executive Members.	

	Item	Action
7	<p><u>Youth MPs Update</u></p> <p>The Youth MP and Deputy Youth MPs updated the Executive Board as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The theme of Youth Work Week 2017 was Youth Services – youth work for today and tomorrow. To promote National Youth work week in BwD the youth forum wanted to produce a short video on why youth work is important, to not only young people but their parents and partner organisations. It was highlighted by the National Youth Agency as an excellent piece of positive youth work. On Thursday 9th November the BwD youth forum attended the annual Youth MP debates. The young people organised a tour around the House of Parliament and on Friday Youth MP Ummaih Shah had the opportunity to take part in the annual debate in the House of Commons chamber chaired by the speaker of the House of Commons John Bercow. All the Youth MP's voted to decide which two issues should become the UK Youth Parliament's priority campaigns for the next year ahead which were Votes at 16 and a Curriculum to Prepare us for Life. • On November the 29th after the success of last year's Takeover Challenge, the BwD Youth Forum organised another BwD Takeover Event at King Georges Hall in the Windsor suite. The theme was 'Mental health', with three partner agencies helping deliver workshops on three topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Domestic abuse- supported by the Wish Centre - Substance misuse- supported by Go2 - Mental health- supported by Lancashire Mind Following feedback, the Youth Forum would be consulting with young people to discuss how they can make an impact with the information and would meet back up with key agencies in 3 months to discuss how they could work together to do this. • The Youth Forum attended the regional Youthforia event at Wigan, with 23 local Youth councils in attendance. • YPS were currently in the process of recruiting the 2018/2019 Youth MP's and forum members. The young people would be participating in a 3 day residential where they would participate in Democracy youth work curriculum sessions and produce their 3 campaign issues along with a short video of why young people should vote for them. This would be shown during Monday 29th – Friday 9th February in schools, colleges, youth clubs and youth organisations across BwD. The announcement would be on Monday 12th February from 4.30pm in the Council Chamber. 	Noted
8.2.1	<p><u>Blackburn with Darwen Council performance on the new Local Authority Public Health Dashboard</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 6 of 54</p> <p>On 16th October Public Health England (PHE) launched a new local</p>	

	Item	Action
	<p>authority public health dashboard, which would support Councillors and senior council officers in making decisions on how they prioritised resources across a range of public health service areas.</p> <p>The dashboard currently covered the following range of service areas/ themes; best possible start in life, child obesity, drug treatment, alcohol treatment, NHS Health Checks, sexual health services and tobacco control.</p> <p>For each service area/theme, one combined (summary rank) indicator had been produced, made up of several different component indicators. Both the summary rank and the component indicators were presented so that Councils with a similar level of deprivation could be compared.</p> <p>Compared with 16 other similarly deprived local authorities, Blackburn with Darwen had</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three summary ranks substantially above average (better) – child obesity, drug treatment, sexual health services • Three above average (better) - best possible start in life, alcohol treatment and tobacco control • One below average (worse) - NHS Health Checks <p>Additional commentary was provided in the Appendix.</p> <p>RESOLVED – That the current performance of Blackburn with Darwen on the new Local Authority Public Health Dashboard be noted.</p>	Noted
8.3	<p><u>Children’s Services Update</u></p> <p>Councillor Maureen Bateson verbally reported that as recently advised, the Council’s Children’s Services had been rated as ‘Overall Good’ in four out of the five areas inspected. A report and Action Plan would be submitted to the next meeting of the Council Forum in January 2018 in order that all Councillors could contribute to the debate.</p>	Noted
8.3.1	<p><u>Adoption Service Six Monthly Report – 1st April 2017 – 30 September 2017</u></p> <p>A report was submitted which summarised the performance of the Adoption Service for the six month period from 1st April 2017 to 30th September 2017 and which provided an overview of the work of the Service for this period.</p> <p>RESOLVED - That the Executive Board notes the half yearly report which is available on the Council website.</p>	Noted

	Item	Action
8.5.1	<p data-bbox="336 69 738 107"><u>Update on Leisure Review</u></p> <p data-bbox="336 143 1318 360">Members were reminded that in 2012/13, the Leisure, Culture and Young People’s portfolio undertook a Leisure review with support from Sport England. The review resulted in the Council approving the building of Witton Park Arena and Blackburn Leisure Centre which replaced the ageing and dilapidated facilities at Waves Water Fun Centre.</p> <p data-bbox="336 403 1318 656">In 2015 and 2016, in the face of continuing and severe cuts in funding from central government, the portfolio held public meetings to discuss the future operational management of Audley Sports Centre, Daisyfield Pools and Shadsworth Leisure Centre. Following consultation processes, the Council subsequently transferred the operational management of the three Council owned leisure facilities to third party operators.</p> <p data-bbox="336 696 1318 1171">The alternative management arrangements at Daisyfield Pools and Audley Sports Centre had progressed well; however the management arrangements at Shadsworth Leisure Centre were less well embedded. The Centurions swimming club were operating the swimming pool at Shadsworth Leisure Centre, however the Council had to provide lifeguard cover for some swim sessions at considerable cost because the club had been unable to lifeguard all the swim sessions. The swimming club membership had not expanded as much as anticipated; as a result the club had been unable to pay the Council the agreed pool hire fee. The costs associated with operating Shadsworth Leisure Centre were not affordable within the cash limited budget for the Leisure, Culture and Young People’s portfolio.</p> <p data-bbox="336 1211 1318 1503">Shadsworth Leisure Centre was creating a budget pressure of £136,000 which could not be managed by the portfolio. The income targets for the three main leisure centres had increased from £2,355m in 2015/16 to £2,918m in 2017/18 and whilst the three leisure centres were on target to achieve this targeted level of income, there was little scope to generate the additional income required to offset the budget pressure from Shadsworth Leisure Centre, for which there was no budget.</p> <p data-bbox="336 1543 1318 1861">As part of the Council’s efficiency savings, the Leisure, Culture and Young People’s portfolio had to consider the future of its other leisure facilities which were ageing, expensive to operate and unaffordable in the face of continuing and severe cuts in funding from central government. In 2015 and 2016, public consultation via surveys and meetings were organised to discuss the future management arrangements for Daisyfield Pools, Shadsworth Leisure Centre and Audley Sports Centre.</p> <p data-bbox="336 1901 1318 2139">The portfolio was able to transfer the management of Audley Sports Centre and Daisyfield Pools to other organisations and as a result, the Council no longer employed any staff within these two buildings. The Centurions swimming club was the only organisation to declare any interest in Shadsworth Leisure Centre and their interest was focused solely on the swimming pool, not the dry side facilities. The</p>	

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	<p>Centurions swimming club had exclusive use of the pool but had allocated one lane of the pool for casual swimming alongside their swim squad training sessions. However, public swimming had reduced to the point where there were only six casual swimmers using the pool on a regular basis. The club had insufficient lifeguards to supervise all the swim sessions so the Council was still providing some lifeguard cover to ensure the safety of swimmers at a considerable cost.</p> <p>It was feasible to relocate the Centurions swimming club and the casual swimmers to other pools in the Borough. The swimming club could relocate to Daisyfield Pools as the pool was currently open just 16 hours a week and had capacity to accommodate the majority of the club swimming sessions. The relocation of the club to Daisyfield Pools would also provide additional income for the pool operator. The casual swimmers could relocate to any of the other three council owned pools within the Borough.</p> <p>The Council had embarked on a consultation process to elicit feedback and views from users and non-users of the swimming pool. The Council had met with the Centurions swimming club on 3 occasions. The consultation process also included hosting an open public meeting on Tuesday 5th December 2017 and making available a customer questionnaire from 27 November 2017 to 24 December 2017 to enable users and non-users to provide feedback and make suggestions about the future operation of the swimming pool. The consultation process would assist the Council to identify if there are any organisations or groups who wished to consider operating the swimming pool at no cost to the Council.</p> <p>If no other organisations showed any interest in operating the swimming pool as a result of the consultation process, or no alternative proposals were submitted which enabled the Council to operate the swimming pool at no cost, one of the options available to the Council was to close the swimming pool and relocate the swimming club and casual swimmers to alternative council owned pools within the Borough.</p> <p>RESOLVED – That the Executive Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes the report and the ongoing consultation processes outlined within the report; and • Notes that the outcome of the consultation will be reported back to the Executive Board on 11th January 2018 with a recommendation as to the future operation of Shadsworth Leisure Centre. 	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
<p>8.8.2</p>	<p><u>Closure of Council Charity: Henrietta Kenyon Bequest</u></p> <p>As previously reported to the Executive Board, the Council was the trustee/part trustee of five inactive charities/trusts that were no longer in operation or meeting the purpose they were initially set up</p>	

