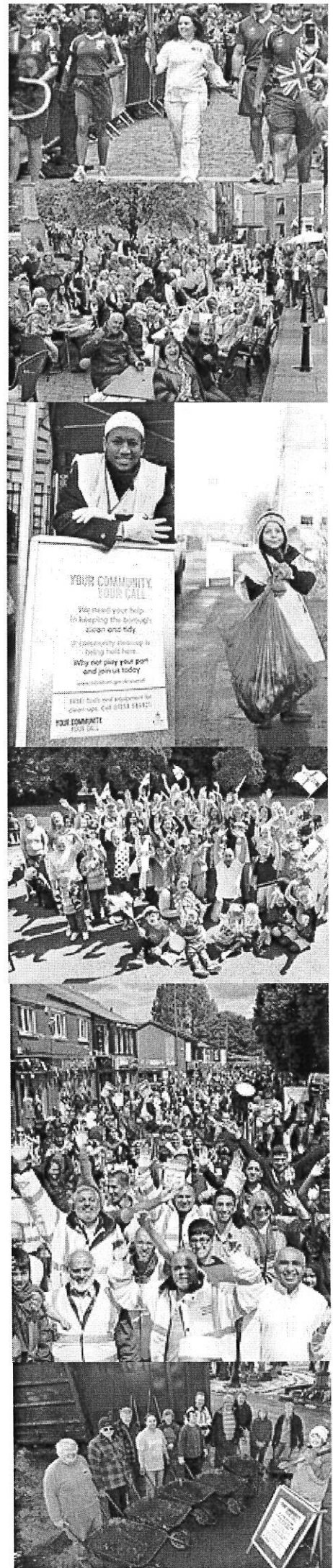




# Corporate Plan 2013-2015

## Executive Summary

Version 1.0



## **Blackburn with Darwen Council – *Working with you***

### **What you can expect from your Council 2013-2015**

This plan tells you what we as a Council are doing at a time when we and other public sector organisations are going through unprecedented cuts and families are feeling the pinch.

This Council will have lost £70m by 2015 which has hampered our ability to provide every service residents want and also tackle the issues the borough faces.

We still have an important job to do. We will continue with our work to change people's lives for the better and remain committed to providing quality services. We have much to be proud of and we are spending the money we have left on the things you value and need the most.

We started developing this plan by listening and having honest conversations. We told you how tough it was going to be and you told us what you wanted us to concentrate on.

And from that, we came up with a list of priorities that we will concentrate on over the next few years. You said jobs, housing, health and helping vulnerable people were your top priorities. We have weaved them into the corporate plan because what matters to residents, matters to us. We will be judged on how well we meet these aims.

You also said that you wanted to help out more and work with us to make the borough a better place. This is when Your Call was born and why, despite the tough times for everyone, not everything is doom and gloom.

Many residents from all walks of life have stood up and fought for the borough and done their bit and it is heartening to see more and more people come forward.

Our pledge to residents is that we will support you in what you want to do to improve your streets, your neighbourhoods, your towns. If someone comes to us with an idea, we won't turn around and say it can't be done. We will work with you to see what can be done.

We are adopting this approach to many of the issues the borough faces and it's embedded in our plan. We are working with young people to come up with solutions to lack of job opportunities, we are working with businesses to bring in new investment into the borough and we are working with communities to help and support those in need.

We firmly believe that by putting you at the heart of everything we do, working with residents, businesses and others, we can really make the borough a better place.

In summary, our ambition for a brighter future for the people of Blackburn with Darwen is based on making sure the Council is fit for the challenge ahead, building on our

strengths and always remembering that what's important to our communities is important to us.

