

Policy Council

Thursday, 6th December, 2018
Blackburn Town Hall,
6.00 pm

AGENDA

1. Chief Executive to read the notice convening the meeting
2. Prayers by the Mayor's Chaplain
3. Apologies for absence
4. Declarations of Interest
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5. Minutes of the Council Forum Meeting held on 4th October 2018
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Appendix Three 2018-19 Half-year progress summary v1
8. Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations October 2018
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9. Council Tax Support Policy
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Appendix B Consultation Findings Report
Appendix C Council Tax Support Scheme EIA

10. Report of the Standards Committee

**REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE
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Date Published: Wednesday, 28 November 2018
Harry Catherall, Chief Executive

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: **POLICY COUNCIL**

DATE: **6th DECEMBER 2018**

AGENDA ITEM NO.:

DESCRIPTION (BRIEF):

NATURE OF INTEREST:

DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY/OTHER (delete as appropriate)

SIGNED :

PRINT NAME:

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

Public Document Pack **Agenda Item 5**
COUNCIL FORUM
Thursday, 4 October 2018

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

RESOLUTIONS

28 Notice Convening the meeting

The Chief Executive read the notice convening the meeting.

29 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Hussain Akhtar, Julie Daley, Derek Hardman, Colin Rigby and Jean Rigby.

30 Minutes of the meeting held on 19th July 2018

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Council Forum held on 19th July 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

31 Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were submitted.

32 Mayoral Communications

The Mayor provided an update on recent activities and events attended, commenting that at that point, she had attended 143 events in 140 days in office.

Particular reference was made to the Mayor's 100 Years of Remembrance Concert at King Georges Hall on 6th November, to which all Members were encouraged to attend.

33 Council Forum

No questions had been submitted under Procedure Rule 10 from members of the public.

34 Motions submitted under Procedure Rule 12

Two Motions had been submitted under Procedure Rule 12 as follows:

MOTION 1

In response to the campaign by the Cooperative Party regarding exploitation of individuals under conditions termed as "Modern Slavery" we

ask the Council to supplement its current policy on modern slavery by means of the following motion:-

BwDBC resolves that it will....

1. Train its corporate procurement team to understand modern slavery through appropriate training.
2. Require its contractors to comply fully with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, wherever it applies, with contract termination as a potential sanction for non-compliance.
3. Challenge any abnormally low-cost tenders to ensure as far as possible they do not rely upon the potential contractor practising modern slavery.
4. Highlight to its suppliers that contracted workers are free to join a trade union and are not to be treated unfairly for belonging to one.
5. Publicise its whistle-blowing system for staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.
6. Require its tendered contractors to adopt a whistle-blowing policy which enables their staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.
7. Review its contractual spending regularly to identify any potential issues with modern slavery.
8. Highlight for its suppliers any risks identified concerning modern slavery and refer them to the relevant agencies to be addressed.
9. Refer for investigation via the National Crime Agency's national referral mechanism any of its contractors identified as a cause for concern regarding modern slavery.
10. Report publicly on the implementation of this policy annually.

Moved by Shaukat Hussain

Seconded by Parwaiz Akhtar

Following debate, Council Forum moved to the vote.

RESOLVED – That the Motion be carried.

MOTION 2

This Council notes the results of the Brexit referendum as declared by the people of Blackburn with Darwen. The Blackburn constituency voted 56.3% to 43.7% to leave the EU and the Rossendale constituency voted 60.7% to 39.3% to leave. The Council also notes the public statements made by our two Members of Parliament:

Kate Hollern in her speech during the Article 50 debate

“As the MP for Blackburn, I was a strident remain campaigner. I absolutely

respect the result of the referendum and voted to trigger article 50 tonight. So, while I will vote to honour the result of the referendum, I won't offer the government a blank cheque"

Jake Berry's statement "I was a reluctant remain voter but now describe myself as a 're-leaver' and having seen what has happened since the referendum would now vote for Brexit".

This motion requests the Chief Executive to write to both MPs reminding them of the decision of the people they represent and to continue to reflect their constituent's democratic view in all they have to say on Brexit during these critical times.

Moved by Councillor John Pearson
Seconded by Councillor John Slater

Councillor Phil Riley moved an amendment to the Motion, seconded by Councillor Mohammed Khan, and circulated the following suggested amended Motion:

This Council notes the results of the Brexit referendum as declared by the people of Blackburn with Darwen on a local authority basis. Blackburn and Darwen voted 56.3% to 43.7% to leave the EU and Rossendale voted 60.7% to 39.3% to leave.

The Council also notes the public statements made by our two Members of Parliament:

Kate Hollern in her speech during the Article 50 debate –

"As the MP for Blackburn, I was a strident remain campaigner. I absolutely respect the result of the referendum and voted to trigger Article 50 tonight. So, while I will vote to honour the result of the referendum, I will not give the government a blank cheque."

Jake Berry's statement "I was a reluctant remain voter but now describe myself as a 're-leaver' and having seen what has happened since the referendum I would now vote for Brexit."

The motion requests the Chief Executive to write to both MPs reminding them of the need to ensure that any settlement reached between the UK Government and the EU reflects the best economic, social and environmental interests of the people of Blackburn with Darwen. It must include a customs union and no hard border in Northern Ireland and it must protect jobs, people's rights at work and environmental and consumer standards and it must be subject to the approval of Parliament, the sovereign representative voice of the British people.

There then followed a debate on the amended Motion and following a vote this was accepted as the Substantive Motion.

There then followed a vote on the Substantive Motion.

RESOLVED – That the Motion, as amended, be carried.

35 Updates from other Committees

Council Forum received reports from the following Committees: Audit and Governance Committee (Annual Report 2017/2018), Standards Committee, Policy and Corporate Resources Committee, PEOPLE Overview and Scrutiny Committee and PLACE Overview and Scrutiny Committee (update reports).

RESOLVED –

1) That the Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2017/18 be endorsed; and;

2) That the update reports from the Standards Committee, Policy and Corporate Resources Committee, PEOPLE Overview and Scrutiny Committee and PLACE Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

36 Reports of the Executive Members with Portfolios

Council Forum received and considered reports and updates from the Leader and Executive Members with portfolios.

During the course of moving her report, Councillor Maureen Bateson welcomed Jayne Ivory, the new Director of Children's Services and Education, and made reference to David Fleming who was retiring from his post as Manager of the Youth Offending Team, and thanks were passed for his valuable service.

RESOLVED - That the reports of the Leader and Executive Members be noted.

37 To consider any questions received from Members under Procedure Rule 11

No questions had been received from Members under Procedure Rule 11.

Signed at a meeting of the Policy Council
on Thursday 6th December 2018
by

MAYOR



REPORT OF MONITORING OFFICER

TO: POLICY COUNCIL

ON: 6 December 2018

PORTFOLIOS AFFECTED: ALL

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

SUBJECT: APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE

To consider the recommendations of the Chief Executive Employment Committee regarding the appointment of a new Chief Executive and the departure of the current Chief Executive from 30th April 2019.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council is asked to consider and confirm the following recommendations of the Chief Executive Employment Committee:-

1. The release of the current Chief Executive on 30th April 2019 as set out in this report.
2. Subject to 1 approve a restructure of the senior management team of the Council incorporating the deletion of the post of Deputy Chief Executive to achieve financial savings for the Council as set out in this report
3. Subject to 2 above, appoint Denise Park as Chief Executive/Head of paid Service with effect from 1st May 2019 on the existing Chief Executive grade of £142,277- £155,463.
4. Subject to 3 above request the Chief Executive designate, Denise Park, to develop proposals for revisions to the Chief Officer structure of the Council to ensure the continued effectiveness of service delivery and request these proposals to be presented to the Chief Officers Employment Committee for consideration, with a view to final recommendations being presented to the Finance Council on 25th February 2019 for the implementation of a new senior management team structure on 1st May 2019.
5. Subject to 3 above in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Part 3 - Section 17) to confirm that Denise Park be appointed from 1st May 2019 as Acting Returning Officer for any constituency or part of a 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. In addition to act as Electoral Registration Officer for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Subject to the above, the Council is asked;

6. To place on record the thanks of the Council for the Services of Harry Catherall over the last 21 years as a senior officer and last 6 years as Chief Executive of the Council.

3. BACKGROUND

The Chief Executive Employment Committee met on 26th November 2018 and considered an option for achieving a reduction in the numbers of Chief Officers consequent of the departure of the current Chief Executive.

4. RATIONALE

When the Chief Executive Employment Committee met they considered a number of factors relating to the executive and senior management of the Council in the context of the ongoing uncertain financial position from 2019/20. In this context the Committee was presented with an option for an efficient internal management restructure and reduction in executive level posts from two to one. The opportunity for this change and the consequential savings being provided by the current Chief Executive proposing and the Employment Committee accepting a joint agreement for his employment to end on 30th April 2019. The Committee was also aware of the opportunity presented by the experience, knowledge skills and abilities of the current Deputy Chief Executive to take on the Chief Executive role from May 2019.

5. KEY ISSUES

The Chief Executive Employment Committee considered the current Chief Officer profile, the likely labour market, turnover risks and general costs of recruitment, redundancy costs and associated legal obligations when considering the options for restructuring and securing some financial savings via a reduction in Executive/Chief Officer posts. They also considered the risks changes in leadership may have, alongside the potential for vacancies to arise in either of the two current executive roles and the associated disruption to the delivery of the Council's primary objectives in the next few years.

It was in this context the Chief Executive Employment Committee has recommended that a legally binding settlement agreement be agreed with the current chief executive which would see him leaving the organisation, but not being made redundant, and that the existing Deputy Chief Executive be retained and offered the role of Chief Executive, thus securing a reduction in posts, avoiding costly redundancy, pension and subsequent recruitment costs and the destabilising of the organisation. The reduction in two posts to one, the costs of which will be contained within the first year saving, thereafter securing an ongoing full year net saving of approximately £130,000 per annum from 2020/21.

Subject to the approval of Council, this option to achieve savings has been

discussed with both Harry Catherall the current Chief Executive and Denise Park the current Deputy Chief Executive and both have indicated they would accept what is proposed.

Should the Council agree this course of action the Council will also need to confirm in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Part 3 - Section 17) that Denise Park be appointed from 1st May 2019 as Acting Returning Officer for any constituency or part of a 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. In addition to act as Electoral Registration Officer for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The appointment of a Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service is a full Council decision and the recommendation for this appointment has been proposed following a meeting of the Chief Executive Employment Committee.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposal to appoint the existing Deputy Chief Executive, Denise Park as Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service will deliver full year savings of approximately £130,000 per annum from 2020/21 due to the deletion of an executive post as set out in this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Chief Executive Employment Committee on considering the issues and making their recommendations received independent legal advice which confirmed the proposals were legally appropriate and reasonable. The appointment of the Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service is a matter for consideration of Full Council following a recommendation from the Chief Executive Employment Committee.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional resource implications other than those set out above.

10. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no equality implications arising from this report.

11. CONSULTATIONS

The Trades Unions have been informed of the proposal and any comments received will be provided to the Council meeting.

CONTACT OFFICER:	David Fairclough, Director of HR & Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)
DATE:	26 November 2018
BACKGROUND PAPERS:	Appointment of Chief Executive 2018 (HR, Legal & Governance)



REPORT OF:	LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
TO:	POLICY COUNCIL
ON:	THURSDAY 6 th DECEMBER 2018

CORPORATE PLAN AND PRIORITIES BEYOND 2020

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To outline key national and local policy challenges and proposals regarding the Council's positioning on future policy areas for the benefit of residents in Blackburn with Darwen.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy Council is invited to:

- Note the content of the report
- Consider the national policy direction and the Council's response to current and future policy changes
- Note the next steps to developing a new Corporate Plan and Corporate Priorities to 2023
- Note the overall performance against the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives

3. CURRENT POSITION

Policy Council 2015 adopted the current Corporate Plan which sets out the council's aims and ambitions up to 2019. As part of this, Policy Council 2017 agreed the continuation of the six corporate priorities to 2020, which are:

1. Creating more **jobs** and supporting business growth.
2. Improving **housing** quality and building more houses.
3. Improving **health and well-being**.
4. Improving outcomes for our **young people**.
5. Safeguarding the most **vulnerable people**.
6. **Making your money go further**.

Further to this, Policy Council continued the implementation of four development themes that underpin all the work the local authority undertakes and these were:

- Image and marketing of the borough.
- Fairness, equality, cohesion.
- Partnership working with residents, businesses and other key stakeholders.
- Digital first.

Progress in 2018

Portfolio	Key activity and achievements in 2018
Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MJ Local Authority of the year award • 20 year anniversary as a Unitary Authority • National Festival of Making 2018 attended by 40,000 + visitors and winning Lancashire Tourism Award • Launch of LSP annual summit with Rt Hon Alan Milburn as guest speaker • Good Neighbour awards • Selected as one of five pilot areas for the government's Integration Area Programme
Children, Young People and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Services retained an overall 'good' judgement following the Ofsted Safeguarding Inspection Framework inspection • Primary schools pupils performed better than the national and Lancashire average in Reading, Writing and Maths • Secondary Schools performed in line with the national average in terms of overall attainment, with English GCSE a particular strength • 3 year Local Area Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) Strategy co-produced with stakeholders • % 16-17 year olds participating in education, employment or training is higher than the regional and England average • 1900 young people attended the 'Blackburn is Hiring' careers fair - the largest in the region • Successful International Women's Day centenary campaign • 10,600 (62%) young people aged 11-18 in BWD voted on the top issues important to them as part of the national Make your Mark campaign
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed additional car parking provision in Blackburn Town centre and at Royal Blackburn hospital • Supported 80 Your Call clean up events which attracted over 1300 volunteers • Engaged with and supported Keep Blackburn Tidy and Keep Darwen Tidy groups. These groups have 450+ volunteers who have arranged their own litter picking activities and have collected over 8,000 bags of rubbish to date, which the Council has removed.
Health & Adult Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackburn with Darwen Local Integrated Care Partnership established and working collaboratively to bring about transformative change in delivering better health and care for our communities • Development of a network to support our neighbourhoods to improve access to asset based and volunteer supported prevention activities • CQC 'good' judgements for St Aidan's Short Term Breaks, Shared Lives and Reablement teams - and no care home in the borough is rated inadequate by the Care Quality Commission • Joint declaration on Healthy Weight signed by the Council and CCG • Mental Health First Aid prioritised as a key skill with designated 'Time to Change' champions • Publication of new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy setting out our shared priorities for improvement of health and wellbeing for the period 2018-2021
Leisure & Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful bid to Sport England for a share of £100m to increase levels of activity across Pennine Lancashire • Wellbeing Service – 50% increase in contacts into the Wellbeing Service compared to first 6 months of 2017 (4,270 vs 2,847)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public access IT upgrade rolled out in all libraries; 97 devices are available in 5 libraries to increase digital access and support learning • Cycling festival to launch the Weavers Wheel, a new 26km cycling route around Blackburn town centre
Neighbourhood & Prevention Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory and Selective Private Sector Landlord licensing schemes –Mandatory Housing in Multiple Occupation registration and the embedding of the selective licensing scheme. The aim being to improve quality, condition and management of private sector rented properties. • Adult learning – ensuring that those furthest from employment are given the opportunities to engage in building personal capacity. This in turn will support lifestyle changes to promote improved health, social mobility and personal prosperity. • Community Safety Partnership – working smarter in collaboration to make our resources go further in being able to tackle those issues that impact on our communities feeling confident about their safety. Where possible to working upstream to engage with perpetrators through early intervention and prevention, trauma and Adverse Childhood Experience informed approaches. • Lancashire Volunteering Partnership numbers and profile has increased steadily which has developed community assets • 9591 volunteer hours recorded in the first half of 2018/19 from Your Call Clean Ups, Other Your Call activity, Healthy Community Partnership Volunteers and Transforming Lives volunteers. • 996 Adult Learners were supported through the National Careers Service contract into higher level skills or employment during 2017/18.
Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing development schemes underway – Roe Lee, Milking Lane, Griffin. • Growth Deal investment of £12m for Pennine Gateways project • National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) investment of £2m investment for Fabric Boarders project to improve public access routes to Blackburn town centre • Improved Blackburn town centre business confidence with new BID Voted in for 2019 – 2024 with around £1.5 million further investment • Strengthened evening economies in both town centres with eight new food and drink outlets in Blackburn and four in Darwen in the past 12 months
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A digital board has been established within the council, representing all major service areas and is now overseeing major digital change programmes including infrastructure refresh, modern user device rollout and a redesigned council website. • Recruitment of apprentices – currently 51 with the Council. • Universal Credit support for residents following launch in February 2018 with co-location of council staff with Shelter at the Job Centre.

Highlights over the last 12 months

The council has had an interesting and exciting 12 months, with many successes which are built on our strong civic leadership role. We have implemented the recommendations of the Electoral Review seamlessly reducing our councillors from 64 to 51 and our wards from 21 to 17, which reflects our positive attitude and culture at the Council amongst members and officers.

In June, the whole Council was able to celebrate winning the prestigious MJ Local Authority of the Year Award. 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. They added this is underpinned by strong, consistent and humble*

leadership and an unwavering mission to put the customer first."

This year the Council celebrated 20 years as a Unitary Authority and all staff were invited to a celebration breakfast at King George's Hall. Over 500 employees attended the event and feedback from staff was positive with the event providing opportunities for staff to meet colleagues from other departments and also to reminisce on achievements of the past 20 years with a special anniversary video.

Over the last 12 months there has been increased resident participation in local activities which has helped us to meet our budget and capacity challenges. The Your Call campaign has been particularly successful in encouraging local people to volunteer some of their time and join community volunteers who are already working with the Council. In 2017/18, 783 events took place, attended by 6,332 residents. Of these, 104 were clean ups with other activity including dog fouling initiatives, community safety and road safety. In addition, we are also part of the Lancashire Volunteer Partnership which provides a central resource to recruit, promote and manage public sector volunteers. The Council has 569 active volunteers on the scheme.

The first ever LSP Annual Summit took place in October 2018 and was attended by over 100 delegates. The Summit was designed to update partners and stakeholders on activity across four key themes over the last 12 months and consider key priorities to take forward. The four themes were health and wellbeing; social integration; growth and business; employment and skills. Consideration was also given to emerging policy initiatives from the Government and more locally to agree key actions and also gather early thoughts for the next iteration of the LSP Strategic Partnership Plan 2020 to 2030. We were delighted that the Rt Hon Alan Milburn, Chancellor of Lancaster University attended as our guest speaker.

Borough and also community events provide a real opportunity to encourage natural cohesion between our residents bringing together different age groups, nationalities and backgrounds. Our success and desire to try new things and our evidence-based approach to addressing cohesion challenges have resulted in the Council being selected as one of five pilot areas for the government's Integration Area Programme. The programme focuses local and national resource on a common goal to deliver integrated communities, to better understand and tackle challenges specific to a place, building on existing best practice and local strengths. In preparation to be a part of the programme we have undertaken consultations and workshops with a range of partners and community leaders to consider three themes – social mixing; local economy; and access pathways. The Borough's vision is for a strong, cohesive and prosperous community, where everyone is treated fairly, where people's faith and culture are understood and respected, where diversity is valued and embraced because of how it enriches our community, and a place where people connect and form relationships and friendships that span every characteristic of society. Our local strategy for achieving this is being developed.

The National Festival of Making (NFoM) held in Blackburn town centre is a prime example of natural cohesion. This year's attendees exceeded last year's record of 30,000 with more than 160 attractions for people to enjoy. As recognition of their hard work, over 80 people of all ages and backgrounds, who had signed up to help throughout the Festival weekend, attended a special reception in the Council Chamber. The volunteers did a fantastic job and were rightly recognised for their contribution.

Next year's date has been confirmed and will take place on the weekend of 15th and 16th June. We are working to ensure that this now becomes an annual event in the Borough which all of our residents and businesses can enjoy. The NFoM has rightly been recognised and has won two awards. At the Hive Awards it was the winner for The Buzz Award and at the Lancashire Tourism Awards it won in the Large Event Award category. The NFoM 2018 has also been shortlisted in 2 categories for the UK festival awards - Best Family Festival and Best Non-Music Festival.

Improving health and well-being and promoting prevention remains a priority for the council to benefits citizens. Blackburn with Darwen led the successful bid to Sport England for Pennine Lancashire to be one of twelve, place-based Local Delivery Pilot areas. Local Delivery Pilots represent a major investment by Sport England, committing £100m across the 12 areas through to March 31st 2021. It is therefore an exciting opportunity to make a significant difference to levels of activity and improve health and wellbeing across Pennine Lancashire including those living in Blackburn with Darwen.

