

Public Document Pack

Council Forum

Thursday, 28th March, 2019

6.00 pm

Council Chamber, Blackburn Town Hall

AGENDA

1. **Welcome and Apologies**
2. **Prayers by the Mayor's Chaplain**
3. **Minutes Of The Previous Meeting**
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5. **Mayoral Communications**
6. **Council Forum**
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7. **To consider Motions submitted under Procedure Rule 12**
No Motions have been received.
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	To approve the final version of the Year Planner 2019/20.	
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PART 2: ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE

There are no items to be considered under Part 2.

Date Published: Wednesday, 20 March 2019
Harry Catherall, Chief Executive

FINANCE COUNCIL Monday, 25 February 2019

PRESENT – *The Mayor Councillor Pat McFall , Councillors Afzal, Akhtar H, Batan, Bateson, Brookfield, Casey, Connor, Davies, Fazal, Floyd, Gee, Groves, Gunn, Hardman, Harling, Hussain I, Hussain M, Hussain S, Kay, Khan M, Khonat, Liddle, Mahmood, Marrow, McFall, McGurk, Oates, Patel, Pearson, Rigby, Rigby, Riley, Salton, Shorrocks, Sidat, Slater Ja, Slater Jo, Slater N, Smith D, Smith J, Surve, Talbot, Taylor and Whittle.*

RESOLUTIONS

61 Chief Executive to read the notice convening the meeting

The Chief Executive read the notice convening the meeting.

62 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Akhtar P, Daley, Khan Z, Jan-Virman, Hussain F, Richards and Slater Ju.

63 Minutes of the Council Forum meeting held on 24th January 2019

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Council Forum meeting held on 24th January 2019 be approved as a correct record.

64 Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were received.

65 Mayoral Communications

The Mayor reminded the meeting that tickets for the Mayor's Ball on 29th March were still available and encouraged people to attend.

66 Capital Strategy 2019/20

It was reported that the Capital Strategy report was a new report for 2019/20 giving a high level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contributed to the provision of the Council's services, along with an overview of how associated risk was managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

The report included much of the information previously included in the Treasury Management Strategy report to Finance Council such as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and the Prudential Indicators, but also included additional information for Members to consider prior to agreeing the Capital Programme which was included at Section 8.0 of the Revenue Budget 2019/20, Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme 2019/22 Report that was also on the agenda.

RESOLVED – That Finance Council approve the proposed Capital Strategy for 2019/20, including:

- a) the proposed Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy, as outlined in Appendix 2
- b) the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement, which determines the Council's policy for repayment of debt (Appendix 3)
- c) the proposed prudential indicators for the forthcoming year (Appendix 4); and
- d) the proposed Investment Strategy for 2019/20, as outlined in Appendix 5.

67 The Robustness of the 2019/20 Budget and the Recommended Level of Reserves

Members were reminded that Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 placed a statutory requirement on the Council's Chief Financial Officer to report on:

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

In setting the Budget for 2019/20, Council was required to have regard to this report when making its budget decisions.

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

RESOLVED –

That Finance Council note that:

An overall assessment of the current budget and the assumptions on which this is based, as well as future budget proposals, savings plans and activity forecasts, has identified that whilst there are risks, the overall budget provisions are considered sufficient to meet the Council's legal responsibilities and obligations.

A review of risks, mitigations and contingencies has also been undertaken alongside the review of reserves and provisions.

Note the assessment by the Director of Finance and Customer Services of;

the robustness of the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2019/20 (as outlined in the report of the Executive Member for Resources) and

the adequacy and recommended level of proposed financial reserves (detailed in Section 5.2).

The Executive Member for Resources, Councillor Andy Kay, on behalf of the Labour Group, presented proposals for the Revenue Budget 2019/20, together with the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Capital Programme for 2019-2022.

Cllr Kay noted that like many councils, Blackburn with Darwen had been facing unprecedented financial challenges since Central Government's policy of austerity began in 2010 due to very large reductions in funding combined with a steep increase in demand for public services. In balancing the Council's finances to date, difficult decisions had been made, and Councillors were reminded of some of the key decisions made to date.

The MTFS for 2019/20 identified a budget gap of £4.9 million; this was based on the funding contained within the last year of the Government's 4-year settlement, and other financial and demand information available to the Council back in January/February 2018. However as 2018/19 had progressed, further pressures had emerged that were not built into these figures, including further rises in demand in both Adult Social Care and in Children's Services, the latter resulting in significant cost increases for Children's Social Care. Both services had experienced continued increases both in the volume of people using these services and in particular the complexity of service user needs; 2018/19 had also seen increased demand pressures on highways and other cost pressures in relation to waste disposal.

Cllr Kay advised that to address these pressures both earmarked and unallocated reserves had been used but, as some of these additional costs were of a recurring nature, they would require further support in 2019/20 and beyond, and would need to be addressed through further savings, re-prioritisation of resources and from additional income. Details of the movement in the Budget Gap for 2019/20 were set out in Appendix B.

In accepting the Government's offer of a 4 year funding settlement through to 2019/20, many of the income figures included within the report for 2019/20 were based on the actual funding figures confirmed, however the position for 2020/21 and beyond was much less certain.

The Government had for some time reported its intention to fundamentally change the way in which Councils were funded including;

- a complete review and reset of the funding requirements of each council area through a "Fair Funding" review,
- a move to 75% Business Rates Retention from 2020,
- the withdrawal of Revenue Support Grant (RSG)
- the withdrawal of some other government grants (as yet to be determined) and
- a review of the funding of Adult Social Care.

However given the demands of Brexit, the development of this new approach had been significantly delayed.

As reported to Finance Council last year, the MTFS would normally extend

for a period of 3 years beyond the end of the budget year, i.e. in this case, through to 2022/23, however given that the Government had still not shared proposals for their intended approach, nor the mechanisms for calculating any local government finance settlement, the future funding arrangements beyond 2019/20 were impossible to plan for with any certainty. Therefore in preparing the MTFs, the year 2019/20 was the focus until more clarity was provided over the next 12 months. Council would be updated on any changes to these assumptions as further information was provided during the course of 2019/20.

The report set out the Labour Group's proposed Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and associated Council Tax level for 2019/20 together with the MTFs for the period 2019-2022 based on a review of the existing assumptions and data to reflect the most current information available.

Given the scale of the financial challenge over the past few years, throughout the course of 2018/19 Executive Members and Officers had continued to review all services and worked to deliver the agreed budget reductions.

The development of a continuous approach to reviewing budgets, identifying cost pressures and the development and implementation of agreed strategies and options to manage costs within the resources available, had significantly assisted in managing the budget, however despite the efforts of Executive Members and Officers, the scale of the funding reductions combined with increases in demand for services and unfunded cost pressures, had meant that further expenditure reductions had been required during 2018/19 and on into 2019/20, in addition to those already implemented since 2010.

The MTFs for 2019/20, as presented to Finance Council in February 2018, identified a budget gap of £4.9 million; this was based on the funding contained within the last year of the Government's 4-year settlement, and other financial and demand information available within the Council back in January/February 2018.

Following a review of new and emerging pressures, £8.227m cost pressures had been identified, approximately £5.8m relating to demand pressures in respect of Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Environment, with other cost pressures identified reflecting overspends and income shortfalls over a range of cost centres within the £116m portfolio budgets.

The MTFs highlighted a budget gap for 2020/21 of £5.719m, and for 2021/22 of £6.591m, although there was significant uncertainty around the assumptions used to produce the figures in both these years given the lack of information provided by central Government.

A number of the cost pressures had been funded corporately within the 2019/20 budget and in the figures presented within the MTFs through to 2021/22 however, whilst the Council was recommended to approve a balanced budget for 2019/20, this was predicated on the delivery of the remaining projects/areas within the savings programme developed over the course of 2018/19, and on the containment of all current and emerging cost pressures within each portfolio.

In December 2018 the Council Forum approved a new Executive and Chief Officer structure for the Council which included the deletion of the post of Deputy Chief Executive noting savings to the Council to be fully realised in 2020/21.

The Chief Officer Employment Committee also considered the arrangements for the 2019 local elections and recommended to the Council that the Chief Executive designate, Denise Park be appointed Returning Officer from the date of the commencement of the full elections process i.e. 26th March 2019, in addition to the previously approved roles for Electoral Services and General Elections from her appointment on 1st May 2019.

In light of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2019/20 and the financial constraints on the authority, the Leader and the Executive Members would work with Officers to continuously review the allocation and use of resources including continued review of all expenditure and income budgets, of contractual commitments and property holdings and implementation of savings plans as required, set within the context of the Council's statutory responsibilities and corporate priorities.

In order to deliver the Capital Strategy, Finance Council was recommended approve the proposed Capital Programme for 2019 through to 2022 of £47.1m, which was detailed at **Appendix C**. The programme recognised the importance of investment in the Borough and the impact that the schemes themselves would have on the regeneration and economic growth of the area in the future.

As noted in the report 'The Robustness of the 2019/20 Budget and the Recommended Level of Reserves', the Director of Finance and Customer Services had recommended to Finance Council that the minimum level of Unallocated Reserves for 2019/20 remained at £4.0m.

The assumptions made within these budget proposals, which were in line with those made by the Government, were that the Council would increase Council Tax in 2019/20 by 2.99% reflecting a general increase in Council Tax to cover increases in the cost of Council services

The MTFS 2019 to 2022 had been reviewed and updated, incorporating;

- the funding allocation for 2019/20, representing the final year of the Government's 4 year settlement "offer" which was accepted by the Council in October 2016
- estimates for income and resources for 2020/21 and 2021/22, acknowledging that these had been made in the absence of any information or detail regarding the allocation of local government funding for 2020/21 and beyond (i.e. the redistribution of local government funding as determined by the Fair Funding Review, the mechanics of the future Business Rates Retention Scheme, and the future provision and allocation of any other Government grant funding streams).

The proposed Revenue Budget Strategy would continue to focus on delivering the Council's priorities and would try to minimise the impact of spending cuts through the delivery of quality efficient and effective services

to, and for, the citizens of the Borough, whilst ensuring the Council operated within the financial constraints imposed by central Government.

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

FOR

Councillors: Afzal, Akhtar H, Batan, Bateson, Brookfield, Casey, Davies, Fazal, Floyd, Groves, Gunn, Harling, Hussain I, Hussain M, Hussain S, Kay, Khan M, Khonat, Liddle, Mahmood, McGurk, Oates, Patel, Riley, Shorrocks, Sidat, Smith D, Smith J, Surve, Talbot, Taylor, Whittle and the Mayor.

AGAINST

Councillors: Connor, Gee, Hardman, Marrow, Pearson, Rigby C, Rigby J, Salton, Slater Ja, Slater Jo, and Slater N.

RESOLVED – That Finance Council:

Approve the proposals for the Revenue Budget for the financial year 2019/20 as outlined in the report and specifically;

- 2.1 Approve an increase in Council Tax rates of 2.99% (i.e. a weekly increase of £0.84 for Band D Council Tax payers and of £0.56 for Band A Council Tax payers)
- 2.2 Note the individual portfolio controllable budgets for 2019/20 as set out in **Appendix A** of the report
- 2.3 Note the work undertaken to implement the £8.0m savings programme (as outlined at **Section 6** of the report) to ensure a balanced budget in 2019/20 and to offset any other emerging cost pressures in-year and/or replenish reserves ahead of more significant savings that may be required from 2020/21, once the outcome of the Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Retention Reviews are known.
- 2.4 Note the significant risks and uncertainty that underpin the assumptions contained within the MTFs for the financial year 2020/21, due to the lack of information that is yet to be provided by central Government including;
 - the mechanisms for Business Rates Retention,
 - the outcome of the Fair Funding Review and the resulting redistribution of resource,
 - the Green Paper on Adult Social Care and the future plans for integration of health and adult social care and associated funding and
 - the impact of Brexit
- 2.5 Approve the utilisation of the Earmarked Reserves, as detailed in the *Robustness of the 2019/20 Budget and the Recommended Level of Reserves Report*
- 2.6 Delegate authority for the agreement of hourly rates and contract

changes for social care providers for 2019/20, arising from the impact of the increase in the National Living Wage, to the Executive Member for Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Executive Member for Resources.

- 2.7 Approve the proposals for the Capital Programme for the period 2019-2021 as outlined in **Appendix C** and **Section 8** of the report
- 2.8 Approve the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019-2022, as per **Appendix D** of the report
- 2.9 Approve, subject to recommendation **2.1** outlined above, the consequent Council Tax levels detailed in the formal resolution within the report from the Director of Finance & Customer Services
- 2.10 Exercise the flexibility given by central government to increase the premium charge on empty properties as follows;
 - for those properties that have been empty for more than 2 years, to increase the premium from 50% to 100% with effect from 1st April 2019 (as agreed at Council Forum on 24th January 2019),
 - for those which have been vacant for five years or more to 200% with effect from 1st April 2020
 - for those which have been vacant for ten years or more to 300% with effect from 1st April 2021
- 2.11 Approve the Pay Policy Statement prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011, including changes to the Executive and Chief Officer posts, to have effect for the year 2019/20 unless replaced or varied by the Council as set out in **Appendix E** of the report; and
- 2.12 Approve Denise Park, Chief Executive designate, as Acting Returning Officer for any constituency or part of the constituency coterminous with or contained in the Borough of Blackburn with Darwen, and Returning Officer for the elections of councillors for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council from 26th March 2019. In addition approve Denise Park to act as Electoral Registration Officer for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council from this date.

69 Council Tax for 2019/20

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

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

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

The Council was also required to set a basic amount of Council Tax for the

financial year 2019/20. The Council Tax was set on the basis of:

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

The Council was recommended to approve the draft resolution setting the Council Tax for 2019/20, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report submitted.

Following discussion, Finance Council moved to a recorded vote, with Councillors voting as follows:

FOR

Councillors: Afzal, Akhtar H, Batan, Bateson, Brookfield, Casey, Davies, Fazal, Floyd, Groves, Gunn, Harling, Hussain I, Hussain M, Hussain S, Kay, Khan M, Khonat, Liddle, Mahmood, McGurk, Oates, Patel, Riley, Shorrocks, Sidat, Smith D, Smith J, Surve, Talbot, Taylor, Whittle and the Mayor.

AGAINST

Councillors: Connor, Gee, Hardman, Marrow, Pearson, Rigby C, Rigby J, Salton, Slater Ja, Slater Jo, and Slater N.