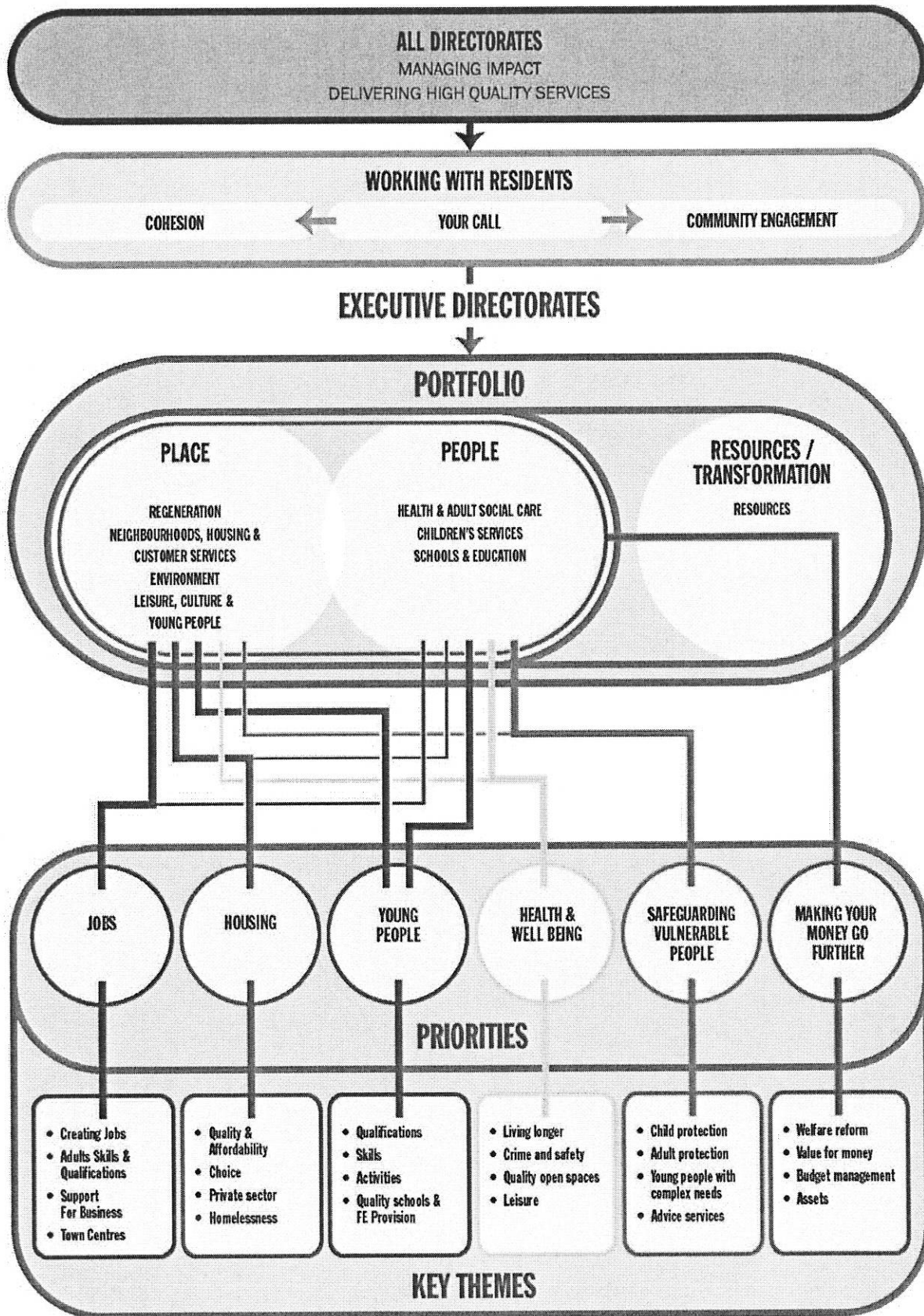
Our Corporate Plan sets out our six priority objectives. These are informed by what you have told us, focussing on what we need to achieve locally over the period of this plan. Our priorities are:

- Creating more jobs and supporting business growth
- Improving housing quality and building more houses
- Improving health and well-being
- Improving outcomes for our young people – education and skills
- Safeguarding the most vulnerable people
- Making your money go further - supporting households in difficult financial times through efficient and effective use of council tax

We are confident that, despite the difficult challenges we face, we can continue to work with staff, residents and partners to deliver excellent services for and with the people of Blackburn with Darwen. In delivering our priorities we are committed to:

- Working with you – working together with residents; businesses and our partners - developing local solutions via local problem solving
- Managing the impact of national reforms on residents and the Council – particularly around the welfare system, health services and educational provision
- Delivering high quality services – a well-managed authority which is fit for the future; efficient and effective; and continuing to use the best possible business models to deliver excellent services

Our Corporate Plan – *Blackburn with Darwen Council - Working with you*



## **Leader – Councillor Kate Hollern**



### **About the portfolio**

As Leader of the Council, my portfolio has overall responsibility for making sure that we plan and deliver high quality, well managed services for the residents of Blackburn with Darwen.

An important part of this role is making sure that we understand what services residents need and want by asking people their opinions directly and including them in our efforts to improve our borough.