Our trailblazing approach will focus on those people who currently do little or no physical activity with poor mental wellbeing challenges. Over 100 organisations and physical activity providers have come together today (6th Dec) to

share their learning, experiences and ideas to help develop and test different ways of increasing levels of activity; increasing the awareness and benefits of physical activity; improving how partners work together in sharing ideas and resources; ensuring the public have a voice and are involved in creating and leading a 'Physical Activity Movement' in more places and to better understand and reflect how life events impact on mental wellbeing and physical activity to inform investment early next year.

Over the last 12 months we have continued to see significant investment into the Borough. Both of our Town Centres are undergoing improvements, Darwen market square public realm work is on site; redevelopment works in Blackburn bringing in Reel cinema is underway with the cinema due to open in 2020; significant investment at Whitebirk with Eurogarages, Hippo Cars, Pets Choice; housing development in Roe Lee, Griffin and other sites is underway along with infrastructure investment around the town centres, Barbara Castle Way and also North Blackburn.

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

Members will know that the MTFS was approved by Finance Council earlier this year and incorporates the four-year financial settlement agreed with central government in October 2016 but, unlike the longer-term strategies previously produced, the current MTFS only extends to 2020/21 given the lack of clarity on future changes to the funding framework and mechanisms such as development of the Business Rates Retention Scheme, new Fair Funding Formula and the short term impact of Brexit.

The MTFS has therefore been developed within this financial context, ensuring that the Council's objectives remain to help support those in hardship whilst encouraging the growth of jobs and businesses. The Finance Council report identified a budget gap of up to £4.9m million in 2019/20, rising to £13.3m in 2020/21. Over the course of the year we have been developing and implementing strategies to contain spending and demand within the available resource and the main elements of this work are contained within the current savings programme which includes savings from digital change, procurement, income generation, commercialisation and development of alternative service models. From the work undertaken we have reduced the projected budget gap for 2019/20 to less than £3.0m and we will refine this further on receipt of the Local Government finance settlement, which is expected on Thursday 6th December 2018. Members will be aware that additional announcements were made at Autumn Budget and these can be found under section 4 of this report.

Progress against the Corporate Plan KPIs 2018/2019

As per previous years, robust performance management arrangements continue to be in place to monitor and ensure the delivery of the Corporate Plan.

The performance framework continues to see performance discussed and challenged with directors and also includes a direct challenge from the Leader of the Council to the Executive Members on a six monthly basis. Appendix One tracks the progress of performance against the Council's strategic objectives for the period April 2018 to September 2018. Appendix Two provides exception reports for priorities which are considered to be off track.

Internal quality assurance checks, through the established Council challenge process, aim to ensure the robustness of the data and information included in all performance monitoring reports. Policy Council are asked to note that some figures may change in future reports, as a result of these quality assurance checks.

There are 106 measures within the Corporate Plan linked to the Council's priority objectives.

Of the 106 measures information for the period is as follows:

- 6% (6 actual) have been forecast as "red" where performance is, or is likely to be off track
- 26% (28 actual) have been forecast "amber" where delivery is on track and currently being managed
- 61% (65 actual) have been forecast "green" or on track
- 7% (7 actual) of the measures a RAG rating is not available

Further detail is provided in Appendix three.

4. NATIONAL POLICY DIRECTION

Autumn Budget

The Autumn budget announced on 29th October, outlined extra funding for adult social care (£240 million in 2018/19 and 2019/2020) alongside additional monies (£410 million) in 2019/2020 to improve social care services. Local authorities have been invited to bid for a share of £84m over five years to improve Children's Social Care. Within education, £10,000 for every primary school and £50,000 for every secondary school in England has been committed whilst a number of changes were also announced for Universal Credit. These include an increase in the work allowance which will impact positively on local families as they will now be able to earn over £1000 extra before the benefit is withdrawn. This change takes effect from April 2019. A £675 million Future High Streets Fund was announced to improve access to high streets and town centres and the fund includes a £55million pot for heritage-based regeneration. A £420 million fund has been announced for local authorities (in year) to tackle potholes, repair damage and ensure the safety of local bridges.

Universal Credit

£1billion was announced for the scheme in the Autumn Budget along with a package of measures which are designed to support the scheme over the next five years. The money will cut the waiting time for the first payment from five to three weeks. Work allowances are also increasing by £1,000 a year which is estimated to help 2.4m working families with children and people with disabilities by £630 per year nationally.

Since the introduction of Universal Credit full service in Blackburn and Darwen in February 2018, the number of residents receiving the benefit has steadily increased, with the caseload in the borough currently at 5,425. The council continues to co-locate with Shelter at the Job Centre to provide digital and budgeting support to benefit recipients. This approach has worked well since February, however, the council has been informed that the DWP funding of this work will cease in March 2019, with the Citizen's Advice Bureau being asked to replace both organisations.

Social Mobility

The Government is placing a stronger emphasis on Social Mobility having appointed a new Chair of the Social Mobility Commission and 12 Commissioners ahead of a relaunch in December. Raising ambitions for every child whatever their background is at the heart of the new Chair and the commission aims to build a fairer society in which everyone can thrive. This resonates the messages at our recent LSP Annual Summit where there was a very clear desire for a greater emphasis and prioritisation of social mobility at a local level. The borough's achievements at GCSE level are higher than average, however, the longer term positive outcomes for our young people are not being realised and the impact of wider social mobility determinants have been put forward as a reason for this.

Business plays an important role in Social Mobility and through the Hive Business School we are ensuring that all state secondary schools in the Borough are linked directly with a local employer and through the Employment and Skills Board we are starting to develop a programme to bring this into KS2. Our aim is to raise aspirations of our young people and future workforce and outline the local employer/entrepreneurial opportunities for them.

Health and Care integration

Earlier this year the NHS published its policy consultation paper 'Developing the long term plan for the NHS' which aims to set out ambitions for improvement over the next decade and plan to meet them over the next five years of the NHS funding settlement. This 10 year plan is based on three key themes – life stage, clinical priorities and enablers of improvement. The call for views on the 10 year plan ended in September and publication of the long term plan is expected by the end of the year.

The Department of Health and Social Care have recently published a policy paper setting out the new Secretary of State's vision for putting prevention at the heart of our nation's health - 'Prevention is better than cure'. The vision sets out that the greater focus, and spending, is needed on prevention with recognition of the important role local government plays in community health and wellbeing. A Green Paper will follow. This renewed focus mirrors our own approach in Blackburn with Darwen working with our health and care partners and influencing the NHS Sustainability and Transformation Plan and new Integrated Care Services (ICS) model. The Healthier Lancashire and

South Cumbria partnership formed with support from the Council and is underpinned by the Pennine Lancashire Integrated Health and Care partnership.

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) / Local Industrial Strategy / Combined Authorities

The Government remain committed to LEPs and for those areas without a Combined Authority, future growth investment is likely to continue to be distributed via LEPs. The Government have also asked LEPs to prepare a Local Industrial Strategy which should set out clearly defined priorities for how cities, towns and rural areas will maximise their contribution to UK productivity allowing places to make the most of their distinctive strengths. The Industrial Strategy will provide the evidence base and priorities to attract funding from the Government. The Lancashire LEP is working on the Lancashire Industrial Strategy which we will help to shape and influence through Cllr Phil Riley, our LEP Director. The Government have also indicated that a Devolution Framework will be published by the end of this year and should outline the opportunities available to local areas which collaborate on a wider footprint.

Exit from the EU

The UK is set to leave the European Union on 29th March 2019. The draft Withdrawal Agreement was published on 14th November and sets out the terms for the Exit. It reflects agreement in principle between the UK and EU negotiating teams. Negotiations continue and the final Agreement will be subject to a vote in Parliament.

Discussions around a deal for the UK continue with concern growing over the possibility of a no-deal Brexit and the impact this will have on the UK. Border issues with Northern Ireland continue to hinder talks whilst demands for a second referendum have been dismissed by the Prime Minister. Local Government have recently been invited to impact talks by the Department for Exiting the European Union and the Local Government Association are also supporting local authorities with briefing papers and impact analyses.

In addition, we await the publication of further details around a UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to replace EU funding in the 2019 spending review. The Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government has responded to questions in Parliament around the fund by releasing details of a proposed consultation before the finalisation of the scheme. However, no dates have been released for this. An additional concern for the region is a skills shortage especially as house-building programmes demand skilled labour. We will continue to work with the Lancashire LEP and partners to monitor the impact of Brexit and identify implications for the Borough.

We will continue to monitor the situation and noting that MHCLG have also engaged with the Lancashire Resilience Forum, we will work with them on planning assumptions and risks relating to Brexit scenarios, ensuring Blackburn with Darwen is represented in those discussions.

Consultations

The Council has been actively responding to national consultations which will have a local impact or are of national significance and to highlight with Government Departments the impact of their policy on our residents. In 2018 to date we have responded to consultations on Civil Society, the Fair Funding Review, Social Care (LGA green paper), Social Housing, Non-Hydraulic Fracking. The Leader has also corresponded directly with Ministers and senior figures at the LGA around the issues we are facing within Adult Social Care. We are looking forward to the publication of the Adult Social Care green paper and will submit a corporate response to the consultation upon publication.

5. NEXT 12 MONTHS

Outlined below are the key activities for each portfolio that will be delivered by March 2020.

Portfolio	Executive Member to deliver by 2020
Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthening our relationship with citizens, businesses and partners to instil fairness, respect and opportunity for all.• Taking Your Call further and recognising the crucial role of our volunteers.• To deliver a successful Social Integration Programme for the Borough.
Children, Young People and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building on our effective partnerships to implement strength based approaches to improving the education, care, health and wellbeing for all our children and young people.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focusing our resources so that children and young people receive the right help at the right time so that they can stay safely at home with their family and in their community.
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building on the development of volunteering for organised clean up events and litter picking activities within the borough. Positively engaging with citizens, organisations and businesses to improve awareness of recycling to reduce contamination and increase recycling rates across the Borough Manage the tendering of significant waste and recycling contracts for the borough. Managing council car parking provision, ensuring safe traffic flow and maximising income.
Health & Adult Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex needs and transition services to support vulnerable Adults – working in collaboration with partners to develop effective solutions to complex problems that impact on the most vulnerable in society. To ensure a systems approach to tackling homelessness, drugs, alcohol and mental wellbeing whilst promoting a sustainable recovery that leads to security of housing, self- esteem, re-engagement in training, employment and personal health and wellbeing. Ensuring that we work upstream at the youngest age possible and support into sustainable adulthood. Promote a Whole System Approach to Addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences. Promote Emotional Wellbeing, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, through the Public Mental Wellbeing programme, aligned with the Suicide Prevention strategy, and the Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Transformation plan. Deliver a range of early intervention and self-help solutions to help adults live independently, with a good quality of life. To further integrate health and care services both locally and across Pennine Lancashire
Leisure & Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewed Wellbeing Offer – holistic and person centred which has leisure and culture at its heart. Sport England Local Delivery Pilot: Together an Active Future - focussing on those people who currently do little or no physical activity with or at risk of poor mental wellbeing.
Neighbourhood & Prevention Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve the safety, work prospects and wellbeing of our people and their communities. To Progress a targeted, prevention and wider neighbourhood offer which supports, enables and facilitates communities to be stronger, more resilient and sustainable. Improve housing access and quality – To ensure that the council maximises opportunities to reduce homelessness and to use its regulatory powers to maintain standards in the private rented sector
Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to closely work proactively with housebuilders and partners to deliver the housing growth agenda. To deliver successful town centres in Blackburn with Darwen together with creating more jobs and supporting business growth. To enhance the Visitor economy and develop further cultural attractions
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering a consolidated and modernised Council office estate to reduce costs, improve facilities for customers and staff as well as increasing the efficiency of services. Digital strategy: Delivering increased digital services for the public including a redesigned website, freeing up valuable face to face resources for those who need them most. Enabling the workforce with modern devices and systems to

6. DEVELOPING THE CORPORATE PLAN – 2019 to 2023

It is vital that we understand our residents, communities, businesses, employees and that their needs are reflected in our priorities and objectives. It's timely therefore that we start to refresh our Corporate Plan to reflect the changes in Council structure and the range of initiatives, new partnerships and interventions we have put in place in recent years alongside the changing landscape in local government and the wider public sector.

Over the past few months we have undertaken activity that will help the Council make an informed decision on future priorities and objectives and these are being analysed. These include:

State of the Borough

To support our Corporate Plan update we have commissioned an independent assessment of the 'State of the Borough' covering three main topics – economy; people; and place. The commission examined our strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats.

In summary, the assessment outlines that we have a large and varied manufacturing base which has the potential for greater growth as the LEP and Government outline advanced manufacturing as a priority. In addition we have experienced relatively high growth in GVA and productivity. The assessment acknowledges that we have higher than average levels of economic inactivity and unemployment along with relatively low qualification levels and in particular a below average education system for 16-18 years olds. However, we have a good education and skills system up to Key Stage 4 with good apprenticeship take up which offers the opportunity to move the future workforce away from a legacy of generational benefit dependence and deprivation.

The assessment identified digital connectivity in the Borough as a key strength which makes us well placed to benefit from growth in the digital sector, another priority area for the Government and LEP. East-West physical connectivity provided by the M65 is highlighted as a strength and opportunity for the Borough.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2018

The Council's JSNA Summary Review for 2018 provides an analysis of the key economic, social and environmental determinants of the life chances of our residents. It also provides an in depth analysis of our population and its health and considers current and future health and social care needs.

The Borough has a much younger age profile than average with 28.5% of our population aged under 20, which is the 6th highest proportion in England. Population projections also show that the 65+ age group is expected to rise almost 40% by 2041. Life expectancy in the Borough continues to lag behind the England average with inequalities also present within the Borough, a difference of approx. 11.6 years for males and 8.4 years for females between the most deprived and least deprived LSOAs within the Borough. Broad health classifications show that cancer and tumours; Cardiovascular Disease (CVD); and respiratory were the biggest causes of death according to latest figures. The Child poverty continues to be an issue with latest data showing that an estimated 16,034 children (39.5%) are living in poverty, the average across the UK being 27%.

Resident survey

To help understand residents views the council has undertaken a residents survey which has been mailed directly to randomly selected households seeking views on council services, their local areas and our current priorities. An open platform was also made available so that all residents, partners, businesses and communities could share their views. The survey closed on 21st November and feedback is currently being collated.

Corporate Peer Challenge

The Council has undergone major change over recent years and it was timely to invite the Local Government Association's (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge to the Council and explore how effectively we are delivering services to residents and business, our financial management and our organisational capacity. We have also invited the Peer Team to provide observation and feedback on our approach to community engagement and our digital direction.

The peer review is taking place Monday 3rd to Thursday 6th December. Their observations and comments will also be used to help shape our priorities.

LSP summit

The LSP is a multi-agency group that represents the diverse public, private, voluntary, community and faith sectors in Blackburn with Darwen. As outlined earlier in this report, we held our first annual summit in October.

Partners from across the public sector, businesses, voluntary and faith sectors along with education providers attended the event providing input identifying the top two or three key priorities for the Borough.

Key priorities for Employment and Skills emerged as improving employability skills by providing work and life experiences, particularly starting at primary school level and building skills development into the schools and education curriculum; being clear on career pathways at all skills levels with apprenticeships seen as a key strength and opportunity.

Addressing mental health barriers was outlined as a priority within the health, care and wellbeing theme along with increasing partnership working across the sectors reduce health inequalities and improve health outcomes. Encouraging people to support themselves through digital health was identified as an opportunity, in particular educating patients to help them make positive health choices.

Within the Social Integration, cohesion and volunteering theme, encouraging all ages and whole communities to integrate was highlighted as a priority with sport and volunteering identified as a real opportunity to do this. Succession planning for volunteers and upskilling volunteers also emerged as a key priority.

Those discussing growth identified local procurement and business engagement as priorities, recognising the role of Hive going forward. There was particular focus on bringing 'big name' employers into the Borough and creating professional roles to encourage graduate retention.

Positive Social Mobility was a cross cutting theme across all of the discussions with suggestions to develop a Social Mobility strategy and action plan seen as an opportunity which could underpin all of the themes.

Social integration strategy

Through a series of consultation events and workshops with a wide range of local groups and organisations from across the borough, four priorities for the work have been identified.

The strategy's four priorities are:

1. Increasing economic prosperity for all of the borough's communities
2. Strengthening relationships between communities;
3. Building connections between young people from diverse communities; and
4. Connecting people from disadvantaged areas to zones of employment and shared spaces.

A number of stakeholder workshops are currently taking place, ahead of an official launch of Blackburn with Darwen's Social Integration Strategy. We will be using this programme to shape our Corporate Plan.

7. NEXT STEPS

Over the next few weeks, officers will be developing five or six key corporate priorities for the Council to 2023 which will reflect the evidence base and emerging local and national policy issues whilst building on our existing six priorities.

Emerging themes based on the points set out in this report include inclusive growth and social mobility; supporting young people and raising aspirations; safeguarding and supporting the most vulnerable people; connected communities and integration; reducing health inequalities and improving health outcomes; strengthening partnership working; financial resilience.

The Corporate Priorities and Plan will be underpinned by an action plan with key corporate and portfolio performance measures so that we can monitor progress and ensure we achieve our priorities.

The final Plan will be available for consideration by members, stakeholders and communities in January 2019 with a final report to Council Forum on 28th March 2019 to approve the new Corporate Plan and Priorities.

8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Subject to Council approval, the Council's Corporate Plan and Priorities will be refreshed and presented to Council Forum on 28th March 2019. The Corporate Plan will strengthen existing policies.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications.

11. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no resource implications.

12. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment will be undertaken as the new Corporate Plan is developed.

13. CONSULTATIONS

There are no consultations at this stage.