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Draft Council Tax Resolution 2019/20 – Finance Council, 25 February 2019

1. That it be noted that on 24th January 2019, the Council calculated the Council Tax Base for the year 2019/20 in accordance with regulations made under Section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the Act):
 - a) 34,839.53 being the Council Tax Base for the whole of the Council area (Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Act); and
 - b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates, as detailed in Appendix 2.
2. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2019/20 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
 - a) £387,019,000 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) (a) to (f) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
 - b) £334,261,068 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) (a) to (d) of the Act.
 - c) £52,757,932 being the amount by which the aggregate at 2 (a) above exceeds the aggregate at 2 (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
 - d) £1,514.31 being the amount at 2 (c) above (Item R) divided by the amount at 1(a) above (Item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
 - e) £156,127.86 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (see Appendix 2).
 - f) £1,509.83 Being the amount at 2 (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 2 (e) above by Item T (1 (a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for

the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.

3. That it be noted that for the year 2019/20 the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire has issued a precept to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as indicated in the tables below.
4. That it be noted that for the year 2019/20 the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority has issued a precept to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as indicated in the tables below, however at the time of writing the report, the precept had yet to be presented to the Lancashire Fire Authority meeting (held on Monday 18th).
5. That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the tables below as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2019/20 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

a) Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

<u>Part of the Council's Area</u>	<u>Valuation Bands</u>							
	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>H</u>
Eccleshill Parish	£1,023.3 1	£1,193.87	£1,364.42	£1,534.97	£1,876.07	£2,217.18	£2,558.28	£3,069.94
Livesey Parish	£1,012.0 6	£1,180.74	£1,349.41	£1,518.09	£1,855.44	£2,192.80	£2,530.15	£3,036.18
North Turton Parish	£1,016.7 8	£1,186.24	£1,355.71	£1,525.17	£1,864.10	£2,203.02	£2,541.95	£3,050.34
Pleasington Parish	£1,010.3 0	£1,178.68	£1,347.07	£1,515.45	£1,852.22	£2,188.98	£2,525.75	£3,030.90
Tockholes Parish	£1,031.1 2	£1,202.97	£1,374.83	£1,546.68	£1,890.39	£2,234.09	£2,577.80	£3,093.36
Yate and Pickup Bank Parish	£1,021.2 8	£1,191.49	£1,361.71	£1,531.92	£1,872.35	£2,212.77	£2,553.20	£3,063.84
Darwen Town Council	£1,015.3 2	£1,184.54	£1,353.76	£1,522.98	£1,861.42	£2,199.86	£2,538.30	£3,045.96
All other parts of the Council's area	£1,006.5 5	£1,174.31	£1,342.07	£1,509.83	£1,845.35	£2,180.87	£2,516.38	£3,019.66

b) Major Precepting Authorities

<u>Precepting Authority</u>	<u>Valuation Bands</u>							
	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>H</u>
Lancashire Police Authority	£134.30	£156.68	£179.07	£201.45	£246.22	£290.98	£335.75	£402.90
Lancashire Combined Fire Authority	£46.32	£54.04	£61.76	£69.48	£84.92	£100.36	£115.80	£138.96

c) Aggregate Council Tax

<u>Part of the Council's Area</u>	<u>Valuation Bands</u>							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Eccleshill Parish	£1,203.93	£1,404.59	£1,605.25	£1,805.90	£2,207.21	£2,608.52	£3,009.83	£3,611.80
Livesey Parish	£1,192.68	£1,391.46	£1,590.24	£1,789.02	£2,186.58	£2,584.14	£2,981.70	£3,578.04
North Turton Parish	£1,197.40	£1,396.96	£1,596.54	£1,796.10	£2,195.24	£2,594.36	£2,993.50	£3,592.20
Pleasington Parish	£1,190.92	£1,389.40	£1,587.90	£1,786.38	£2,183.36	£2,580.32	£2,977.30	£3,572.76
Tockholes Parish	£1,211.74	£1,413.69	£1,615.66	£1,817.61	£2,221.53	£2,625.43	£3,029.35	£3,635.22
Yate and Pickup Bank Parish	£1,201.90	£1,402.21	£1,602.54	£1,802.85	£2,203.49	£2,604.11	£3,004.75	£3,605.70
Darwen Town Council	£1,195.94	£1,395.26	£1,594.59	£1,793.91	£2,192.56	£2,591.20	£2,989.85	£3,587.82
All other parts of the Council's area	£1,187.17	£1,385.03	£1,582.90	£1,780.76	£2,176.49	£2,572.21	£2,967.93	£3,561.52

Appendix 2

Town and Parish Council Precepts

Parish / Town Council	<u>2018/19</u>	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>Council Tax Increase /</u>				<u>Grant</u>	<u>Council Tax</u>	<u>(Reduction) Council Tax Band D 19/20 less 18/19 £</u>
	<u>Tax Base</u>	<u>Precepts</u>	<u>Grant</u>	<u>Council Tax</u>	<u>Tax Base</u>	<u>Precepts</u>	<u>Grant</u>	<u>Council Tax</u>	
		£	£	£		£	£	£	
Eccleshill Parish	92.57	2,328.00	413.50	25.15	96.60	2,429.00	413.50	25.14	(0.01)
Livesey Parish	1,879.27	15,523.00	1,371.00	8.26	1,977.24	16,332.00	1371.00	8.26	0.00
North Turton Parish	1,741.18	28,310.00	1,241.00	16.26	1,764.22	27,069.00	1,241.00	15.34	(0.92)
Pleasington Parish	259.81	1,450.00	0.00	5.58	257.86	1,450.00	0.00	5.62	0.04
Tockholes Parish	211.47	7,454.84	146.00	35.25	208.50	7,682.86	146.00	36.85	1.60
Yate and Pickup Bank Parish	138.74	3,070.00	260.00	22.13	138.95	3,070.00	260.00	22.09	(0.04)
Darwen Town Council	7,414.15	98,095.00	23,905.00	13.23	7,461.76	98,905.00	23,905.00	13.15	(0.08)
TOTAL / AVERAGE	11,737.19	156,230.84	27,336.50	4.55	11,905.13	156,127.86	27,336.50	4.48	(0.07)

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

MAYOR

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

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

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

MEETING: **COUNCIL FORUM**

DATE: **28TH MARCH 2019**

AGENDA ITEM NO.:

DESCRIPTION (BRIEF):

NATURE OF INTEREST:

DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY/OTHER (delete as appropriate)

SIGNED :

PRINT NAME:

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



REPORT OF:	LEADER
TO:	COUNCIL FORUM
ON:	28TH MARCH 2019

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to outline the Council's response to the recommendations from the Local Government Association's (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge which was undertaken at the Council in December 2018.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- a) The contents of this report be noted
- b) The Council's response to the LGA's recommendations be endorsed

3. BACKGROUND

The LGA undertook a Peer Review at Blackburn with Darwen Council from 3-6 December 2018 providing an external perspective on how well the council is performing and on its future plans. The LGA undertake these challenges at all councils every five or six years.

Each corporate peer challenge focuses on five core components, which in the LGA's experience are features of effective councils. The peer team considered these within a local context and priorities of Blackburn with Darwen. The core components of the challenge are:

1. Understanding of the local place and priority setting
2. Leadership of Place
3. Financial planning and viability
4. Organisational leadership and governance
5. Capacity to deliver

In addition to the above, the Council asked the team to consider the following:

- Community engagement
- Digital transformation

As part of the challenge process, the Peer Team held a series of meetings and focus groups with a range of people from across the council and its partners – including elected members, senior officers, managers, supervisors, apprentices and front line staff. Their key recommendations are outlined below:

- a) Engage members, staff, partners and residents in developing a compelling vision for the Borough's future
- b) Develop an agreed set of outcomes for people, place and the Council and reflect these in the refreshed Corporate Plan and with partners in the LSP 2030 vision
- c) Establish a dashboard of a limited number of key performance indicators (KPIs) to demonstrate progress towards outcomes and more effectively communicate performance to members, partners and residents.
- d) Strengthen the marketing and promotion of Blackburn with Darwen to potential visitors and investors, emphasising the opportunities presented by the Borough's young and diverse communities
- e) Take a whole council approach to the budget process across different service and portfolio areas to ensure resources align to key priorities and desired outcomes
- f) Consider how to create more strategic capacity at an appropriate level and place in the organisation through the proposed senior management review
- g) Ensure a whole council approach to transformation and public service reform, integrated with the digital agenda, with a clear road map for delivery and pursue this at pace
- h) Develop an organisational development (OD) and workforce development strategy to ensure that the Council can meet the challenges of the future
- i) Consider area based budgeting with partners to deepen community engagement and influence wider spending
- j) Consider ways of empowering ward members, including through allocation of funding for local initiatives
- k) Identify gaps in community volunteer arrangements and develop a plan to address these and continue to support community volunteers

4. KEY ISSUES

The feedback report from the LGA, following their Corporate Peer Challenge, was reported to Executive Board on 14th February and outlined 11 key recommendations. In addition to these, there are other highlights from the final report which are outlined below for the Council to consider as part of the wider feedback.

The Peer Team's comments and observations are positive with particular reference to our deep understanding of place and the challenges and opportunities presented, the widely respected political and managerial leadership at the council, our partners having a real confidence in the council as well as passionate staff who are committed to the area.

The report also highlights that the Council has helped to bring significant improvements in infrastructure attracting inward investment and indicates that the Council should now give more attention to how it can help local people to access more and better jobs through the development of a more inclusive approach.

The report recognised the success of Your Call and other volunteering programmes and encouraged the Council to engage with the wider voluntary and community sectors to make best use of resources available. In particular the Peer Team reported that our partners are willing to explore further neighbourhood place based working and the scope for alignment/pooling of budgets.

The Council's member training offer is recognised as being of value with good take-up, and the Council has been encouraged to draw on the experience of other organisations such as the LGA in enhancing the member development programme. The Peer Team highlighted that members from all parties feel able to challenge the Executive through scrutiny without a detrimental impact on relationships and use of call-in seems appropriate. They also highlighted that resources to support scrutiny has been reduced and suggested that the Council should ensure that best use is made of these limited resources, in particular through effective pre-decision and policy development work linked to council priorities. They also suggested that that task and finish groups may be an effective approach for some aspects of scrutiny.

The report outlines the need for a clearer vision and plan around the next stages of whole council transformation, and recognises that the Council is currently refreshing the Corporate Plan. To support this, the Peer Team suggested that there needs to be more investment in staff and leadership development and opportunities for more cross service working and development.

The Council's good understanding of financial challenges it is facing was noted by the Peer Team, in particular the detailed savings programme developed with Portfolio holders and the implementation of Civica Financials which provides real time financial information. The Peer Team have suggested that the Council should consider if more regular financial reporting to all members would increase their engagement with the budget challenges the Council faces, with both elected members and staff able to contribute to identifying savings and developing budget proposals.

In terms of capacity the Council's positive use of the apprenticeship levy to help with the development of staff was recognised along with increasing capacity through effective partnerships. The Peer Team also highlighted that a rewards and recognition scheme for staff should be considered.

The Peer Team were very positive about Your Call and our wider volunteering activities recognising the strength of our volunteers individually and as groups. They have suggested providing a mechanism to regularly meet with a selection of volunteers to discuss their suggestions and provide further guidance and support where necessary.

The creation of the new digital and business change department was highlighted as providing valuable additional capacity at a senior level to drive forward the digital agenda. The Peer Team suggested that an IT strategy and roadmap for delivery would be helpful, alongside the digital direction of the authority being integrated into the OD strategy and workforce planning.

5. NEXT STEPS

The LGA have asked the Council to reflect on their findings and suggestions. Appended to this report is a table which outlines the key recommendations from the Peer Review and how the Council is responding. The Leader, Executive Members and Management Board will oversee actions and Policy Council in December 2019 will be asked to review the recommendations of the Peer Review and how these have informed our work programme.

The recommendations from the Peer Review which the Council wish to take forward will be measured through council performance reporting and business planning mechanisms. The LGA also intend to undertake a follow up 'light touch' visit in the next 12 – 24 months to help the Council assess the impact of the peer challenge and the progress it has made against the areas of improvement and development identified by the Peer Team.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications related to this report at this stage.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Any financial implications of the response to the Corporate Peer Challenge recommendations will be managed within existing budgets.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications related to this report.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Any resource implications of the response to the Corporate Peer Challenge recommendations will be managed within existing budgets.

10. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. No issues have been identified which negatively affect one or more to the different equality groups.

11. CONSULTATIONS

There have been no formal consultations undertaken.

Chief Officer/Member

Contact Officer: Denise Park, Deputy Chief Executive.
Date: 15th March 2019

LGA RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSE/ACTION
1. Engage members, staff, partners and residents in developing a compelling vision for the Borough's future.	<p>The Council's new Corporate Plan 2019-2023 has been developed and subject to agreement at Council Forum in March, is due to be launched after Annual Council in May 2019. This will include a vision for the Council and will align with the refresh of the LSP Plan for Prosperity 2030 which will outline a vision for the Borough.</p> <p>Members, staff, partners and residents have been involved in developing the Corporate Plan throughout the process.</p>
2. Develop an agreed set of outcomes for people, place and the Council and reflect these in the refreshed Corporate Plan and with partners in the LSP 2030 vision.	<p>The Council Corporate Plan for 2019-23 is being developed and reflects four strategic themes – People; Place; Economy; Council and eight corporate priorities (web link to doc). These strategic themes and priorities have been informed by a range of activity including the LSP Summit (October 2018), Residents Survey (November 2018), JSNA summary review (November 2018), State of the Borough independent economic analysis (September 2018) and the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (December 2019).</p> <p>When the Corporate Plan has been agreed work will start on developing the LSP 2030 vision which will sit alongside the Corporate Plan and set out a borough vision with partners.</p>
3. Establish a dashboard of a limited number of key performance indicators (KPIs) to demonstrate progress towards outcomes and more effectively communicate performance to members, partners and residents.	<p>The Council's performance management framework is being refreshed to reflect the new Corporate Plan 2019-23 which will be launched after Annual Council in May 2019. The Council has already streamlined its KPIs and performance monitoring arrangements in the last few years and will strengthen this further by reviewing the frequency and format of reporting and ensuring that the KPIs accurately reflect the outcomes set out in the Corporate Plan. The Council is keen to ensure these are measurable stretch targets.</p>
4. Strengthen the marketing and promotion of Blackburn with Darwen to potential visitors and investors, emphasising the opportunities presented by the Borough's young and diverse communities.	<p>Work is underway to enhance our strategic marketing, visitor and investor engagement programme and activities.</p> <p>The Chief Executive chairs a Project Board which will set out a refreshed framework with a costed programme of activity by April 2019. This work builds on our current place-marketing approach and enables partners to better align their activities and resources within a new overarching framework.</p> <p>We will continue to develop and leverage our cultural and visitor assets. The National Festival of Making</p>