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	<p>to achieve. Given the differing nature of each of the dormant accounts it was intended that separate reports would be presented for each charity. This report focuses on the Henrietta Kenyon Bequest (HKB).</p> <p>The HKB was a charity the objects of which were “to provide comforts and amenities for aged persons resident in the hostel known as Brookhouse, Pearl Street, Blackburn which would not otherwise be provided out of the rates taxes or other public funds”.</p> <p>It was unfortunately not clear how the Council came to manage this account and it could be presumed that after the monies were paid by the executors the remaining account was transferred to the local authority at some stage.</p> <p>Whilst the account was registered as a charity and there was a will, the Charities Commission were only holding the first and last page of the will so the detail was not known to the Council. This caused a concern particularly if there was missing information relating to the closure of the account.</p> <p>On this basis and in the event of absent trustees it was recommended that the Council apply to the Charities Commission under the Charities Act 2011 to request a direction to be made to deal with the dormant account. This was the most viable option for the Council to transfer funds in an ethical and prudent manner, under the direction of the Charities Commission. There are currently monies in the sum of £14,752.09 (approx.) held in the charity’s account which have not been added to or drawn from for a number of years.</p> <p>RESOLVED - That the Executive Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) note the background and options available to the Council relating to this dormant charity; b) authorises the closing of the charity and the account of the Henrietta Kenyon Bequest; c) authorises the application to the Charities Commission for a direction to transfer funds for a dormant bank account under the provisions of the Charities Act 2011; d) and in doing so to enter into discussion/consultation with other charities that may be eligible to receive funds from the HKB, or as directed by the Charities Commission and; e) approves the distribution of the monies to such charity/charities who have been identified as having the same aims and purpose by the Director of Finance and IT in consultation with the Executive Member for Resources. 	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p>

	Item	Action
9.1	<p data-bbox="336 69 1075 107"><u>Blackburn Town Centre Development Proposals</u></p> <p data-bbox="336 143 1313 398">Building on the Council's investment in both Blackburn and Darwen Town Centres over a number of years, a report was submitted which outlined new proposals which complemented the Council's existing programmed schemes to deliver a number of significant regeneration projects within Blackburn Town Centre, including the Northgate Quarter. Existing proposals were published within the Executive Board Reports of 13th April 2017 and included:</p> <ul data-bbox="336 439 1313 925" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="336 439 1313 555">• Cinema Project on the former Waves Leisure Centre site with the Council leading the development for a new cinema and two small leisure units leased to Reel Cinemas Ltd. <li data-bbox="336 595 1313 925">• Blakey Moor Townscape Heritage Project within the Northgate Conservation Area, which included proposals for renovation and repair of the Victorian Blakey Moor terrace, former Baroque public house, King George's Hall front elevation and around 20 other historic buildings on Northgate and Lord Street West over the next 5 years. The project also included a public realm improvement scheme which adjoined the new cinema project. <p data-bbox="336 958 1203 1030">Three new proposals were now proposed to complement the existing projects and included:</p> <ul data-bbox="336 1070 1313 2132" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="336 1070 1313 1400">• Fabric Borders: <u>A new £2.9m</u> infrastructure project supported by the National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) to reconfigure vehicular and pedestrian routes in the Tontine Street, Sudell Cross, Victoria Street/Whalley Range and Northgate areas across the Town Centre to remove vehicular congestion and conflicts, improve pedestrian wayfinding and movements and develop new, under-utilised sites, some in poor condition, on either side of Barbara Castle Way. <li data-bbox="336 1440 1313 1809">• Public Car Park and infrastructure: <u>A new £2.5m</u> scheme including a public car park and associated infrastructure to be provided below the new cinema development on the former Waves Leisure Centre site. The new car park would be open to the public and accessed from Feilden Street and provide around 98 spaces and would include investment in provision for Electrical Charging points. The car park would also provide opportunities for nearby surface level car parks to be developed in the future. <li data-bbox="336 1850 1313 2132">• Jubilee Square: <u>A new £1.0m</u> high quality public realm and associated infrastructure scheme to link the College campus with the Blakey Moor heritage area and the new Cinema. Jubilee Square which would bring the neighbouring investment areas together, enhancing the setting, providing attractive pedestrian links and Supporting the evening economy by attracting end users to establish and open 	

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	<p>new business premises in the area.</p> <p>RESOLVED - That the Executive Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Note the three new project proposals and the NPIF funding award; ii. Note that the Final Business Case for the Cinema, and the proposed Car Park and Jubilee Square will be provided to the Executive Board in April 2018 as a key decision prior to commencement; and iii. Further updates on Fabric Borders and Blakey Moor will be provided to the Executive Board at key decision stages. 	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
<p>9.2</p>	<p><u>Procurement of a Construction and Development Framework</u></p> <p>A report was submitted which sought approval for the appointment of organisations to a Construction and Development Framework, following a robust evaluation process. The proposed Framework would enable and assist the Department for Growth and Development in bringing forward Council owned sites for commercial development, in addition to procuring construction and civil engineering works for growth projects and programmes.</p> <p>The report summarised the process followed between publication of OJEU notice and conclusion of the procurement. Following the evaluation process, and based on the scoring it was concluded by the evaluation team that five organisations be appointed to the Framework.</p> <p>The Framework would deliver benefits over traditional procurement for projects by facilitating a more integrated solution based on continuing and closer relationships with a limited number of suppliers to assist in developing the supply chain and workforce within Lancashire region.</p> <p>The Framework would also accelerate construction and development activity through pre-procured delivery partners with opportunities for early contractor involvement enabling joint development of schemes.</p> <p>RESOLVED - That the Executive Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Approve the recommendation, following a robust evaluation process, to appoint 5 organisations to the Blackburn with Darwen Construction and Development Framework subject to the final negotiations being concluded with no detrimental change to the Council's commercial position or risk profile; 2.) Delegate authority to the Director of Growth and Development, in consultation with the Executive Member Regeneration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) to finalise the negotiations and formally enter into Framework Agreements with the 5 organisations provided that the negotiations 	<p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p>

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	<p>have no detrimental impact on the Council's commercial position or risk profile; and</p> <p>b) subject to a) above, to finalise the detailed contractual discussions and agree final terms and contract award.</p>	
9.3	<p><u>Griffin Housing Development Strategy</u></p> <p>It was reported that the Griffin clearance site was a key development priority for the Council. The Griffin regeneration area had previously seen 160 homes refurbished under Housing Market Renewal along with a number of community confidence projects delivered to improve the quality of life for local residents. The Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment (2008) also identified 165 homes of very poor quality to be cleared and the site to be redeveloped. The Griffin SPD (2011) outlined principles for redeveloping the clearance area to provide good quality family housing and environment. The Griffin SPD was further updated in 2017.</p> <p>The Growth & Development team had carried out an extensive options appraisal of the site alongside detailed soft market testing with key developers and housing providers to look at ways of developing the site in a timely manner. The preferred option was to offer the site as two separate phases, with phase 1 being ready for development and phase 2 potentially requiring a compulsory purchase order.</p> <p>The Council had acquired the recently decommissioned Griffin public house to help create a strong frontage onto Bank Top/Redlam. This would make the site more attractive and accessible with the potential for new access into phase 1 from the main road. This had assisted in a favourably soft market testing exercise.</p> <p>Following on from the soft market testing and options appraisal, it was recommended to offer the site in two phases as separate development opportunities responding to the market interest. The report detailed the proposed action and sought approval to engage in the process of disposing of the site for development.</p> <p>RESOLVED - That the Executive Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Note the outcome of the options appraisal carried out for the Griffin Clearance site, the preferred option to offer the site in two phases, phase 1 via informal land tender and phase 2 via special purchaser arrangement with Together Housing Association; 2.) Approve the disposal of phase 1 via Informal land tender to be commenced in 2018; 3.) Grant approval to treat Together Housing Association as a 'special purchaser' to develop a new affordable housing scheme for phase 2; 4.) Delegate authority to conclude negotiations, including terms 	<p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p>