Contact Officer: Denise Park


Date: 28th November 2018

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following papers are available via the Council's website:


- Corporate Plan
- JSNA

Appendix One: Corporate Plan 2018/2019:
Performance Report Half-year (April – September 2018)


<u>The Leaders Portfolio</u> Councillor Mohammed Khan 	Performance measures	Good Performance is	Baseline	2018/2019 target	Half year performance and rating <div style="text-align: center;"> <div style="background-color: red; color: black; padding: 2px;">(RED)</div> <div style="background-color: yellow; color: black; padding: 2px;">(AMBER)</div> <div style="background-color: green; color: black; padding: 2px;">(GREEN)</div> </div>	Year-end performance and rating
1. Your Call <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements to make Blackburn with Darwen cleaner and greener Improvements to health and wellbeing Improving community togetherness and belonging/neighbourliness 	Delivery of work programme to expand the scope and delivery of Your Call by ensuring all those with ideas are supported. <i>(Your Call)</i>	Delivery	On-going delivery	90 Your Call Clean ups 150 other Your Call Activity	56 Your Call Clean ups 509 other Your Call Activity (GREEN)	
	Growth of volunteers supporting council services <i>(Your Call)</i>	Delivery	On-going delivery	Update on progress	711 volunteers supporting council services (GREEN)	
	Delivery of work programme to facilitate and build resilient communities who are more capable of doing things for themselves. <i>(Your Call)</i>	Delivery	On-going delivery	Update on progress	4,192 people attending capacity building activities (GREEN)	
2. Ensuring BwD plays a key role in Lancashire governance and expanding our scope within the Northern powerhouse.	Delivery of work programme to ensure that Blackburn with Darwen is in a strong position to benefit from any positive changes to Lancashire governance arrangements and potential freedoms and flexibilities offered to Lancashire by the Government.	Delivery	On-going delivery	Update on progress	(GREEN)	

3. Support community cohesion.	Civic participation and community events <i>(Community Togetherness)</i> <i>(Support community cohesion)</i>	Maintain annual activity	18 Civic participation & community events (2016/17)	Increase on 2017/18 performance - 25 Community events	14 Civic participation and community events (GREEN)	
	% of people who meet and talk to people from different ethnic groups <i>(CSP Perception Survey)</i> <i>(Support community cohesion)</i>	Higher	Survey data is not comparable with previous year's surveys due to methodology. Baseline to be developed in year.	Update on progress	Integrated Communities Programme New baseline 2018 / 2019	
	% of people who agree that the borough is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together <i>(CSP Perception Survey)</i> <i>(Support community cohesion)</i>	Higher	Survey data is not comparable with previous year's surveys due to methodology. Baseline to be developed in year.	Update on progress	Integrated Communities Programme New baseline 2018 / 2019	
	Delivery of Equalities Work programme (Social Integration Strategy) <i>(Support community cohesion)</i>	Delivery	On-going delivery	Update on progress	(GREEN)	
4. Improving the image of BwD	Delivery of growth work programme - to promote the positive offer of the borough	Delivery	On-going delivery	Update on progress	(GREEN)	
	Delivery of work programme - Managing the reputation of the Council	Delivery	On-going delivery	Update on progress	(GREEN)	
5. Improving Health and Wellbeing	Delivery of work programme (HWB and HWB strategy) - we will achieve our ambitions in the	Delivery	On-going delivery	Update on progress	(GREEN)	

	refreshed Joint Health and Well-being Strategy 2018-2021					
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Resources Portfolio Councillor Andy Kay 	Performance measures	Good Performance is	Baseline	2018/2019 target	Half year performance and rating	Year-end performance and rating
					<div>(RED)</div> <div>(AMBER)</div> <div>(GREEN)</div>	
	1. Deliver a balanced budget year on year with the resources available.	Achieve a breakeven or underspend against overall cash limit.	Higher		Overall 1% tolerance	(AMBER)
		Percentage of undisputed and valid supplier invoices paid within 30 days	Higher	New measure	100%	Q1 = 83% Q2 = 86% YTD = 85% (AMBER)
		Council Tax collection rates	Higher	New measure	27.8% at Q1 53.6% at Q2 78.1% at Q3 95.5% at Q4	Q1 = 27.7% Q2 = 53.4% (AMBER)
		Business Rates collection rates	Higher	New measure	26.4% at Q1 56.4% at Q2 81.6% at Q3 98.5% at Q4	Q1 = 31.61% Q2 = 55.63% (GREEN)
2. Transforming our systems to offer digital solutions.	% of user activity through digital and automated channels	Higher	New measure	Increase in % use against 17/18 data	Baseline data still being collated. (AMBER)	

3. Implement Council capital projects to deliver updated ICT infrastructure and replacement computer devices for staff.	To plan, procure and begin implementation against agreed project milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivery against agreed quality, time and budget measures.	Within agreed tolerance of project plans	New measure	Started projects and completed relevant phases in line with agreed plans.	Projects started and programme currently to plan and budget (GREEN)	
4. Developing the organisation and its people.	Reduction in employee absence through sickness	Higher	New measure	To be an upper quartile performer across North West LA's	4.65 days Annual data for similar NW Authorities 2018/19 is not available until after Q4 2018/19. (AMBER)	
5. Developing the organisation and improving employee well-being.	Information relating to RIDDORS	Lower		Quarterly update to be lower than previous equivalent quarter	9 RIDDOR (RED)	
6. Improving citizen engagement	Information relating to management and progress of stage 1 complaints to show improved performance timescales	Lower	New measure	Average response time to be lower than previous equivalent quarter	90% of stage 1 corporate complaints responded within 15 working days (GREEN)	
7. Improving the appearance of the borough and maintaining service standards	Performance of investment estate portfolio: a. Occupancy rate	Higher	Baseline: 95.6% (14/15)	96%	98% (GREEN)	


Regeneration Portfolio Councillor Phil Riley 	Performance measures	Good Performance is	Baseline	2018/2019 target	Half year performance and rating	Year-end performance and rating
					<div>(RED)</div> <div>(AMBER)</div> <div>(GREEN)</div>	
	1. Accelerating the Growth Agenda.					
	Housing:	Higher	427 (2017/18)	550 housing completions	422 completions in Q1 and Q2	
	a) Number of Housing Completions				(GREEN)	
Page 26	Housing:	Higher		200 empty properties brought back into use	148 empty properties brought back into use in Q1 and Q2	
	b) Number of empty properties brought back into use				(GREEN)	
	Sq. m of commercial floorspace developed	Higher		10,000 Sq.m	4,753 Sq.m from Apr 18 – Sep18	
					(GREEN)	
	Town centre vitality:	Lower	Baseline: Blackburn 21.0% (12/13)	Blackburn 17%	Blackburn 16.95%	
	a) Vacancy rates in Blackburn town centre				(AMBER)	
	Town centre vitality:	Lower	Baseline: Darwen 16.6% (12/13)	Darwen 11%	Darwen 10.3%	
	b) Vacancy rates in Darwen town centre				(GREEN)	

3. Improving the appearance of the borough and maintaining service standards	Monitoring against national planning performance targets 2018: a) Major projects decided in 13 weeks	Higher	Baseline: 85% (14/16 – 2 year rolling period)	80%	100% (GREEN)	
	Monitoring against national planning performance targets 2018: b) Non-major projects decided in 8 weeks	Higher	Baseline: 68% (14/16 – 2 year rolling period)	90%	97% (GREEN)	
	Appeals: a) Major applications allowed preceding 2 years	Lower	Baseline: 0% (14/16 – 2 year rolling period)	2%	No major applications subject to appeal (GREEN)	
	Appeals: b) Non-major applications allowed preceding 2 years	Lower	Baseline: 1.43% (14/16 – 2 year rolling period)	2%	0.97% (GREEN)	
	To deliver whole network inspections. All named roads: Measure routine inspections of all adopted roads within the inspection frequency	Higher		>95%	100% (GREEN)	
	Response to dangerous structures	Higher	100% (2017/18)	100% response within 24 hours	100% (GREEN)	
4. Local jobs for local people.	Average weekly pay rating (Earnings by place of residence)	Higher	£460.20 (2017)	Increase on 2017 Average weekly pay rating	£460.20 (2017 Gross weekly pay – all full time workers)	

					Latest available data (AMBER)	
	Economic activity rate (% of working age people in employment and/or seeking employment)	Higher		70%	68.7% (Jul 17-Jun 18) Latest available data (AMBER)	
	Apprenticeship starts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age 19-24 • 25+ 	Higher	New measure	Increase on 2017 Apprenticeship starts for Age 19-24 & 25+	Age 19-24: 250 Age 25+: 330 (Aug 17 to Apr 18) Latest available data (AMBER)	
	% of residents with level 4 or above qualifications	Higher	28.9% (Jan 17 – Dec 17)	30%	28.9% (Jan 17 - Dec 17) Latest available data (AMBER)	

Environment Portfolio Councillor Jim Smith 	Performance measures	Good Performance is	Baseline	2018/2019 target	Half year performance and rating <div data-bbox="1697 300 1863 421"> <div>(RED)</div> <div>(AMBER)</div> <div>(GREEN)</div> </div>	Year-end performance and rating
1. Improving the appearance of the borough and maintaining service standards Page 30	Number of Your Call clean up events held.	Higher	2016/17: Events : 144 Volunteers : 2,759	10 events per month April to September (60 events), 4 per month October to March (24 events). Culminating in 3,000 volunteers	80 events, 1,328 volunteers Plus support to 450+ volunteers & 2 Facebook groups (Keep Blackburn Tidy & Keep Darwen Tidy) (AMBER)	
2. Reducing fly tipping, landfill waste and maximising recycling.	Reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.	Lower	2016/17 : 7,596 tonnes	7,700 tonnes	12,968 tonnes (Apr - Sept 18) (RED)	
3. Effective licensing and enforcement activities.	Rotate CCTV cameras to cover at least 36 problem locations in a 12 month period	Higher	New indicator	36 locations targeted	18 camera locations in first 6 months (GREEN)	


Page 31	Quantity of illicit tobacco seized.	Higher	≥ 6000 cigarettes and / or 4.6kg tobacco	≥ 6000 cigarettes and / or 4.6kg tobacco	460 cigarettes 2.65kg tobacco 348 packs of chewing tobacco (GREEN)	
	% of alcohol retailers compliant with licensing conditions.	Higher		≥95%	98.5% (GREEN)	
	% of food businesses achieving 3 Star and above rating on the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.	Higher		≥90%	91.7% (GREEN)	
	We will continue to commit resources to shisha enforcement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of formal interventions for smoking in enclosed premises (related to shisha). 	Higher		≥4	1 (AMBER)	
	Permitted air polluting processes (for which the council is the regulatory authority) which are compliant with permit requirements.	Higher		≥90%	100% (GREEN)	

Leisure & Culture Portfolio Councillor Damian Talbot 	Performance measures	Good Performance is	Baseline	2018/2019 target	Half year performance and rating <div data-bbox="1688 263 1859 384"> <div>(RED)</div> <div>(AMBER)</div> <div>(GREEN)</div> </div>	Year-end performance and rating
1. Increasing the participation and engagement of young people. <div data-bbox="91 730 141 890" style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 32</div>	Number of junior visits generated through CLS&YP services	Higher		330,400 junior visits	LIS: 18,350 Leisure: 109,874 Venues: 4,144 Arts: 1,200 Heritage: 3,495 TOTAL 137,063 junior visits (GREEN)	
	Number of volunteer hours supporting Culture and Leisure services delivery	Higher		24,670 volunteer hours	LIS: 6,426 Leisure: 2,461 Venues: 89.50 Arts and Heritage: 5,598 TOTAL 14,574.5 volunteer hours (GREEN)	
	Number of Leisure attendances (including pitches)	Higher		1,055,754 attendances	498,535 attendances (GREEN)	


	Number of contacts and referrals to health and wellbeing hub	Higher		4,866 contacts & referrals	4,270 contacts & referrals to health and wellbeing hub (GREEN)	
Page 33	3. Stimulating cultural involvement into social and economic regeneration.	Higher		132,000 attendances	KGH 34,816 DLT 6,038 TOTAL 40,854 attendances (RED)	
	Number of art organisations and programmes supported	Higher		30 art organisations & programmes supported	21 art organisations & programmes supported (GREEN)	
	Number of LIS cultural and self-directed learning events and activities	Higher		800 events & activities	412 events & activities (GREEN)	
	Number of cultural events and activities across arts and heritage services	Higher		150 cultural events & activities	LIS: 8 Arts & Heritage:72 TOTAL 80 cultural events and activities across arts & heritage services (GREEN)	

Neighbourhoods & Prevention Services Portfolio Councillor Shaukat Hussain 	Performance measures	Good Performance is	Baseline	2018/2019 target	Half year performance and rating <div> <div>(RED)</div> <div>(AMBER)</div> <div>(GREEN)</div> </div>	Year-end performance and rating
1. Improving the quality of housing. Page 34	Reduction in number of privately run HMO bed spaces	Higher		20	5 (AMBER)	
	HMOs subject to enforcement	Higher		26 HMOs	24 HMO's (GREEN)	
	Properties licensed and inspected in Selective Licensing areas	Higher		300 licences 200 inspected	242 licences issued 75 inspected (AMBER)	
	Increasing the number of private sector homes that have hazards (category 1 & 2) removed	Higher		295 category 1 & 2 hazards removed	187 category 1 & 2 hazards removed (GREEN)	
2. Demand management and prevention.	Households prevented from becoming homeless	Higher		350	209 (GREEN)	
	Number of people who have had their homelessness relieved	Higher		220	90 (AMBER)	


	Number of people engaged in capacity building activities	Higher		3,600 people engaged in capacity building events	4,192 (GREEN)	
	Number of Your Call Volunteer hours	Higher		6,400 hours	9,591 hours (GREEN)	
3. Community Safety / Lifelong Learning	Total crime figures	Lower	14,338 (2017/18)	Reduce total crime: within +/-10% of the 2016/17	8,950 +20% (RED)	
	Number of people on skills programmes	Higher		2,679 people on skills programmes	193 (AMBER)	
	Number of people achieving a qualification	Higher		700 people achieving a qualification	326 (AMBER)	
	Number of people supported through National Careers Service Contract into higher level skills or employment.	Higher		1,200 people supported	1,445 (GREEN)	

Adult Social Care Portfolio Councillor Brian Taylor	Performance measures	Good Performance is	Baseline	2018/2019 target	Half year performance and rating	Year-end performance and rating
					<div>(RED)</div> <div>(AMBER)</div> <div>(GREEN)</div>	
Overarching Priority: To fulfil the council’s statutory and regulatory duties to improve and protect the health and wellbeing of the population through innovation and engagement						
1. Safeguarding vulnerable adults and developing the Service User voice.	‘Percentage of individuals with a safeguarding concern that proceeded to a section 42 enquiry’. Measure SGA3 in the new Safeguarding Adults Collection (SAC). <i>(Monitored on number of people)</i>	Within a range	49.9% (572/1,146) people (2016/17)	Within the range of 45-55%	46.1% (260/564) (GREEN)	
	User experience and user voice: to achieve ‘silver status’ in Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) by March 2019.	Achieve		Extend Silver Status - User experience and user voice	(GREEN)	
2. Managing demand and budget pressures through prevention, early intervention and self-help.	Permanent admissions to residential and nursing care homes for older people (65 and over), per 100,000 population <i>(Using ASCOF measure not SALT)</i>	Lower	838.9 per 100,000 pop 65+ (2016/17)	Lower than 2017/18	460.3 per 100,000 pop 65+ (Cumulative figure) (GREEN)	
	Demand Management Tracker: • % of total contacts signposted to alternative sources of support.	Higher	2017/18 baseline year	35%	49% (GREEN)	

3. Integration and partnership working with key partners across the public and voluntary sectors.	Delayed transfers of care (DTOC) from hospital that are attributable to adult social care, per 100,000 population. (Ascof 2C2)	Lower	4.56 days per 100,000 population (2017/18)	2.62 days per 100,000 population	4.7 days per 100,000 population (AMBER)	
	Number of referrals from the Social Work Teams that have been supported by volunteers	Higher	17 (2017-18)	Increase on 2017/18	6 (GREEN)	
	Number of referrals from the Social Work Teams to the Neighbourhood Service for Community Connectors	Higher	46 (2017-18)	Increase on 2017/18	45 (GREEN)	

Health Portfolio Councillor Brian Taylor 	Performance measures	Good Performance is	Baseline	2018/2019 target	Half Year performance and rating <div data-bbox="1688 264 1854 376"> <div>(RED)</div> <div>(AMBER)</div> <div>(GREEN)</div> </div>	Half year performance and rating
Overarching Priority: Providing the best services possible to fulfil the council's statutory and regulatory duties towards the borough's children, young people and their families.						
1. Help residents to live longer and healthier lives. Page 38	a) Reduce differences in life expectancy between BwD and the national average year on year.	Lower	Baseline year 2008-10	7% reduction in local life expectancy gap on the 2008-10 baseline	New annual data will be released in Q3. (AMBER)	
	b) Increase BwD citizen life expectancy year on year.	Higher	Baseline year 2008-10	0.7 year increase in average local life expectancy on 2008-10 baseline	New annual data will be released in Q3. (AMBER)	
2. Improve life chances for residents by offering improved and joined up health and wellbeing services.	a) Reduce smoking in adults	Lower	Baseline year 2017 – adult smoking prevalence 16.7%	Adult smoking prevalence 16%	New annual data for 2018 will be released in Q4. (AMBER)	
	b) Better outcomes in Successful drug treatment: Proportion of all in treatment, who successfully completed treatment and did not re-present within 6 months.	Higher	2017/18 25.2% (End of Jan 2018)	All Adults - 24%	End of Aug 2018 24.6% (GREEN)	

3. Effectively manage public sector demand and put more resources into preventative services.	a) To implement the Prevention at Scale – Making Every Contact Count Healthy Heart across neighbourhoods within Blackburn with Darwen	Monitor progress	New initiative	By end March 2019 - GP practices in all 4 localities are participating in Phase 1 – Valuing NHS Health Checks	(GREEN)	
	b) To review the Council's Health and Wellbeing investment across the council in line with public health outcomes (SDoH)	Monitor progress	Position of financial allocation and outcomes 17/18	To develop a 2-year plan to grow a 'Public Health Council' Offer, delivered from the Public Health Grant, ensuring a shift to Primary Prevention	(GREEN)	

<div>Children’s Services, Young People & Education Portfolio</div> <div>Councillor Maureen Bateson</div> <div></div>	Performance measures	Good Performance is	Baseline	2018/2019 target	Half Year performance and rating	Half year performance and rating
					<div>(RED)</div> <div>(AMBER)</div> <div>(GREEN)</div>	
Overarching Priority: Providing the best services possible to fulfil the council’s statutory and regulatory duties towards the borough’s children, young people and their families.						
<div>1. Work effectively with partners to safeguard children and young people including those vulnerable to exploitation, radicalisation or offending.</div> <div>Page 49</div>	Youth Offending: a) First time entrants to the youth justice system (rate per 100,000 – rolling 12 months)	Lower	246 per 100,000 (Apr 15 – Mar 16)	Beneath the regional and national average	175 per 100,000 (Apr 17 – Mar 18) (GREEN)	
	Youth Offending: b) Proven rate of Re-offending by Young Offenders	Lower	33.3% - 9 out of 27 young people reoffended (Jul 14 - Sept 14)	Beneath the regional and national average	41.2% - 7 out of 17 young people reoffended (Jul 16 - Sept 16) (GREEN)	
	Number of Open Child in Need cases - not including open single assessments (excluding Looked After Children, Child Protection & Care Leavers)	Lower	873 (Year End 2016/17)	400-500	605 (AMBER)	
	Exploitation measure: Proportion of young people worked with by Engage where risk is successfully reduced	Higher	75% (2016/17)	90%	95% (GREEN)	

2. Intervene early at the right time to avoid costly intervention wherever possible, including supporting those children with additional needs.	Increase the number of families receiving help through the CAF process and Early Help offer to reduce number of child in need cases open to social care	Within a band	250	500+	630 (GREEN)	
	Number of commissioned residential placements for Looked After Children as a total of all Looked After Children placements.	Maintain	15 (Oct 2015)	15-25	27 (RED)	
	% of children offered a package of care at Apple Trees within 28 days of the referral panel decision being made	Higher	100% (2016/17)	100%	100% (GREEN)	
	To increase the number of children aged 0-5 with additional needs who receive support through the CAF	Higher		Higher than the previous year (79)	118 (GREEN)	
3. For those children who come into care, work quickly to ensure that they achieve permanence without unnecessary delay and their care and learning needs are prioritised.	Adoption scorecard national targets: a) Average days from child entering care to starting adoptive placement	Lower	680 (2012-2015)	Perform at national threshold level (426 days)	435 (AMBER)	
	Adoption scorecard national targets: b) Time taken from court decision for placement order to matching the child with an adoptive family	Lower	226 (2012-2015)	Perform at national threshold level (121 days)	165 (AMBER)	
	% of children in care for 2 ½ years who have remained in the same placement for at least 2 years	Higher		Achieve at or above national average for 2018/19	68% (107 of 158 C&YP included in the measure) (GREEN)	
4. Increasing the participation and engagement of young people.	Number of cases managed by the Targeted Youth Support Team	Higher		100 cases managed	115 (GREEN)	