	<p>provides an authentic opportunity to deliver an event of truly national significance that is capable of lifting local ambition and linking local programming. Other established Festivals of quality will complement this approach. We will exploit the various dimensions of “making” as a unifying theme.</p> <p>Our youthful, culturally rich and entrepreneurial communities are providing further opportunities to raise the profile and aspirations of residents and businesses alike. These need to be better co-ordinated and promoted. A renewed Blackburn Town Centre BID mandate also creates the opportunity to pool resources to deliver joint activity. New investment plans for Darwen will help enhance pride of place.</p> <p>We will continue to engage with the LEP and Marketing Lancashire to position the Borough within Northern and national contexts. For example, we will work to ensure that we are a central focus of the emerging national County of Culture Lancashire bid.</p> <p>To maintain and underpin progress, we will also need to ensure a strong pipeline of strategic development opportunities to capture new economic and financial benefits, and to engage new investors, occupiers and visitors.</p>
<p>5. Take a whole council approach to the budget process across different service and portfolio areas to ensure resources align to key priorities and desired outcomes.</p>	<p>The Council has developed and implemented various savings programmes over the last nine years to meet the financial challenges of the government’s austerity policy. Whilst developed collectively, the individual savings have been identified on a portfolio by portfolio basis which has given Members the opportunity to make differential savings requirements across each area. In doing so statutory services have been protected, along with those services provided to our most vulnerable residents; it is suggested that this approach will be retained for future budgetary planning purposes.</p> <p>However in agreeing the new Corporate Plan 2019-2023, a more focused approach can be taken in the budget setting process in respect of referencing budget allocations, investment and the development of supporting savings programmes, to the key priorities and delivery of outcomes that are set out within the Plan.</p> <p>Across the four strategic themes, and the eight key priorities that sit beneath these, we can set out how the budget of the individual portfolios contribute to each, to confirm and ensure that resources align to their delivery.</p>
<p>6. Consider how to create more strategic capacity at an appropriate</p>	<p>Over the previous eight months there have been a number of organisational changes at senior management level bringing three new Directors into the organisation, the most recent starting in post in January 2019 and</p>

<p>level and place in the organisation through the proposed senior management review.</p>	<p>completing the Chief Officer team. There has also been additional capacity created through a Growth Programme Director.</p> <p>On December 6, 2018 Policy Council approved a restructure of the senior management team incorporating the deletion of the Deputy Chief Executive Post and appointing Denise Park, the existing post-holder as the new Chief Executive from 1st May 2019. The Council considers that its new Chief Officer team provides sufficient strategic capacity with the right skills and expertise to deliver Council priorities.</p> <p>Communication across the organisation and within departments is crucial. We will therefore look to strengthen the flow of information and enhance engagement across the organisation to free up strategic capacity, planning and delivery.</p> <p>Through our OD and workforce strategies (see further detail on section 8) we will also review leadership skills, development and succession planning across all levels of the organisation.</p>
<p>7. Ensure a whole council approach to transformation and public service reform, integrated with the digital agenda, with a clear road map for delivery and pursue this at pace.</p>	<p>The council has been consulting with stakeholders and a newly formed digital board, to develop a revised digital strategy for 2019. This strategy will be closely aligned to the council's corporate plan and priorities. It will bring together redesigned technology and systems, with the skills and capabilities to transform services for our citizens and teams. A head of service for digital transformation will also be recruited (planned Q1 2019/20) to oversee implementation of the strategy.</p> <p>We will work closely with Organisational Development to ensure the right transformational skills, digital skills and capabilities are embedded throughout the organisation over the next 2 years. A pilot of Lean Process training for 70 digital and business change staff was completed at the end of 2018 which will help to inform our approaches going forwards.</p> <p>The council has recently signed up to the Local Government Digital Declaration and has started to develop new partnerships across local government and national digital teams. We are also working with the wider market, both larger suppliers and small to medium sized enterprises to realise our digital ambitions. Signing up to the digital declaration will also add pace to our plans to develop skills around digital and agile approaches.</p> <p>Plans and funding are in place to support digital integration and interventions with the NHS in 2019/20. The council is leading the local digital health and care group overseeing the changes as part of the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) and wider System (ICS). We are also building new networks across digital social care teams</p>

	across Lancashire and South Cumbria local authorities, to share lessons and coordinate delivery.
8. Develop an organisational development (OD) and workforce development strategy to ensure that the Council can meet the challenges of the future.	<p>A new OD strategy is already being developed and will link to the wider Digital and Accommodation Strategy as well as the budget strategy going forward. The OD Strategy will include leadership and management development, leadership culture, employee and member engagement with change, their training and development needs and set out how the Council will grow and develop in all aspects of delivering services in the 2020's.</p> <p>It will also incorporate the development and delivery of a revised workforce strategy which will include revisions and updates to our recruitment strategy, culture organisational values and behaviours, introduction of updated pay and reward strategy and (digital) employee handbook and enhanced health and welfare/support programme.</p> <p>The new Workforce Strategy will set out how workforce planning will reflect the marketplace and, coupled with new arrangements and approaches to recruitment and retention, will address any lessons from the Equality Watch report. It will also enhance our reputation for delivering effective services with a workforce skilled and experienced reflective of our community.</p> <p>The workforce strategy will also consider the Council's commitment to the Borough wide Employment and Skills Strategy developing stronger links with schools and colleges and the provision of apprenticeships, work experience and volunteering. The workforce strategy will consider how we are able to attract and retain high calibre employees giving consideration to succession planning.</p>
9. Consider area-based budgeting with partners to deepen community engagement and influence wider spending.	<p>The council is committed to working as close to its communities as possible. We believe the most effective way to do this is through bringing our public sector partners together at a local level sharing resources, expertise and experience to deliver improved outcomes for our neighbourhoods.</p> <p>We recognise the engagement opportunities that can help support and influence best use of assets. Since Unitary status this has evolved and developed in response to both the national and local Policy drivers. We have been at the forefront of development through shared neighbourhood teams, neighbourhood boards and more formal transfer of assets and management to community, voluntary and faith based organisations. The council has also promoted Place based leadership and collaborative working to bring about place shaping through taking a total place approach both in service delivery and budgeting. Increasingly this has been about joining up agendas, outcomes and resources of allied organisations and community assets.</p> <p>We launched our local Integrated Care Partnership in August 2018. We are leading on the health and social integration with</p>

	<p>all our Adult Social Care teams being co-located in the community with primary health services. This infrastructure with the Transforming Lives and Community Connector Neighbourhood functions is already bringing significant Partnerships and resources together to increasingly deliver PLACE based services.</p> <p>Volunteering is a major part of our strategy and we have seen year on year increase in active participation. Working with the Lancashire Volunteer Partnership we have a good infrastructure and a strong foundation to build on to further develop this area. Using a strength based approach we aim to have the ability to co-ordinate and accurately support social prescription. In terms of driving this work we have Primary Care Neighbourhood Partnerships that are jointly lead by the council and Primary Care networks. All key health, social care and community partners are represented. This includes a patient voice and the opportunity for local community groups to help influence, shape and participate in delivery of services. We are already seeing participation at new levels in supporting loneliness, isolation, local environment through litter picking, food and fuel poverty, organ donation, diabetes and obesity. In addition, key programmes such as Sport England and Social Integration will help us to drive the active participation in getting our communities to take ownership and help develop the future borough.</p> <p>Our ambition would be to promote a Total Place approach and increasingly work closer with whole communities for and with whom we deliver services to engage them in shaping services and actively participating in making the right choices to improve their quality of life, health and wellbeing.</p>
<p>10. Consider ways of empowering ward members, including through allocation of funding for local initiatives.</p>	<p>All members have access to good quality and appropriate training to develop their talents and abilities to fulfil their democratic roles. These training opportunities ensure they are empowered with the right knowledge and skills to make informed choices and decisions.</p> <p>Ward Members through the leadership have been fully supportive and engaged in the 'Your Call, Your Community' campaign that has helped find solutions to many problems. The growth of volunteer and community participation has been directly related to the way in which this council has empowered its elected Members. There is an expectation beyond Ward issues and case work to promote active citizenship.</p> <p>In each Ward elected Members are the conduit towards unlocking local community resources and matching them where possible with resources from commissioning of services. Through the Voluntary, Faith and Community Sector we deliver significant levels of service to help advise and guide communities. Together this infrastructure supported by the council and our Partners provides a strong opportunity to develop local initiatives.</p> <p>The new Sport England and Social Integration programmes will enable allocation of resources to neighbourhoods as described above. Elected Members are a key part of the engagement and problem solving infrastructure through which the council can improve the quality of life for our communities.</p>

<p>11. Identify gaps in community volunteer arrangements and develop a plan to address these and continue to support community volunteers.</p>	<p>The council has a strong approach to recruiting and developing volunteers. This work is led by the Neighbourhood Managers and Community Connectors as part of the Lancashire Volunteer Partnership.</p> <p>In recent years we have seen a year on year increase in participation. We have secured funding support through ESIF programme under the strengthening communities theme. This in turn has given us the opportunity to work in Partnership with other sectors, particularly the community, voluntary and faith sectors.</p> <p>Volunteering is central to a number of strategies and is seen as a way of engaging our communities back into intermediate and longer term employment. A way of helping to reduce social isolation and to promote wellbeing. A fantastic way in which to help personal development at any age by building key skills and experience. We know that volunteering is not free and therefore needs investment in the support infrastructure, equipment, training and supervision. It is also right that the council rewards, recognises and celebrates the valuable contribution volunteers make to the borough.</p> <p>In the next phase of our strategy we will be looking to further strengthen volunteer co-ordination, to better organise and identify opportunities, to work collaboratively with Partners to jointly promote and host volunteers. As part of progression pathway we want to see volunteering play a role in all aspects of community life, be available and accessible to people of all ages and abilities.</p> <p>Many of the council's employees volunteer and play an active role in our borough outside of their day job. As part of the council's organisational development strategy we want to ensure that their contribution is recognised and captured. That there are opportunities for them to participate further. As a council we actively encourage volunteering and will be developing a strategy to identify a programme of opportunities to further enable participation</p> <p>As outlined in the Peer Challenge final report, the Peer Team acknowledged the remarkable success of Your Call in encouraging people to volunteer on behalf of their local communities. To strengthen this further we will continue to work with volunteers providing them with tools, equipment, advice and guidance on an ongoing basis, including the initial clean up kit, of which we have provided 625 to date.</p> <p>In addition a significant number of 'Environment' volunteers have signed up via the Lancashire Volunteer Portal. We also provide a quarterly newsletter to volunteers on the environment and provide an annual celebration event in recognition of their efforts. The Environment department also has 81 volunteers who form the Winter Grit squad and undertake gritting in communities across the borough. The Council keeps in contact with these</p>
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	volunteers via social media and provides regular feedback on impending weather conditions and ensures that there are adequate levels of salt in salt bins located across the Borough
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REPORT OF:	LEADER
TO:	COUNCIL FORUM
ON:	28TH MARCH 2019

CORPORATE PLAN 2019-2023

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to seek agreement for the Council to adopt the new Corporate Plan 2019 – 2023, from May 2019 and note that a refreshed performance framework will be developed to underpin the Corporate Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- a) Council endorse the core content of the new Corporate Plan and agree that it be launched after Annual Council
- b) Council note that a new performance framework will be developed to underpin the new Corporate Plan

3. BACKGROUND

Policy Council in December 2018 agreed that a new Corporate Plan 2019-2023 be developed, underpinned by a refreshed performance framework.

As reported at Policy Council in detail, the new Plan is informed by several key pieces of work and activity including independent economic analysis, refreshed Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), a LSP summit held with our partners in October, the resident's survey undertaken in November and the LGA Peer Review at the end of the year.

Based on all of this activity and reflecting on the current corporate priorities, four strategic themes have been identified and underpinned by eight corporate priorities set out below. Note the priorities are not ranked in order of importance. It's crucial that the Plan reflects what the Council wants to achieve for residents and it will help inform policy and budget decisions, as well as supporting bids for external funding.

People - A good quality of life for all of our residents

- P1. Supporting young people and raising aspirations
- P2. Safeguarding and supporting the most vulnerable people
- P3. Reducing health inequalities and improving health outcomes

Place - Community pride in a vibrant place to live and visit

P4. Connected Communities

P5. Safe and clean environment

Economy – A strong and inclusive economy with continued growth

P6. Strong, growing economy to enable social mobility

P7. Supporting our town centres and businesses

Council - Delivered by a strong and resilient council

P8. Transparent and effective organisation

Four cross-cutting themes underpin the Plan – digital; partnership working; fairness for all; and promoting and celebrating the Borough.

A refreshed performance framework to support the new Plan and priorities is also being developed.

4. RATIONALE

The Plan is for everyone – councillors, staff, partners, residents, business – who can support the Council and the Borough in being the best it can possibly be.

The Plan is a relatively brief strategic document highlighting the core priorities for the Council over the next four years and is underpinned by departmental business plans and other strategies and plans such as the workforce strategy, digital strategy, social integration strategy.

Subject to Council Forum approval, it is proposed that the new Corporate Plan be launched after Annual Council in May alongside the new performance framework. The Plan will be available digitally on the Council website.

Complimentary to this, the LSP have committed to update its Plan for Prosperity which will outline the vision for the Borough from all partners over the next 10-15 years.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The new Corporate Plan sets out the policy priorities for the Council from 2019-2023 and replaces the existing six corporate priorities which were developed in 2012.

A new performance framework is being developed and will be launched after Annual Council in May 2019. The performance framework will outline key performance indicators and reporting mechanisms to ensure the Council's performance against the new priorities can be measured.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Any financial implications of the new Corporate Plan will be managed within existing budgets.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Any resource implications of the new Corporate Plan will be managed within existing budgets.

9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. No issues have been identified which negatively affect one or more to the different equality groups.

10. CONSULTATIONS

The Plan has been informed by the residents' survey undertaken in Autumn 2018. The survey was carried out by independent experts to a random sample of households across the Borough. In addition, an open access on-line survey was available for all residents to respond to. Elected members and officers have also contributed to and been consulted on the Plan.

Chief Officer/Member

Background papers: Draft Council Corporate Plan 2019-2023
Contact Officer: Denise Park, Deputy Chief Executive
Date: 15th March 2019

Blackburn with Darwen Corporate Plan 2019 - 2023

OUR VISION

Section under development

Our vision is to enable all of our residents to achieve a good quality of life in a vibrant and thriving place, with strong community values and an inclusive society.

People: A good quality of life for all of our residents
Place: Community pride in a vibrant place to live and visit
Economy: A strong and inclusive economy with continued growth
Council: Delivered by a strong and resilient council

“Working together for our Borough”

OUR PLACE, OUR PLAN

We have lots to be proud of as a Council and as a Borough. Government inspections, our own performance reporting, external peer challenge and feedback from residents tell us that we are delivering good council services and our activities continue to receive national recognition from industry leaders.

National austerity has meant that we have had to make some difficult financial decisions as a council over recent years, which has impacted on services and activities at a time when the public sector is increasingly relied on for support by residents and businesses. Despite this, our strong track record of delivery and partnership working alongside dedicated employees and members enables us to continue to be an ambitious council and strive to deliver better outcomes for everyone.