	Item	Action
	<p>of any land sale and contracts to the Director of Growth and Development and Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Executive Members for Resources and Regeneration to approve the final commercial terms;</p> <p>5.) Grant approval to the Director for Growth and Development in consultation with the Director of HR, Legal and Corporate Services to consider serving of a potential Compulsory Purchase Order under the Town and Country Planning Act once all other avenues to purchase by agreement have been expended. A separate report will be presented to the Executive Board to seek approval to initiate the CPO; and</p> <p>6.) Authorises the Director of HR, Legal and Corporate Services to complete the necessary legal formalities and all legal documentation.</p>	<p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p>
	<p><u>PART 2 - THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC MAY BE EXCLUDED DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS</u></p>	
<p>11.1</p>	<p><u>Procurement of a Construction and Development Framework</u></p> <p>Further to the report submitted at Agenda Item 9.2, an additional report was submitted containing commercially sensitive information.</p> <p>RESOLVED – That the Executive Board:</p> <p>1.) Approve the recommendation, following a robust evaluation process, to appoint 5 organisations to the Blackburn with Darwen Construction and Development Framework subject to the final negotiations being concluded with no detrimental change to the Council’s commercial position or risk profile;</p> <p>2.) Delegate authority to the Director of Growth and Development, in consultation with the Executive Member Regeneration:</p> <p>a) to finalise the negotiations and formally enter into Framework Agreements with the 5 organisations provided that the negotiations have no detrimental impact on the Council’s commercial position or risk profile; and</p> <p>b) subject to a) above, to finalise the detailed contractual discussions and agree final terms and contract award.</p> <p>Signed at a meeting of the Board</p> <p>on the day of</p> <p>(being the ensuing meeting of the Board)</p> <p>Chair of the meeting which the Minutes were confirmed</p>	<p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p>

	Item	Action

**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: **11TH JANUARY 2018**

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 Children's Services

LEAD OFFICER: Director of Children's Services

DATE: 11th January 2018

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED: Children's Services

WARD/S AFFECTED: All

KEY DECISION: YES NO

SUBJECT: Fostering Service Quarterly Report – 1 July 2017 – 30 September 2017

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To provide information on the management and performance of the Local Authority's Fostering Service.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

Notes this 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 second quarter of 2017- 2018, covering the period from 1st July to 30th September 2017, and provides an overview of the Service.

4. KEY ISSUES

1. The overall number of foster carers has reduced including a decline in the number of mainstream foster carers. There are a number of reasons for this:

- Courts are prioritising placements with family and friends which has placed the service under pressure to undertake a significantly increased number of full Family and Friends assessments within tight timescales.
- A large number of Family and Friends assessments have led to the making of Special Guardianship Orders.
- The challenge of recruiting mainstream carers for specific groups of children and young people is replicated across the region.
- Lack of capacity in the Fostering Service to complete mainstream foster carer assessments in addition to the large number of Family and Friends assessments.
- Delay in the new Recruitment and Marketing Officer starting in post.

2. An increase in the number of children coming into care has placed pressure on fostering and residential placements across the region, and consequently the commissioning budget; however, the Fostering Service is operating within budget.

3. There has been a slight dip in performance relating to placement stability though the borough remains better than the national average.

4. An increase in the number of commissioned placements as a result of increased numbers of children coming into care and reduction in the number of foster carers. This has led to an increase of 10 commissioned placements this Quarter when 7 independent fostering placements and 3 agency residential placements were made.

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 set out in the 'National Minimum Standards for Fostering'

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:	V2.0
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Alyson Hanson – Service Leader, Placement Services
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DATE:	22 nd November 2017
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	Fostering Service Quarter 2 Report – 1 July 2017 – 30 September 2017
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Fostering Service Quarter 2 Report

1st July to 30th September 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) increased in Quarter 2 from 363 at the end of June 2017 to 380 at the end of September 2017. 63% (240) of children in our care are in foster care and 36% (139) are placed with in-house foster carers. The increase in the number of children coming into care has put the availability of all types of foster placement under pressure. In Quarter 2, local authorities across the North West region found themselves competing for independent fostering agency placements of which the availability appeared to have diminished.

	30th June 2017	30th September 2017
Number of Children in our Care	363	380
Number of CioC in Foster Care	245 (67%)	240(63%)
Number of children in in-house foster care placements	146 (40%)	139(36%)
Number of children in family and friends foster care	50 (14%)	49(13%)
Number of children in independent fostering agency placements	49 (13%)	52(14%)
Number of children placed with other local authority carers	0	0

In House and Agency Placements

	In house	Family and Friends	Independent Fostering Agency
Male	85	28	37
Female	54	21	15

Age break down of children in foster placements

Age	Mainstream	Family and Friends	Independent Fostering Agency
0 to 2	24	12	7
3 to 6 years	17	15	3
7 to 10 years	28	6	11
11 to 15 years	48	11	25
16 and 17 years	22	5	6
Total	139	49	52

New Referrals in Quarter 2

	No of children	Sibling Groups	Age 0 - 5	Age 6 - 11	Age 12+	Children placed in-house	Fostering Agency	Residential placements	Short Break	Children didn't come in
July	23	3	13	5	5	9	5	1 in-house + 1 agency		7
Aug	10	1	4	2	4	2	1	1 agency	1	5
Sept	9	1	4	2	3	5	3			1
Quarter 2 total	42	5	21	9	12	16	9	3	1	13

Half of the new referrals in Quarter 2 were in the 0 to 5 age group. The largest numbers of placements made were with in-house foster carers. A significant proportion of those that did not come in went to family and friends placements under Regulation 24.

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 2:

Children and young people said:

'I feel safe and happy'.

'...sometimes there are fights between me and the other foster kids'

'I feel sad when I make everything argumentative and when my spending money gets docked for not doing as I am told'.

'My foster carer is creative and bonkers'.

'I have got an understanding family who are caring and loving'.

Social workers said:

'The carers are happy to accept any support that is offered. An example of this is that they recently had a consultation with the Revive Service'.

'K is struggling to deal with a lot of issues. W has been a fantastic support in discussing the issues and implementing a support strategy'.

'J is fully integrated within the family – he has good relationships with their extended family'.

Birth Children said:

'It's really good having T, he is so funny he makes me smile all the time. He is like my little brother.'

'I think we should get more information about what is happening as often things come as a shock to us and we haven't been able to prepare for any upsets'.

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. 10 of these children are in in-house foster care placements, 2 are in family and friends placements and the remaining four are in independent agency 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. Revive delivers consultation to foster carers, training and direct intervention on emotional health and well-being. In Quarter 2, 13 children in our care were referred to the service, the majority of whom are in foster placements. Feedback from foster carers following a consultation is very positive. The Revive Service has delivered training to foster carers on self-harm and a new 10 week course called APP (Attachment and Positive Parenting) commenced in Quarter 1 and concluded in Quarter 2. Evaluations were 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 implements a written education policy prepared in partnership with the Education Manager for Children in Our Care. The Virtual Head's role is to ensure 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.

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.

During Quarter 2, the results for SATs and GCSE examinations were published.

Key Stage 1 - 16 children in care formed the Key Stage 1 cohort in 2017; 11 (69%) of these attended primary schools in Blackburn with Darwen. 2 schools (out of borough) have failed to provide the results for a child despite repeated requests; therefore, these children have not been included in the results. 1 child in the group (6%) has an Education, Health and Care Plan and 2 (13%) children are recorded as receiving SEN Support that is reflected in the outcomes achieved.

Writing has been the strongest area for our CIOC with Maths the weakest when compared to all children in BwD and those nationally. Overall performance is relatively strong for this cohort.