	% of children & young people who have improved outcomes following Targeted Youth Support intervention	Higher		Baseline Year	Cases stepped down Sept 18 5.20%	
	No of children & young people accessing respite activities <i>via Young Peoples Service</i> .	Higher	Baseline Year 2017/18 134	Maintain Baseline 134	127 (GREEN)	
5. Ensure that children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (aged 0-25) have opportunities and support which inspire and enable them to achieve their best.	% of children with identified SEN achieving expected progress in Reading, Writing and Maths between Key Stage 1 and the end of Key Stage 2	Higher	2016/17 Reading: -0.9 Writing: -1.0 Maths: +0.3	Achieve at or above national average for 2018/19	Provisional 2018 Results: Reading -0.34 Writing -1.16 Maths +0.32	
	Average Progress 8 score at GCSE for students with identified SEN	Higher	2016/17: -0.34	Achieve at or above national average for 2018/19	Results for 2018 not available at this point in the year	
6. Continue to work with schools and develop local partnerships to improve learning, training and employment outcomes for children and young people.	% of learners attending schools judged good or better by Ofsted	Higher	85% (2015/16)	Achieve at or above national average for 2018/19	76% National (85%) NW (83%) (RED)	
	% 16-17 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). Reported once a year on the same basis as the national figure, i.e. as an average across November to January.	Lower	6.17% (BWD figure) Dec 16 -Feb 17 counting period	Achieve at or below national average for 2018/19	Apr-Aug 2018 NEET Average: 3.5% Not Known: 2.5% Combined: 6.0% (NW combined: 8.0% England combined: 7.5%) (GREEN)	
	Increase apprenticeship take up: Under 19 apprenticeship starts *Students in academic years 12 and 13 are	Higher	2017/18 final figures available Nov 18.	Increase on 2017/18	Q1 & Q2 2018/19 Apr-Aug 2018: An average of 278 (7.3% of cohort*)	

	tracked and reported to the DfE. This will include young people between the ages of 16 and 18.				were engaged in an apprenticeship (GREEN)	
	% of care leavers aged 19, 20 & 21 in Education, Employment or Training (EET)	Higher		Achieve at or above national average for 2018/19	52% (GREEN)	
<div>Page 43</div> 7. Continue to narrow the gap in academic attainment for children from our more vulnerable groups by removing barriers to success.	Gap in academic achievement for children living in areas in the borough in the most deprived 30% nationally according to the 'Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index' (IDACI) compared to the national average for such areas:					
	a) % of disadvantaged children achieving the new expected standard by the end of Key Stage 2	Higher	2016/17: 42%	Achieve at or above national average for 2018/19	Provisional 2018 result: 52.6% (GREEN)	
	b) Average Progress 8 performance for children Progress 8 is the new composite GCSE measure covering English, Maths, other EBacc* subjects and other relevant qualifications. *History, Geography, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Science, Modern Foreign Languages	Higher	2016/17: -0.23	Achieve at or above national average for 2018/19	Results for 2018 not available at this point in the year	
	% of children and young people in care performing at nationally expected levels: a) At the end of primary school	Higher	2016/17: 33%	Achieve at or above national average for 2018/19	Provisional 2018 result: 38% (GREEN)	
	% of children and young people in care performing at nationally expected levels: b) At the end of secondary school	Higher	2016/17: -1.18	Achieve at or above national average for 2018/19	Results for 2018 not available at this point in the year	

Appendix Two: Corporate Plan 2018/2019: Performance Report
Half-year (April – September 2018) Exception Reports

- **Resources:**
 - Information relating to RIDDOR
- **Environment:**
 - Reduce the amount of waste going to landfill
- **Leisure & Culture**
 - Number of attendances at King Georges Hall (KGH) and Darwen Library Theatre(DLT)
- **Neighbourhoods and Prevention Services:**
 - Total crime figures
- **Children, Young People & Education:**
 - Number of commissioned residential placements for Looked After Children as a total of all Looked After Children placements
 - % of learners attending schools judged good or better by Ofsted

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Portfolio: Resources		
Priority: Developing the organisation and improving employee well-being.		
Performance Measure: Information relating to RIDDOR		Good performance is: Lower
Target: Quarterly update to be lower than previous equivalent quarter		Baseline:
Quarterly performance	Half year performance and RAG rating 9 RIDDOR (RED)	Year-end performance and RAG rating
<p>What is the reason for the performance? A breakdown of the RIDDORs are as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 x Environment & Leisure – manual handling/ slip/trip/fall • 2 x Adults – serious assault / manual handling • 1 x Digital & Transformation – slip/trip/fall • 1 x Growth & Development – HAVs <p>The above RIDDORs were reportable due to either being a 7 day over injury or an injury which was classed as a ‘specified injury’ fracture/break.</p> <p>There has been a lot of focus on the above RIDDORs to establish how they occurred and how they may be prevented. A lot of proactive work has been undertaken in particular to the serious assault incident and the manual handling accidents.</p>		
What is the likely impact of continued performance? The impact of the performance continuing may result in further RIDDORs occurring if action is not taken.		

What activities have been or are being put in place to address these issues? In the case of the serious assault we have liaised with partners to establish revised processes and procedures to avoid this occurring again.

The health, safety & wellbeing team have undertaken a programme of training across the Council, and bespoke training has been arranged for the respective teams. Each of the RIDDORS has been or is currently being investigated and at the conclusion of each investigation recommendations and actions are being shared with management and staff.

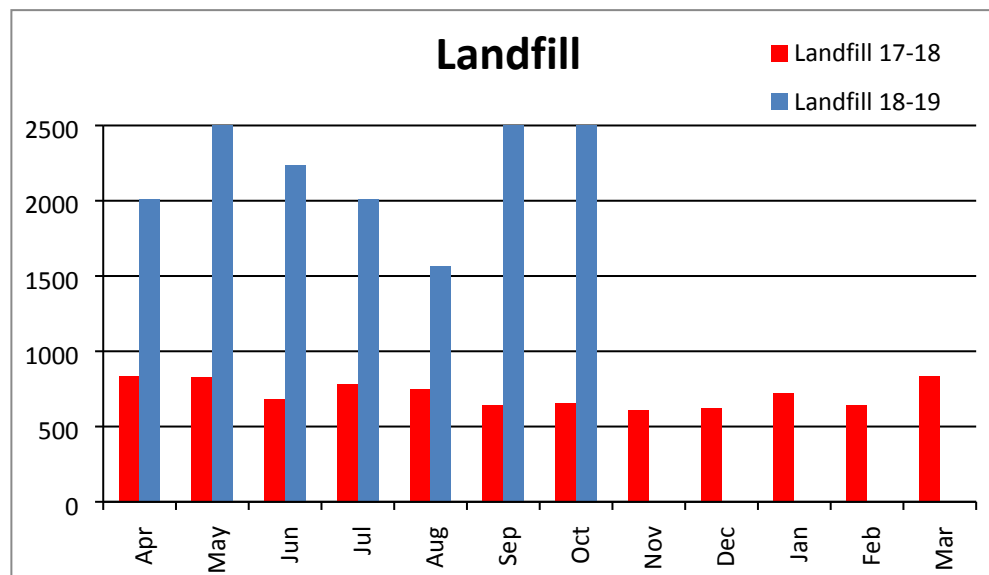
There will also be some refresher training taking place for front line service staff. The health, safety and wellbeing team will also communicate the importance of near miss reporting to avoid accidents in the future.

Are there any decisions likely to be required of Executive Members in the future, in relation to this issue? No

Portfolio: Environment		
Priority: Reducing fly tipping, landfill waste and maximising recycling.		
Performance Measure: Reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.		Good performance is: Lower
Target: 7,700 tonnes		Baseline: 2016/17: 7,596 tonnes
Quarterly performance	Half year performance and RAG rating 12,968 tonnes (Apr – Sept 18) (RED)	Year-end performance and RAG rating
<p>What is the reason for the performance? There has been an increase in the amount of waste sent to landfill for the first half of the year, which has exceeded the overall target. The amount of waste landfilled is a result of burgundy bin waste, fly tipped waste, bulky waste removals and waste going through the household waste recycling centres, which could not be sent for waste to energy.</p> <p>The agreement with Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority (GMWDA) ended abruptly in March 2018, due to GMWDA withdrawing from the agreement, due to internal pressures on waste outlets. A temporary solution until 2020 has been offered by SUEZ, as part their existing contract with the council, which sees some waste sent to energy from waste plants, but there are no guarantees on tonnage. As such, the outlet provided by SUEZ has not been consistently available, thus seeing more waste sent to landfill.</p> <p>Additionally, an increase in residual tonnage in the first half of the year of 6%, due to waste growth in the borough has not helped reduce landfill demand. The new temporary agreement with Suez that commenced in April 2018 is looking to shred this material, thereby making it suitable for waste to energy and so divert away from landfill, but outlets are hoped to become more readily available for 2019/20, so it is anticipated that landfill tonnage will be higher for 2018/19. The new Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) contract also has increased diversion targets in place, but the contractor is not at present achieving the targets, which will see the contractor incur penalties. The Blackburn site in particular is too small and no longer fit for purpose, hence the need for a new site to enable better recycling. In the meantime, site improvements are being carried out at the site to reduce the need for the site to close as often during skip exchanges and</p>		

to provide space for new containers.

Household waste recycling centres – the Executive Member has been consulted about plans to introduce changes to the access policy – a permit for construction waste, proof of residency to allow access and changes to the existing van permit (to be introduced on 1st February 2019). The Council's PR and Comms team are being consulted on respective publicity around these changes.



Total waste sent to landfill between April – Sept inclusive is 12,968 tonnes showing an additional 2,568 tonnes. April to October is 15,765 tonnes which is again an additional 2,823 tonnes.

What is the likely impact of continued performance?

What is the impact on residents? The impact is on budgets, not directly affecting residents.

What is the impact on the council, department/s or portfolio/s? A corporate decision was made to not increase the portfolio's budget for waste indices and inflation for 2018/19, which compounded with increased landfilling of the additional waste growth, is seeing a budget deficit develop.

What is likely to happen to performance against target at year end? The target for landfill diversion will not be met.

What activities have been or are being put in place to address these issues?

Have action plans / improvement plans been completed – from these what are the key actions / improvements and what are the timelines for them? SUEZ are seeking to find solutions for 2019/20, plus the council is undertaking soft market testing as part of the preparation for a tender next year for waste treatment, with a likely target of 90% diversion to be applied to the contract.

Are there new strategies being developed? The Government is due to release its Waste Strategy in late 2018, which will help shape the direction of travel for

waste in the future.
 Are there changes in policy / structures? There could be policy changes as a result of the Governments waste strategy.
Are there any decisions likely to be required of Executive Members in the future, in relation to this issue? A decision on the waste contract award for 2020 will be passed to the Executive Board.
 Exec Member / SPT decisions? The Exec Member is aware of the pressures on his budget and also on the waste destinations and increases as part of regular Senior Policy Team (SPT) updates. This information is passed to the Executive Board.
 Initial discussion with members re possible change in service? Discussion with the Exec Member on the results of the soft market testing will take place in December.

Portfolio: Leisure & Culture		
Priority: Stimulating cultural involvement into social and economic regeneration		
Performance Measure: Number of attendances at King Georges Hall (KGH) and Darwen Library Theatre(DLT)		Good performance is: Higher
Target: 132,000 attendances		Baseline: 118,729 (2017/18)
Quarterly performance	Half year performance and RAG rating KGH 34,816 DLT 6,038 TOTAL 40,854 attendances (RED)	Year-end performance and RAG rating

What is the reason for the performance? The performance measure is a tally of the number of tickets sold for each event at both DLT and KGH combined with attendances at private hire events and bookings.

Explanation against target:

- Traditionally the second half of the year is the busiest as it contains the Christmas pantomime and a good deal of children's events like Sing Together held over 8 days in March. In previous years KGH has also hosted additional events such as the Big Sing Little Sing and Dance Together. These events attracted in excess of 1,000 people per performance. Unfortunately in 2018/19 these events have cancelled their dates due to budget cuts and reduced funding and increasing production costs. In addition whilst the pantomime will perform well on a financial footing it will not attract the same level of attendances as Christmas 2017 which was Beauty and the Beast that coincided with the release of Disney's film of the same and saw record breaking audiences.
- The closure of Blakey's has also impacted on attendances. This space was used frequently for smaller bookings and events and whilst these did not attract high figures individually, combined they contributed several 1,000 attendances.
- In previous years the quieter programme over the summer months has seen a number of large Asian wedding bookings (c2,000 each). The current trend for smaller Asian weddings combined with the opening of other venues has increased competition and significantly reduced wedding booking at KGH.
- Q1 & Q2 Show cancellations and rescheduling e.g. Seann Walsh (due to a TV appearance); Chas and Dave show cancellation (Chas passed away) are situations beyond the Council's control but have impacted c 2,000 attendances.
- The combination of these factors cannot offset positive attendances expected including The Vaccines, Kaiser Chiefs and Jake Bugg in Q3 & Q4

Comparisons / trends – compared to previous quarters, previous years?

- Previous years have seen a very similar pattern that 2018/19 is showing with a predicted busier second half of the year. However, the numbers of attendances are down in comparison due the reasons presented above. 4

Has policy, delivery changed?

Programme delivery has changed due to financial pressures, the programme has been booked on a commercial basis (as in the past) with local

What is the likely impact of continued performance?

What is the impact on residents?

- The number of attendance at KGH and DLT has minimal impact on residents. Both KGH and DLT offer a broad choice of events that appeal to all.

What is the impact on the council, department/s or portfolio/s?

- Again the numbers of attendances have minimal impact on other departments or portfolios.

What is likely to happen to performance against target at year end?

- The second half of the year will be busier but it is expected that overall annual attendance performance will not meet target.
- However if you look at occupancy (a measure of efficiency) it clearly demonstrates improvement over the last 3 years

Darwen Library Theatre	2016/17 (Apr -Sept)	2017/18 (April -Sept)	2018/19 (April - Sept)
No. of ticket events *inc. music workshops	56	65*	47
Occupancy	39%	35%	44%
King George's Hall			
No. of ticketed events	39	36	33
Occupancy	51%	43%	60%

- Financially Venues is projecting a better than budget performance position at year end – in part due to a commercial approach to programming and improved efficiency.

What activities have been or are being put in place to address these issues?

Have action plans / improvement plans been completed – from these what are the key actions / improvements and what are the timelines for them?

- Due to the scheduling of tour dates and booking shows it is likely that there will not be any significant increase in the number of bookings achievable in 2018/19 to increase attendance figures.
- The key priority for Venues is to ensure that they perform to or better than budget (which is the projection)

Are there new strategies being developed?

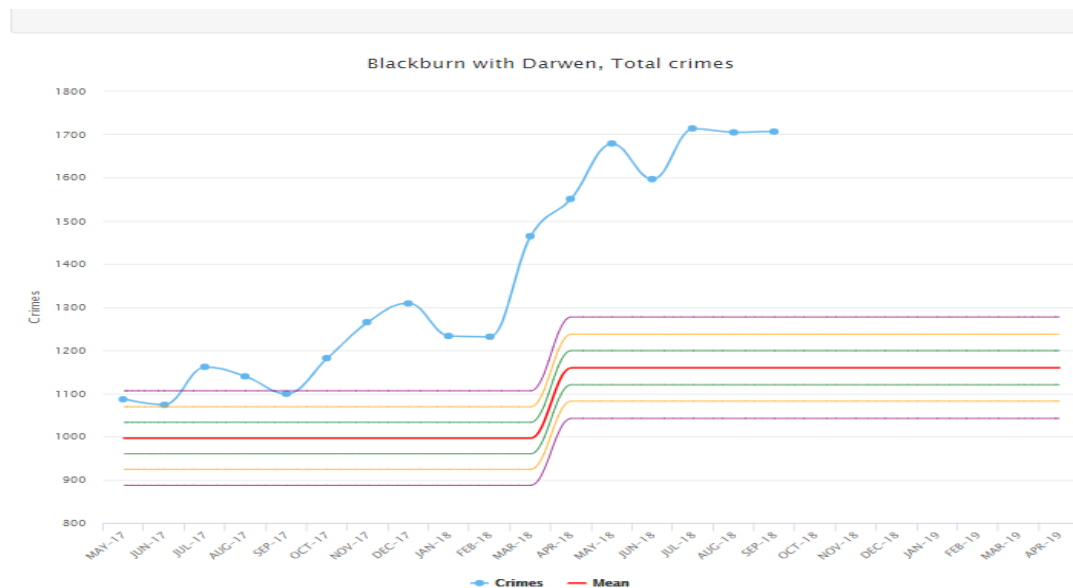
- The business case for a new box office system that would enable Venues staff to utilise strong audience analytics to increase direct marketing and ticket sales is currently on hold pending a review of corporate savings. The purchase of this (with payback within 2 years) would strengthen promotional activity, profiles of KGH and DLT and increase income generation.

Are there any decisions likely to be required of Executive Members in the future, in relation to this issue? The Executive Member for Leisure & Culture is regularly briefed on the number of attendances at King Georges Hall and Darwen Library Theatre. The activities to address the underperformance outlined above are also discussed via six monthly performance reporting and budget monitoring.

Portfolio: Neighbourhoods & Prevention Services		
Priority: Maintaining Low Crime Levels		
Performance Measure: Total crime figures		Good performance is: same or lower
Target: Within 10% of 2017/18 baseline year.		Baseline: 14,338 crimes recorded (2017/18).
Quarterly performance	Half year performance and RAG rating Target 7,169 Actual 8,950 +20% (RED)	Year-end performance and RAG rating
What is the reason for the performance? Explanation of the performance measure – The Performance measure is the total number of crimes reported to the constabulary by residents, businesses and or visitors to the borough. Explanation against target – The target is set at within plus or minus 10% of the 2017-18 baseline year; essentially our aim is to keep crime rates stable. While there have been significant improvements in crime rates over the last 10 years, particularly in the period 2006-2013, maintaining those reductions set against a backdrop of austerity has been the challenge, given the difficulty in making further gains with much reduced resources. Comparisons / trends compared to previous quarters, previous years – The below chart gives an overview of crime trends over the last 3 years. While individual crime categories can be affected by changes in recording practice which can and do occur, the overall number of crimes being reported is lesser affected, hence a		

good overall indicator of the actual levels of crime we can supplement with feedback from residents via local and national crime survey data.

What the chart shows is an increasing volume of crimes being reported to the police at an increasing rate from an average of circa 1,100 crimes a month to over 1,700; the rate of increase has moderated over the last three months but has not improved. It is also worthy of note that Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Road Safety are the predominant issues at the majority of community meetings, town centre and business engagement events and ward solutions meetings reflecting the impact on residents and businesses. The Office for National Statistics has reported that crime is increasing nationally, so this is also a challenge for many other local authorities.



Has policy, delivery changed – There has been a significant change in the way in which Lancashire Police record crime, this following criticism in a recent inspection by HMIC. Defaulting to recording crimes ‘as reported’ has played a significant role in the increase albeit on the back of continual crime related increases over the last 3 years. Therefore while crime has not increased at a rate consistent with that shown above it maintains its upward trajectory.

Policy has developed in many areas; the work around early action, transforming lives and vulnerable adults. We have also continued to develop the work we do with neighbouring authorities, driving collaborative service delivery, inward investment and developing economies of scale opportunities wherever possible to mitigate the impact of austerity. That said the challenge posed has been a significant one with its impact, in reducing resources, having continued year upon year; the effect of which multiplies when you take account of the number of agencies involved in the prevention, intervention and enforcement of Crime and Disorder all of whom have been affected to varying degrees. As a partnership, we have also had to take decisions around prioritising what is most important, with a move toward maintaining and or enhancing protecting vulnerable people from serious harm, particularly young people, at the cost of work streams targeting volume

crime offenders committing lower level offences which are impacting on overall crime levels.

Explanation of service delivery - Service Delivery is outlined in the area Community Safety Plan detailed on the Council's webpage. The partnerships priorities are supplemented by a delivery plan against each which can be circulated on request.

What is the likely impact of continued performance? The impact higher crime rates have on communities is well documented. High or increasing crime levels can be catalysts to community tensions and business disinvestment and decline. This can include; increased desire to move or higher actual mobility of residents; weaker attachments of residents to, and satisfaction with, their neighbourhood, lower local involvement; and lower house values and inward investment. Empirical research confirms this.

In terms of the impact on the council – overall demand for services will go up, particularly those services that protect vulnerable people and places and the restriction in what preventative programmes can be introduced as we respond to escalation and crisis management. It will have an impact on inward investment for both business and housing as noted with the desirability of living or working in an area tied to perceived and or actual crime rates.

The target is likely to be missed this year given the rate of increase has reduced but not the volume of offences. Current trajectory would suggest a level of 16-1700 offences per month equating to an approximate year-end total of 18,600 offences, approximately 4,000 offences over target.

What activities have been or are being put in place to address these issues? Further work is being developed to target violent crime offences, particularly those that are most vulnerable, suffering the greatest levels of harm and or repeat victimisation. There is also targeted work around both Blackburn and Darwen town centres as we continue to work with local businesses. Resourcing any activity sustainably is the biggest challenge we are working on with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Blackburn BID and other partners to resource to risk and invest in sustainable interventions collectively.

Are there any decisions likely to be required of Executive Members in the future, in relation to this issue? A range of proposals likely to impact on crime rates will be put before members as part of the 2018-23 Community Safety Strategy development. Given crime is principally the symptom of wider social issues, the majority of reductions in service will have impact, the cumulative effect of which will be a negative one.

Portfolio: Children, Young People & Education		
Priority: Intervene early at the right time to avoid costly <u>intervention</u> wherever possible, including supporting those children with additional needs.		
Performance Measure: Number of commissioned residential placements for Looked After Children as a total of all Looked After Children placements.		Good performance is: Within a target range
Target: 15-25		Baseline: 15 (Oct 15)
Quarterly performance	Half year performance and rating 27 (RED)	Year-end performance and rating
What is the reason for the performance? Of the 27 commissioned residential placements, 5 are of severely autistic children for whom there is no possible internal provision and one is a very costly secure placement. The remaining children and young people in residential placements have such levels of risk present		

in their lives that intensive residential support is the only appropriate option, often distant from the Borough.