The world is changing at a rapid pace environmentally, socially, economically with digital technology having a significant impact across society and how we interact with each other locally, nationally and internationally. As a Council we must be flexible and adaptable transforming the way we do things in the most appropriate way, responding to government policy direction and meeting the needs of local people and businesses.

We cannot do this on our own. We need our public and private sector partners to work with us to create jobs; build and improve homes; increase skills and qualifications; support communities; improve health and wellbeing etc. That’s why our Corporate Plan is for everyone - councillors, staff, partners, residents, businesses – all who can support the Council and the Borough in being the best it can possibly be.

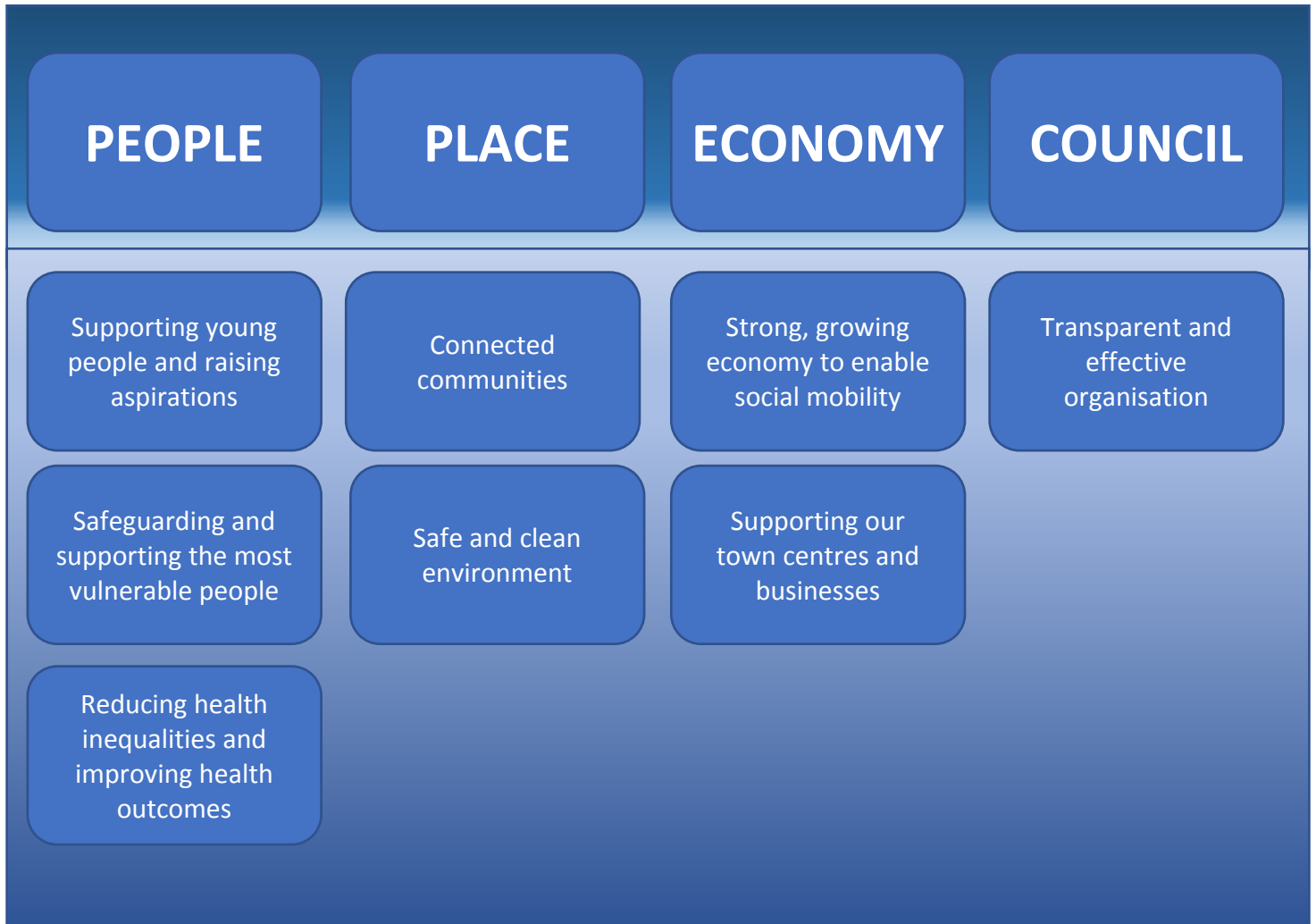
Our Corporate Plan outlines the Council’s core priorities and ambitions over the next four years. It brings together all of our council strategies and plans including the [Social Integration Strategy](#), Digital Strategy, Workforce Strategy. Our Department Business Plans will set out the activities and priority actions to support our Corporate Plan ambitions. The Plan is complimentary to the Local Strategic Partnership’s emerging Plan for Prosperity 2030 which will articulate the strategic vision for the Borough across partners.

Our citizens are critical to the success of the Borough and our Corporate Priorities focus on creating a good quality of life for all of our residents from birth to older age.

Signed by:

Leader *Chief Executive*

Visual outline of strategic themes and priorities to be developed here...



OUR CORPORATE PRIORITIES

PEOPLE: A GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL OUR RESIDENTS

Our Borough has the largest population across Lancashire with almost 150,000 people. We have a younger than average age profile with 28.5% of our population aged under 20, offering great potential for the future. By 2041, population projections show that the 65+ age group will have risen by almost 40% demonstrating the broad age profile of the Borough.

We know that some areas of our Borough have social and economic challenges including high levels of economic inactivity, poor health and wellbeing indicators, lower than average skill levels and relatively low earnings.

However, our key stage 4 outcomes are improving and generally good across the Borough along with a higher than average apprenticeship take up. We have two of the country's top performing secondary schools in our Borough and our primary schools are performing better than the regional and national average. Employer and education collaboration within the Borough is high with all secondary schools linked directly with a large private sector employer. This is being strengthened further with links developing into primary schools. We are proud to have retained our 'good' OFSTED rating in Children's Services.

To increase and improve life chances for all our residents we are investing in health and care provision by delivering increased levels of activity through Sport England funding, investing in extra care housing provision and working with partners to develop a health care system based on prevention.

Priority 1. Supporting young people and raising aspirations

Our young people are the future of our Borough and we are committed to support them from birth and through their journey to becoming adults.

We will:

- work with parents and carers to enable them to access good quality early years education and learning so that our children are ready for a strong start at school.
- work with our schools, communities and partners to continue to nurture well rounded independent young people.
- work with all of the schools, colleges and partners to support young people in achieving their full potential.
- work with partners and Hive Business School to ensure young people have access to clear careers advice and guidance and are equipped with the skills and qualities to access jobs.

Priority 2. Safeguarding and supporting the most vulnerable people

We have a duty to safeguard people of all ages to be safe from harm and live a life free from abuse, neglect and unfair treatment, and support those who choose to live independently.

We will:

- provide support locally and at the earliest opportunity to ensure people are safeguarded and protected.
- work with partners to guarantee that people in need of support and protection continue to receive it from the right agencies at the right time for as long as they need it.
- support our safeguarding partnerships arrangements to ensure that local agencies co-ordinate their work to safeguard vulnerable people of all ages and are effective.

Priority 3. Reducing health inequalities and improving health outcomes

We are committed to increasing life chances for our residents by improving health and wellbeing; creating healthy places and giving all people the opportunity to Start Well, Live Well and Age Well.

We will:

- work with people earlier to prevent ill health and poor wellbeing, promoting self-care and supporting independence to enable people to live well at home.
- work with our partners to make sure that our residents have access to good quality sporting and leisure facilities across the Borough and can access wellbeing activity in their local neighbourhoods.
- work with the NHS, third sector, public sector partners and business to improve people's mental health and wellbeing through advice, support and activities.
- consider the impact on health and wellbeing in all of our services.
- work with local NHS services to reform, integrate and improve the health and social care system and to extend the investment in prevention for all of our residents.

PLACE: COMMUNITY PRIDE IN A VIBRANT PLACE TO LIVE AND VISIT

As a multi-cultural Borough, the area is home to many people with diverse ethnicities and identities. In 2018 the Council was selected as one of five pilot areas for the Government's Integration Area Programme. Underpinning this programme is our vision for a strong, cohesive and prosperous community, where everyone is treated fairly, where people's faith and culture are understood and respected, and a place where people connect and form friendships that span every characteristic of society.

As a Council we are immensely proud of our towns and heritage and our 2018 residents' survey confirms that our residents are generally satisfied with their local area and proud of their town centres and sense of community. We want to develop this further through a strengthened relationship with residents based on civic pride, active participation and social responsibility within natural neighbourhoods and the wider environment.

To celebrate the towns, boost the local economy and bring our communities together, we welcome and support a range of festivals and events across the Borough and in both of our town centres, which also puts us on the national stage. In 2017 we hosted the first National Festival of Making which is now held each year bringing over 30,000 people into the Borough, gaining national recognition at the UK Festival Awards.

Priority 4. Connected communities

Communities bring a sense of belonging for many people, breaking through social isolation and building personal resilience. We remain committed to strengthening resilient communities and groups.

We will:

- ensure that residents have access to a broad range of good quality festivals and events across the Borough to bring neighbourhoods and communities together.
- make volunteering easier and work with partners and residents to direct volunteer support where it's needed the most.
- support communities and community groups to access funding and other resources.
- work with communities to become digitally enabled.
- recognise the achievements of our communities and the valuable contribution of residents.
- support activity to enable people from different backgrounds or beliefs to integrate.

Priority 5. Safe and clean environment

We want the Borough to be a safe and clean place to live and visit, promoting pride in the area and environment.

We will:

- work with our residents, schools and businesses to raise awareness of the positive environmental and financial impacts of recycling
- work with communities, environmental organisations and groups to help keep neighbourhoods clean and tidy.
- continue to invest in our roads and pavements to make sure they are safer.
- work with our citizens and businesses to promote behaviours, using enforcement action where necessary and in the best interest of public protection.

ECONOMY: A STRONG AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMY WITH CONTINUED GROWTH

Blackburn with Darwen is in a prime location. It is one of the largest and fastest growing urban centres in Lancashire and wider North West, with close proximity to Manchester with much improved access by rail and road, and surrounded by open countryside and desirable rural villages. The M65 creates an East-West growth corridor of strategic importance of regional importance, with further improvements in road and rail connectivity ensuring Pennine Lancashire is at the economic heart of the Northern Powerhouse. Access to superfast and ultrafast broadband and 4G connectivity out-perform national benchmarks and we are home to a number of high profile global businesses such as EuroGarages, Crown Paints, Graham and Brown, Herbert Parkinson, and Blackburn Rovers.

Health is our largest economic sector with the manufacturing industry the second largest. These sectors will be key to driving local productivity, growth and innovation. We are also near to other national manufacturing assets such as Samlesbury Aerospace Enterprise Zone. We will maximise these linkages and opportunities. Whilst resident economic activity rates have remained relatively low, productivity growth has been strong. Since 2010, the value of our local economy has grown more rapidly than the national average and faster than all Core Cities in the North of England.

A strong and sustainable economy is crucial and underpins the delivery of high quality public services. We have in place ambitious development, infrastructure and growth opportunities to secure strong and inclusive growth outcomes for our residents and communities and will continue to work with our partners to further strengthen our attractiveness, as a place to live, invest, visit and enjoy. Our complimentary business and investor engagement work will leverage local business and economic success, an emerging pipeline of strategic development opportunities whilst celebrating our youthful, dynamic and culturally rich population. Our town centres will continue to be developed with a strong cultural and economic offer and as destinations of choice for new residents, visitors and investors.

Priority 6. Strong, growing economy to enable social mobility

We are committed to making sure that everyone of working age is able to access jobs, career progression and make a positive contribution to the economy, irrespective of their social circumstances and background.

We will:

- work with our partners to improve productivity through skills, innovation, sector and trade programmes.
- develop and deliver a strategic pipeline of growth programmes attracting investment and generating new economic, housing and infrastructure growth opportunities.
- deliver sustained growth and higher value employment for all our residents as an enabler to social mobility.
- provide a broad and good quality house choice for all our residents, transforming old housing stock, building new homes and working with private and social landlords to improve the rental market.
- work with partners and investors to secure the Borough regionally and nationally as an investment priority.

Priority 7. Supporting our town centres and businesses

Thriving town centres and businesses are crucial to the success of the Borough and its residents. We are committed to creating the right environment and support to maximise growth and increase investment.

We will:

- work with partners to strengthen the economic and cultural offers of Blackburn and Darwen town centres.
- promote and encourage local procurement to support local businesses.
- work with Hive to establish a powerful business network to promote Blackburn with Darwen and support wider engagement with new investors to the Borough.
- encourage entrepreneurship and new business growth drawing on our young, culturally rich and dynamic population.

COUNCIL: DELIVERED BY A STRONG AND RESILIENT COUNCIL

2018 was a significant year for the Council as a whole, celebrating 20 years as a unitary authority, implementing electoral changes reducing councillors from 64 to 51 and wards from 23 to 17 and importantly being nationally recognised by industry experts, the Municipal Journal, as Local Authority of the Year.

The Panel of independent judges said *“the breadth of the council’s achievements for its communities is outstanding regardless of socio-economic and fiscal challenges. This is underpinned by strong, consistent and humble leadership and an unwavering mission to put the customer first”*.

The Council invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a [Corporate Peer Challenge](#) in December 2018 to provide some independent challenge and feedback on our performance as a council. It found that our political and managerial leadership is well respected; that we have a deep understanding of our local place; that partners have confidence in us; that we understand our financial challenges; and that our support to communities is strong. The public sector is rightly judged on the quality of services to people and businesses and we are immensely proud that our 2018 Residents Survey told us that 71% of people are satisfied with the Council.

We want to build on this further, harnessing the continued dedication and passion from employees and members by providing consistently reliable services with the right support at the right time, enabling greater independence whilst safeguarding and supporting those who need it most. We’ve already developed different ways of working, transforming services to become more efficient. We will continue to adapt and modify our practices to meet the demands of our citizens and businesses.

Priority 8. Transparent and effective organisation

Residents and businesses must have confidence in the Council and we remain committed to being the best we can possibly be.

We will:

- ensure that all our services are delivered in a cost effective and efficient way supported by technology and in collaboration with our partners and citizens.
- make best use of our available resources and assets providing value for money for residents and businesses.
- be open and transparent in our leadership and governance.
- maximise external funding and be commercially active bringing greater resilience to our finances.
- take active steps across all council departments to reduce our carbon footprint and be even more environmentally and ecologically aware.