Subject	BwD 2017* EXS+ (CIOC)	National CIOC 2016	BwD 2017* EXS+ (All)	National 2017* EXS+ (All)
Reading	71% (10)	50%	74%	76%
Writing	71% (10)	37%	67%	68%
Maths	64% (9)	46%	74%	75%
Overall	64% (9)	-	-	-

At Key Stage 2 - 22 children in care formed the Key Stage 2 cohort in 2017; 17 of these sat the end of Key Stage tests with 5 children being dis-applied or not eligible to take the tests. 15 (68%) of the cohort were educated in BwD primary schools at the time of taking the tests. 8 children in the group (36%) had either a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan and a further 6 (27%) are recorded as receiving SEN Support that is reflected in the outcomes achieved. Data to compare BwD CIOC with their CIOC peers nationally is not yet available.

- Writing has been shown as the weakest subject area for our CIOC when compared to all children in BwD.
- Maths has been shown to be the strongest area for our CIOC when compared to all children in BwD and therefore is a strength within the borough.

Subject	BwD 2017* EXS+ (CIOC)	National CIOC 2016	BwD 2017* EXS+ (All)	National 2017* EXS+ (All)
Reading	50% (9)	41%	67%	71%
Writing	44% (8)	46%	76%	76%
Maths	67% (12)	41%	76%	75%
Overall	33% (6)	25%	59%	61%

At the time of taking their GCSE examinations, 3 (10%) young people in care achieved at least 5 A*- C GCSEs, including Maths and English. One of these young people achieved 10 GCSEs at Grade 4/C and above, another achieved 8 and a third achieved 7 GCSEs. 7 young people regularly attended GCSE revision sessions run by the Virtual School at the Kip McGrath centre. 3 achieved grade 4 or above in English and /or Maths. 17.39% (4) met the new GCSE threshold measure for GCSE in English and Maths at Grade C or above. 24% (8 young people) achieved a Grade 4 or higher in English and 30% (10) achieved this in Maths. 15% (5 young people) achieved the new measure of Grade 4 or higher in both English and Maths.

	Maths and English 9-4 2017		CIOC Nat Ave A*- C inc. Maths and English 2016	5 A*-C /9-4 inc. Maths and English 2017		At least 1 A*-C/9-4 2017		Achieving 1 or more GCSE or national qualification 2017	
2017	5	15%	17.5%	3	10%	17	52%	28	85%
2017 Students with statement/ EHCP	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	3	50%

Engagement with Children & Young People

During Quarter 2, a 'Sons and Daughters' group was scheduled. The activity took place at Blackburn Tenpin Bowling and 6 children attended the group. The purpose of the event was to make the children understand that they are valued and recognised for their contribution to the fostering role. Overall, the activity was a fun day for all the children who were able to establish friendships, played two games of bowling and had something to eat. Each of the young people completed a consultation form. They were able to talk about their fostering households and share with each other the highs and lows of fostering.

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 continues to take forward.

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.

VOICE Group

The VOICE group meets 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. The members of the group have been involved in a number of consultation activities to inform and shape services. They have also 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 and Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group, when appropriate.

The 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.

In Quarter 2, some children in Foster Care attended 'Interviewing Skills' training, giving them the skills and confidence to interview social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers. Two Children in Foster Care and two Care Leavers attend The Collaborate Project, to influence the Centre for Children & Young Peoples Participation Seminar Series.

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.

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 focuses 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.

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.

Young people are allocated a Leaving Care Worker at the age of 15¾ years. In Quarter 2, caseloads increased and are not likely to reduce in the future due to the ruling that care leavers can remain open post-21. In Quarter 2, several young people aged 16 years and 16 years plus came into care.

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

During Quarter 2, the Advanced Practitioner continued 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.

At the end of Quarter 2, one of the service managers commenced a period of planned sickness absence and the Advanced Practitioner stepped into this role to provide temporary cover.

The new Recruitment and Marketing Officer took up post in Quarter 2.

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
Quarter 2 2016/17	126	93	15	18
Quarter 2 2017/18	112	78	14	20

The number of mainstream foster carers reduced slightly compared to Quarter 1, although it is a significant reduction compared to the same period 12 months ago. There have been a number of retirements and

resignations which account for the reduction. The number of new carers recruited has been insufficient to offset this drop, something that is a concern for the Service. The difficulty recruiting new carers is replicated by local authorities across the region and was a particular challenge for Blackburn with Darwen in Quarter 2 as there was some delay in the new Recruitment and Marketing Officer taking up his post.

Despite a significant increase in the demand for family and friends assessments, the number of family and friends carers has remained fairly static. This is due to the significant number of Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) made following assessment. The surge in demand for family and friends assessments with tight court timescales has compromised the ability of the Service to prioritise assessments for potential mainstream carers due to limited staff resources.

Matching and Ethnicity

All placements made in Quarter 2 were an ethnic and cultural match.

Foster Carer Recruitment

Recruitment activity was limited in Quarter 2, partly due to the school holidays and also because of the delay in the new Recruitment and Marketing Officer taking up his post and completing his induction to the role.

The main event for the Summer was the Radio 2BR Uganda appeal that was social media driven where the Service linked in with 2BR and QEGS. Over 13 days, there were 28 social media posts with varying results.

Date	Posts	Likes	Reach	Comments	Video Views	Shares
Total	28	73	9614	3	5500	1

Despite limited activity, there was an increase in the number of enquiries for August due to an email that was sent out to people who previously made an enquiry expressing an interest in fostering babies. Recruiting carers for babies has been on hold for some time but new carers to replace a number of those retiring are now needed.

In September, the Fostering Service made a change in directing people to the website 'contact us' page on the You Can Foster Blackburn with Darwen page. This meant the customer journey is now simpler and potential applicants find it easier to enquire.

Numbers of assessments and approvals

	Enquiries	Record of Interest	Number in Assessment	Approvals
July	17	1	11	0
August	29	1	10	1
September	14	4	10	0

The pressures on the fostering service to complete Family and Friends assessments within very exacting court timescales has compromised the capacity of the Service to prioritise mainstream foster carer assessments. This is a concern given the need to replace carers resigning and retiring. The new Recruitment and Marketing Officer is already generating interest and this will place the Service under increased pressure to undertake assessments.

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 new Recruitment and Marketing 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 the targeting of P.R., digital marketing and additional

local activity. Discussions are currently taking place to further develop this campaign dependent on collaborative funding and working from Local Authorities.

Foster Carer Retention

During this Quarter, there has been one resignation which meant the loss of one placement, however there has been one approval with the gain of three placements meaning an increase of 2 placements.

Assessment

Statutory guidance for fostering assessments is that they should be completed within 8 months, a timescale that 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 of specialist training on relevant topics, safeguarding training, Health and Safety training and Support Groups for carers.

The new conference style training is delivering more focused learning for carers, which is specifically tailored to their requirements and allows them to attend one training day and cover multiple topics.

A specialist disability training conference was held in Quarter 2. Conferences planned for the next 12 months include:

- Foetal Alcohol Syndrome and Substance Misuse in November 2017;
- Emotional Health and Well-being and Sex and Sexuality in January 2018;
- Child Development conference focusing on adverse childhood experiences and the Voice of the Child in March 2018;
- Total Respect training as part of the conference in May 2018.

In addition Paediatric First Aid will be delivered a number of times to ensure that all carers can attend. Between conferences, a number of support groups and Fostering Fora will be held.

Fostering Panel

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

Panel Business

During the absence of one of the Fostering Team Managers, the Advanced Practitioner has stepped into the role of Panel Advisor for the main Panel. The Panel met every month during the Quarter and was quorate each time. Panel paperwork was generally evaluated as 'good'.

In July, the Fostering Panel agreed two approvals of Family and Friends carers. There was also a foster carer's first review and 4 de-registrations, 3 of which were for Family and Friends foster carers and one for mainstream carers. In August, the Fostering Panel agreed an approval of one mainstream fostering household and two changes of approval for two mainstream fostering households providing a further 2 placements. There was one foster carer review following an allegation, the outcome of which was to continue the approval. There were 6 resignations including 5 Family and Friends foster carers with 4 of these due to the making of SGOs and one due to a placement disruption. The further resignation was from a short break carer.

In September, the Fostering Panel made one recommendation for approval and one recommendation for non-approval; these were both Family and Friends assessments. There were three foster carers reviews presented to the Panel including a first review which was approved and a review following a change of circumstances which was

approved. The third was following an allegation and these foster carers resigned with the Panel noting they would have made a recommendation to de-register them anyway.