Council services are only one type of support that residents need and want to access. Health services, police and fire services, employment and skills support are all vital to the quality of people's lives.

The role of my portfolio is to ensure we work closely with all of our key partners, through the Local Strategic Partnership, so we co-ordinate our services and avoid duplicating our efforts where possible.

Our most important partner is of course, our residents. I will personally make sure that, through the Your Call campaign, the Council continues to work with you. These include the many hundreds of volunteers who go out week after week taking responsibility for their area; who run community centres; who organise community events and look out for their neighbours.

Blackburn with Darwen is a wonderfully unique, culturally diverse place to live and it is the Council's role to celebrate this, as well as promote a dialogue, shared understanding and mutual respect between people from different backgrounds.

### **Our priorities**

- Community cohesion and equalities
- Your Call and engagement with residents
- Driving and developing key partnerships to ensure that opportunities are created for everyone within Blackburn with Darwen
- Supporting a vibrant, effective and active voluntary sector
- Increasing public satisfaction and improving the reputation of Blackburn with Darwen

## **Our promises**

By 2015 we will have ensured that the Council has:

- Increased the number of residents who feel that people from different backgrounds get on well together in Blackburn with Darwen
- Made sure that Your Call goes from strength to strength and increases the number of residents taking part in volunteering and who feel they can influence the decisions made in their local area
- Kept residents informed about the services that it delivers



## Health and adult social care – Councillor Mohammed Khan



### About the portfolio

The Council's new responsibility for improving the health and wellbeing of local residents complements the work we do to support vulnerable people, so it makes perfect sense that health and adult social care sit together in one portfolio. Our work is all about helping people to live the best lives they can.

Our adult social care services support thousands of people every year with their personal care and daily living needs. We mostly help older people, but our services are for adults of any age who need extra support because of a disability, frailty or ill health.

We want to help people to remain in their own homes and live independently for as long as they can, with home-based support and day services. When people need more intensive support through residential or nursing care, it is our job to plan and buy the services that will best meet their needs. We offer a mix of in-house social care and care provided by private and independent organisations.

NHS reforms have given councils a whole host of new responsibilities around health. Public health transferred to the Council on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013, and we have set up a new Health and Wellbeing Board to oversee all the work done by the Council, NHS and local voluntary and community organisations to improve the health and wellbeing of local people.

Part of my role involves coordinating the work of this Board. We recently produced Blackburn with Darwen's first ever Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which includes an action plan for the Council and its partners to tackle some of the borough's biggest health and social care challenges over the next three years.

### Our priorities

#### Health:

- Making sure the Council delivers on its new responsibilities for health as part of the NHS reforms
- Joining up the planning, buying and delivery of public health, adults and children's services
- Making sure services commissioned by public health deliver the outcomes we have set out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Improving the health and wellbeing of local residents so that their health compares well with other parts of the country

### Adult social care:

- Engaging with local residents and supporting people within communities to do more to help each other
- Putting support in place early so that people can stay independent for longer
- Joining up services so there is seamless support for people with significant needs and their carers
- Enabling and empowering the people who receive our care services by providing choice and control
- Safeguarding vulnerable people

### **Our promises**

By 2015 we will have ensured that the Council has:

- Helped residents to live longer, healthier lives
- Effectively managed rising social care demand and put money back into more preventative services
- Implemented its new responsibilities for improving health and well-being
- Brought together all of its key commissioning services for health and wellbeing, to make sure we can offer better services and more value for money
- Supported more vulnerable people to live at home as long as they want to
- Made sure that more people with care needs, who want to stay in their own homes, can do so
- Increased the number of residents who take control of the care services that they receive



## Resources – Councillor Andy Kay



### About the portfolio

The Resources portfolio provides a wide range of support for all Council services, as well as delivering key front line services such as housing and council tax benefit processing. We have the important task of making sure that the Council's budgets are set each year; that we provide good value services for residents, and of course, that we don't spend beyond our means. In recent years, this has meant asking all services to say how they can work differently, in order to help us make the savings needed on the back of the Government's budget cuts

The support that we provide includes financial management; IT services; HR services; support for staff development and management of the Council's buildings and office space. Importantly, this also includes delivering the legal and audit work that ensures that the Council complies with all the laws and responsibilities that Government requires of it, making sure services are delivered in a way that keeps our staff and customers safe.