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES THAT UNDERPIN EVERYTHING WE DO

Digital

The digital world is playing an increasing part in people's lives, we want to harness the opportunities digital brings and make sure we don't leave anyone behind.

We will work collaboratively with our partners to enable access to digital skills and the internet for all, helping to connect people, communities and places. Working with our partners in industry, education and the public sector we will aim to improve local opportunities in the digital sector, supporting new and existing business to take advantage of technology & innovation to improve productivity and growth and create new digital jobs for the future.

We will operate as a digitally enabled and intelligent council, continually improving quality and efficiency in all we do, making us sustainable, fit for the future. We will harness the opportunities provided by data technologies to drive a more personalised and improved service to the people of the borough. We will equip our workforce with the right devices, tools and skills to work in modern and agile ways.

We'll offer 24/7 digital services, automating tasks and transactions wherever possible so that our teams are freed up to deal with complex requests and support the residents who need 1-1 contact the most.

Partnership working

The LGA Peer Review in December 2018 highlighted that our partners have real confidence in the Council and that we are seen as an effective partner across the region. We are committed to continuing to work closely with our partners to deliver services and build capacity across the sectors. Our partners include other public sector organisations, businesses, education providers, government departments, third and faith organisations, community groups and citizens.

Fairness for all

Everyone has the right to an equal opportunity to make the most of their life and talents. Equality recognises that historically certain groups of people with protected characteristics such as race, religion, disability, sex and sexual orientation have experienced discrimination. We will continue to fulfil our duty in ensuring fairness for all of our employees and that decision making will meet our legal obligations.

Promoting and celebrating the Borough

We are proud of our borough and its heritage and through each of our corporate plan priorities we will continue to promote a positive image of the area so that our residents and businesses share our pride and regionally and nationally we are recognised as a fantastic place to live, work, visit and invest.

HOW WE WILL DELIVER OUR PRIORITIES

All of our employees and Councillors are key to delivering the priorities of our Corporate Plan together and we want them to be positive role models across all of our activities.

We have an in-depth training programme for our Councillors and will continue to refresh this regular, working with the LGA, so that our politicians are well equipped to understand their important roles within the Council and representing their communities.

Positive behaviours and practices are crucial from everyone and we are committed to recruiting and retaining the right people with the right skills and behaviours. We will continue to support our own employees to progress and grow within the organisation and provide continuous professional development and training opportunities both within the Council and through partnership working. We will ensure that all employees have an input into developing departmental business plans, co-design business processes and activities, identify digital solutions and highlight any opportunities to work more effectively.

The health and wellbeing of our employees and councillors is very important and we will continue to promote positive activities which everyone will have the opportunity to engage with to support and improve their wellbeing.

MEASURING OUR PERFORMANCE

The success of our Corporate Plan will be measured through a new performance management framework with Key Performance Indicators which are measurable and meaningful. We will also work collaboratively with partners to analyse information about our Borough to ensure we are delivering services in the right way to have the biggest impact.

Background information

Residents Survey 2018

LGA Peer Review 2018

Independent Economic Analysis – SQW 2018



REPORT OF:	REPORT OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE
TO:	COUNCIL FORUM
ON:	28TH MARCH 2019

SUBJECT: COUNCILLOR DISCLOSURE & BARRING SERVICE CHECKS

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To consider revisions to the current policy on the safeguarding and probity checks applied to Councillors.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council Forum is asked to

1. To agree that following election each councillor be asked to undertake a basic disclosure check which would detail any unspent convictions in line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act
2. Subject to 1) above, to agree that following election any councillor who by nature of occupation/role has a DBS certificate of not more than 4 years old be allowed to utilise this certificate (known as portability) to meet requirement 1, but will be asked to undertake a basic disclosure check on the anniversary of the 4th year of the issuing of this certificate or submit a revised (portability based) certificate at that time.
3. Subject to 1) above, to agree, that the cost of the basic disclosure, currently £25, be borne by the councillor from their allowances payments.
4. Subject to 1) – 3) above, and in order to implement the new arrangements ask the Monitoring Officer to develop a DBS Policy incorporating these new arrangements as set out in this report in consultation with the Standards Committee, bringing the Policy for approval of full council in the summer.
5. To agree that the Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, to express the view that in support of the Code of Conduct for Councilors and the expectations as referenced in the Section 27(2) of the localism Act 201, all elected members of Council's should be subject of `enhanced` disclosure and barring services checks.

3. BACKGROUND

In January the Council Forum noted that the Committee had looked at the current practice regarding undertaking police checks via the appropriate regulations. Currently a risk assessment is undertaken and specific Councillor roles where they may have access or personal data relating to health, children or vulnerable adults, such as the Leader and Executive Members for Children Young People & Education, and for Adults and Health, and these roles are subject to full `enhanced` checks.

Currently all prospective councillors make a personal declaration on nomination for office as regards criminal convictions, however when elected unless their terms of office include specific health, childrens or vulnerable adults related activity, the current national regulations do not permit the Council to ask Councillors to agree to enhanced police and barred list checks.

The Standards Committee however considered that given the important role played by Councillors in the Community and the general expectations of the public as regards probity and integrity, it would be reasonable for the Council to adopt a policy where every Councillor following their election be expected to agree to a police conviction check, known as a basic disclosure, which is permitted within the regulations. (Given some holders of office would already by virtue of other occupations have DBS certificates – the Council would also accept these under the portability arrangements, reducing the total number of checks required.)

The Standards Committee also expressed the view that the cost of any basic disclosures should be borne by the Councillor, funded from their members allowance. The cycle of re-checks, being the election cycle (i.e. every 4 years).

Any new arrangements would need to be set out in a written DBS Policy approved by Council. Subject to the consideration of this report by the Council Forum it is suggested therefore that the Monitoring Officer be asked to develop a Policy which would include would fully set out the process for carrying out checks, the type of DBS check, retention/storage of the DBS certificates, renewal, portability, the use of the disclosure information, access to information and what actions would be taken and by whom on the disclosure of convictions.

The Standards Committee also considered that the role of the modern councillor by its nature meant regular `unsupervised` access to and representation of vulnerable people in a variety of settings and they felt the current rules prohibiting the higher `enhanced` level of check for all councillors should be reconsidered by government.

In this context the Standards Committee have asked the Council Forum to agree that the Chief Executive be asked to write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, to express the view that in support of the Code of Conduct for Councilors and the expectations as referenced in the Section 27(2) of the localism Act 2011, all elected members of Council's should be subject of `enhanced` disclosure and barring services checks.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Councils current policy on the disclosure and barring checks would be changed by the approval of this report and a new Policy would be developed for consideration and approval by the full council.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications from the adoption of the recommendations as set out in this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no specific legal requirement to undertake DBS checks on elected members, but the Council can lawfully decide to introduce DBS checks. This was debated at the Standards Committee on 14 January 2019, and made recommendations to Council as the decision-making body to consider and determine the recommendations

The current disqualification rules for councillors and mayors contained in section 80, Local Government Act 1972 includes a provision that anyone convicted of an offence carrying a prison sentence of more than three months (without the option of a fine) is banned from serving as a local Councillor. Individual candidates are required to make a self-declaration on the prescribed form during the nomination process that they are not disqualified to stand and be elected as a local councillor. Currently, no DBS or other checks are undertaken by the Council. However, under section 27, Localism Act 2011 there is a duty on the Council to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority.

DBS checks by the Council will need to be in accordance with The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. A DBS policy will should be developed and approved by Council before any DBS checks on elected members can be implemented. This is to ensure lawfulness and transparency in the Council's procedures when undertaking DBS checks for elected members.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Existing resources from the Governance Services team and Human Resources teams would be required to develop and assure the Policy. Current resources from the Governance team would also be required to manage and deliver the revised policy.

10. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no equality issues arising from this report.

11. CONSULTATIONS

The proposals from this report have been developed by the Standards Committee for the approval of full Council. The adoption of a new DBS Policy would also be subject to a recommendation from the Standards Committee to full council ensuring all Councillors who would be impacted by the changes have had opportunity to consider and debate before final decision.

Chief Officer/Member

Contact Officer: David Fairclough
Date: 7 March 2019
Background Papers: Standards Committee Reports and Minutes January 2019

REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Councillor Saima Afzal

**PORTFOLIO COORDINATING
DIRECTOR: David Fairclough**

Complaints Update to the Standards Committee

The Committee received a report confirming that no complaints had been received regarding Members Conduct under the Arrangements for dealing with complaints about the `Code of Conduct for Members`. The report covered the period between 21st December 2018 and 1st March 2019. The Committee is kept up to date on complaints received throughout the year, how these are being dealt with and outcomes.

Handling Vexatious Complaints and the Code of Practice

The Committee considered the current arrangements for handling vexatious complaints and supporting guidance. No Changes were proposed.

Local Government Ethical Standards

The Committee reviewed the Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life published in January 2019, on the subject of ethical standards in local government. The Localism Act 2011 provides the current legal framework for local authority standards. The report presented to the Prime Minister by the Committee for Standards in Public Life, provides a series of recommendations related to potential changes to this framework. The Standards Committee noted that should a number of these recommendations be adopted by government they would change the current Standards Regime and process adopted by Councils and therefore amend the responsibilities of the Standards Committee and the arrangements for the handling Code of Conduct Complaints. The full report is publicly available via:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-government-ethical-standards

**Councillor Saima Afzal
Chair of the Standards Committee.**

Council Forum 28th March 2019

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

The Committee meets on 25th March and will continue to progress its work programme.

The Committee will be looking at the following issues.

Sickness Absence and Wellbeing

This will follow on from the work at the last meeting of the Committee and the information subsequently received by members. Recommendations will be considered by Committee for forwarding to the Executive Member for response.

Corporate Asset Strategy and Disposal Policy.

The Committee will receive information from the Deputy Chief Executive on how the Council manages its assets and the policy followed for disposal. The Committee will consider recommendations for the Executive Member to respond to.

Digital Engagement Strategy.

The Committee will review the work of the Task Group set up to look at the Council's Digital Engagement Strategy. The Task Group met on 25th February with the Director of Digital and Business Change and looked at how the strategy was developing and in particular how the strategy would seek to include those hard to reach groups and ensure that all areas of society were included. Recommendations will be drawn up at the meeting.

The Committee will report on progress to Council Meeting on the issues considered by them.

Council Forum 28th March 2019

Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee

This report updates Council Forum on the progress of the Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4th March 2019.

Joint Working on Mental Health and the Work of the Lancashire Care Foundation Trust.

The Committee welcomed representatives from the Lancashire Care Foundation Trust. The Trust has been undertaking a programme of improvements and welcomed the opportunity to discuss the progress to date and the timeline for improvement of services. The Committee were informed that work would look at using what was available and re-shaping services to meet the needs of service users. There had been a significant increase in activity, especially through presentation at accident and emergency departments. The Committee were informed of the multi- agency crisis plans that were in place to deal with issues such as suicide prevention and how these added value to services provided and could identify issues that needed addressing to assist those in need. The need for early intervention was stressed and the Trust's priority was to deliver services as locally as possible and through schools and not Accident and Emergency Departments.

The Trust gave details of the resources available to them and the access they had to additional services in the private sector that could assist in dealing with pressures that arose. The services provided were currently being mapped on a Lancashire wide basis and transformation would happen over a period of 2-3 years. The aim of the review would be to reduce the need for beds and provide the preventative services that would reduce this need. The Trust worked with all partners including the Local Authority and CCG to meet need and address issues that were presented.

The Trust undertook to come back to the Committee in the near future to outline progress on the reshaping of services to meet need and progress on the introduction of early preventative interventions and outcomes.

Safeguarding

The Committee received an update on the work that was being undertaken to safeguard children in the borough, the work that was going on with partners to ensure that we keep children safe was outlined and the work that is underway to enhance this. The Committee agreed to review progress early in the new municipal year.

Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group

The Committee received an update on the work of the Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory group and proposals for the group to ensure that the outcomes

for looked after children were as high as possible. The Group would be looking to restructure the way it worked to have themed focus groups which would enable members to get more involved and ensure that the best possible outcomes are achieved.

Sylvia Liddle

Chair of the Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Council Forum 28th March 2019

Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee continued to progress its work programme looking at the issues relating to Refuse Disposal and Recycling and the Council's Enforcement Policy. The Committee will put forward recommendations for the Executive Member to consider and respond to at the next meeting.

Waste Disposal and Recycling.

The Committee received information based on the scope and focus that they had agreed following the last meeting.

The Committee examined the work being carried out to ensure that recycling rates were increasing and that targets were met. The Committee examined how the service continued to perform and that this was as an efficient performing recycler and producer of effective services to meet the needs of the citizens of the borough and targets set by the government.

The Committee agreed that the Executive Member for Environment be requested to consider

- further publicity of the availability of the assisted bin collections for those in need of the service to ensure that collections are as inclusive and responsive to the needs of all users
- that further publicity and outreach work be undertaken to ensure that people are aware that larger bins are available for families etc. reducing the consequences of lack of space in bins.
- that the future development of civic amenity sites be reported to an appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee when in the early stages to enable the views of members to be incorporated.

Enforcement

The Committee looked at the policy relating to the Enforcement Action taken by the Council and its partners. The Committee examined the areas where the Council took enforcement action and the way that this was carried out. They looked at the difficulties of enforcement action and how this was carried out and the areas and age ranges that enforcement actions related to. The Committee agreed-

- That the work on enforcement be commended and especially those operatives on the ground who face intimidation and provocation in the course of their work.
- That a more detailed breakdown of the time spent in locations be provided to ensure that we can be sure that no area is receiving concentration of effort at the expense of others.

- That an information sheet be given to members on the ways in which CCTV or video evidence can be used by the Council to assist in obtaining prosecutions relating to enforcement

Naushad Surve

Chair of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR MOHAMMED KHAN

Date: 28th March 2019

It is almost a year since we implemented the recommendations of the Electoral review seamlessly reducing our number of councillors and wards. Reflecting over the municipal year we have a lot to be proud of as a Council including MJ Local Authority of the year, successful National Festival of Making, significant investment in our town centres and at our employment sites along the M65, continued housing growth, supporting and celebrating our volunteers through Your Call as well as celebrating 20 years as a unitary authority.

As we begin the new municipal year we will be launching our new Corporate Plan with eight new priorities focussed on creating a good quality of life for all of our residents. We will continue to maximise opportunities for funding through the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and press for funding from the Government, including future High Street Fund which we anticipate our local MPs will support.

Pennine Lancashire unitary authority

As members are aware, the Council Leaders of Burnley, Pendle, Rossendale and myself have sent a letter to James Brokenshire, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government seeking to explore options for setting up a new Unitary Authority for Pennine Lancashire.

We have the backing of local MPs and I am sure my fellow elected members will understand the significant opportunity and benefit a Pennine Lancashire unitary would bring, increasing our financial capability and capacity to match neighbouring city regions and further improve local outcomes. Subject to receiving a positive response from the Government, we expect this to be a challenging but exciting opportunity for all concerned and I will ensure that elected members are fully informed on progress.