Review Panel

24 foster carer reviews were presented to the Annual Review Panel during Quarter 2 and 12 sets of carers attended. 1 evaluation form was returned which indicated that the experience of attending Panel was positive. Three allegations were also presented to the Panel.

Complaints

There was one complaint in Quarter 2. This was from a foster carer who raised concerns about her experience of a home visit. The complaint was forwarded to Customer Care and to the Service Leader, who provided a written response to the complaint and support was put in place by the Fostering Network. The carer decided she did not wish to pursue the complaint further.

Compliments

One compliment was recorded by the Review Panel during Quarter 2 by a foster carer who commented on the support they receive from their Supervising Social Worker:

“Second to none, always responds to calls, emails, and goes out of her way to ensure we have outcomes to any issues. She is very good at following up on matters and makes sure our needs are met with prompt attention to detail.”

Allegations

During Quarter 2, there were three allegations that were fully investigated and procedures were 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 3 specific incidents reported in Quarter 2 which involved:

- A young person experimenting with lighters and paper. Support and advice was provided to the carers and relevant professionals were notified.
- An incident involving a young person in a contact session where a mother removed a child from the carer's car without warning. Support was put in place for the carers and staff at the children's centre diffused the situation and took care of the child.
- An incident involving a young person with illicit pictures on a mobile phone. The young person disclosed that she had been having a sexual relationship with her boyfriend. The matter was reported to the Police and support was put in place for the carers and young person by their social worker.

There were 3 serious illnesses and accidents reported during Quarter 2 including:

- A minor accident that occurred during a fight between two young people in placement.
- An incident which resulted in a young person punching out causing a minor injury to their finger.
- An incident which involved a young person receiving a small bite to their leg from a dog. This resulted in the young person attending A&E, the bite was cleaned and a bandage was applied.

There were no incidences of bullying during Quarter 2.

Offending by Children and Young People in Foster Care

No young people in foster care were involved with the police or Criminal Courts in Quarter 2.

Missing From Home

15 episodes of missing from home were reported during Quarter 2. 7 incidents involved one young person and a further 5 involved another young person. The 3 remaining incidents involved individual young people.

In all cases, 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. They are overseen by the Service Leader and by the Fostering Panel.

There were 4 exemptions in place during Quarter 2. Three of these remain in place within separate fostering households that continue to support sibling placements of 4 children. The fourth exemption supports a parent and child placement.

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. 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

There were 20 Family and Friends foster carers at the end of Quarter 2. There were 4 new approvals during the Quarter and 7 resignations. 5 resignations were due to obtaining SGOs, 1 was a rehabilitation plan back to the child's parents and 1 was a disruption. This has meant a decrease in 3 overall Family and Friends households. It is of note that without successful permanence planning in relation to SGOs, the amount of family and friends foster carers would be significantly larger.

The number of Family and Friends full assessments ordered by the courts has continued to rise. During Quarter 2, there were 12 Regulation 24 placements progressing to full Family and Friends assessments, 8 Family and Friends fostering assessments and 5 SGO assessments. 3 further assessments commenced but did not progress to completion due to the unsuitability of the applicants. Of these assessments, 3 were presented to the Panel with recommendations for non-approval due to concerns highlighted during the assessments. The Fostering Panel agreed with all of these recommendations; however, one was overturned by the Agency Decision Maker.

The demand for full Family and Friends fostering assessments has placed a significant strain on the Fostering Team to manage the increased workload. Mainstream assessments have needed to take a back seat in order to

prioritise court and Panel timescales for Family and Friends assessments. This has been further exacerbated with the courts' current expectation that fostering assessments are completed within 8 weeks or less. Consideration is being given to how this increased workload can be managed going forward.

Short Break Foster Care

12 short break carers provided 17 placements during Quarter 2. Short break 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 they met during Quarter 2.

Training / Staff

All staff members have individual training and a development plan, which is linked to their annual appraisal and monitored during monthly supervision.

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. 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. However, at the end of Quarter 2 performance dipped slightly compared to the same period 12 months ago due to a surge in placement disruptions during August. Placement stability continues to be better than the national average for England.

	April	May	June	July	August	September
LAC with 3 or more placements	0	0	8	9	16	16
Total number of LAC	367	370	363	375	371	380
% Stability of LAC placements 2017/18	0%	0%	2.2%	2.4%	4.3%	4.2%
% Stability of LAC placements 2016/17	1.4%	1.4%	2.3%	2.6%	3.1%	3.3%

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

There were no new referrals in Quarter 2 though emergency support was requested for one young person. There were no case closures in Quarter 2. The majority of open cases require long term support and the level of support can vary from very intensive to involvement in activities only depending on how stable the young person's placement is at any one time.

Feedback from young people and carers:

'I feel like I have friends at Lytham Road, I feel comfortable when I am here and I feel like I belong.'

'It is good to know other Young People might have the same problems as me.'

'The support received from Fostering Support has made a big difference to both us and our foster child. I feel like he is more confident, he recently said during an appointment that the only place he feels comfortable is at Lytham Road. This is because the staff don't look at him like he is weird like the people at school do.'

The Saturday Morning Club continues to run every fortnight with ten children aged between 7 and 11 years accessing the service. Activities have included a 'Farm to Fork' educational visit through Tesco, arts & crafts, baking, Autumn Crafts, and Halloween activities. The Saturday Morning Club continues to be positive, providing opportunities for younger children in foster care to engage positively.

Fostering Support held a Macmillan Coffee Morning in September raising £172. Internet Safety sessions have been delivered on a one-to-one basis.

Commissioned Placements

The number of fostering and residential commissioned placements increased in Quarter 2 compared to the previous Quarter.

End of Quarter 1	End of Quarter 2
Independent Agency Residential Placements - 18	Independent Agency Residential Placements - 25
Independent Agency Fostering Placements - 49	Independent Agency Fostering Placements - 52

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 2 update – The new Recruitment and Marketing Officer is now in post and implementing the recruitment strategy for the year. The pressure on the Service to meet very exacting court timescales for Family and Friends assessments has compromised mainstream recruitment activity.

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 2 Update – the Team Development day scheduled for Quarter 2 has been delayed to ensure that new starters in the service are able to participate. This will now take place later in the year.

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 2 Update – The Director of Children’s Services, Executive Member and Service Leader met with the FCA Committee during Quarter 2 and a Fostering Forum is scheduled for November 2017. 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 2 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 2 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 increase in placement disruptions during August needs to be explored to determine whether anything could have been done to prevent placement breakdown.

6. Link fostering into the Adolescent Strategy alongside residential services and consider creative ways to improve placement sufficiency for adolescents.
Quarter 2 Update – A review of adolescent services is to be undertaken imminently.

7. Continue to monitor compliance with Fostering Regulations and Standards.
Quarter 2 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
22nd November 2017

EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Leisure Culture and Young People
LEAD OFFICERS:	Director of Environment and Leisure
DATE:	11 January 2018

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Leisure Culture and Young People
WARD/S AFFECTED:	Shadsworth with Whitebirk
KEY DECISION:	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

SUBJECT: Update on Leisure Review

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2015 and 2016, in the face of continuing and severe cuts in funding from central government, the portfolio held public meetings to discuss the future operational management of Audley Sports Centre, Daisyfield Pools and Shadsworth Leisure Centre. Following consultation processes, the Council subsequently transferred the operational management of the three Council owned leisure facilities to third party operators.

The alternative management arrangements at Shadsworth Leisure Centre involved the Centurions swimming club having exclusive use of the pool, the club would allocate one lane for public swimming during club swim sessions and they would life guard the pool to enable the Council to reduce staffing costs. The club also proposed to pay pool hire fees to the Council to cover pool operating costs.

Unfortunately these arrangements have not been able to be fully implemented. The Council has had to provide lifeguard cover for some swim sessions at a considerable cost because the club have been unable to lifeguard all the swim sessions. The swimming club membership has not expanded as much as anticipated; consequently, the club have been unable to pay the Council the agreed pool hire fee.

As a result the operating costs for the swimming pool remain significant and are not affordable within the cash limited budget for the Leisure, Culture and Young People's portfolio.