Looked at over the past 18 months we have seen a significant recent growth in residential placements, it needs to be noted that the proportion of children and young people in our care that are placed in residential provision remains beneath the national average(12%).

The target range for performance possibly needs reconsidering in the light of a more nationally typical proportion of young people in residential provision. Using the national and regional average as a range, one would expect Blackburn with Darwen to have between 35 and 45 children and young people in residential provision. Including those in in-house residential provision, we currently have 30 children and young people in children's homes or residential schools. Therefore this pressure reflects a reversion to the norm and a movement away from previously exceptional performance, combined with the review of the council's own residential provision.

The wider context around commissioned placements in the region is that there is insufficient capacity to meet growing need for agency placements, which means that this situation is likely to worsen over the next few years, especially in the light of growing complexity and demand and the long term impact of austerity now being felt by the 'people' departments. In children's social care the impact is being felt in both rising demand and in more damaged children, with a higher complexity of need. It is the latter group of children and young people that are the key drivers for this rise in the number of children in external residential placements.

What is the likely impact of continued performance? Careful management of placements across the past year has seen a slight reduction in their total weekly cost, although it does remain considerable (£90,000).

When reported first in an exception report in September 2017, the average weekly cost of each commissioned residential placement was £3,750, with a potential annualised cost for the placements of nearly £5.5 million. This represented a rise of £750 per child in placement since the start of the financial year. Over the latter half of the 2017/18 year, we have been able to reverse this situation so that, while the number of placements remained the same, the average weekly cost has reduced somewhat (currently £3,050) - with a potential annualised commitment of £4.5m. The situation at present is a total weekly cost of £91,000; an average cost of £3,375 (a situation not helped by one secure placement costing more than £6,000 a week); and a projected annualised cost of over £4.7 million, which in turn represents just under a fifth of the total Children's Services budget being spent on placements for 27 very vulnerable young people.

What activities have been or are being put in place to address these issues? Very tight monitoring of external residential placements has been in place for the past decade and this continues - a weekly panel to discuss any placement changes, chaired by a Head of Service, with a quarterly review of all children in commissioned placements - chaired by the Director of Children's Services. One of our strategic commitments is to try to keep all of our children in local placements and this drove our exceptional performance over the past decade. Children and young people are only ever placed in residential placements outside the borough where there are no appropriate alternatives and where it is clearly the only means of meeting that child or young person's needs or managing the acute risks in that young person's life.

Are there any decisions likely to be required of Executive Members in the future, in relation to this issue? The Executive Member for Children's Services is regularly briefed on the number of commissioned placements. The activities to manage the issue, as outlined above, is discussed at Senior Policy Team meetings via quarterly performance reporting and budget monitoring items.

Portfolio: Children, Young People & Education		
Priority: Continue to work with schools and develop local partnerships to improve learning, training and employment outcomes for children and young people.		
Performance Measure: % of learners attending schools judged good or better by Ofsted		Good performance is: Higher
Target: Achieve at or above national average for 2018/19		Baseline: 85% (2015/16)
Quarterly performance	Half year performance and RAG rating 76% National (85%), North West (83%) (RED)	Year-end performance and RAG rating
<p>What is the reason for the performance? The impact of recent inspection activity is that the proportion of pupils attending schools judged good or better fell to 76% - 9% beneath the national average, and 7% beneath the regional average. This fall stems from a particular concentration by Ofsted during the current academic year on schools felt to be vulnerable on the basis of data analysis. The figure has also been lowered by either the inspection or inclusion of converted academies where the predecessor school had been deemed to be inadequate or to require improvement. Previously, these schools as 'new' schools were not deemed to have a current inspection grade and were therefore not counted in the calculation for the borough as a whole. At inspection all of these successor schools were judged to still require improvement to be good, which in turn lowered the percentage overall for the borough. One final large secondary school academy still has not been re-inspected.</p> <p>Having noted all of the above, it is striking that while the overall achievement of Blackburn with Darwen pupils at the end of Primary and Secondary school is relatively strong within the region (& nationally), the inspection grades for local schools lags behind and is less positive.</p> <p>As is the case nationally, the emphasis in school improvement has been on a school-led school improvement system, built around schools working collaboratively together. While this has been broadly successful across schools as a whole, there was always a risk in such a voluntary, partnership-based system, that while the majority of schools would prosper, some schools would not participate as fully, or that the wider system's ability to positively impact on individual schools would not be sufficient. Ofsted inspection judgements broadly reflect the underlying reality of a growing spread of performance between local schools, so there are both more outstanding schools locally, but also a stubborn proportion that are not judged to be good. This is an issue that the local school improvement board is fully aware of and is currently considering.</p> <p>What is the likely impact of continued performance? The impact is that more local children are not attending schools judged by the inspector of schools to be good. However, while there is a relationship between inspection judgements and the achievement of pupils, it is not straightforward, not least because an inspection reflects the situation at that point in time and that may not necessarily be the case at the present time - so, for example, several of the schools currently judged to require improvement actually perform a better than the national average in most key performance measures.</p> <p>We would hope that the performance against the indicator will improve by year end, as the schools described above (currently judged to require improvement,</p>		

but performing strongly) are re-inspected. In particular, one secondary school performing above national average currently graded RI would make a 4% difference in this indicator with a good judgement.

What activities have been or are being put in place to address these issues? As noted above, the current pattern of performance is an area of concern for the local school improvement board, which contains all of the local agents of school improvement: the local authority, teaching schools, multi-academy trusts and dioceses. The purpose of the board is for all partners to work together effectively to improve the quality of local education.

In addition, the local authority is linking directly with individual schools, where there are causes for concern; and with individual multi-academy trusts and the Regional Schools Commissioner around the performance of academies.

Are there any decisions likely to be required of Executive Members in the future, in relation to this issue? No

Appendix Three: 2018/2019 Half-year Corporate Plan Progress Summary **(April – September 2018)**

Performance summary

There are 106 measures within the Corporate Plan linked to the Council's priority objectives.

Of the 106 measures information for the period is as follows:

- 6% (6 actual) have been forecast as "red" where performance is, or is likely to be off track
- 26% (28 actual) have been forecast "amber" where delivery is on track and currently being managed
- 61% (65 actual) have been forecast "green" or on track
- 7% (7 actual) of the measures a RAG rating is not available

The table below shows a breakdown of the measures across the portfolios:

Portfolio	Total	Red	Amber	Green	Awaiting data
Leader's Cllr Mohammed Khan	11	0	0	9	2
Resources Cllr Andy Kay	10	1	5	4	0
Regeneration Cllr Phil Riley	20	0	9	11	0
Environment Cllr Jim Smith	8	1	2	5	0
Leisure & Culture Cllr Damian Talbot	8	1	0	7	0
Neighbourhoods and Prevention Services Cllr Shaukat Hussain	12	1	5	6	0
Adults Social Care Cllr Brian Taylor	7	0	1	6	0
Health Cllr Brian Taylor	6	0	3	3	0
Children's Services, Young People & Education Cllr Maureen Bateson	24	2	3	14	5
Total	106	6	28	65	7

Each portfolio has been asked to allocate a red, amber or green forecast to the measures that they own. The following guidelines have been provided to ensure a standardised approach to allocating these forecasts:

Red

- The measure is likely to fail or perform poorly in the future
- The measure falls below a set national target / statutory required performance.
- The measure may also be below a minimum requirement for the particular service as agreed by the department
- The lead department perceives there could be a potential serious risk to the Council

Amber

- The measure is at risk of failure, but the lead department feels this is currently being managed
- Actions are or need to be in place to ensure that the end of year position is achieved

Green

- The measure is on target/ over performing / over achieving (if departmental target has been set)
- The lead department perceives there is currently no risk to the council in relation to this measure.



REPORT OF:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
TO:	COUNCIL
ON:	6th DECEMBER 2018

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS – OCTOBER 2018

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

For the Council to consider and approve the final recommendations following the review and public consultation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Council is asked:

- 1 To note the review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations commenced on 1 October 2018.
- 2 To approve the final recommendations of the review and changes to polling districts, polling places and polling stations for parliamentary and local government elections.
- 3 Subject to 2 above, to note the publication date (1 February 2019) of the revised electoral register and implementation of the review from 2 May 2019 (or earlier in the event of a General Election or a referendum).
- 4 To delegate to the Chief Executive, as the (Acting) Returning Officer to make any appropriate changes to the polling districts, polling places and polling stations following approval of the final recommendations whenever such needs arise, until the next formal review.
- 5 Subject to 1-4 above, authorise the Director of HR, Legal & Governance to make any necessary changes to the Council's Constitution.

3. BACKGROUND

The Council went through a boundary review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, which reviewed the ward boundaries within Blackburn with Darwen. The review by the LGBCE recommended a reduction of councillors from 64 to 51 and changed the number of electoral wards from 23 to 17. These recommendations were approved and adopted through the Blackburn with Darwen (Electoral Changes) Order 2017.

The council must also regularly review the division of its area into polling districts and the places where electors are asked to vote. Full reviews must be started and completed within the period of 16 months that starts on 1 October of every fifth year after 1 October 2013.

In view of the boundary review undertaken by LGBCE and the regular review under legislation, the Council held a review of our polling districts, polling places and polling stations to ensure they are aligned where possible and fit for purpose.

The designation of the Council's polling places and districts is the responsibility of the Council and the relevant functions, including the Council's duties under the Representation of the People Act 1983 to divide constituencies into polling districts and the power to divide wards into polling districts at local government elections. The review of parliamentary polling districts and places has been combined with that of local polling districts. This will ensure that polling districts for local elections are the same as for parliamentary elections. Although polling districts for local government elections are not automatically part of the statutory review. However, the Electoral Commission advises that the polling districts for UK parliamentary and local government elections should always be the same, and it therefore follows that any review of parliamentary polling arrangements should be conducted simultaneously with one of local government arrangements. Therefore the review covered the polling arrangements for parliamentary and local government polling arrangements. The (Acting) Returning Officer for the Rossendale & Darwen constituency was formally notified of the Council's review and was invited for any representations during the consultation period.

The allocation of polling stations within polling places is not a Council function and is the responsibility of the Returning Officer. However, in practice the consideration of the location of likely polling stations will have an important impact on the choice of polling places and the boundaries of polling districts, particularly in some areas of the borough where suitable premises have been hard to locate. The Chief Executive (as the Returning Officer) therefore, arranged a Member Feedback Session on 17 September and invited feedback of his initial proposals and suggestions for any suitable alternative polling stations where appropriate. Comments and suggestions received informed and assisted in completing the Returning Officer's representations which were then published for public consultation.

4. THE REVIEW

The formal procedure to be followed by local authorities in undertaking the review is described in Schedule A1 of the RPA 1983. The Council therefore published a notice of holding a review on 1 October 2018 and consulted parliamentary Returning Officer for the Rossendale & Darwen constituency. The Returning Officer's proposals and representations were published on the Council website for public consultation, which took place between 1 October 2018 and 9 November 2018. During the consultation period representations and comments were invited from any interested parties, including Members, the two Members of Parliament, the Returning Officer for the Rossendale & Darwen constituency, local disability groups and other interested parties. A hard copy of the Returning Officer's proposals and representations was also available for inspection at the Town Hall by contacting the Elections Office.

The review and the recommendations involved visiting and accessing a number of existing and proposed polling places/stations in Blackburn and Darwen. In designating polling places/stations the Council ensured that a set criteria was met relating to the location, facilities, accessibility to and within the polling place/station (including disabled access), health and safety and space. The review also included an evaluation of temporary polling stations (mobiles) to determine whether their continued use and location provided the best option, and taking into account the feedback the council had received from residents and electors over the years. In drawing up recommendations consideration was also needed to be given to the number of polling stations allocated for a given electorate. The physical geography of a ward including, railway lines, dual carriageways, hills, the shape of the ward itself was also taken into account. Other

factors taken into consideration included the situation of polling places/stations in relation to wider amenities and the main transport routes within a ward. In order to predict the likely number of electors at a polling station in the future, turnout figures from the May 2018 'all out' elections were used. Other information referred to during the review included availability and accessibility of polling places and previous representations made by candidates, agents and polling station staff.

All comments and representations received during the consultation period were considered before the Returning Officer's final recommendations were prepared. The Returning Officer's final recommendations were due to be published on the website by 30 November and information/ward maps on display in the Council Chamber from week commencing 3 December. When the final recommendations were published on the council website, a web link was sent to all Members, the offices of the 2 MPs, the (Acting) Returning Officer for the Rossendale & Darwen constituency and local disability groups.

The Council's approval of the final recommendations will complete the review the new polling arrangements will be implemented at the next scheduled local government elections in May 2019 (or earlier in the event of a General Election or a referendum).

The implementation of the new polling arrangements will require some changes to the electoral register. The new electoral register will be published on 1 February 2019, following a statutory 14 day notice period.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The electoral review and the Blackburn with Darwen (Electoral Changes) Order 2017 (approved in December 2017) reduced the number of electoral wards from 23 to 17, with new wards boundaries. In order to re-align the polling districts and polling places with the new scheme the Council conducted a review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations between September and December 2018, in accordance with relevant legislation. The Council must seek to ensure that all electors in the borough and constituency have reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Temporary polling stations (mobiles) are costly to hire. Under the current polling arrangements there are 6 such temporary polling stations. Following the review and under the final recommendations this will be reduced to one, resulting in savings to the elections budget.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA 1983), every local authority has the statutory responsibility to divide their area into polling districts, to designate polling places for those polling districts, and to keep the polling districts and polling places under review.

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced an additional requirement whereby local authorities must review all polling districts and polling places within the period of 16 months starting on 1 October of every fifth year after 1 October 2013. When undertaking a review steps set out in Schedule A1 to the Representation of the People Act 1983 must be followed.

Local authorities must also comply with specific access requirements, and in particular they must seek to ensure that all electors in a constituency in the local authority area have such

reasonable facilities for voting as practicable in the circumstances, and that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place is accessible to electors who are disabled.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The implementation of the review will involve significant work to update the GIS database, the electoral register and the elections management system. Some support from the software system provider may there be required by the Elections Team.

9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Council has a statutory obligation to ensure that polling places are accessible to all electors. The accessibility of buildings and location of polling places will be a key factor in developing the final proposals.

10. CONSULTATIONS

A Member Feedback Session was held on 17 September and invited feedback from Members of the initial draft proposals and suggestions for any suitable alternative polling places where appropriate. Notice of the review was published and the consultation on the Returning Officer's proposals took place between 1 October and 9 November 2018. Members were invited to continue providing comments and suggestions. The two Members of Parliament, the Returning Officer for the Rossendale & Darwen constituency and local disability groups were also notified of the review and invited to make representations on the proposals.

Contact Officer: Asad Laher, Head of Governance
(01254 585495)

David Fairclough, Director for HR Legal & Governance (01254 585642)

Date: 28th November 2018

Background Papers: None



REPORT OF:	EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR RESOURCES
TO:	POLICY COUNCIL
ON:	6th DECEMBER 2018

Council Tax Support Scheme 2019/20

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To agree the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2019/20.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the requirement to introduce a localised Council Tax Support scheme in 2013, the Council has maintained a scheme that has been broadly in line with the previous national Council Tax Benefit scheme rules and Housing Benefit legislation.

A wide ranging review of the scheme in recent months has recommended that a number of changes should be introduced. The proposals are based on a number of key considerations, which include;

- alignment of the scheme with Universal Credit, which in turn will mitigate the increase in the volume of changes in financial circumstances and subsequent reissue of council tax bills;
- simplification of the scheme, and;
- to reduce the overall level of Council Tax Support awards to working age claimants which will, as a consequence, result in a potential budgetary saving to the Council.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy Council is invited to:

- Note the contents of the report, and;
- Approve the Council Tax Support Scheme for the financial year 2019/20.

4. BACKGROUND

The Welfare Reform Act contained provisions which abolished the national Council Tax Benefit scheme and recommended localised schemes to be administered by Local Authorities throughout England with effect from 1st April 2013.

As a consequence of the legislation, the Council is obliged to formally continue the scheme already agreed, or to make any adjustments prior to 31st March 2019. This report seeks to fulfil the necessary legal requirements and to present Blackburn with Darwen's Council Tax Support scheme for 2019/20.

5. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

5.1 Proposed Changes

It is proposed that the current Council Tax Support scheme is amended for 2019/20 as follows:

- i. The introduction of a tolerance range whereby small changes to a Council Tax Support claim (+ or - £2 per week) will not result in a recalculation of a claim, thus negating the need to recalculate Council Tax bills.

All adjustments will however be taken into account prior to the recalculation of the following year's entitlement to Council Tax Support;

- ii. The introduction of a minimum income level for Council Tax Support claimants who are self-employed. The level will be set in line with Universal Credit rules which calculate the minimum earnings at 35 hours per week, which are then multiplied by the National Living Wage or National Minimum Wage, whichever is applicable.

Appropriate adjustments will be made for self-employed claimants who have carer responsibilities, or a disability, that would prevent the person working 35 hours;

- iii. The introduction of a £5 deduction for each non-dependent living with claimants of Council Tax Support;
- iv. The introduction of a cap for the calculation of Council Tax Support which limits the award to a Band B Council Tax liability;
- v. The abolition of the second adult rebate;
- vi. The reduction in time that a person can be temporarily absent from the country and still receive Council Tax Support (reduced from 13 weeks to 4 weeks).

This change will bring the Council Tax Support scheme in line with all other welfare Benefits; and,

- vii. The provision of a Discretionary Support Scheme to mitigate the changes on the most vulnerable in the borough.

5.2 Customer engagement

In order to notify all claimants who will be affected by the changes, it is proposed that those impacted by the changes detailed in points i-vi above, will receive a direct mailing; remaining claimants will be communicated with via the Council website and the Shuttle.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Council is obliged to produce a Council Tax Support scheme for 2019/20 prior to the 31st March 2019. The full scheme has been provided and is documented in **Appendix A**.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council Tax Support Scheme presents a financial risk to the Council as any increase in the number of claimants, or in the amount of Council Tax Support awarded, increases costs and therefore impacts on the resources available to the Council.

In addition, whilst the changes listed above for 2019/20 will reduce the amount of Council Tax Support awarded, and therefore increase the collectable Council Tax debit, there may be a decrease in overall collection rates should individuals have difficulty in paying their Council Tax, which would thereby reduce resources available.

As noted in 4.1 (vii) above, the Council will utilise a Discretionary Support Scheme to mitigate the changes on the most vulnerable in the borough; this will be funded from the reduction in the cost of the Council Tax Support scheme arising from the implementation of 4.1(ii) to 4.1(vi) above.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council Tax Support Scheme must be agreed by Full Council each year prior to the 31st March 2019. Failure to do so will result in the 'default scheme' being imposed on the authority.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The review of Council Tax Support, and the documentation to support the new scheme, has been undertaken from within existing Council resources, however there has been a small amount of consultancy support from Northgate and the Welfare Reform Club.

Whilst the changes listed above will increase the collectable debit, it is expected that some of this additional debit may be difficult to collect and could result in an increase in customer contact in pursuing recovery. Additional resources may be required to support the service following these changes and if so, they will be funded from the reduction in the cost of the Council Tax Support scheme arising from the implementation of the changes detailed in 4.1(ii) to 4.1(vi) above.

10. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

In determining this matter a Full EIA has been completed, this is attached as **Appendix C**.

11. CONSULTATIONS

The Council, as a billing authority, is required to enter into public consultation with Council Tax Support claimants and residents of the borough, and also with all major Precepting Authorities, following significant changes to the Council Tax Support scheme.

A full consultation exercise was commenced on the 3rd September 2018 and ended on 22nd October 2018.

The responses were formally reviewed on the 7th November 2018.

A full report detailing the consultation responses is documented in **Appendix B**.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

Contact Officer: Andy Ormerod (Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services)

Date: 6th December 2018

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Council Tax Support Scheme 2019/20

Appendix B – Consultation Findings report

Appendix C – Equalities Impact Assessment



COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2019-2020

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Introduction

1. Since April 2013, all council tax billing authorities in England are required to set up a scheme to help people in financial need pay their council tax. This document describes the scheme in Blackburn with Darwen, for the period 1st April 2019 until 31st March 2020.
2. The scheme is called a Council Tax Reduction Scheme because any support usually takes the form of a reduction in council tax liability, and therefore a reduction in the applicant's council tax bill. But it is also known as council tax support and that is the term generally used in this document.
3. Although this document provides a comprehensive account of the scheme in Blackburn with Darwen, further information on those aspects which have to be included in all schemes can be found in the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012 (and subsequent amendments).