Social Integration

Our MHCLG funded social integration programme, *Our Community, Our Future*, is picking up pace as we approach the end of Year 1.

The four priorities in Blackburn with Darwen's *Our Community, Our Future* strategy are:

1. To increase economic prosperity for all the borough's communities as an essential prerequisite for social integration
2. To strengthen relationships between the borough's diverse communities (focussed predominantly on adults)
3. To build connections and strengthen relationships between young people who live in the borough's diverse communities
4. To connect the borough's disadvantaged communities to shared spaces – linking people and neighbourhoods to zones of employment, physical assets, community shared spaces and social action.

To help deliver the programme's four priorities a number of projects have been out for tender for Community Voices, Community Ambassadors, Youth Voices, Youth Ambassadors, Workplace Integration Ambassadors and Apprenticeship & Volunteer Work Placements. Evaluation for all the submissions have been completed and there's now further clarification and implementation work to be done over the next few weeks prior to partners' appointments.

To help support the delivery of the programme additional staff have been recruited to the core team. Also, the Local Integration Partnership Board is now known as the Our Community, Our Future Board and work is progressing on a visual identity for the programme.

Solidarity with the people of New Zealand

The community of Blackburn with Darwen came together outside Blackburn Town Hall on Monday 18th March to attend a minute's silence to pay their respects for the victims and everyone affected by the attack.

I would like to thank Abdul Hamid Quereshi, Chief Officer of Lancashire Council of Mosques, Rev Canon Brian McConkey from Blackburn Cathedral, and the Secretary of the Interfaith Forum Derek Estill for their attendance and kind words.

I would also like to thank council staff and the community for coming together and would like to reiterate that the attack will not divide us and we will make sure we are united with one voice and send a message to these individuals - you are not going to win.

Health and care integration update

The North, East, West & Darwen Primary Care Neighbourhood Groups have now reached a six month milestone. Following attendance at the NHS England Time for Care programme the group members continue to work collaboratively to develop their project plans. This includes the identification of milestones and key indicators to help keep the projects moving forwards.

To help share the progress of each of the Primary Care Neighbourhoods across the Integrated Care Partnership, group members have been invited to attend the Local Integrated Care Partnership Board bi-monthly meetings. At January's meeting, Darwen Primary Care Neighbourhood members presented an update on their plans and achievements to date. They also highlighted the main focus for their neighbourhood group which is a joint project with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to support people with health and wellbeing needs to return to work.

A development session was held in February to help align the key priorities outlined within the newly released NHS Long Term Plan with the Integrated Care Partnership across Blackburn with Darwen. Representatives included GP Leads, Executives and Senior Officers from across the whole partnership. It is envisaged that the key outcomes from the session will be included in a jointly agreed plan to guide next steps.

National Festival of Making 2019

The National Festival of Making will take place on 15th and 16th June 2019 in Blackburn town centre. Planning and preparations are progressing with our partners with further communication and marketing to be issued next month. Information will also be made available next month around how to volunteer and I encourage you all to give a few hours and support this great family festival.

Community Volunteer Awards

The Council has joined forces this year with Community CVS to organise the Community Volunteers Awards. The awards aim to recognise those individuals, groups and businesses whose efforts have a big impact in their local neighbourhoods. There are 12 categories including the Good Neighbour Award, the Young People's Award and the Community Involvement Award – with a total of 21 awards up for grabs.

Nominations are open until Friday 5th April and I personally want to see lots of nominations for the good neighbour category. This category recognises those who go the extra mile for the people on their street, whether it's popping in to make a brew for an elderly neighbour or it's taking the bins out for everyone.

The Community Volunteer Awards will be presented at a special celebration event in King George's Hall on 10th June.

Sport England update

Working with Sport England, Pennine Lancashire's Together an Active Future is moving forward into the £3m Pathfinder phase. This exciting 'test and learn' period will enable the 6 Local Authority areas, including Blackburn with Darwen to develop their local delivery plans to engage with people who are inactive and have poor mental wellbeing.

A robust investment framework will be submitted to Sport England so that resource for Blackburn with Darwen can be secured and drawn down, in line with clear principles for investment which are based on community involvement, local insight, expertise, passion, co-design and planning. This Pathfinder 'test and learn' phase is an important step to demonstrating effectiveness in order to access a share of a further £7m of Accelerator funding and shouldn't be rushed and needs to be undertaken in the right way.

Gaining an understanding of how local people feel about physical activity and to hear their ideas about how to increase levels of activity is crucial. A Pennine population survey has been launched to enable people to have their say and get involved and details will be published on line shortly. The closing date for the survey is 30th April and I ask you all to encourage Blackburn with Darwen residents to complete it.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH & ADULT SOCIAL CARE
COUNCILLOR BRIAN TAYLOR

PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING DIRECTORS:
DOMINIC HARRISON (HEALTH)
SAYYED OSMAN (ADULT SOCIAL CARE)
DATE: 28th March 2019

HEALTH

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)

The Council is committed to preventing and addressing the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on our population. Recent highlights of the work taking place in Blackburn with Darwen and across Pennine Lancashire include:

North West Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma Conference: In January over 200 delegates attended a conference hosted by Public Health England North West, which brought together policymakers and practitioners from councils, health bodies, police, schools and voluntary, community and faith organisations to learn about good practice and innovative approaches for preventing and addressing ACEs and trauma. The Blackburn with Darwen and Pennine Lancashire ACE programme was featured and Cllr Brian Taylor hosted the expert panel session.

Resilience film screenings: To raise awareness of ACEs the Council has hosted ten community screenings of the ACE film 'Resilience' in locations such as schools, church halls, community centres and cafés. Over 500 people, representing both the community and wider workforce have attended the screenings together with a facilitated Q&A session. Due to popular demand more are planned for 2019/20.

ACE e-Learning: The Council has developed a new e-learning course to help build awareness and understanding of ACEs and what can be done prevent and address them. The course is relevant to community members and all staff working in public services, free to access, with no previous knowledge of ACEs required and aims to:

- Introduce the concept of ACEs and build awareness of ACE science
- Promote the benefits and importance of being ACE aware and relevance to the learners own life or role
- Empower the learner to start to take action to prevent and address ACEs
- Provide an introduction to practical tools and techniques for preventing and addressing ACEs
- Signpost to sources of further information, resources and support.

Over 352 people undertook the course during the first month, including 165 Council staff.

The Blackburn with Darwen ACEs Hub: A growing number of people are connected both virtually and face to face by our ACEs Hub. The Hub is in its very early stages and its success depends on as many of us as possible actively learning, sharing and supporting one another on our ACEs journey [@AceHubBwD](#) and [#ACEawareBwD](#).

CHILD OBESITY TRAILBLAZER

Child obesity is a local public health priority because of the potential long-term impact on physical and mental wellbeing. Innovation has included support for the development of training and resources for front line staff, based on needs identified by one of our local GPs. From this strong base, Blackburn with Darwen Council led a Pennine Lancashire bid that has been selected to receive funding as part of the National Childhood Obesity Trailblazer Programme, which is intended to test the limits of existing powers and develop solutions to local obstacles aiming to enable ambitious local action and to achieve change at scale.

Blackburn with Darwen is one of thirteen councils selected to receive funding to develop a detailed proposal for the full three-year programme, which will be based on four key areas of engagement: community, business, system leadership and Regulation & Policy. The three year trailblazer programme is anticipated to commence in late May 2019, with up to five sites selected to lead projects to implement their plans.

PASSIVE SENSORS

With the Health and Social Care Secretary calling for new service models that focus on prevention and keeping people well, living in the community, and out of hospital for longer, the Connected Healthy Communities ground-breaking research, is testing new 'passive sensor' technology in 100 homes of vulnerable older adults living in Higher Croft and Edgworth. The sensors track changes in heat, humidity and movement, to predict risk, and trigger responses, to help them stay safe.

Care Network, Blackburn with Darwen Age UK, Healthy Living, Blackburn with Darwen Carers Service and Community Business Partners are helping to identify people aged over 50 and living alone to take part in the study and help test the sensors in their homes. East Lancashire Deaf Society has been supporting sensor installation, with all those that taking part also benefiting from a free handyperson service undertaking small jobs around the home, such as fixing a door knob or changing a bulb. The project is supported by the Lancashire Digital Health Board with further development support from Lancaster University.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

LEARNING DISABILITIES BOARD

Care Network has been contracted to facilitate the Learning Disability and Autism Partnership Boards from 1st April 2019 for three years which ensures the Board's current successful profile continues. A user led Learning Disability and Autism Strategy will be produced in line with the NHS long term plan.

The Blackburn with Darwen Boards provide a platform for people to identify their local needs and contribute to service planning. Five service users, supported by the Learning Disability Board attended the Regional Learning Disability conference in Blackpool where they were able to proudly contribute their thoughts and opinions on what is working well and what they would all like to develop further.

CHANGES TO SAFEGUARDING ADULTS ARRANGEMENTS

The Safeguarding Adults Team has been a stand-alone specialist team since 2008 and during this time the main responsibility for safeguarding vulnerable adults across the department has been with this team. In line with the move to integration with partners and neighbourhoods, a new model has been established where the Safeguarding Team is incorporated into the wider teams within Adult Social Care.

The move will support and upskill the wider workforce on safeguarding and support and upskill the safeguarding social workers in care management.

The change in arrangements will commence from 1st April 2019 and a staged approach will be taken to ensure that all aspects of safeguarding adults continues to be addressed. Initially the safeguarding social workers will be acting as safeguarding champions in their respective teams and will take a lead on safeguarding enquiries whilst working alongside their colleagues. Longer term the aim is to embed safeguarding practice throughout each of

the wider teams which enables the safeguarding social workers to not only undertake care management work, but also to lead on more complex safeguarding issues across the teams.

Four of the social workers in the safeguarding team will integrate into the three neighbourhood teams of North and East, West and Darwen plus the Hospital/Home First team. The remaining social worker will maintain a central role and be responsible for leading on domestic abuse, attending Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and linking in with the Complex Case Hub alongside providing the link to the other specialist teams (Learning Disability and Mental Health).

INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICE

The Occupational Therapy and Moving and Handling Service has been working with community equipment provider NRS Healthcare in order to strengthen the agreement to ensure a fast reliable service and delivery of equipment, including emergency replacements of equipment over weekends.

The current contract includes a dedicated NRS Occupational Therapist, which allows for open communication between therapists and assessors working out in the community direct to the loan stores; matching and making best use of recycled equipment and making savings rather than purchasing new stock.

The service has encouraged a therapeutic approach to support strength based assessment across the department which includes the Sensory Impairment Service providing rehabilitation and mobility and orientation training for the visually impaired within the borough who are adapting to the new improved layout of the town centre and amenities.

The Independent Living Service has been involved with an independent Disabled Facilities Grant review on how the grant is managed and implemented and scored highly in all areas. Waiting times for Occupational Therapy have reduced to 8 weeks which is significantly lower than other authorities across Lancashire.

**Council Forum Report of the the Executive Member for Regeneration
Portfolio Co-ordinating Director – Director of Growth and Development
28 March 2019**

FISHMOOR DEVELOPMENT

Countryside Homes have completed all surveys at the Fishmoor development sites. A formal pre-planning application to seek comments on emerging proposals has been submitted to the Council. Scheme proposals will be finalised following planning comments and will be submitted to the Council for consideration over the coming weeks. Emerging proposals outline around 380 new family homes for market sale, affordable rent/shared ownership and homes for private rent.

GRIFFIN HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

The Council's preferred bidder has completed further surveys on the site to confirm land contamination, statutory services locations etc to help optimise the scheme layout. Emerging proposals outline around 140 new family homes for sale, affordable rent and private rent. The refined proposals are planned to be submitted to the Council over the next few weeks for consideration. The new development will provide quality family housing in a safe and attractive environment.

LANESIDE CPO

The Laneside CPO was made on 26th July 2018 and submitted to the Secretary of State for confirmation on 2nd August 2018. The owner, Oriental Developments Limited, objected to the Council's application for confirmation of the CPO and a public inquiry was held on the 26th February 2019. The Council presented a strong case and was supported by attendance from residents and ward members. The Planning Inspectorate has advised that a decision will be made around the 8th of April.

ALASKA STREET DEVELOPMENT

The Council has appointed one of its strategic partners, Places for People (PfP), to develop 73 new family homes for affordable rent on the Alaska St site. The new homes will be through Modern Methods of Construction and will be manufactured off-site and erected on site. The development will provide good quality family homes to complement the extensive regeneration and new build previously undertaken by PfP in the Infirmary Waterside area. PfP are expected to start preparing the site for the build programme from May 2019.

DARWEN MARKET SQUARE

Public realm works are progressing on the Market Square with completion expected in April. Works have been managed to minimise disruption to traders and users of the area. The structure, walls, planting beds and refurbished railings are in place with paving quarried from Brinscall. New artworks have been commissioned following extensive consultation with the local community and will be installed at the end of the construction period. The Square will be available for events in May, including Darwen Music Live, and a programme is being developed in conjunction with the Town Council and other organisers.

GROWTH DEAL TRANSPORT SCHEMES

Ellison Fold Way, Darwen, is now open and for the first time directly links Marsh House Lane with Ivinson Road. The 750m residential link road, funded through Growth Deal 2, has been designed to improve access to South East Darwen and to open up land around Bailey's Field which will allow the building of new family homes.

Progress continues in relation to the Council's other Growth Deal 3 Transport schemes. Works are advancing at Furthergate with the new Gorse Street/New Burnley Road junction now visible. This scheme is expected to complete in Summer 2019. The North Blackburn Growth Deal 3 scheme is on-site with pre-works underway. Junction improvements at Pleckgate Road and Whalley Old Road will follow-on from works at Brownhill Roundabout later in the year.

VICTORIA STREET/NORTHGATE LINK ROAD

The Victoria Street/Northgate Link Road scheme started in February 2019. Groundworks are in progress and the old Northgate section of the highway has been unearthed, with reconstruction now taking place, with a comprehensive package of measures to follow. The Victoria Street/Northgate Link Road project will complete by March 2020.

LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

The Council are in the first year of a 3-year Local Plan Review process. Initial studies to establish the latest housing and economic development requirements for the Borough have been completed, and a "Call for Sites" exercise has also been carried out. The first round of public consultation is underway (11th Feb – 1st April) and is seeking the views of residents, businesses and stakeholders regarding the high-level strategic options for the new Local Plan.

An Employment Land Review of the Borough is almost complete, as is a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, with a Retail Capacity Study also underway to understand shopping patterns and needs. Once the consultation is complete, further technical studies will be necessary, and a "preferred options" plan will be drafted to identify the sites which should be allocated to meet the Borough's requirements for housing and employment development up to 2036. The public consultation on "preferred options" is likely to take place in early 2020.