The purpose of the report is to update members of the consultation process which was undertaken between 27 November and 24 December and make recommendations regarding the swimming pool at Shadsworth Leisure Centre.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

- Notes the report and the consultation processes outlined within the report.
- Approves the closure of the swimming pool at Shadsworth Leisure Centre from 1 February 2018 and the relocation of the Centurions swimming club and casual swimmers to other council owned swimming pools across the Borough.

3. BACKGROUND

The report to Executive Board on 14 December 2017 informed Members that Shadsworth Leisure Centre is creating a budget pressure of £136,000 which cannot be managed by the portfolio. The main reason for the budget pressure was the operation of the swimming pool which is costing circa.£102,000 to operate.

In 2016, The Council approved a proposal that gave the Centurions swimming club exclusive use of the pool, in exchange for this, the club agreed to allocate one lane for public swimming during club swim sessions and they would life guard the pool to enable the Council to reduce staffing costs. The club also proposed to pay pool hire fees to the Council to cover the utility costs associated with the swimming pool.

Unfortunately and despite best endeavours, the Centurions swimming club has experienced slower volunteer uptake than they had anticipated and as a result, they have not recruited sufficient qualified lifeguards to supervise all the swim sessions. Therefore the Council has had to provide lifeguard cover at certain times during the week at a considerable cost. The club membership has grown in size but it has not expanded as much as the club has anticipated, accordingly the club are not collecting the subscription fees required to cover the required pool hire fee.

Members were informed at the December Executive Board meeting that a public consultation process was being undertaken from 27 November to 24 December regarding the future operation of the swimming pool at Shadsworth Leisure Centre. The public consultation process included:

- Three meetings with the Centurions committee members to discuss the operation of the swimming pool at Shadsworth Leisure Centre and the club requirements for pool time
- Hosting an open public meeting which took place at Shadsworth Leisure Centre on Tuesday 5th December 2017
- Making available a survey questionnaire from 27 November 2017 to 24 December 2017 to enable users and non-users to provide feedback and make suggestions about the future operation of the swimming pool.

The consultation process also assisted the Council to identify if there are any organisations or groups who wished to consider operating the swimming pool at no cost to the Council.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

- The Centurions swimming club have exclusive use of the pool but have allocated one lane of the pool for casual swimming alongside their swim squad training sessions. However, public swimming has reduced to the point where there are only six casual swimmers using the pool on a regular basis. The club has insufficient lifeguards to supervise all the swim sessions so the Council is still providing some lifeguard cover to ensure the safety of swimmers at a considerable cost.
- Shadsworth Leisure Centre is creating a budget pressure of £136,000 in 2017/18 which is unaffordable and cannot be managed by the portfolio.
- The Council has embarked on a consultation process from 27 November 2017 to 24 December 2017 to elicit feedback and views from users and non-users of the swimming pool. The Council has met with the Centurions swimming club on 3 occasions. An open public meeting took place at Shadsworth Leisure Centre on Tuesday 5th December 2017 and a survey questionnaire was made available for users and non-users from 27 November 2017 to 24 December 2017 to elicit feedback and suggestions about the future operation of the swimming pool.

- The consultation process was also undertaken to assist the Council to identify if there are any organisations or groups who wish to consider operating the swimming pool at no cost to the Council.
- No other organisations have shown any interest in operating the swimming pool as a result of the consultation process. There were no alternative proposals submitted which would enable the Council to operate the swimming pool at no cost.
- One of the options available to the Council is to close the swimming pool and relocate the swimming club and casual swimmers to alternative council owned pools within the Borough.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Sport England facilities planning model which was completed in 2012 demonstrated that the Borough had an over-provision of swimming pool facilities. If the swimming pool at Shadsworth Leisure Centre was to close it would reduce swimming pool provision in the Borough, but there would still be sufficient swimming pool facilities for the residents of the Borough as highlighted by Sport England in the facilities planning model for pool provision (2 swimming pools in Blackburn and 1 swimming pool in Darwen).

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of operating Shadsworth Leisure Centre in 2017/18 were detailed in the 14 December 2017 Executive Board report and informed members that the Centre was forecasted to require a subsidy of £136,000 in 2017/18.

If the swimming pool at Shadsworth Leisure Centre was to close, it would save the Council circa £102,000 pa in utility costs, staff costs and rates. The staff currently employed to lifeguard the swimming pool could be redeployed to other vacant posts within the portfolio so there would be no redundancies as a result of the pool closure.

A small number of staff would be employed to supervise the use of the dry side facilities including the sports hall, fitness gym, squash court, school gym and dance studio. The income from the dry side facilities would offset the staffing costs. There would be some costs associated with rates and utilities but these would be significantly reduced if the swimming pool was closed.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

In 2015 and 2016, the Council embarked on consultation processes with regards to the future management and operation of Daisyfield Pools, Shadsworth Leisure Centre and Audley Sports Centre.

As a result of these consultations, the Council secured alternative management arrangements for Audley Leisure Centre and Daisyfield Pools which remain in place to date. Unfortunately, the alternative management arrangements for the swimming pool at Shadsworth Leisure Centre have not proceeded as planned and as a result, the Council has had to fund significant operating costs for which it has no budget.

As the previous consultation processes were undertaken in 2015 and 2016, the Council entered into a further consultation process from 27th November 2017 to 24th December 2017 regarding the future operation of the swimming pool at Shadsworth Leisure Centre.

The consultation process included three meetings with committee members of the Centurions swimming club, hosting an open public meeting on Tuesday 5th December 2017 and making available a survey questionnaire from 27th November 2017 to 24th December 2017 to enable users and non-

users to provide feedback and make suggestions about the future operation of the swimming pool. The results of the consultation are included within this report along with recommendations about the future operation of the swimming pool at Shadsworth Leisure Centre.

The Centurions currently operate the swimming pool at Shadsworth Leisure Centre under the terms of a Service Level Agreement. If the swimming pool at Shadsworth Leisure Centre closes, the Service Level Agreement will be rescinded and the Centurions will be allocated block bookings for pool space at Daisyfield Pools and Darwen Leisure Centre and will pay the agreed pool hire rates at each site.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

If there are no changes to the operation of Shadsworth Leisure Centre, the Council will have to allocate £136,000 to subsidise the operation of the centre.

If the pool was to close, a small number of staff would be employed to supervise the use of the dry side facilities including the sports hall, squash court, school gym and dance studio. The income from the dry side facilities would offset the staffing costs. There would be some costs associated with rates and utilities but these would be reduced greatly.

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

A public consultation process has been carried out to determine the future operation of the swimming pool at Shadsworth Leisure Centre. The consultation process included meeting with Centurions' committee, hosting a public meeting on Tuesday 5th December and making available a customer questionnaire from 27th November 2017 to 24th December 2017 to enable users and non-users to provide feedback and make suggestions about the future operation of the swimming pool. The consultation process will also assist the Council to identify if there are any organisations who wish to consider operating the swimming pool at no cost to the Council.

Meetings with committee members of the Centurions - Following a number of meetings with committee members of the Centurions, it was agreed that if the pool at Shadsworth Leisure Centre was to close, the Centurions would be able to continue with their club swimming sessions if pool time was made available at Daisyfield Pools and at Darwen Leisure Centre. It should be noted that over 60% of centurions swimmers live in Darwen.

Public Meeting on 5 December 2017 - The public meeting was attended by 34 people, the key questions and answers discussed at the meeting are as followed:

Q How have volunteers in other venues managed to run facilities and access funding?

A The Pelican Centre in Wigan was provided as an example of a council owned swimming pool being asset transferred to a community group and subsequently attracting significant external funding of c.£500k to improve the facilities.

Q Why can't Shadsworth be school swimming hub?

A Many primary schools prefer to use other centres to learn to swim because they are more modern (Blackburn Leisure Centre and Darwen Leisure Centre) or because the facility has small pool facilities with more shallow water space in which to teach the children to swim.

Q Shadsworth Pool is not fit for purpose and will take a huge amount of money to refurbish, why can't Council maintain buildings?

A The Council has had its budget reduced by over £100m since 2010 and doesn't have the funding available to operate and maintain the range of buildings it owns which is why alternative management arrangements were sought for the three leisure buildings in 2015 and 2016.