Overview of the scheme

4. There are different arrangements for pension-age and working-age applicants.

Pension-age applicants

5. The Government has decided that pensioners should have broadly the same level of support that they had in the old Council Tax Benefit scheme. This means that the Council has to follow the rules decided by central Government, and has no discretion to alter them.¹
6. Subject to some overall conditions, there are three groups of pensioners in financial need who the scheme is designed to help:
 - those whose income is no greater than the set amount allowed for living expenses; these pensioners qualify for 100% reduction on their council tax bill;
 - those whose income is greater to a certain extent than the set amount allowed for living expenses; these pensioners will have 20% of the difference between their income and the amount for living expenses deducted from the maximum amount of council tax support that would otherwise be payable;
 - those where there is a second adult sharing the household who would normally be expected to contribute towards the council tax bill, but who cannot afford to do so; these pensioners will see a reduction in the council tax bill of either 7.5%, 15%, 25% or 100%, depending on the circumstances of the second adult living in the household. (See Appendix 2.)

¹ Set out in the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended from 2013 to 2017).

7. Where a pensioner is receiving the guarantee part of State Pension Credit his income and capital are ignored for the purposes of council tax support, so the pensioner receives 100% reduction on their council tax bill. Where a pensioner is receiving only the savings credit part of State Pension Credit, the amount of income and capital used in the Department for Work and Pensions assessment is used for the calculation of council tax support.

Working-age applicants

8. The Council has devised its own scheme for working-age applicants.
9. Subject to some overall conditions, there are two groups of working-age applicants in financial need who the scheme is designed to help:
 - those whose income is no greater than the set amount allowed for living expenses; these working-age applicants qualify for a 80% reduction on their council tax bill but, if they live in a property in band C or above, they qualify for a 80% reduction of the council tax bill set by the Council for a band B property;
 - those whose income is greater to a certain extent than the set amount allowed for living expenses; these working-age applicants will have 20% of the difference between their income and the amount for living expenses deducted from the maximum amount of council tax support that would otherwise be payable.
10. The overall conditions for an applicant to receive financial assistance from the scheme are that he:
 - lives in the property as his main home; and
 - is liable to pay council tax; and
 - meets the residence rules; and
 - has capital not exceeding £16,000; and
 - has income at or below a certain amount; and
 - has made an application for assistance from the scheme.

Living Allowances

11. In the calculation of council tax support, the amount allowed for living expenses is made up of the following components:
 - an amount for the applicant or, if he is a member of a couple, an amount for both of them;
 - if appropriate, an amount for children or young persons who are members of his family, together with an additional amount (family premium)²;
 - if appropriate, additional amounts, or premiums, as set out in Appendix 1, for example to cover expenses associated with disability.

² The family premium was withdrawn from 1st May 2016 in the Prescribed Requirements regulations, but the Council have nevertheless decided to include it both for pensioner and working age applicants.

12. There are special arrangements for polygamous marriages – see Annex 2.

Treatment of income

13. The income of an applicant's partner is treated as belonging to the applicant.

14. Income is calculated on a weekly basis. In order to arrive at the weekly amount of earnings and other income to be taken into account, a monthly payment is multiplied by 12 and divided by 52: in other cases the amount is converted to a daily amount and multiplied by 7. Where applicable, an assumed income from capital is added (see paragraph 35) and, where relevant and subject to certain conditions, childcare charges are deducted. The weekly maximum amounts to be deducted are £175 for one child and £300 for two or more children. (For applicants receiving Universal Credit, the maximum amounts to be deducted are 85% of these figures.)

15. Where incurred, childcare charges can be deducted from income where the applicant is:

- A lone parent who is working at least 16 hours a week;
- A member of a couple both of whom are working at least 16 hours a week;
- A member of a couple one of whom is working and the other is incapacitated, in hospital or in prison.

16. Annex 3 explains these childcare provisions in more detail and also contains a definition of the childcare charges which can be deducted.

Earnings from employment

17. Where an applicant has earnings from employment, the weekly amount of earnings is averaged over 5 weeks prior to the first week in which support is payable if the applicant is paid weekly, and 2 months if the applicant is paid monthly. However, where an applicant's earnings fluctuate, earnings can be averaged over any reasonable period. If an applicant has been working for less than 5 weeks or 2 months, the average weekly earnings are estimated on the basis of either any earnings received, if representative of future earnings, or an estimate provided by his employer. If earnings change during the period of an applicant receiving council tax support, average earnings are estimated over any reasonable period but not more than 52 weeks.

18. Earnings are taken into account from the date of application even if they were not received during the week of application. Where an applicant begins remunerative work after an application for council tax support has been made, earnings are taken into account from the first support week after he began work, even if they were not actually received in that week. Similar arrangements are made when earnings change.

19. See Annex 4 for the definition of earnings as an employed earner.

Self-employment

20. An applicant for council tax support is treated as self-employed if:

- self-employment is his main job; and
- he gets regular work from self-employment; and
- his work is organised, for example there are invoices and receipts, or accounts; and
- he expects to make a profit.

21. Where an applicant is self-employed, weekly earnings are estimated over a reasonable period but no more than over 52 weeks. See Annex 5 for a description of how self-employed earnings are calculated.

22. Working-age self-employed applicants are assumed to have a certain level of income (the Minimum Income Floor) after 2 years of self-employment. The level of income is calculated using the National Minimum Wage for the applicant's age group, multiplied by the number of hours he is expected to look for and be available for work. For most people that is 35 hours a week, but is 24 hours a week if the applicant meets certain requirements (for example is a carer receiving Carer's Allowance, a lone foster parent with a foster child in placement under the age of 5, a lone parent with a child under the age of 5, or a lone parent who has caring responsibilities for a child who has a physical or mental impairment of any age for whom they receive Child Benefit). From the resulting figure, a notional deduction for tax and National Insurance is deducted.

23. If the applicant ceases self-employment during the 2 year period but becomes self-employed again within 6 months, the periods of self-employment are treated as continuous for the purpose of calculating the 2 year period. Where this occurs the Council will review the application to ensure that this change in employment status has not been made to take advantage of the council tax support scheme.

Other income

24. Income other than earnings is fully taken into account unless specified in Appendix 4 which lists income that is ignored. Weekly income other than earnings is also estimated over a reasonable period but no more than over 52 weeks. See Annex 6 for a description of how income other than earnings is calculated.

25. Benefit income is taken into account over the period in which it is paid. The period over which a tax credit payment is taken into account varies depending on whether the payment is a daily, weekly, two-weekly or four-weekly instalment.

26. In most cases, income that the applicant has not obtained (for example, a deferred pension) but is available on application is treated as possessed by him, but only from the date it could be obtained.³
27. If it appears to the Council that an applicant has come to an arrangement with a non-dependant member of the household specifically to take advantage of the council tax support scheme, where the income and capital of the non-dependant exceeds that of the applicant, the income and capital of the non-dependant is treated as if it were the applicant's, and the applicant's income is ignored. This rule does not apply in the case of an applicant in receipt of Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance.

Treatment of capital

28. If an applicant has more than £16,000 no support is payable under this scheme.
29. All capital is taken into account, including income treated as capital, unless it is listed in Appendix 5 in which case it is ignored. The capital of a child or young person who is a member of the applicant's family is also ignored. The capital of an applicant's partner is treated as if it belonged to the applicant.
30. Certain types of income are treated as capital. See Annex 7 for a full list.

Notional capital

31. If an applicant deliberately disposes of capital in order to obtain council tax support, it is assumed that the applicant still possesses that capital and it is therefore taken into account. This notional capital is reduced over time by the amount that the applicant would have received in council tax support if he had not been treated as having that capital. With certain exceptions, where an applicant fails to realise capital which he owns, that capital is also taken into account. Most payments of capital made to a third party on behalf of the applicant are taken into account.

Calculation of capital

32. Capital which an applicant possesses in the United Kingdom is calculated at its current market or surrender value less:
- 10% if there are expenses attributable to its sale, and
 - the amount of any monetary claim secured against it.
33. Capital which an applicant possesses outside the United Kingdom is treated in the same way except that it is calculated:

³ See paragraph 22 of Schedule 1 to the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012.

- at its current market or surrender value in that country if it can be transferred to the United Kingdom; or
- if it cannot be transferred to the United Kingdom, at a price which it would realise if it were sold in the United Kingdom to a willing buyer.

34. Where an applicant owns capital jointly with one or more persons, each share is treated as equal unless there is evidence to the contrary.
35. Where an applicant has capital exceeding £6,000 (£10,000 for pensioners), income of £1 is assumed for every complete £250 (£500 for pensioners) up to a maximum of £16,000. In making this calculation, if the final part of the excess is not a complete £250 (£500 for pensioners), an income of £1 is nevertheless taken into account.

Calculation of council tax support

Maximum council tax support

36. Council tax is calculated on a daily basis. For any day for which an applicant is liable to pay council tax, the maximum amount of council tax support for pensioners is 100% of the amount of council tax set by the council for the applicant's dwelling, less any appropriate discount, divided by the number of days in that financial year. For working-age applicants, the maximum amount of council tax support is 80% of the amount of council tax set by the council for the applicant's dwelling, but if they live in a property in band C or above the maximum is 80% of the amount of council tax set by the Council for a band B property.

Where income is more than the amount for living expenses

37. Where an applicant's income is greater than the amount allowed for living expenses in his case, council tax support is withdrawn gradually (sometimes known as the taper) as income increases until entitlement is extinguished altogether. This avoids a cliff-edge effect of suddenly ending all support as soon as income becomes greater than the amount for living expenses.
38. For example, if an applicant's weekly maximum council tax support is £15, and the amount for living expenses in his case is £100 a week, he is entitled to maximum support of £15 as long as his income is not greater than £100. If his income increases to £120, a sum equal to 20% of the difference between his income (£120) and the amount for living expenses (£100) is deducted (20% of £20 = £4) from his maximum council tax support, so he receives £15 less £4 = £11 a week. If his income increases further to £180, the amount deducted from his maximum council tax support is £16 (20% of £80 is £16) and there is therefore no entitlement to council tax support because £16 is greater than the maximum of £15.

Other aspects of the calculation

39. In calculating the amount of council tax support, fractions of less than half a penny are rounded down and fractions of half a penny or more are rounded up.
40. Where an applicant is jointly liable for council tax with other residents at the same dwelling, the council tax set by the authority (less any discount) is divided by the number of people jointly liable and the applicant's council tax support is based on his share. This does not apply in the case of a student who is excluded from entitlement to council tax support, or a partner of the applicant.

Non-dependant deductions

41. A non-dependant is a person living as a member of the applicant's household who is not his partner or a child/young person for whom he is responsible. There are certain exceptions such as joint-occupiers, boarders and paid carers. Non-dependants aged 18 or over are usually expected to contribute to household expenses such as council tax.
42. For pensioners, the weekly deduction for a non-dependant aged 18 or over in work is normally £11.90 and for a non-dependant aged 18 or over not in work, £3.90. However, where the applicant can demonstrate that a non-dependant in work has relatively low gross weekly earnings, the deduction is as follows:
- less than £202.85, the deduction is £3.90;
 - not less than £202.85, but less than £351.65, the deduction is £7.90;
 - not less than £351.65, but less than £436.90, the deduction is £9.95.
43. In the case of non-dependant couples only one deduction is made, but all their gross income is taken into account.
44. Where there is joint liability for council tax in a household, any non-dependant deduction is divided equally between the liable persons.
45. No non-dependant deductions are applied if the applicant or his partner:
- is blind;
 - is receiving Attendance Allowance, the care component of Disability Living Allowance, the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment, or an Armed Forces Independence Payment, including where these benefits and payments are temporarily suspended, for example through hospitalisation.
46. No non-dependant deductions are applied where the non-dependant:
- normally lives elsewhere;
 - is receiving a training allowance paid as part of a youth training scheme;
 - is a full-time student;

- has been a hospital in-patient for more than 52 weeks;
- is not living with the applicant because he is a member of the armed forces away on operations;
- is receiving a payment for a disability caused by the Thalidomide drug;
- is receiving Income Support, State Pension Credit, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- is entitled to an award of Universal Credit where the award is calculated on the basis that the non-dependant does not have any earned income;
- is a person disregarded for the purposes of council tax discount.

47. In calculating a non-dependant's income the following are ignored:

- Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment or Armed Forces Independence Payment;
- payments made under certain specified trust funds including analogous payments.

48. For working-age applicants, there is one deduction for all non-dependants of £5 a week. The exemptions listed in paragraphs 45 and 46 above do not apply.

49. In the case of non-dependant couples only one deduction is made, but all their gross income is taken into account.

Temporary Absences

50. An applicant can be regarded as living in his home and therefore eligible for council tax support even if he is temporarily absent for certain periods. Council tax support is payable during periods of temporary absence if the applicant:

- is liable for council tax and the address he is temporarily absent from is his sole or main residence;
- intends to return to live in his home;
- is not letting or sub-letting that part of the home that he normally occupies;
- is unlikely to be away for more than the time allowed (see below).

51. In calculating the period of absence, the first day of absence is included and the day of return is excluded.

52. For absences in Great Britain, a period of absence from home must not be (or must not be expected to be) more than 13 weeks. However, this is extended to 52 weeks where the applicant is:

- a remand prisoner awaiting trial or sentence;
- living in a bail or probation hostel, or bailed to live away from home;
- a hospital patient or living in accommodation other than residential accommodation for the purpose of receiving medically approved treatment or care;

- providing medically approved care to someone else, or caring for a child under 16 whose parent or guardian is away from home because he is receiving medically approved care;
- absent because of fear of violence in the home or domestic abuse;
- on an approved training course;
- a student who is eligible for council tax support (for example, if they have to study abroad as part of their course);
- in a residential care home, other than on a trial basis.

53. For absences outside Great Britain, a period of absence from home must not be (or must not be expected to be) more than 4 weeks. However, if the applicant is absent from Great Britain because of the death of a close relative and it is unreasonable for him to return within the first 4 weeks, the Council may decide that council tax support can be paid for up to 8 weeks.

54. And the 4 week period can be extended to 26 weeks where the applicant is:

- a member of the armed forces on operations overseas;
- receiving medical treatment in hospital;
- absent because of fear of violence in the home or domestic abuse;
- undergoing (or his partner or dependent child is undergoing) medical treatment or medically approved convalescent care in accommodation other than residential accommodation;
- a mariner or continental-shelf worker.

Extended support - the run-on

55. Extended council tax support (sometimes known as the run-on) can be awarded to people who have been (or their partners have been) receiving Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income-related Employment Support Allowance for at least 26 weeks, and who come off that benefit because they or their partners start employment as an employed or self-employed earner, or increase hours or earnings where that employment is expected to last 5 weeks or more. This also applies to those who were receiving certain contributory benefits which end for the same reason. The qualifying contributory benefits are Incapacity Benefit, contributory Employment and Support Allowance, and Severe Disability Allowance. The qualifying rules are broadly the same as for those coming off income-related benefits.

56. Extended support can be made for up to 4 weeks starting from the beginning of the week after entitlement to a qualifying benefit ends. Support lasts for 4 weeks unless the applicant's liability for council tax ends first.

57. The amount of the extended payment is usually the amount that the applicant was entitled to during the last week he was receiving a qualifying benefit. However, if for

any reason entitlement to council tax support after the change of circumstances is higher, the higher amount is paid.

58. Where an applicant who is entitled to extended support moves from one local authority to another, extended support may take the form of a payment from one local authority to the other, or directly to the applicant. The amount of extended payment remains the same, that is, the amount payable in respect of the last week before entitlement to a qualifying benefit ceased. Where an applicant continues to be liable for council tax, the second authority must reduce the new amount of council tax support by the amount of the extended support already awarded.
59. Entitlement to council tax support does not end until the end of the extended support period, even if entitlement would otherwise have ended based on the applicant's new circumstances. The general rules for calculating changes of circumstances do not apply.

Universal Credit

60. The calculation of council tax support for those households receiving Universal Credit is slightly different.⁴ Income is compared to an amount for living expenses in broadly the same way as for other applicants but the definitions are different.
61. For the amount for living expenses, the scheme uses the Universal Credit maximum award, including all elements such as housing. This ensures consistency of treatment between Universal Credit and the council tax reduction scheme in deciding what a person needs to live on.
62. For income, the scheme uses the assessment of income in Universal Credit which is provided by the Department for Work and Pensions, to which is added the actual award of Universal Credit. The way that Universal Credit works means that housing and childcare costs are taken into account under both 'income' and 'living expenses', in effect cancelling each other out. The figure for capital used in the assessment of Universal Credit is used for the calculation of council tax support.
63. And it is also possible to treat the income as belonging to a non-dependant (and the non-dependant's income as the applicant's) if the Council decides that an arrangement has been made to take advantage of the scheme.
64. Monthly figures are converted to weekly figures by multiplying by 12 and dividing by 52.

⁴ Schedule to the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Default Scheme) (England) Regulations 2012, paragraphs 28 and 37

People treated as not in Great Britain

65. Council tax support is payable only to those applicants who live in Great Britain and in some circumstances people are treated as if they are not in Great Britain and are therefore excluded from the scheme. This applies where they do not satisfy the habitual residence test and where they are subject to immigration control.
66. The habitual residence test is in two parts: first, an applicant must show that he is habitually resident (intends to settle and make his home in the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, or the Republic of Ireland). Secondly, EEA nationals (people from EU countries together with Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and Liechtenstein) must have a legal right to live in the UK and claim benefits, i.e. a 'right to reside' in the UK. For example, workers, students, people who are self-sufficient or have lived in the UK for at least 5 years normally have the right to reside. From 1 April 2014, an EEA national who is a jobseeker, is not treated as having the right to reside for the purposes of applying for council tax support simply by being a jobseeker (although he may have a right to reside on some other basis, for example, as a family member of a worker).
67. An applicant will normally pass the habitual residence test if he is receiving Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance. But from 1 April 2015 this does not apply if a new applicant is receiving income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and his right to reside was decided only on the basis that he was a jobseeker or the family member of a jobseeker.
68. British citizens returning to the UK after a period of living or working abroad have an automatic right to reside in the UK but they do need to show that they are habitually resident in the UK.
69. Non-EEA and non-UK nationals may be subject to immigration control and an applicant who is subject to immigration control is excluded from applying for council tax support. For example, this applies where an applicant:
- needs permission to enter or remain in the UK but does not yet have it;
 - has permission to enter or remain in the UK, but only if he does not claim benefits or use other public services;
 - has been given permission to enter or remain in the UK because someone formally agreed to support him.

Students

70. A property that is wholly occupied by full-time students, for example a hall of residence, is exempt from council tax. Most students are not eligible for council tax support but some students who are liable for council tax can get support in specified circumstances. See Annex 8 for a full account, including treatment of student income.

Effective dates

Date entitlement begins

71. An applicant's entitlement to council tax support begins from the start of the support week (Monday to Sunday) which follows the date of application. However, if an applicant becomes liable for the first time for council tax in Blackburn with Darwen and he is entitled to council tax support, his entitlement begins from the support week in which he applies.

Date from which changes in circumstances take effect

72. Changes in circumstances also take effect from the Monday following the date of change, apart from these exceptions:
- changes in applicant's income arising from legislative changes affecting rates of income tax, personal tax reliefs, National Insurance contributions, and tax credit rates are ignored for a period of up to 30 weeks (pensioners only);
 - a change in the amount of council tax payable takes effect from the date of change;
 - a change in the amount a person is liable to pay by way of council tax (for example changes to a discount) also takes effect from the date of change;
 - if the change applies to an applicant who now has a partner, or a partner has died, or they have separated, it takes effect from the date of the change;
 - backdated payments of income are generally taken into account over an appropriate period as if they had been paid on time.
73. For working-age applicants, a change of circumstance which results in a change in entitlement to council tax support of £2 a week or less is not implemented in the way set out above. Instead, the change is recorded and is implemented only when:
- a subsequent change (or changes) during the current financial year bring the total effect of all the changes to more than £2; or
 - the end of the financial year is reached, in which case the change is implemented in calculating the amount of council tax support for the new financial year.
74. The purpose of this modification is to ensure that the Council does not repeatedly send out amended council tax bills to applicants when the effect of the changes is relatively minor.