ONE PUBLIC ESTATE

The Council acts as lead authority for Lancashire's One Public Estate (OPE) Programme and submitted the latest collective bid (OPE 7) for revenue and recyclable grant funding. The bid was successful in securing £395,000 for projects across Lancashire, including Blackburn with Darwen and to fund the core programme management team.

The Council's successful element is focused on the SE Blackburn/Haslingden Road Growth Corridor which secured £120,000 of recyclable grant to fund project management, business cases, masterplanning and feasibility studies. This work will help to assess opportunities for further developing Council and Hospital owned sites for residential and health related employment uses.

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

Recent regional analysis and national publicity has pointed to increasing demand pressures on children's services, with particular pressures in the North and North West. The North generally has seen rising numbers of children in care over recent years, with particular pressure around children and young people in older age groups with very complex social and behavioural issues. During 2017, Blackburn with Darwen moved towards the regional norm with a marked rise in the number of children in care placed in the most costly residential placements. During 2018 there was a slight fall in the number of children in care in external residential placements, which is to be welcomed, but this has been off-set by a recent rise in the number of children in care placed in independent fostering agency placements.

There has been a surge of work coming into Children's Social Care through the latter part of 2018 and early part of 2019. The number of Children in our Care is 411, which is a historically high figure and points to increasing prevalence of unacceptable levels of risk to children and young people within families in local communities. The number of children subject to child protection plans remains high and has risen to 276, and the total number of children and young people open to Children's Social Care remains high at 1,943. In addition, over 700 children are being supported by Early Help services, which means that nearly 7% of the 0 to 19 year old child population is being supported by the council's Children's Services or partner agencies. 20 children have been adopted since April 2018 and 18 children are currently placed in adoptive placements.

MAKE A NOISE CONSULTATION FUN DAY

Children's Services teams and health and education partners worked together to deliver the Make a Noise consultation fun day for children open to social care in the February half term holiday at Darwen Vale High School. 45 children and young people across the age range, 23 parent/carers and invited guests enjoyed a wide range of hands-on participation activities with 17 stalls. Activities were designed to capture the views of children and young people to find out what is important to them and what they would like their corporate parents to get better at and prioritise.

Facilitators enjoyed offering face painting, messy play, badge making, arts and crafts, photo booth, dance and a penalty shootout which was especially enjoyed by the older boys and supervised by a Care Leaver.

The views captured will support the development of a new and updated corporate parenting strategy which will evidence the voice of the child and reach out to more young people across our service. A new and refreshed 'Children in our Care' website is being developed so that burning issues can be listened to and responded to.

YOUTH ELECTIONS 2019/20

Over 9,300 young people voted in the recent Blackburn with Darwen Youth Elections for 2019/20 and the newly appointed Youth MP is Uday Akram from Tauheedul Islam Boys' High School. The Deputy Youth MPs are A'aisha Patel from Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School and Corey McPartland from The Studio/Darwen Youth Club. The successful trio will promote their key campaign issues which are Ending Homelessness, Food Poverty,

Mental Health, a curriculum to prepare us for life and increasing opportunities for young people to take part in residential and extracurricular activities. I congratulate all three on their appointments and look forward to supporting them in the coming year.

CHANGES TO LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (LSCB) ARRANGEMENTS

The Children & Social Work Act 2017 requires that new Safeguarding Partnerships be created by 29th June 2019, stepping away from Local Authorities being the lead partner with responsibility to set the local safeguarding arrangements under the LSCB model, to the Local Authority, CCG and Police being jointly responsible.

Proposed arrangements will see a Pan-Lancashire Safeguarding Strategic Partnership with equal responsibilities and leadership from the three Local Authorities across the footprint (Blackburn with Darwen, Lancashire & Blackpool), the Police and the 8 Clinical Commissioning Groups. Beneath this Board will sit three Locality Groups (East, Central & Coastal) which will identify priorities specific to their areas. The functions of the new partnership arrangements will be covered by a number of sub-groups, all with a focus to ensure that there is consistency in outcomes for children across the 3 Local Authority areas.

STRATEGIC YOUTH ALLIANCE

A 'Strategic Youth Alliance' has been formed to bring together youth sector organisations to develop and coordinate a borough-wide offer of universal provision for young people. The three-way partnership between the Council, Blackburn Youth Zone and Blackburn Rovers Community Trust will see each partner organisation contributing resources to a universal neighbourhood and holiday provision.

The three organisations will form the Strategic Youth Alliance Board and will be responsible for provision across communities during term-time and key holiday periods. The Board will be supported by a Youth Alliance Network consisting of key youth sector partners already delivering in neighbourhoods to increase the provision available to children and young people.

The Alliance will work collectively to secure external funding to enhance universal neighbourhood provision and support to smaller youth sector organisations in order to meet the needs of young people in local communities.

Schools Working Together Conference

A 'Schools Working Together' conference on 1st March brought together pupils from eight of the borough's secondary schools. Over the last twelve months the pupils have collaborated on activities designed to foster understanding between people from different culture and faith backgrounds.

As well as hearing one pupil's first hand account of surviving a terror attack in Pakistan, the young people also took part in workshops which explored themes around challenging stereotypes, countering extremist attitudes, and social integration. The pupils will meet again in the summer term to put forward their suggestions of activities to work on together to strengthen the cross-cultural relationships that they have started to build.

OFSTED INSPECTIONS

The Adolescent Support Unit which provides short breaks for young people who are experiencing emotional difficulties received a full Ofsted inspection in January. The home retained their 'good' judgement and staff were praised for providing quality, supportive relationships and listening to and acting on the 'voice of the child'. The report states '*Staff provide a warm, nurturing environment for young people. Staff are skilled at quickly building up positive relationships with young people. Children's views are listened to. One young person said, 'This is like a second home. The staff have listened to me and helped me to chill out more.'*

Since the last Council Forum report, four schools have received their Ofsted reports. Turton Belmont Community Primary School, Turton and Edgworth CE Primary School and St Stephen's CE Primary School all retained their 'good' judgements.

Longshaw Nursery School received a 'good' judgement in all areas, following an inadequate judgement in May 2017. The report highlighted that 'the executive headteacher, senior leaders and members of the interim executive board (IEB) have swiftly brought stability back to the leadership and management of the school'.

Pleckgate High School is particularly celebrating their Ofsted report having secured outstanding judgements in all areas - effectiveness of leadership and management; outstanding in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; outstanding in personal development, behaviour and welfare and outstanding in outcomes for pupils. The school's leadership and governing body have been very ambitious, making brave decisions to elevate the school from an inadequate judgement five years ago.

GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE

The 2019 annual Governors Conference is planned for 30th March at Blackburn Central High School. The theme this year is 'Inclusion' with the Director of the 'Council for Disabled Children' confirmed as Key Note speaker. Blackburn Rovers, Youth Zone, Inter Madrassah Organisation and Parents in Partnership will be attending to showcase what help is available to support children and young people.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

COUNCILLOR JIM SMITH

PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
DIRECTOR: MARTIN EDEN
DATE: 28 MARCH 2019

PARKING SERVICES

Parking Services provides a range of services to support the highways and network management of the Council. The service is a statutory requirement under the Traffic Management Act 2004 with car parking being one of the key elements in managing the highway network. The overall aims are:-

- Balance the needs of a varying number of road users whether for business or personal use
- To maximise the safety and minimise congestion effects of on-street and off-street parking and the Highway Network as a whole
- To improve quality of driving for all traffic network users.

Pay and Display

January and February are traditionally the quietest months for town centre parking. In January a total of £62,936 was collected from our Pay and Display machines, this was an increase of £11,705 on the previous year. This increase is mainly due to the success of Brown Street Car Park and the extension in May 2018 and the introduction of 20p tariff increase and Sunday charging in October 2018. The £62,936 generated in January came from 39,783 transactions, giving an average transaction of £1.59p.

PUBLIC PROTECTION SERVICE

Preparations for No-Deal Brexit

The Public Protection Service has been assessing the potential impact of a no-deal Brexit on the service, based on the available Government guidance, to feed into the Corporate preparations.

Short term, no significant changes to legislation are anticipated, beyond renaming it; therefore, while the provisions will remain the same, all legal documentation referring to EC directives will have to be updated to remain valid. As legislation does change in the medium term, significant officer time is likely to be lost to training.

Medium term, there are concerns about potential risks posed by any decision to relax border controls to ease the flow of goods, and the areas of food and product safety are a particular concern. Should this happen, it could be exploited by serious and organised crime gangs to increase the importation of illicit goods. Public Protection will continue to monitor the situation and report any deterioration of standards in the respective markets.

Trading Standards Intelligence Operating Model

The Trading Standards team is adopting a new mechanism to prioritise its work. The Intelligence Operating Model (IOM) has been developed by National Trading Standards to encourage TS teams to move to problem oriented policing of the fair trading environment.

The IOM is used by national Trading Standards and regional Trading Standards investigation teams, so it makes sense to align Blackburn with Darwen's processes with these.

ENVIRONMENT

YOUR CALL

Since January 2019, there have been 2 Your Call clean up events arranged with the Council. However, these events have been added to by the efforts of the Keep Blackburn Tidy and Keep Darwen Tidy Facebook groups. Both of these groups continue to help keep the borough looking clean, whilst also helping with the health and wellbeing of the community.

The Environment department has provided these groups with equipment and tools and they have started to organise their own clean up events, independently of the Council. Since January, we have issued 93 new volunteer packs and the total number of community litter picking volunteers now stands at 625.

WASTE ENFORCEMENT

The Enviro-crime team have been successful with 7 prosecutions regarding waste offences across the borough, with 6 households being fined £660, plus £200 costs for accumulating waste on their properties and another household being fined £140, plus £250 costs for allowing dog waste to be stored and accumulate within their rear yard.

GARDEN WASTE

In February 2018, we delivered calendars and subscription packs, including stickers to 10,400 subscribers. In February 2019, calendars and subscription packs were delivered to 9,900 subscribers, which is a reduction of 500 subscribers.

However, it should be noted that the Council has increased the cost of the green waste service by £5.00 per bin per year. So whilst the number of subscribers has reduced, income generated by the service has actually increased. It is also pleasing to note, that since the green waste service commenced on the first weekend in March 2019, we have enrolled a further 1100 subscribers with more residents signing up each day.

NEW TOWN CENTRE TEAM

The Environment management team have redesigned the Blackburn town centre service to build on the recent success with Blackburn winning three Britain in Bloom awards in 2018, namely:

- Best BID Award 2018
- Gold Award 2018 in the BID Category
- Gold Award 2018 in the Town City Centre Category

The street cleansing and grounds maintenance team are being merged in March 2019. We are confident that this new team, working in partnership with Blackburn BID will make a significant and positive improvement to Blackburn town centre.

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR LEISURE and CULTURE
COUNCILLOR DAMIAN TALBOT PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
DIRECTORS: DOMINIC HARRISON &
MARTIN EDEN
DATE: 28th MARCH 2019**

LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

DARWEN LIBRARY

Work has begun to transform a redundant back office area at Darwen Library to enable delivery of a gambling counselling service and other community based activities. By day the multi-purpose, flexible space will provide accommodation for partner agencies, 3rd sector organisations and community groups to offer surgeries, appointments, workshops, training and social prescribing activities. Outside of school hours and during the holidays the space will offer a much needed safe environment where teenagers can gather to learn, be creative and socialise.

BLACKBURN LIBRARY DIGITAL HEALTH HUB

As referred to in the Executive Member for Resources report the ground floor space in the Central Library will be adapted to create a new digital health capability to encourage engagement and provide support for all residents to support improved digital health literacy by enabling people to access relevant services and self-manage their conditions and well-being. A successful expression of interest has secured £20k funding from NHS Digital and expert digital inclusion support from The Good Things Foundation as part of the Widening Digital Participation Programme. Working with a range of health providers including local GP's, 3rd sector organisations, support groups etc. the library space will offer an informal, 'front door', approach to digital healthcare interactions and social prescribing. Work to develop the Digital Health Hub is ongoing.

ROOFTOP BEES COMMUNITY PROJECT

Opportunities to set-up and develop a community apiary and outdoor learning centre at Livesey Library are being explored following the success of the Town Hall Rooftop Bees project. Initial discussions with the volunteers at the library and interested parties have been very positive and judging from the success of similar community bee projects the installation and programme development would be a great local asset. The next monthly meeting of the Rooftop Bees will be held at the library.

VENUES

SHOWS

January saw an excellent sell out gig from Kaiser Chiefs. The mix of live music, Club Nights and spoken word continues with performances at KGH from Lee Mead, a Quadrophenia experience, as well as Bez and Roweta from the Happy Mondays. International comedians continue to bring their shows to Blackburn including Dara O Briain and Tom Stace and the much anticipated and sell out tour of Rhod Gilbert.

DLT entertains with the Britain's Got Talent favourite DNA and Comedian Mark Thomas.

LEISURE

BETTER AGEING REPORT: RAISING THE BAR ON STRENGTH AND BALANCE

The re:refresh health and wellbeing team feature in a report published by the Centre for Better Ageing on February 12th 2019. Despite common misconceptions, falls are not an inevitable part of ageing and can be prevented; the report raises the importance of community-based provision and cites Blackburn with Darwen as a great example of where community based strength and balance classes work really well and reflects the role of re:refresh volunteers.

<https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/publications/raising-bar-strength-balance>

FREE HALF TERM AT WITTON PARK

A successful and popular week of FUN FREE FAMILY activities was on offer during half term. The programme included a Family Scavenger Hunt, Bike Doctor (learn how to repair your bike), bike hire to use in the park, inclusive cycle sessions with adapted bikes, Biker Tots (balance bikes for younger children to learn on indoors) and Electric Bike led rides around the park. It was great to see so many young people and families enjoying being active.

LADIES AND GIRL DANCE EVENT

Looking forward the re:refresh team are planning a free, fun dance session to engage with women and girls who maybe don't take part in leisure activities currently. The social event on 11th April at Blackburn Sports and Leisure Centre (6pm – 8pm) will include different dance styles from Clubbercise and Bollywood to Zumba, Salsa and Bokwa. There will be refreshments provided and awards for best fancy dress.

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS & PREVENTION
COUNCILLOR SHAUKAT HUSSAIN
PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
DIRECTOR: SAYYED OSMAN
DATE: 24th March 2019**

DEMENTIA FRIENDS

In January, community members together with 27 volunteers from churches across Blackburn attended two sessions to learn about Dementia and sign up to become Dementia Friends. Those attending became members of the Blackburn with Darwen Dementia Action Alliance which is a group set up to offer practical help to those with Dementia and their carers.