### Our priorities

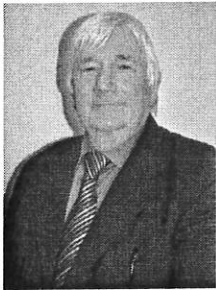
- Managing the budget and making sure services deliver value for money
- Delivering the transformation programme to meet the savings required of us
- Supporting residents through the changes of welfare reform
- Delivering our ICT strategy: finding new, improved and flexible ways of providing services with the help of technology
- Continuing to focus on getting best use out of all of our property and assets
- Developing the organisation and its people

### Our promises

By 2015 we will have ensured that the Council has:

- Delivered the required budget savings
- Transformed its services and supported residents in response to the welfare changes and council tax localisation reforms
- Increased the number of customers accessing and using our online services
- Improved staff attendance at work

## Children's Services – Councillor Frank Connor



### About the portfolio

Making sure the voice of children and young people is heard is at the heart of everything we do and that means providing plenty of opportunities for them to say what they think about our services.

We provide a wide range of services for children, young people and their families. Our early years services are all about giving children the best start in life and we deliver many of these through our network of children's centres. Our social care services support children with disabilities, arrange fostering and adoptions for children in our care and, most importantly, protect children from harm.

We also provide a Families Information Service, which gives information and advice about childcare services, early learning and other children's services that are available in Blackburn with Darwen.

Our services are regularly inspected by Ofsted to check that they are of a high standard and achieve good outcomes for children, young people and their families. I am proud that most of our services are assessed as being "good" or "outstanding". This gives me reassurance that the Council is doing everything it can for our children and young people.

### Our priorities

- Making the voices of our most vulnerable children heard and giving them more influence by making sure that their views directly affect the way we design and deliver services
- Reviewing with our partners the way we plan and buy services for children, young people and families, taking into account our new responsibilities for health
- With partners, creating a new strategy for early help for children, young people and families that is locally delivered, more targeted and affordable
- Changing the way we deliver our social care services in line with national and legal Ofsted requirements
- Joining up support for children and young people with complex needs 0-25 and their families to make sure all their needs are well met

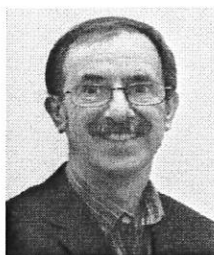
### Our promises

By 2015 we will have ensured that the Council has:

- Increased opportunities for children and young people to shape local services that affect their lives

- Increased the number of families receiving help through our Common Assessment Framework and Early Help offer
- Reduced the length of time taken for children in our care to be adopted
- Reduced the number of children being re-referred to social care services
- Made sure that services for children and young people with complex needs are delivered seamlessly with education and health partners

## Schools and Education – Councillor Dave Harling



### About the portfolio

A first class education is the single greatest success factor in helping our residents secure good jobs and helping Blackburn with Darwen achieve its long term economic well-being.

It is my portfolio's responsibility to make sure that every child in Blackburn with Darwen has access to excellent education opportunities.

We are responsible for building strong relationships with all nursery, primary and secondary schools as well as post 16 providers and colleges to support and challenge them to deliver the best possible education for our young people.

Where necessary we intervene on behalf of the families and the wider community to ensure schools that face additional challenge can improve.

We have a specific responsibility to ensure that the needs of children and young people who are assessed as having special educational needs (SEN) are met. We oversee the placement of SEN children in appropriate schools as well as assure the quality of the SEN support provided by all mainstream nurseries, special schools and resourced provisions. Supporting and championing parents and carers of children with special educational needs is a priority for the portfolio.

The Schools and Education portfolio is also responsible for ensuring that the borough's education offer is fit for future needs and that we have sufficient places in the right areas to meet demand.

We manage all admissions arrangements across all government funded schools. In addition we oversee capital investment in our schools including the Building Schools for the Future programme, which has seen new schools built and some significant improvements to existing schools.

The portfolio is also responsible for securing the welfare of a range of vulnerable learners including those that go missing from education, are home educated, school non-attendeers, children in employment and the creative industries and children that have been excluded. We also provide targeted careers advice and guidance for vulnerable groups including those at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training).

We have seen some fantastic results at all levels of attainment over recent years, and despite the challenges that the national education reforms bring, I feel our role is more significant than ever. We are committed to improving on these results and ensuring we

deliver the best education and outcomes for our children and young people. We will be continuing to work with schools to ensure they achieve “good” or “outstanding” in their Ofsted.