Application procedure /online applications

75. Only one partner in a couple (or a polygamous marriage) can apply for council tax support in respect of the same dwelling. If the partners cannot agree who should apply, the Council will decide for them.

76. Where a person who is liable to pay council tax is unable to act for himself and someone has been appointed to act on their behalf (for example an attorney) the person appointed can make an application on behalf of that person. Where there is no-one to act on the person's behalf, the Council may appoint someone to act. An appointee must be aged over 18 and must apply for the appointment in writing. The Council may accept as an appointee someone who has already been appointed by the Department for Work and Pensions to act in respect of a social security benefit. The Council has the power to revoke the appointment at any time and the appointee may resign on giving 4 weeks' notice. If, subsequently, another person is authorised to act on the applicant's behalf (for example, an attorney) the former appointeeship ceases. The appointee must take full responsibility for all aspects of the application and is made fully aware by the Council of the duties involved, including the consequences of failing to comply with those duties.

77. An application may be made:

- in writing; or
- online; or
- by telephone in exceptional circumstances.

78. Universal Credit award notices received from the Department for Work and Pensions are treated as an application for council tax support.

79. Assisted digital support is available at Blackburn and Darwen Town Halls.

80. An application made in writing has to be made to the Council office on a form provided by the Council free of charge. Where an application is made on the correct form but is not properly completed, the Council may ask the applicant to complete the form correctly. Where an application is made in writing but not on the correct form, the Council may either supply the applicant with the correct form or ask for further information and evidence.

81. If an application is made online or by telephone and the Council considers that all the required information has not been provided, the Council will give the applicant the opportunity to provide the required information.

Date on which an application is made

82. The date to be taken as the date on which the application is made is normally the date the application is received by the Council, or the date the applicant first notified the Council of his intention to apply, if this is followed up within one month by a properly completed application. There are some exceptions to this general rule:

- if an applicant has been awarded State Pension Credit which includes a guarantee credit, Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, or Universal Credit and the Council

tax support application is received within one month of the claim for any of the above listed benefits, the date of application for council tax support is the first day of entitlement to one of those benefits;

- if an applicant or his partner is in receipt of one of the above listed benefits when he becomes liable for council tax for the first time, and the council tax support claim is received within one month of becoming liable, the date of application for council tax support is the date he became liable;
- where a couple's relationship comes to an end either due to the separation or death of one of them and the former partner was entitled to council tax support and the application is made within one month of the death or separation, the date of application for council tax support is the date of death or separation;
- where an application is not properly completed and is corrected within one month (or longer if the Council considers reasonable) the date of application is the date on which the first contact is made. If the incomplete application is not corrected within one month or other reasonable period, the date of application for council tax support is the date when sufficient information becomes available to decide the application.

Advance applications

83. An applicant may submit an application up to 8 weeks in advance if he anticipates that he will become liable for council tax during that period. The application is treated as made on the day on which liability for council tax begins.
84. Other than where an applicant is a person treated as not being in Great Britain, the Council may treat an advance application as made in the support week before the first week of entitlement to council tax support. This applies where an applicant is not entitled to council tax support in the week after the actual date of application, but the Council considers that he will become entitled within the next 13 weeks (17 weeks for a pensioner) unless there is a change in circumstances.

Date applications are treated as made and backdating

85. Where a pensioner applies and qualifies for council tax support, his application is treated as made 3 months before it was actually made (effectively all applications from pensioners are automatically backdated for a period of 3 months). Where an applicant applies for council tax support within one month of being awarded State Pension Credit including the guarantee credit, the three month period cannot go back any earlier than the date of his State Pension Credit claim.
86. Where an applicant requests his application to be backdated to an earlier date and shows a good reason for not making the application earlier, the application can be backdated to the latest of:
- the first day from which continuous good cause is shown;

- 6 months before the application was made (or the request for backdating was made);
- the start of the financial year (if over 6 months) if the Council considers exceptional circumstances are shown.

Evidence and information

87. Where appropriate, the Council can accept evidence submitted online or by telephone to support an application.
88. An applicant to council tax support must provide a National Insurance number for himself and if appropriate, others for whom he is applying, or evidence that he has applied for a National Insurance number. This requirement does not apply to a:
- child or young person;
 - person from abroad;
 - person subject to immigration control.
89. An applicant to council tax support must provide such evidence in support of his application as the Council considers reasonable, within one month of being notified of his duty to do so. This does not apply to an applicant who is a pensioner in respect of specified income which is ignored in the calculation of council tax support or whose income has been verified by The Pensions Service, where the Council has been notified of that income. The Council informs the applicant of his duty to notify any change of circumstances, and if asked by the applicant, which change of circumstances must be notified.
90. The Council can require an applicant to whom council tax support has been awarded (or any partner) who is at least the qualifying age for Pension Credit, to supply information about pension fund holders and suppliers of pension fund schemes.
91. Before a decision has been made on an application, an applicant may amend or withdraw the application by notifying the Council either in writing, by electronic communication or by telephone.

Duty to notify changes in circumstances

92. An applicant, or a person acting on behalf of the applicant, has a duty to report changes in circumstances either before an application has been decided by the Council or after council tax support has been awarded. The changes to be reported are those which the applicant might reasonably be expected to know would affect entitlement, and the changes must be notified in writing, by telephone or online within a period of 21 calendar days from the day when the change occurs, or as soon as reasonably practicable afterwards. Some types of change of circumstance do not need to be reported:

- changes in the amount of council tax payable to the council;
- changes in the ages of the applicant and his family or any non-dependants except where someone ceases to be a child or young person;
- changes which affect the amount of Income Support, income- based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit but not the amount of council tax support, except where the benefit ceases.

93. An applicant who receives State Pension Credit and who has been awarded council tax support does not need to report changes in circumstances except:

- any changes relating to a non-dependant's income or residency;
- any absence from the home exceeding or likely to exceed 13 weeks.

94. And where State Pension Credit comprises only of Savings Credit, the applicant does not need to report changes in circumstances except:

- changes affecting a child living with him other than age;
- a change in an applicant's capital which takes, or may take, the total to more than £16,000;
- certain changes in the income or capital of a non-dependant or partner⁵

Decisions and awards

95. Once the Council is satisfied that an application for council tax support has been completed in the proper manner together with all the required evidence and information, it will make the decision within 14 days or as soon as practicable thereafter.

96. Having made the decision on an application, the Council will notify the applicant, or a person appointed to act on behalf of the applicant, immediately, and within 14 days in the case of any other decision. The notification of a decision on an application is normally in the form of a revised council tax bill which includes:

- a reminder about the duty to report changes in circumstances and an explanation of the consequences of failing to do so;
- examples of changes that might affect entitlement to council tax support or its amount;
- information about the effect of the decision on the applicant's council tax liability;
- information about appeal procedures.

97. The revised council tax bill issued by the Council advises the applicant that he can request a written breakdown of the calculation showing how the decision was

⁵ See paragraph 9 (8) (c) of the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012

reached. The Council will respond to such a request within 14 days or as soon as practicable afterwards.

98. Where the Council makes an award of council tax support the applicant's council tax account is credited, and any refunds that may be due are paid by bank transfer.
99. Where the Council revises a decision and the amount of council tax support increases, the Council will credit the applicant's council tax account, and if as a result the account is in credit a refund will be made as soon as reasonably practicable. For working-age applicants, revised decisions amounting to £2 or less are not processed immediately but rolled forward until either the total including subsequent changes reaches more than £2 or the end of the financial year.
100. Where an award of council tax support is due but the applicant has died, the Council will credit any outstanding entitlement to council tax support to the applicant's council tax account, and any credit refund will be made to the executor or administrator as soon as practicable.
101. Where an award of council tax support is revised and the new entitlement is greater than the original entitlement, the amount already awarded for the same period is offset against the new entitlement.

Use of information

102. Where it is lawful to do so, the Council uses information provided by the Department for Work and Pensions and Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs in order to calculate entitlement to council tax support. Similarly, the Council shares information with those departments when it is required to do so.
103. The Council may receive, obtain, verify, record and store information relating to applications for council tax support, from:
- the applicant;
 - other persons in connection with applications;
 - other local authorities;
 - central government departments.
104. The Council may forward information to anyone in the Council or others authorised to act on behalf of the Council, in processing applications for council tax support. This is in accordance with the Council's privacy notice and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Revisions and written statements

105. The Council may revise or further revise a decision at any time. On request, the applicant or the person appointed to act on his behalf, may request a written or online

explanation of the revision, as long as the request is received within one month of the date of the revised decision.

106. The Council may terminate an award of council tax support, in whole or in part, if the Council considers that:

- the conditions of entitlement have not been met;
- an award should be revised or superseded;
- the applicant has failed to provide information requested;
- the application is fraudulent and/or there is deliberate misrepresentation of the facts in order to take advantage of the scheme.

Appeals

107. If an applicant is dissatisfied with the Council's decision on entitlement to council tax support or the amount awarded, he may write to the Council setting out why he is dissatisfied within one calendar month of the date of the notification/bill. The Council will then consider the matter and notifies the applicant in writing, either that he does not have a case stating the reasons why, or that action has been taken to address his concerns. If the applicant is still dissatisfied, or if the Council does not address his concerns within 2 months, he may appeal to the Valuation Tribunal.

Discretionary awards

108. If the Council considers it appropriate, it may award council tax support or additional council tax support on a discretionary basis. Applications may be made in writing or online and should be accompanied by supporting evidence. Awards will be made where a customer demonstrates financial hardship.

109. If the Council decides that a particular group of people should receive support from the discretionary scheme, it may treat an application to the main scheme as an application to the discretionary scheme as well. Any awards are credited to the applicant's council tax account. No cash awards are made.

110. Further information about the Council's discretionary scheme can be found at www.blackburn.gov.uk/benefits

Electronic communication

111. The Council may use electronic communication (for example via computer networks or mobile phones) in administering council tax support and may receive electronic communications including applications online, subject to the following conditions:

- there is an explicit authorisation given by the Council's chief executive;
- there is an approved method of authentication;
- approved forms are used;
- records are maintained in a way specified by the chief executive.

112. Any applications which are not submitted in the approved manner are treated as invalid. The Council may authorise another person or persons to act as intermediaries in connection with the delivery of information electronically and its authentication.
113. Any information delivered electronically is treated as if it were delivered in any other way required by the Council's scheme, as long as the above conditions are met. Information is treated as not delivered until it is accepted by the Council's official computer system. If, for legal reasons, it becomes necessary to prove the identity of the sender or recipient of information sent or received electronically, it is presumed to be the person named on the official computer system. Similarly, if it is necessary to prove that information sent electronically has actually been delivered to the Council, it is treated as received if it is recorded on the official computer system. By the same token, if it is not recorded as received on the official computer system it is treated as not received. And the time, date and content of any electronic communication is presumed to be that recorded on the computer system.

Fraud and compliance

114. The Council is determined to combat fraud in order to protect both its finances and the wider interests of all taxpayers. The Council makes every effort to prevent and detect fraud by using due diligence, and will take appropriate action where an application is found to be fraudulent or misrepresented to take advantage of the scheme.
115. In order to minimise the opportunity for fraud, the Council will:
- verify applications for council tax support rigorously;
 - employ sufficient staff to meet its commitment to combat fraud;
 - actively tackle fraud where it occurs;
 - co-operate with the Department for Work and Pensions and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs in joint-working, including prosecutions;
 - in all cases seek to recover all outstanding council tax.
116. In order to ensure that the above actions are carried out successfully, the Council will put in place all the required administrative policies, procedures and processes.

Annex 1 – Glossary of terms

Alternative maximum council tax support	A way of calculating council tax support for pensioners where there is a second adult sharing the household who would normally be expected to contribute towards the council tax bill, but who cannot afford to do so.
Amount for living expenses	An amount of money assumed to be sufficient to cover day-to-day living expenses.
Applicant	A person who has made an application to the Council for council tax support.
Application	An application for council tax support.
Armed Forces Independence Payment	A payment made in accordance with an armed and reserve forces compensation scheme.
Attendance Allowance	A benefit for people aged 65 and over that helps with the extra costs of long-term illness or disability, which can be either physical and/or mental. It is paid regardless of income and savings, and is tax-free.
Carer's Allowance	A benefit for someone caring for another person for at least 35 hours a week. It is paid regardless of income and savings but can be taxable.
Child	A person under the age of 16.
Child Benefit	A non means-tested benefit (below income of £60k) to help with the cost of children. It is usually paid monthly to a person who is responsible for a child either aged under 16 or aged 16 to 20 in full-time education or training.
Child Tax Credit	A payment to help with the cost of children aged under 16, or 16 to 20 in full-time education or training, for whom a person is responsible. It is income-related and paid in addition to Child Benefit to people in work and out of work.
Close relative	A parent, parent-in-law, son, son-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, step-parent, step-son, step-daughter, brother, sister. Where any of these close relatives is one member of a couple, the definition includes the other member of that couple.
Concessionary payment	A payment made in certain circumstances to compensate a person for the non-payment of a benefit or a tax credit.
Council	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council.
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	A scheme designed to help people in financial need pay their council tax.
Council tax support	A term generally used to describe a council tax reduction

	scheme.
Couple	Two people who are married to, or civil partners of, each other, or are living together as though they were married or civil partners, in the same household.
Disability Living Allowance	A non means-tested, non-taxable benefit paid to people who need supervision or help with their daily or nightly care, or who have mobility problems. It has now been replaced for most people by Personal Independence Payment but is still paid for children.
Earnings	Any remuneration or profit derived from employment
Employed earner	A person who is gainfully employed under a contract of service.
Employment and Support Allowance	A benefit paid to working-age people who have an illness, health condition or a disability which makes it difficult or impossible to work. Contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance is not means-tested but based on National Insurance contributions. Income-related Employment and Support Allowance is means-tested.
Estrangement	A breakdown of a relationship between 2 persons.
Extended reduction	A set amount of council tax support made for a specified period, usually 4 weeks.
Family	A couple, or a couple where one or both have responsibility for a child or young person living in the same household, or a lone parent who has responsibility for a child or young person living in the same household.
Financial or tax year	The period beginning 6th April in one year to 5 th April in the following year.
He, him, his	In this document these terms have the same meaning as she, her and hers.
Household	Not defined as such but given its every-day meaning, taking account of factors such as the overall relationship between the parties, living arrangements and the degree to which facilities are shared. Children and young people are treated as part of the household even when temporarily absent but are not part of the household in certain specific circumstances, such as when they are living in care or formally placed with the applicant.
Housing Benefit	An income-related (means-tested) benefit paid to tenants on low incomes (either in or out of work) to help pay their rent. The scheme is administered by local authorities in accordance with national legislation.

Income Support	An income-related (means-tested) benefit paid to working-age people on low income such as carers and lone parents. It is not usually paid to someone receiving Jobseeker's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance.
Jobseeker's Allowance	A benefit paid to working age people who are not working (or working less than 16 hours a week) and who are available for, and actively seeking full-time work. Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance is not means-tested but depends on National Insurance contributions. Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance is means-tested.
Local authority	An authority responsible for issuing council tax bills and providing a scheme for council tax support.
Lone parent	A person who has no partner and who is responsible for a child or young person living in the same household.
Macfarlane Trust	A charitable trust established to help relieve poverty or distress among those suffering from haemophilia.
Maternity leave	A period during which a woman is absent from work because she is pregnant or has given birth to a child, and after which she has the right to return to work.
Medically approved	Certified by a medical practitioner.
National Minimum Wage	The minimum amount that legally must be paid to an employed earner.
National Insurance	A form of taxation on earnings and self-employed profits paid into a fund from which some social security benefits are paid. The Department for Work and Pensions issues National Insurance numbers which are unique to each person and required when applying for council tax support.
Net earnings	The amount of earnings after specified deductions such as income tax and National Insurance contributions.
Net profit	The amount treated as self-employed earnings which is the applicant's total profit less specified deductions such as allowable expenses.
Non-dependant	A person living as a member of the applicant's household who is not his partner, or a child or young person for whom he is responsible, with certain exceptions such as joint-occupiers, boarders and paid carers.
Non-dependant deduction	A set amount deducted from an applicant's council tax support as a contribution made by a non-dependant towards household expenditure.

Occupational pension	Any pension or other periodical payment made under an occupational pension scheme.
Official computer system	A computer system maintained by or on behalf of a local authority for sending, receiving, processing or storing of any information.
Partner	The person who is the other member of a couple.
Paternity leave	A period of leave during which a father or partner is absent from work in order to care for his new-born or newly- adopted child, after which he has the right to return to work.
Pensioner	A person who has reached the qualifying age for State Pension Credit and is not (or where there is a partner the partner is not) receiving a working-age income-related benefit.
Personal Independence Payment	A replacement benefit for Disability Living Allowance designed to provide help to people over 16 who need care or who have mobility needs. It is not means-tested or taxable.
Personal pension scheme	A pension that a person arranges individually which is based on how much is paid into the scheme and how successful the pension provider's investments are.
Polygamous marriage	A person who is a husband or wife as a result of a marriage entered into under a law which permits polygamy and either party to the marriage has an additional spouse.
Public authority	A body or organisation which has a public function, for example the NHS and local authorities.
Relative	A close relative (as defined above) as well as a grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece.
Remunerative work	Where a person is working for at least 16 hours a week (which may be an average) for which payment is made or which is done in expectation of payment.
Resident	An applicant is resident in a dwelling if he occupies it as his sole or main home.
Residence rules	Qualifying conditions whereby an applicant has to establish that he has the right to live in the UK and intends to settle in the UK, Isle of Man, Channel Islands or Ireland and make it his home.
Second adult reduction (or second adult rebate)	Another term for alternative maximum council tax support (see above).

Self-employed earner	A person who is gainfully employed in Great Britain otherwise than in employed-earners employment.
Service user	A person who is consulted by, or on behalf of, certain public bodies.
State Pension Credit	An income-related (means-tested) benefit paid to pensioners on a low income. It has two components: the minimum guarantee and an additional 'savings credit' designed to reward those who have put by savings and income for retirement.
Sports award	An award made by certain specific sports councils from funds derived from the National Lottery.
Student	A person who is attending or undertaking a defined course of study at an educational establishment or on a qualifying course.
Support or reduction week	A period of 7 days commencing on a Monday and ending on a Sunday.
Temporary absence	A period not exceeding a specified number of weeks where a person is temporarily absent from their home and intending to return to that home, and has not sub-let that part of the home they normally occupy.
The Trusts	The Macfarlane Trust, the Macfarlane (Special Payments Trust) and the Macfarlane (Special Payments) (No.2) Trust.
Universal Credit	An income-related (means-tested) benefit for people of working-age who are on a low income. It replaces four existing means-tested benefits, including Housing Benefit and two tax credits.
Voluntary organisation	A body other than a public or local authority whose activities are carried out on a not-for-profit basis.
War Disablement Pension	A payment paid to people who have been injured or disabled as a result of any service in Her Majesty's Armed Forces. The amount paid depends on the severity of the disablement.
War Widow's Pension	A pension payable to the widow, widower or in some circumstances the children of someone killed in the Armed Forces or who died later as a result of injury in the Armed Forces.
Working-age applicant	A person who has not reached the qualifying age for State Pension Credit or who has reached that age but is receiving (or where there is a partner the partner is receiving) a working-age income-related benefit.

Working Tax Credit	An income-related payment made to someone in paid work but on a low income. Different qualifying conditions apply depending on age and hours worked.
Young person	A person who is a qualifying young person for Child Benefit purposes. The young person must be over 16 and under 20 and on a course of full-time, non-advanced education or in approved training, or in appropriate full-time education.

Annex 2 - Polygamous marriages

A polygamous marriage means any marriage where one party is married to more than one person, and the ceremony of marriage took place under the law of a country which permits polygamy. The amount for living expenses for polygamously married couples is calculated by awarding the highest amount applicable to the applicant and one of his partners. An additional amount is awarded for each other partner and is the difference between the allowance for a single person aged 25 or over and a couple aged 18 or over (See Appendix 1). The amounts awarded for children and other components are the same as for other applicants.

Where an applicant is polygamously married he is treated as possessing the income and capital of all partners to the marriage with whom he shares the household.