Three years ago the Adult Learning Service began a partnership with the national charity, Dementia Friends and were asked to train and support 100 Dementia Friends in the Borough. Following January's sessions 592 Friends have now trained in the borough, leading to tutor Lynnette Banister gaining national recognition for her work in promoting Dementia awareness and signing up friends.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES - VOLUNTEERING IN LANCASHIRE (SCVL)

The European funded programme '*Strengthening Communities-Volunteering in Lancashire*' has worked with over 400 participants and helped them on a pathway to work. Participants are encouraged to volunteer as a way of gaining valuable skills and experience. Many of the participants have significant barriers to work, with poor mental health being a major issue for many. All participants are assigned a key worker who offers intense support and hand-holding through each stage of the journey towards employment, helping to increase confidence and improve self-esteem.

The below case study illustrates the impact of this service:

A male service user was depressed and suffering from regular anxiety attacks when he started working with the service. He had applied for many jobs but failed to secure any interviews, his Employment Support Allowance (ESA) had been stopped and he was struggling to care for his mum. His key worker encouraged him to seek help for his mum and she is now receiving the support that she needs. The service user was supported to complete a successful application for Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and develop a new CV and apply for jobs online. Help was also given with interview techniques and support to the interview. Although he was unsuccessful at his first interview, he continued to persevere and has been in full time employment for four months, which he enjoys. The service user now feels empowered and the advice and guidance provided has allowed him to make positive changes in his life.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT (BEFRIENDING)

The service continues to grow and develop befriender volunteers to support people in our communities. One of the service's volunteers is a Community Support Befriender for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Lancashire Volunteer Partnership. She has been described as 'kind, warm, considerate and friendly'. She supports an older gentleman who has suffered from depression due to a family bereavement and occasional excessive drinking. The

gentleman, who has limited mobility and struggles to leave the house, requested support to be able to talk to somebody and for company. The volunteer visits weekly in his home and as well as providing company supports with shopping and walking in the park. The volunteer is very happy with the placement whilst the client feels happier and healthier and looks forward to the visits each week.

GLOBAL ACTS OF UNITY

In February, a number of schools in Blackburn with Darwen participated in interactive sessions with Global Acts of Unity. The company was set up by Mike Haines, brother of David Haines who was killed by Daesh/IS in 2014. Over the last couple of years, Mike has spoken to thousands of young people across the country about his life with his brother, the impact of his death and how he chose to not live with anger and hate but promote unity, tolerance and understanding.

The sessions were impactful and emotive and were a huge success with students in the borough. They were commissioned as part of the Prevent delivery offer to schools in the borough and a variety of schools, both mainstream and independent, faith and non-faith took part. Mike was very complimentary about the schools, staff and students and wrote a blog of his experience in Blackburn which has been promoted through social media channels.
<https://mikehaines.globalactsofunity.com/2019/02/19/by-eck-blackburn-you-were-belting/>

SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION TO CONTROLLING MIGRATION FUND:

Blackburn with Darwen has been successful in securing Controlling Migration Funding for a further year. This will continue to support the work around the integration of asylum seekers and refugees into the borough referred through national mechanism. The funding will be shared between the local authority and third sector providers in both Darwen and Blackburn.

ENHANCED WINTER HOMELSSNESS PROVISION

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has produced guidance for all local authorities around the provision of overnight accommodation for rough sleepers during severe cold weather. To meet our duty, the "Severe Weather Emergency Provision" (SWEP) as it is known nationally, should be provided when the outside temperature is forecast to be below zero for at least three consecutive nights.

Here in Blackburn with Darwen we ensure that such provision is available every night of the year so that no one needs to sleep out on the streets of the borough. Additionally, between November and March we have provided further help with security to mitigate some challenges around individuals who have, or would have previously been excluded due to problematic behaviour placing others at risk.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES – 28th March 2019

COUNCILLOR ANDY KAY

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
CHIEF OFFICER: DENISE PARK**

Benefits

Policy Council in December agreed several changes to the Council Tax Support scheme for 2019/20. In order to ensure adequate notice is given to those affected, the Benefits Team will be issuing letters explaining the changes in the next two weeks.

Citizens Advice will commence delivering support to Universal Credit claimants at the DWP office from the 1st April. This support replaces the previous model which was provided by Council staff and Shelter. The contract that Citizens Advice has agreed with the DWP is only intended to provide 'help to claim' and does not include any budgeting/debt or housing advice. Whilst Citizens Advice have indicated they will support claimants with debt issues, it is unlikely to be at the level provided by the Council and Shelter.

We will monitor the situation and impact on the claimants from the 1st April 2019.

Revenues

Business Rates

The government's new Retail discount will be introduced from the 1st April. Approximately 450 businesses will benefit from the new discount and receive a reduction of 1/3 in their Business Rates liability. All businesses who are entitled to the discount will be notified within the next few weeks and adjusted annual bills with the discount applied will be issued promptly in April 2019.

Council Tax

The premium Council Tax charge will be increased from 150% to 200% with effect from 1st April 2019. All properties that will be affected by this change in policy have been inspected over the last two weeks and owners notified of the impending change.

2019/20 Budgets, Medium Term Financial Strategy and Closure of Accounts 2018/19

The 2019/20 Revenue and Capital budgets and the Medium Term Financial Strategy were approved at Finance Council on 25th February 2019 and now the Finance team are working towards 2018/19 year-end closure and preparation of the 2018/19 statutory accounts.

Digital & Business Change

On February 5th The Council were confirmed as a signatory to the Local Government Digital Declaration, a collaboration between the UK Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the Government Digital Service (GDS) and local authorities. The council will now form part of a collective of local authorities moving forward at pace to transform services for citizens and provide value for money through digital innovations. Being part of the declaration will also enable Blackburn with Darwen to access funded training programmes and bid for transformation funding.

The council have successfully bid for funding to develop a new digital health and care hub in Blackburn library. The hub will be used to coach residents in using online tools to manage their health and care, piloting a new digital health curriculum for our citizens. We are aiming to launch the hub during the spring working with partners in the NHS and The Good Things Foundation.

The directorate were part of the successful Hive Digital event held in February, where the council's digital strategy approach was presented and received positive feedback from stakeholders. The strategy approach was also scrutinised by councillors during a task group scrutiny session on the 25th February. The revised strategy draft is now nearing completion and will be reviewed during March.

Apprenticeships

Recruitment of council apprentices for 2019/20 is being planned and we are working closely with schools to offer work experiences and promoting working in The Council as a future career option for young people. Two recruitment evenings are taking place on Wednesday 27th March at Witton City Learning Centre 5.30pm until 8.00pm and Thursday 25th April at Darwen Vale High School 5.45pm until 8.00pm.

Modern.gov

The new Committee Management System continues to be rolled out across the Council to ensure efficiencies and improvements are delivered and assure an improved archive of past decisions is openly available. The Library area now also contains a number of useful documents such as the Councillors Poster, Flag Protocol, Forward Plan, Members Interests, Outside Bodies and the Year Planner. Access to all is via the Council Website.

Legal Services

LCC and Blackburn With Darwen Council recently submitted an entry under the category of business transformation for this year's Local Government Chronicle awards on the new Coroner's Service. Included in the submission was the work that was done around the merger, CT scanning, out of hours service, revised IT and operational procedures. There was tough competition and whilst we didn't actually win we were shortlisted along with 8 other entrants. Representatives from the authorities along with the Senior Coroner attended the awards ceremony in London on the 13th March. This demonstrates the positive working relationship we share with LCC following the merger along with a strengthened and improved service.

Year Planner 2019-20

Please note that all meeting dates are subject to change

Last Updated 28th February 2019

Changes to note:

13th May 2019 - New Member Induction

3rd June 2019 – date reserved for Call In / Training (previous date 19th June 2019)

5th June 2019 – Health and Wellbeing Board (previous date 18th June 2019)

10th June 2019 – People OSC (previous date 3rd June 2019)

17th June 2019 – Place OSC (previous date 10th June 2019)

25th June 2019 – Audit Committee

26th June 2019 – Standards Committee

24th July 2019 – Audit Committee (previous date 25th July 2019)

*Civic Sunday 2020 – Date to be confirmed, may change to 24th May 2020

YEAR PLANNER 2019

	May	June	July	August	September	October
Monday			1			
Tuesday			2 DTC			1 DTC SACRE
Wednesday	1		3			2
Thursday	2 Elections		4 EB	1		3 CI
Friday	3 Election Count		5	2		4
Saturday	4	1	6	3		5
Sunday	5	2	7	4	1	6
Monday	6 May Day Bank Holiday Ramadan starts	3 Schools re-open	8	5	2 Schools reopen	7
Tuesday	7 DTC	4 DTC SACRE Eid al Fitr	9 GLSC	6 DTC	3 DTC	8 GLSC
Wednesday	8	5 HWB	10	7	4 HWB	9
Thursday	9	6	11 PH	8 EB	5	10 EB
Friday	10	7	12	9	6	11
Saturday	11	8	13	10	7	12
Sunday	12	9	14	11	8	13
Monday	13 New Member Induction	10 PEOPLE OSC	15 CI/T	12 Eid al Adha	9 PEOPLE OSC	14
Tuesday	14 GLSC	11 GLSC	16 L	13 GLSC	10 GLSC	15 AUD
Wednesday	15	12	17	14	11	16
Thursday	16 AC	13 EB	18 CI	15 PH	12 EB	17 PH
Friday	17	14	19	16	13	18 Schools Close – Autumn Half Term
Saturday	18	15	20	17	14	19
Sunday	19 Civic Sunday	16	21	18	15	20
Monday	20	17 PLACE OSC	22	19	16 PLACE OSC	21
Tuesday	21	18 LASC	23 Schools Close – Summer Holidays	20 LASC	17	22 LASC
Wednesday	22	19	24 AUD	21	18	23 SC CI/T
Thursday	23 PH	20 PH	25	22	19 PH	24
Friday	24 Schools Close	21	26	23	20	25
Saturday	25	22	27	24	21	26
Sunday	26	23	28	25	22	27
Monday	27 Spring Bank Holiday	24 RESOURCES OSC	29	26 August Bank Holiday	23 RESOURCES OSC	28 Schools reopen
Tuesday	28	25 AUD	30	27	24	29 L
Wednesday	29	26 SC CI/T	31	28 CI/T	25 CI/T	30
Thursday	30	27		29	26	31
Friday	31	28		30	27	
Saturday		29		31	28	
Sunday		30			29	
Monday					30	
Tuesday						

YEAR PLANNER 2019/2020

	November	December	January	February	March	April
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday			1 New Year's Day			1
Thursday			2			2
Friday	1		3			3 Schools Close – Easter Holidays
Saturday	2		4	1		4
Sunday	3	1	5	2	1	5
Monday	4	2 PEOPLE OSC	6 Schools reopen	3	2	6
Tuesday	5 DTC	3 DTC	7	4 DTC SACRE	3 DTC	7 DTC
Wednesday	6	4 HWB	8	5	4 SC	8
Thursday	7	5 PC	9 EB	6	5	9 EB
Friday	8	6	10	7	6	10 Good Friday
Saturday	9	7	11	8	7	11
Sunday	10 Remembrance Sunday	8	12	9	8	12
Monday	11	9 PLACE OSC	13	10	9 PEOPLE OSC	13 Easter Monday
Tuesday	12 GLSC	10 GLSC	14 AUD	11 GLSC	10 GLSC	14 GLSC
Wednesday	13	11	15 SC	12	11 HWB	15
Thursday	14 EB	12 EB	16 PH	13 EB	12 EB	16 PH
Friday	15	13	17	14 Schools Close – Spring Term	13	17
Saturday	16	14	18	15	14	18
Sunday	17	15	19	16	15	19
Monday	18	16 RESOURCES OSC	20	17	16 PLACE OSC	20 Schools reopen
Tuesday	19	17 LASC	21 GLSC	18 LASC	17	21 LASC
Wednesday	20	18 CI/T	22 CI/T	19	18	22 CI/T
Thursday	21 PH	19 PH	23 CF	20 PH	19 PH	23
Friday	22	20 Schools Close	24	21	20	24 Ramadan starts
Saturday	23	21	25	22	21	25
Sunday	24	22	26	23	22	26
Monday	25	23	27	24 FC Schools reopen	23 RESOURCES OSC	27
Tuesday	26	24 Christmas Eve	28 L	25	24	28 L
Wednesday	27 CI/T	25 Christmas Day	29	26 CI/T	25 CI/T	29
Thursday	28	26 Boxing Day	30	27	26 CF	30
Friday	29	27	31	28	27	
Saturday	30	28		29	28	
Sunday		29			29	
Monday		30			30	
Tuesday		31 New Year's Eve			31 AUD	
Wednesday						

YEAR PLANNER 2020

	May	June	KEY
Monday		1 Schools reopen	<u>Council & Committee Meetings</u>
Tuesday		2 DTC	AC – Annual Council 6.00 pm
Wednesday		3 HWB	FC – Finance Council 6.00 pm
Thursday		4	CF – Council Forum 6.00 pm
Friday	1	5	PC – Policy Council 6.00 pm
Saturday	2	6	EB – Executive Board 6.00 pm
Sunday	3	7	PH – Planning & Highways Committee 6.30 pm
Monday	4 May Day Bank Holiday	8 PEOPLE OSC	AUD – Audit and Governance Committee 6.30pm
Tuesday	5 DTC	9 GLSC	SC – Standards Committee 6.00 pm
Wednesday	6	10	LASC – Licensing Act 2003 Sub-Committee & GLSC General Licensing Sub Committee 6.00 pm
Thursday	7 Election	11 EB	L – Licensing Committee 6.00 pm
Friday	8 Election Count	12	SACRE - Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education 9.00 am
Saturday	9	13	
Sunday	10	14	
Monday	11	15 PLACE OSC	
Tuesday	12 GLSC	16	<u>Overview and Scrutiny Committees</u>
Wednesday	13	17	PEOPLE OSC – People Overview & Scrutiny Committee 6.00 pm
Thursday	14	18 PH	PLACE OSC – Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee 6.00 pm
Friday	15	19	RESOURCES OSC – Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee 6.00 pm
Saturday	16	20	CI/T – provisional dates assigned for Call Ins or Member Training
Sunday	17	21	
Monday	18 New Member Induction	22 RESOURCES OSC	
Tuesday	19	23 LASC	
Wednesday	20	24 CI/T	<u>Partnership Meetings:</u>
Thursday	21 AC	25	HWB – Health & Wellbeing Board 5.30 pm
Friday	22 Schools Close	26	
Saturday	23 Eid al Fitr	27	<u>Other Meetings:</u>
Sunday	24	28	DTC Darwen Town Council 7.00 pm
Monday	25 Spring Bank Holiday	29	
Tuesday	26	30	
Wednesday	27 CI/T		
Thursday	28 PH		
Friday	29		
Saturday	30		
Sunday	31 Civic Sunday *		