Q The swimming pools at Darwen Leisure Centre and Blackburn Leisure Centre have low numbers of swimmers during some of the peak opening times which is not an efficient use of valuable pool space. Can this be reviewed?

A The types of bookings and the attendances will be reviewed at Blackburn Leisure Centre and Darwen Leisure Centre to ensure that the pools are used efficiently and maximise the usage. (it should be noted that the Centurions have been offered some pool time at Darwen Leisure Centre if Shadsworth swimming pool was to close)

Q The main pool at Daisyfield Pool is not as wide as the other main pool facilities within the borough and the five lanes are too narrow for the older members of the swim squad, can the council resolve this matter to ensure the older swimmers do not pick up any injuries from colliding with lane ropes?

A The Council will have the lane rope fixings adjusted and re-drilled to create four wider lanes for swimming rather than the current five narrow lanes

Q If the land surrounding the School and Leisure Centre was sold for development in the future, would this release capital funding to invest in Daisyfield Pools?

A The Council has no control over the future use of the school building if or when Tauheedhul Boys School relocates to new premises. The future of the school building is a matter for the Department of Education.

Q What will happen within the community if Shadsworth closes and they lose their facility?

A The Council is not making decisions about the whole building at this time, the consultation relates specifically to the Pool. The reality is that the local community do not use the pool at Shadsworth Leisure Centre.

Q How long will the consultation process last?

A The consultation period will last one month period. The feedback is important and could provide proposals for the future operation of the swimming pool which the Council will seriously consider.

Q What's the responsibility of Half Fish to Club/Hirers?

A If the Centurions relocate to Daisyfield Pools they will be treated as a paying customer with booking rights and booking arrangements as agreed with the operator, Half Fish.

Survey Questionnaire

A total of 44 survey questionnaires were completed. The key issues raised as a result of the questionnaires are as followed:

- More people disagree with the pool provision focus of the Leisure Review than agree with it, with the main reasons given for this being the value of the facilities to the swimming club, the detrimental impact it would have on club training times and a lack of suitable alternative facilities to use.
- The vast majority of respondents feel any closure would have a very or fairly big impact on them, with over 70% of people who use the facility for club training at least 3 times a week feeling it would have a very big impact
- Around two in three indicated that, given the option they would swim at Darwen Leisure Centre and one in three would swim at Blackburn Leisure Centre. Only 18% would choose to swim at Daisyfield Pools due to the condition of the building.
- The main alternatives suggested to the pool closing related to investing in a new swimming pool facility to replace Shadsworth swimming pool, charging for car-parking on the land surrounding the leisure centre (but not for staff or centre users), increasing the opening hours of Daisyfield Pools.

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:	Martin Eden
DATE:	2 January 2018
BACKGROUND PAPER:	Executive Board report, Update on Leisure Review, 14 December 2017



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Regeneration Executive Member for Resources
LEAD OFFICERS:	Deputy Chief Executive Director of Growth and Development
DATE:	11 January 2018

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Regeneration	Resources
WARD/S AFFECTED:	Shear Brow	
KEY DECISION:	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

SUBJECT:
Update on 11 – 17 Blakey Moor, Blackburn (“the property”)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 In April 2017, the Executive Board approved the recommendation for the Council to make a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) (referred to as the “Order”) to compulsorily acquire 11 – 17 Blakey Moor to deliver the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Blakey Moor Townscape Heritage Project, if negotiations with the owner were unsuccessful. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to enter into a mutual agreement with the owner of the property and to agree terms for this acquisition, without the need to make a CPO.

1.2 The Council needs to acquire 11 -17 Blakey Moor Terrace, Blackburn in order to deliver the Townscape Heritage Project and the regeneration of the Blakey Moor/Northgate area of the town centre. The Council has been attempting to acquire the property over an extended period of time and agreement has now been reached with the owner. Other than this land and property, the acquisition will include any other interests and any third party and reversionary interests to be acquired (that may be revealed after carrying out full land registry checks). A plan is attached at Appendix 1 showing the property.

1.3 The Executive Board is also requested to delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Growth and Development in consultation with the Executive Members for Resources and Regeneration to negotiate terms with the owner of the land and with the remaining tenant of the property.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

1. Approves the acquisition of 11-17 Blakey Moor
2. Delegates authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Growth and Development in consultation with the Executive Members for Regeneration and Resources to mutually negotiate and agree final terms with the owner of the land and the remaining tenant in the property.
3. Approves the provisionally agreed terms for disposal of the property as set out in this report.
4. Approves the making of a CPO (previously approved) should negotiations with the owner fail at any time

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Council received Full Approval in June 2016 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the £3 million Blakey Moor Townscape Heritage Project. £1.5 million funding from HLF and £1.5 million match funding from Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's Capital Programme (approved Executive Board, February 2016).

3.2 The project proposals were developed by the Council's Economic Regeneration and Business Team, guided by the recommendation of the Heritage Lottery Fund and a team of consultant's including Buttress Conservation Architects, Planit-IE landscape Architects and Colliers International commercial property and development specialists.

3.3 Over the next 4 years, the project will offer property owner's grants of up to 80% to repair or reinstate architectural details and to bring vacant floor space back into commercial use.

The project will deliver:

- refurbishment of up to 25 historic buildings including King Georges Hall front elevation, former Baroque public house, Blakey Moor terrace and properties on Northgate and Lord Street West
- a public realm improvement scheme to Blakey Moor planned to start first half of 2018 that will see the area better defined with quality paving, improved lighting and soft planting.
- a heritage skills training programme developed with Blackburn College supporting both students and teaching staff with experience and skills.
- activity including marketing and an events and activity programme to celebrate the town's rich culture and heritage

3.4 The project is an important part of the on-going regeneration and development of the town centre, creating improved links between Blackburn College and the town's retail core. The enhancement works will support commercial viability of existing businesses, create opportunities for new businesses, help to reinvigorate the towns evening and leisure economy and further establish this part of the town as a cultural hub. There is strong evidence that this is already happening with the level of interest been shown by investors and new openings of Bees Knees, Shhh Bar, Northgate and The Lemon Tree (former Jubilee) on Blakey Moor.

3.5 The refurbishment of the Blakey Moor terrace was identified as a priority project in the delivery of the wider Townscape Heritage Project. An options appraisal was carried out by Colliers International to establish the most commercially viable option for the terrace within the context of supporting the wider regeneration of the area and town centre.

As reported in the Executive Board Decision February 2016, the viability of 6 options for the Blakey Moor Terrace were assessed, including the option to demolish. Soft market testing, taking in the views of licensed restaurant agents and commercial developers, was undertaken by Colliers to establish likely demand from commercial users/operators. This concluded that:-

- The site is potentially attractive to restaurants and also cafes and coffee houses with the historic nature of the area attractive as a destination.
- There are many examples of reconfigured historic buildings being attractive to such operators. The town centre location with very busy footfall, opposite a major leisure attraction and near to car parking make it attractive to operators.
- The minimum floor area that operators look for would be 200sq.m – up to about 500sq.m. The proposed layouts would give unit sizes of 250sq.m, with about 100sq.m outside, and 570sq.m;
- Local authority ownership can be used to positively influence the offer.

All 6 options that were considered require the acquisition and/or improvement of 11-13 Blakey Moor.

The final report from Colliers and insights from the Retail Group research both concluded that Blackburn could sustain a substantial modern restaurant offer and Blakey Moor has the potential to provide a suitable environment for this. Colliers therefore suggested it would be the optimal option for the Council to use the Townscape Heritage Project to nurture a restaurant quarter, using Blakey Moor and the former Baroque building as a focal point.

Blakey Moor terrace specifically presents an opportunity for an independent/premium restaurant offer. The majority of works to deliver a suitable unit/s for this use would be eligible for Townscape Heritage grant funding and the surrounding public realm work planned to start in 2018 will significantly enhance the area.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

The development of the property is a key and fundamental part of delivering the Townscape Heritage project and supports the Blakey Moor TH area and the wider redevelopment of the Northgate area.