### **Our priorities**

- Reviewing and redefining the Council’s role in ensuring education excellence for all, through strong partnerships and a shared vision
- Reviewing, developing and agreeing with learning providers a revised education improvement strategy for learners 0-19
- Working with schools and other stakeholders to review and develop a fit for purpose special educational needs strategy
- Developing an effective business model, with new and improved services for trading with the wider education sector
- Implementing the new schools funding reforms, including the assessment of the impact of the Government’s new funding formula

### **Our promises**

By 2015 we will have ensured that the Council has:

- Increased the number of schools judged as good or outstanding , to ensure our children have the best opportunities to succeed
- Increased the number of children with special educational needs who make good progress in school, so that these children have the same opportunities as others
- Made sure that children from our more deprived communities continue to have the opportunity to excel in school, so that we can remove barriers to their success
- Ensured that it is able to offer viable, high quality services to our local schools and education providers, thereby creating the right environment for our schools to be the best they can be

## Regeneration – Councillor Maureen Bateson



### About the portfolio

We are all striving to make Blackburn with Darwen a prosperous, well connected and vibrant place to live. A place where businesses thrive with opportunities to grow, jobs are created and wages are good.

This is called economic development. The Regeneration portfolio helps businesses and employment to grow. But at the same time we need to ensure that the borough has the other things that people and companies need – a good road network which connects people to where they want to go, whether that be jobs, shopping, leisure or to health facilities; quality and suitable housing, busy town centres and great shops.

We work closely with colleagues at the economic development company Regenerate Pennine Lancashire to support local businesses, particularly through the Regional Growth Fund and Assistance to Industry schemes, to create new jobs and grow the borough's economy.

Our planning and transport services play a key role in our economic development. They shape the future of towns and roads and how they need to change to meet our goals about growth. We produce and review our Local Development Framework, which sets out how the Borough will physically change over the next 10-15 years, including what decisions about the location and design of future developments will be made.

Our property and development service looks at how we can use the Council's assets to the best of our abilities and how our town centres can be developed as attractive places to visit, work in and shop.

Our highways service maintains the borough's highways and street lighting network to support the local economy and make the borough an attractive place to live.

### Our priorities

- To create more jobs and especially jobs for local people
- Work with local businesses to help them grow and prosper
- Improve skills to allow local people to access local jobs
- Promote our successful town centres, including our markets
- Deliver long term investment in major capital projects such as highways and transportation



## **Our promises**

By 2015 we will have ensured that the Council has:

- Helped to increase the number of people who are in work and/or are seeking work
- Commenced or completed a number of major projects in support of our economy including:
  - Pennine Reach
  - Cathedral Quarter
  - The former Blackburn market site
  - Freckleton Street Link Road
- Reduced the number of vacant shops and market stalls in Blackburn and Darwen town centres
- Reduced the number of roads and street lights that are in need of repair

## **Neighbourhoods; Housing and Customer Services – Councillor Yusuf Jan-Virmani**



### **About the portfolio**

My portfolio is responsible for a broad range of services and we play a pivotal role in helping the Council talk with and listen to its residents.

Our neighbourhood teams are based right in the heart of the community and work with residents, community groups, charities and other public sector organisations such as the police to help manage many issues and challenges the borough faces. We want residents to feel their areas are safe and nice to live in and the work we do on a neighbourhood level supports that.

We believe many solutions can be found in the community and our neighbourhood officers can help communities work together as well help foster community spirit. We help Your Call happen because we are right in the centre of communities.

We run adult learning services, which offer our residents the chance to learn new skills and gain experience which can help open up opportunities for them.

My portfolio is also responsible for housing. We are determined that, through working with others to bring investment into the borough, more high quality homes will be built and made available for residents so that they will have a range of choices for places to live. We also run a public protection service that tackles housing problems that can badly affect the lives of residents and the wider neighbourhood.

We are responsible for customer services, which includes managing residents' enquiries coming into the Council and giving advice, guidance and support. Demand for these services increase as a result of Government changes to the benefits system.

### **Our priorities**

- Provide services that help the Council talk with and listen to its residents and communities and help them work together to solve problems
- Help adults learn new skills and gain experience
- Help and support residents and communities through government changes to benefits
- Make sure the new way of buying and planning health services and community safety meet the needs of the borough
- Improve the borough's housing, so better homes are on offer, residents have more choice and new homes are being built. Also address issues related to privately rented accommodation

- Make sure there is an effective and efficient public protection service to cut risks to our communities and potential harm

### **Our promises**

By 2015 we will have ensured that the Council has:

- Supported residents to gain new skills and seek employment
- Continued to prevent people from becoming homeless
- Helped residents to be safer and have less problems with anti-social behaviour
- Ensured the development of over 400 new homes

## Environment – Councillor Jim Smith



### About the portfolio

We all want to achieve the best quality environment in the most sustainable way possible so it can be enjoyed by residents, businesses and visitors alike.