The key issues are as follows:

- Blakey Moor terrace is identified within the Townscape Heritage Project as the 'Priority Project' and delivery of this is as essential, as defined by the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- The Council has held ownership of part of the terrace, 19-27 Blakey Moor since 1998 and the remaining properties 11-17 and land are within private ownership.
- In January 2016, the owner of 11-17 Blakey Moor indicated to the Council that they did not wish to receive a grant to develop the property and their preference would be to sell the properties to facilitate delivery of the project by the Council. Independent property consultants were appointed at the property owners request and negotiations began to acquire the properties by agreement.
- Should an agreement not be reached, the project would be substantially delayed and at worst put at risk.
- The Council got Executive Board approval in April 2017 approval to purchase the required land and property by CPO should ongoing negotiations not conclude using powers available within the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (section 226 (1)(a) for the CPO and/or section 121 of the Local Government Act 1972
- The Council has continued to progress negotiations with the property owner in relation to the land and property acquisition while preparations for CPO were underway.
- An agreement with the owner to acquire the property has now been reached which the Executive Board is asked to approve.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The development of the Northgate area meets the 'Culture and Life' objective of the Blackburn Town Centre Strategy and the development of the Town centre in the Local Plan. Specifically, Policy 26 of the Local plan, part 2 applies and supports the delivery of the Blakey Moor Townscape heritage Project. The project also helps to deliver the improvements set out in the Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans. The project also delivers the Heritage priority and ambitions within the Council's 12 point Plan. The project also ties in with wider development area around the north of the town centre including the cinema development and NPIF investment into improving access across and into the town centre as set out in the December 2017 Executive Board report.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council's offer to the property owners takes into account market value of the land and property, current tenure and rental yields and business goodwill and statutory loss compensation. A price has been agreed and accepted in principle, subject to board approval.

In addition, negotiations are ongoing with the tenant in 11 – 15 Blakey Moor with a preference to relocate the business within the town centre and delegation to negotiate terms has been requested once acquisition has been completed.

Funding for the acquisition will be via the Corporate Property Re-Investment Fund.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposed transaction complies with the Council's Constitution and Local Government Acts for the acquisition of property interests and works to promote the Council's objectives whilst obtaining the best consideration reasonably obtainable.

In accordance with the 2015 'Guidance on Compulsory purchase process and The Critchel Down Rules for the disposal of surplus land acquired by, or under the threat of, compulsion' the Council can take into account certain factors in agreeing compensation/acquisition costs, to avoid pursuing a CPO. The aim is to be reasonable and where the cost of a CPO would outweigh a more realistic payment to the owner the following extract from the Guidance is useful.

Extract taken from paragraph 3:-

“3. What should acquiring authorities consider when offering financial compensation in advance of a compulsory purchase order?”

When offering financial compensation for land in advance of a compulsory purchase order, public sector organisations should, as is the norm, consider value for money in terms of the Exchequer as a whole in order to avoid any repercussive cost impacts or pressures on both the scheme in question and other publicly-funded schemes.

Acquiring authorities can consider all of the costs involved in the compulsory purchase process when assessing the appropriate payments for purchase of land in advance of compulsory purchase. For instance the early acquisition may avoid some of the following costs being incurred:

- legal fees (both for the order making process as a whole and for dealing with individual objectors within a wider order, including compensation claims)
- wider compulsory purchase order process costs (for example, staff resources)
- the overall cost of project delay (for example caused by delay in gaining entry to the land)
- any other reasonable linked costs (for example potential for objectors to create further costs through satellite litigation on planning permissions and other orders)

In order to reach early settlements, public sector organisations should make reasonable initial offers, and be prepared to engage constructively with claimants about relocation issues and mitigation and accommodation works where relevant. “

The Council is satisfied that the cost of a mutual agreement with the owner outweighs the cost of making a CPO.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Resource demands of this acquisition in terms of officer time will be met by existing Council Growth and Development Department staff, Legal [Page 48 of 54](#) officers and Capita staff. The Townscape Heritage project is coordinated by a Townscape Heritage manager funded by the project

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

10.1 The Blakey Moor Townscape Heritage Project is a key part of the Council's ongoing Economic Regeneration of Blackburn town centre and the wider borough and the redevelopment of Blakey Moor including 11-17 (currently privately owned) and 19-29 (Council owned) is an essential part of the successful delivery of the Townscape Heritage Project.

10.2 The Townscape Heritage Project has been consulted upon with members of the public, property owners, businesses and other stakeholders and this consultation informed The Detailed Scheme Plan, Activity Statement and Detailed Plans for Public Realm that were prepared prior to submitting the funding application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Consultation events and activity included (dates from February 2015 to December 2017)

- public exhibition, talks and tours, arts activity, painting competition and a pop-up memory café as part of this year's Blackburn Heritage Festival
- group meetings and drop-in sessions with business and property owner
- one-to-ones with owners and businesses
- heritage careers lecture and consultation event with Blackburn College students
- consultation and workshop event with construction staff at Blackburn college
- meetings with local arts and events groups and organisations to establish links and develop wider activity
- consultation with highways and other people responsible for Town Centre Management and Maintenance
- regular consultation and progress updates for Council Members to ensure continued support of the project
- market testing with potential developers and operators to ensure proposals are economically viable and sustainable
- consultation with heritage lottery to ensure proposal can secure funding
- consultation with building surveyors, conservation architects and Council's Planning department to ensure that proposals were deliverable, sustainable and best practice in the conservation of an historic property
- Appointment of dedicated Townscape Heritage manager.
- Launch of Blakey Moor TH project on April 28th 2017 with owners, occupiers and stakeholders in the area.
- Numerous events and activities including pop up Memory Café, Heritage Festival etc
- Training visits to Blackburn Cathedral and Darwen Terracotta for Blackburn College students
- Expression of Interest process for grant applications and ongoing dialogue for interested property owners

- Information, news and events available via website <https://gladstonesview.wordpress.com/about/49-2/> and facebook site <https://www.facebook.com/BlakeyMoor/>

10.3 Alongside this, detailed and ongoing discussions with the property owner of 11-17 Blakey Moor in relation to the project and potential acquisition of property have been ongoing since October 2015. Key events include:

October 2015 – meeting with Growth Programme Director
 December 2015 – Meeting with Executive Member for Regeneration
 January 2016 – meeting with Economic Regeneration and Business Manager
 January 2016 – property owner confirmed that they did not wish to be part of the project and wished to sell to the Council
 February 2016 - The Council appointed a surveyor to negotiate sale
 April 2016 – Financial advisor appointment to act for property owner
 October 2016 – Offer made to property owner
 October 2015 – March 2016 – chasing up response to offer and responding questions
 April 2017 – Executive Board approval for CPO
 May, July and November 2017 – further claims made by the owner and correspondence between advisors
 November 2017 – agreement to acquire made subject to Board approval

10.4 Consultation has demonstrated a high level of support for the Townscape Heritage Project, including acquisition of 11-17 Blakey Moor by the Council to facilitate the development of the full terrace, 11-29 Blakey Moor. Consultation with the property owner has identified that they did not wish to receive a grant to develop the property and their preference would be to sell the properties to facilitate delivery of the project by the Council.

Feedback from consultation with the Heritage Lottery has been that Blakey Moor terrace is a 'Priority Project' and delivery of this is as essential to the wider scheme and funding. Without firm plans to deliver the development of the full terrace, the whole Townscape Heritage Project would be at risk. Colliers International options appraisal and feedback from market testing concludes that the development of the terrace could deliver wider regeneration benefits, but this would need to include the whole terrace to provide viable floor space and ideally the block should be redeveloped at one time.

Consultation with members of the public and other stakeholders has demonstrated support for the proposed redevelopment and reuse of the building and agreement that this would impact positively on the town's economic and cultural prosperity.

10.5 Consultation with the tenant of the property and the Council's existing tenant still in situ are being undertaken with a view to relocation within the town centre as a preference once the acquisition is completed..

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: Clare Turner

DATE: 2/1/2018

**BACKGROUND
PAPER:**

El Sub Sta

CR

Ward Bdy

BLAKEY MOOR

Statue

LB

TCB

62

PH

19

11 to 17

3

PH 33

54 to 58

52

Higher Cockcroft

29

North

BARTON STREET

Car Park