The Environment portfolio delivers a number of day to day services such as waste and recycling collection service and street cleaning, which are important to everyone. Much of the work we do also impacts on the health and quality of life of people in this borough can potentially enjoy.

We also want to maintain the best possible appearance of the borough, and we do this through a range of 'street scene', 'green' and 'Public Protection' services.

We also work alongside our Council colleagues, partners, local communities, volunteers, business and other organisations to promote better behaviour and attitudes. As part of the Council's 'Your Call' initiative, we work closely with our communities and volunteers to support initiatives at a more grass roots level.

Our public protection service provides advice, guidance and where necessary, enforcement, to protect residents and businesses. They deliver an environmental health function, which helps safeguard residents and prevent them from coming to harm as a result of poor hygiene, health and safety or failure on other regulatory standards.

We are also committed to reducing carbon emissions and making our borough more sustainable. We actively promote recycling, stop waste from going into landfill and try to encourage residents and businesses to produce less waste generation.

In order to reduce the effects of climate change, we need to work smarter and in a more joined up way with our partners. Our future challenge is to reduce demand on services by promoting education, awareness, behaviour and change in attitude. This is the only way we will be able to meet our aspirations and ensure environmental sustainability.

### Our priorities

- Working with residents to improve the appearance and cleanliness of their streets and open spaces, particularly through the Your Call campaign
- Increasing recycling and diverting waste from landfill whilst delivering a quality waste service

- Managing and responding to flooding and other environmental risks
- Helping our residents to improve their health and well-being by providing high quality green and open spaces
- Improving community well-being by delivering effective licensing and enforcement activities, particularly in relation to alcohol and tobacco abuse and noise nuisance

### **Our promises**

By 2015 we will have ensured that the Council has:

- Worked with residents to help them clean up their local areas
- Continued to respond and take action on incidents of fly-tipping
- Supported residents groups to play more of a role in managing their local parks and bowling greens
- Helped to improve the health and quality of life of residents by tackling issues of noise nuisance and illegal smoking

## Leisure, Culture and Young People – Councillor Damian Talbot



### About the portfolio

Leisure in Blackburn and Darwen has been transformed in recent years and it is my portfolio's role to make sure that our residents make the most of the wide variety of great services that are available to them to improve their health and wellbeing, from parks to museums, from swimming pools to theatres.

The leisure, culture and young people's portfolio looks after our well used library and information service and leisure, heritage and cultural services including King George's Hall, Darwen Library Theatre and Blackburn Museum, as well as activities targeted at young people.

We work closely with health service colleagues to deliver the re:refresh initiative to improve the health and wellbeing of residents by providing free leisure and information and advice on healthy lifestyles.

We are committed to ensuring that we listen to the views and opinions of people from different backgrounds and ages, so our services can be tailored to the needs and wants of all our residents.

### Our priorities

- Commitment to Community Voice – to ensure that residents are able to help shape local services and that we continue to work with the hundreds of volunteers helping to deliver our leisure and cultural offer
- Review of our Leisure and Culture Assets – looking at all our leisure services and supporting the on-going regeneration of Blackburn and Darwen town centre
- Health & Wellbeing - developing an integrated health and wellbeing service in partnership with other Council departments, the third sector and local health organisations which encourages people to make healthy lifestyle choices.
- Young People - Developing a borough wide, integrated offer for children and young people in partnership with other Council departments, the Youth Zone and other 3<sup>rd</sup> sector youth organisations
- Culture and Creativity - Developing a vision for Blackburn with Darwen as part of a creative and cultural Pennine Lancashire. Promoting culture's contribution to social regeneration and community cohesion within the borough

### Our promises

By 2015 we will have ensured that the Council has:



- Increased participation in physical activity and leisure opportunities for the benefit of Blackburn with Darwen residents
- Delivered a new, state of the art, athletics facility at Witton Park
- Increased the number of young people using their culture and leisure services/activities
- Continued to provide and secure attendances at a large number of shows at King Georges Hall and Darwen Library Theatre
- Delivered a new, state of the art, leisure facility in Blackburn town centre in partnership with Blackburn College