Where a person who is polygamously married lives as a non-dependant member of an applicant's household, only one non-dependant deduction is made, but the amount deducted is the highest applicable after taking account of the circumstances and income of all partners in the marriage.

Annex 3 - Childcare charges

Where incurred, childcare charges can be deducted from income where the applicant is:

- A lone parent who is working at least 16 hours a week;
- A member of a couple both of whom are working at least 16 hours a week;
- A member of a couple one of whom is working and the other is incapacitated, in hospital or in prison.

For the purposes of childcare charges an applicant can be treated as working during the first 28 weeks of a period of sickness as long as he was in work immediately before getting a specified sickness or disability benefit (or appropriate National Insurance credits). Also, an applicant can be treated as working if he is absent from work, on maternity, adoption, shared parental or paternity leave, as long as he was in work immediately before the leave

began and is entitled to statutory, maternity, adoption, paternity or shared parental pay or maternity allowance.

To be eligible, the childcare charges must be:

- paid by the applicant or his partner;
- in respect of a child who is a member of the applicant's family;
- for care provided by specified care providers, for example registered child minders;
- in respect of a period before the first Monday following the child's 15th birthday (16th birthday if the child is disabled).

The charges cannot be for care provided by a member of the applicant's family or for care which mainly takes place in the applicant's home. And the charges cannot be payments in respect of the child's compulsory education.

Childcare charges are estimated over an appropriate period of no more than one year in order to arrive at an accurate average weekly charge.

Annex 4 - Definition of earnings as an employed earner

The definition of earnings includes the following:

- any bonus or commission;
- payments to compensate for loss of earnings but not redundancy payments;
- payments in lieu of notice or payments intended as compensation for loss of employment;
- holiday pay but not if it is paid more than 4 weeks after employment ends;
- payments made for a period when no actual work has been carried out, for example a retainer;
- any expenses which are not 'wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred' in connection with employment such as travelling expenses between home and work;
- compensation for unfair dismissal from work and any other payment made under employment rights legislation;
- any statutory sick pay, maternity pay, paternity pay and adoption pay;
- payments made by or on behalf of an employer to an applicant who is on maternity or paternity leave, adoption leave or is absent from work because of illness;
- non-cash vouchers which have been counted when calculating liability to pay National Insurance contributions.

The definition of earnings does not include:

- payments in kind with the exception of non-cash vouchers as above;
- expenses which are 'wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred' in connection with employment;
- any occupational pension;

- expenses arising from participation in consultation exercises on behalf of specified public authorities.

Annex 5 - Calculation of self-employed earnings

The earnings of a self-employed earner are the gross income from the employment. Local authority payments to foster parents, and certain kinship carers are not treated as self-employed earnings but as income other than earnings.

Royalties, copyright, design, patent, trademark and Public Lending Right Scheme payments are taken into account over a set period of weeks. The number of weeks is obtained by dividing the amount of the payments by the amount of council tax support which would be payable had the applicant not received the payments, plus the amount that would normally be ignored in his case.

The earnings to be taken into account are the net profit from the business less any amount which is ignored under Appendix 3. Where a self-employed applicant is a partner (or a share fisherman) the net profit is his share of the profit.

In order to arrive at a figure for net profit, the following expenses are deducted from gross earnings:

- any expenses 'wholly and exclusively' incurred including repayments of capital on business loans for the replacement of equipment or machinery, or the repair of existing business assets (after any insurance payments);
- appropriate income tax and National Insurance contributions;
- one half of any sum paid periodically in respect of a personal pension scheme;
- net payments of VAT and interest payments on loans taken out for the purposes of the applicant's business.

The following items are not considered to be expenses:

- capital expenditure;
- depreciation of any capital asset;
- any sum earmarked for setting up or expanding the business;
- losses incurred before the period over which the earnings are calculated;
- repayment of capital on business loans;
- any debts owed to the business except certain irrecoverable debts;
- expenses that the Council consider have not been reasonably incurred;

Special arrangements apply in assessing the net profit of childminders. The net profit is one third of the earnings less income tax, National Insurance contributions and one half of the payments to a personal pension scheme.

Where an applicant has more than one employment as a self-employed earner, any losses incurred in any one of his employments cannot be offset against his earnings in any other of his employments.

Annex 6 - Calculation of income other than earnings

The following are examples of how an applicant's income other than earnings is calculated:

- where a benefit payment, for example Income Support, includes a deduction to recover an overpayment, it is the gross amount of the benefit that is taken into account;
- where an applicant is receiving a reduced rate of contributory Employment and Support Allowance because of a sanction, it is the full amount that is taken into account;
- where tax credit for the current tax year includes a deduction to recover an overpayment of tax credits for the previous year, it is the tax credit less the deduction that is taken into account;
- where a student applicant in receipt of a student loan leaves their course prematurely, he is treated as having the same weekly income from the loan as if he had completed the course, but only for the period during which he attended the course.

Annex 7 - Income which is treated as capital

- occasional bonus payments to part-time coastguards, fire-fighters, and those manning lifeboats;
- refunds of income tax deducted from profits or emoluments chargeable to income tax under Schedule D or E;
- any holiday pay which is paid more than 4 weeks after the employment ends;
- with some exceptions (see Appendix 5) any income derived from capital but only from the date it is normally due to be credited to the applicant's account;
- any advance of employed earnings or any loan made by the applicant's employer;
- with the exception of payments made by certain specified⁶ trust funds, any charitable or voluntary payment which is not made or due to be made at regular intervals;
- the gross receipts of any commercial activity undertaken by a self-employed applicant receiving council tax support, but only if those receipts were payable into a special account;
- any arrears of subsistence allowance which are paid to an applicant as a lump sum;

⁶ Schedule to the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Default Scheme) (England) Regulations 2012, paragraph 64 (7)

- any arrears of working tax credit or child tax credit;
- any payment made through an approved trust for providing assistance to a disabled person whose disabilities were caused by the Thalidomide drug.

Annex 8 - Students

To be eligible for council tax support, a student must be liable for council tax and be in one of the following categories:

- receiving Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- a lone-parent;
- student couples with responsibility for a child or young person;
- disabled and would be entitled to a disability premium;
- a single foster carer;
- treated as incapable of work (or having limited capability for work) for a continuous period of at least 156 days;
- under 21 and not in higher education;
- under 20 and someone receives Child Benefit for them;
- receiving a Disabled Student's Allowance for deafness;
- have interrupted their course due to illness or caring responsibilities (with the approval of their college or university) for the period between their illness or caring responsibilities ending and when they return to University, but only if they do not receive student finance during that time;
- pension-age, or whose partner is pension-age;
- covered by a sick note saying that they have not been able to work due to illness or disability for at least 28 weeks;
- part-time students.

Calculation of grant income

A student's grant income is taken fully into account, except payments for the following:

- tuition or examination fees;
- in respect of disability;
- residential study away from their normal place of study;
- maintaining a home away from their normal place of study;
- £390 for the cost of books and equipment, £303 for travel expenses (but only where the student does not have or treated as having a student loan) and childcare costs;
- higher education bursary for care leavers;
- the grant for dependants known as the parents' learning allowance.

Where a student receives other income (for example a gift) to cover expenditure necessarily incurred in respect of the above items, it is ignored but only to the extent that it exceeds the amount ignored from grant income (for example, £390 for the cost of books).

Grant income is normally taken into account over the period of study for which it paid. This generally means the period beginning with the start of the course and ending with the last day of the course. In the case of a sandwich course, any periods of work experience are excluded from this calculation.

Calculation of student loans

A student loan (or a postgraduate master's degree loan) is treated as income. This also applies where a student doesn't actually have a loan but could obtain one. And if a student is treated as having a loan it is the maximum amount available (or in the case of a postgraduate master's degree loan 30% of the maximum available) which is treated as income.

£10 of the weekly amount is ignored. A fixed amount of £390 towards the cost of books and equipment, and £303 towards the cost of travel is deducted from the loan income, whether or not the costs are actually incurred.

Any loan taken out by a student to pay their fee contribution to an educational establishment is ignored.

Any discretionary access funds paid periodically by a college or university are ignored unless intended for and used for specified basic needs, in which case the funds are fully taken into account less £20 a week. Where access funds are paid by way of a lump sum, the lump sum is treated as capital. However, where the lump sum is used for items other than specified basic needs it is ignored for a period of 52 weeks from the date of payment.

Where a student's partner has been assessed for a contribution to his grant or loan, that contribution is taken into account as income, but an equal amount of the partner's income is ignored.

Appendix 1 - Living expenses

The amounts for living expenses consist of amounts for the applicant and where appropriate his partner (known as personal allowances), amounts for children and young people, and additional amounts, known as premiums, mainly for disability and caring responsibilities.

Amounts for the applicant	£ per week
Single person aged between 18 and 24	57.90
Single person on full Employment and Support Allowance	73.10
Single person aged between 25 and pension age	73.10
Lone parent below pension age	73.10
Couple below pension age	114.85
Single person or lone parent who has reached pension age	176.40
Couple, one or both have reached pension age	263.80
Amounts for children, young people	£ per week
Dependent child/young person aged under 20 ⁷	66.90
Premiums	£ per week
Family premium	17.45
Family premium (lone parent in certain circumstances)	22.20
Disabled child premium (for each child)	62.86
Carer premium	36.00
Disability premium for single claimant	33.55
Disability premium for a couple	47.80

⁷ This was limited to 2 children from 6th April 2017 in the prescribed scheme but the Council has decided to include all children and young persons in its scheme.

Enhanced disability premium for single claimant	16.40
Enhanced disability premium for a couple	23.55
Enhanced disability premium for a child	25.48
Severe disability premium for single claimant	64.30
Severe disability premium for a couple (one qualifies)	64.30
Severe disability premium for a couple (both qualify)	128.60
For certain applicants in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance	£ per week
Work related activity component	29.05
Support component	37.65

A brief explanation of qualifying conditions for the various premiums:

Family Premium

This applies where the applicant's family includes at least one child or young person. It was abolished from 1st May 2016 in the prescribed scheme but the Council has decided to retain it.

Disabled child premium

This applies where an applicant or partner is responsible for a child or young person living in their household who meets at least one of the following conditions:

- is blind;
- receives Disability Living Allowance;
- receives Personal Independence Payment;
- would receive one of these benefits if they were not in hospital.

The disabled child premium is paid for each child who satisfies one of the above conditions.

Carer Premium

This applies where an applicant or partner is entitled to Carer's Allowance (including where Carer's Allowance is not paid because of overlapping benefit rules). The applicant must have actually made a claim for Carer's Allowance in order for the premium to apply.

If both the applicant and his partner qualify for carer premium, two premiums are paid.

Disability premium

This applies where an applicant or his partner is under the qualifying age for State Pension Credit and either registered blind or receiving:

- Disability Living Allowance;
- Personal Independence Payment;
- Armed Forces Independence Payment;
- Working Tax Credit with a disability element;
- Attendance Allowance;
- Constant Attendance Allowance;
- War Pensioners Mobility Supplement;
- Severe Disablement Allowance;
- Incapacity Benefit.

It is also paid in certain circumstances where an applicant has been unable to work for at least a year.

Enhanced disability premium

This applies where an applicant or his partner is under the qualifying age for State Pension Credit and receiving the disability premium or income-related Employment Support Allowance, and one of the following:

- Personal Independence Payment daily living component at the higher ('enhanced') rate;
- Armed Forces Independence Payment;
- Disability Living Allowance care component at the highest rate.

Or an applicant is in the support group for income-related Employment Support Allowance.

Severe disability premium

This applies where an applicant is receiving the disability premium or income-related Employment Support Allowance, and one of the following qualifying benefits:

- Personal Independence Payment daily living component;
- Armed Forces Independence Payment;
- Disability Living Allowance care component at the middle or highest rate;

- Attendance Allowance (or Constant Attendance Allowance paid with Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit or War Pension).

A further condition is that no-one aged 18 or over is living with the applicant, unless they're in one of these situations:

- they receive a qualifying benefit;
- they are registered blind;
- they are a boarder or sub-tenant (but not a close relative);
- they make separate payments to the landlord.

The severe disability premium is not paid if someone is receiving Carer's Allowance or the carer's element of Universal Credit for looking after the applicant.

Couples receive the higher amount of severe disability premium if both of them are eligible, or the lower amount if:

- someone receives Carer's Allowance or the carer's element of Universal Credit for looking after only one member of the couple; or
- only one member of the couple meets the eligibility criteria and the other is registered blind.

Appendix 2 - Alternative Maximum Council Tax Reduction (or Second Adult Reduction)

Pensioners may qualify for council tax support through the alternative maximum council tax reduction, sometimes known as the second adult reduction or rebate. This is where there is a second adult sharing the household who would normally be expected to contribute towards the council tax bill, but who cannot afford to do so. The amount of the reduction depends on the income of the second adult:

Where the second adult or second adults are in receipt of Income Support, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or State Pension Credit.	25%
Where the gross income of the second adult, or where there is more than one second adult, their aggregate income (ignoring income from income-related benefits) is less than £201 per week.	15%
As above, but where the income is £201 per week but less than £260 per week.	7.5%
Where a dwelling would be wholly occupied by students (who are not entitled to council tax support under the main scheme) but for the presence of one or	100%

more second adults in receipt of an income-related benefit.	
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In calculating a second adult's gross income, payments of Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment or Armed Forces Independence Payment are ignored. Payments from certain specified trusts such as the Macfarlane Trust are also ignored.

Appendix 3 - Earnings that are ignored fully or in part

Earnings paid before the first day of entitlement

Where an applicant ceases employment as an employed earner because of retirement and is entitled to retirement pension (or would be if he satisfied the contribution conditions), his earnings are ignored from the date after the employment has been terminated.

Where an applicant ceases employment as an employed earner for reasons other than retirement before the first day of entitlement to council tax support, his earnings are ignored except for certain specified payments such as retainers and compensation for unfair dismissal.

Where an applicant has not ceased employment but his working hours have decreased to fewer than 16, or he is ill or she is on maternity leave before the first day of entitlement to council tax support, the earnings are ignored other than specified payments such as statutory sick pay, statutory maternity pay, paternity or shared parental pay.

The above paragraphs also apply when an applicant has been working part-time (fewer than 16 hours a week) and that employment either comes to an end or is interrupted.

Similar arrangements apply when employment or part-time employment as a self-employed earner comes to an end: earnings, other than royalties or analogous payments, are ignored from the date the employment ended.

Earnings paid when council tax support has been awarded

The applicant's earnings which are ignored are shown in the table below.

Amount ignored	Circumstances which must apply
All	Where the applicant is receiving Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit because earnings will already have been taken into account in assessing entitlement to these benefits.
£20	Entitled to a disability or severe disability premium, work-related activity or support component of Employment and Support Allowance or a carer premium. (NB £20 in total for couples.)
£25	Lone parent.
£10	Couples where £20 is not ignored.
£20	Where the applicant receives earnings from employment as a part-

	time fire fighter, auxiliary coastguard, manning or launching a lifeboat or being a member of any territorial or reserve force. (NB £20 in total for couples if they are both employed in this way.)
£5	Single person where £20 is not ignored.
All	Earnings of a child or young person.

If earnings are paid abroad and cannot be transferred to the United Kingdom they are ignored whilst the situation exists. If earnings paid in a different currency have to be converted into sterling any banking charge or commission is ignored.

In addition to the amounts listed in the table above a further £17.10 is ignored where the applicant:

- qualifies for a 30 hour element in the calculation of their working tax credit;
- is aged at least 25 and who works for at least 30 hours a week or who has a partner who does so;
- has a partner and one of them is working 16 hours or more a week and whose family includes at least one child or young person;
- is a lone parent working 16 hours a week or more;
- is working or his partner is working 16 hours or more a week and is entitled to a disability premium, a work-related activity component or a support component of Employment and Support Allowance.

Appendix 4 - Income other than earnings that is ignored fully or in part

Income wholly ignored – benefit payments:

- Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment Armed Forces Independence Payment and any mobility supplement paid to members of the armed forces;
- all income when the applicant is receiving Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit;
- any concessionary payment made to compensate for non-payment of any of the benefits mentioned immediately above;
- War Disablement Pension, a War Widow's or War Widower's Pension and certain analogous payments;
- Christmas bonus for pensioners;
- Guardian's Allowance;
- Child Benefit;
- Discretionary Housing Payments;
- payments made under a local welfare provision (formerly part of the Social Fund);

- any increase in the rate of social security benefits for a dependant who is not a member of the claimant's family.

Income wholly ignored – expenses:

- any payment made for travelling or other expenses relating to participation in a recognised work programme;
- any payment made for expenses incurred for unpaid voluntary work;
- payments arising from participation in consultation exercises undertaken by certain public bodies;
- payments for expenses to attend a court of law (for example, travel, subsistence and accommodation), for example jury service or acting as a witness;
- any payment of expenses in respect of an employed earner that is 'wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred'.

Income wholly ignored – other:

- charitable and voluntary payments, but not where the payment is made by a former partner of the applicant, or former partner of any member of the applicant's family or the parent of a child or young person where they are a member of the applicant's family;
- certain personal injury payments including payments under an annuity or court order;
- any payment made to the applicant as a holder of the Victoria Cross, the George Cross or any analogous payment;
- payments made from the Macfarlane and similar trusts, and certain analogous payments;
- any payment made under the Assisted Prison Visit's Scheme set up to help relatives or other persons to visit persons in custody;
- payments akin to education maintenance allowance;
- certain specified training allowances;
- any payment made under the Employment Services Access to Work scheme for disabled people;
- direct payments made to disabled people to buy services and direct payments in lieu of health care;
- payments made by a local authority to enable the applicant or his partner to live independently;
- a parental contribution taken into account in calculating a student's grant or loan, and payments where there is not a grant or loan up to a limited extent;
- payments made to the applicant by a child, young person or non-dependant;
- child maintenance payments except when paid by the applicant or his partner;
- certain payments made in respect of adoption, fostering and provision of respite care;

- payments made in lieu of vouchers for Healthy Start food and vitamins or for milk tokens;
- income in kind;
- income derived from capital in most circumstances;
- income from abroad that cannot be transferred to the United Kingdom;
- any banking charges or commission to convert a payment of income into sterling;
- payments received under an insurance policy taken out against the risk of being unable to maintain certain loan repayments;
- tax on income which is otherwise taken into account;
- payments of income which are treated as capital under this scheme;
- payments in respect of certain NHS charges, for example dental treatment;
- sports awards, unless they are intended for certain basic needs.

Income partially ignored

Subject to a combined maximum of £20:

- £15 of any Widowed Mother's Allowance or Widowed Parents' Allowance;
- £15 of maintenance payments other than child maintenance;
- £20 of payments to the applicant made by sub-tenants of the applicant's home with a formal liability to pay rent;
- £20 of payments made by a boarder plus half the amount in excess of £20;
- payments of Working Tax Credit up to £17.10 where earnings are too low to use the whole amount ignored under standard arrangements.

Appendix 5 - Capital that is ignored

Property

- the dwelling normally occupied by the applicant as his home including any garden, garage and outbuildings;
- premises occupied wholly or partly by a partner, relative or any member of the applicant's family as his home where that person has attained the qualifying age for State Pension Credit or is incapacitated;
- premises occupied by a former partner as his home providing that the applicant is not estranged or divorced from his former partner, nor where the applicant had formed a civil partnership that has been dissolved;
- any premises that the applicant acquires and intends to occupy as his home within 26 weeks from the date of acquisition or within a longer period if the Council considers reasonable;
- any sum solely attributable to the sale of premises formerly occupied by the applicant as his home which is to be used for the purchase of other premises that he

intends to occupy as his home within 26 weeks of the sale, or a longer period if the Council considers reasonable and necessary to secure the purchase;

- any future interest in property (for example where a person has been left property for life that the applicant is due to inherit on their death) but not where the applicant has granted a lease or tenancy including sub-leases or sub-tenancies;
- the business assets owned wholly or partly by the applicant while working for the business, but where he ceases working, the value of the business assets are ignored only for a period in which the Council decides is reasonable to allow for the disposal of such assets;
- payments for repair to, or replacement of, personal possessions, repairs or improvements to the home are ignored for 26 weeks or a longer period if the Council considers it reasonable;
- the applicant's former home which he left following estrangement, divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership for a period of 26 weeks from the date on which the applicant left the home. Where the applicant's former home is occupied by the former partner who is a lone parent, the value of the home is ignored so long as the former partner continues to occupy the home;
- for 26 weeks or longer if reasonable, the value of any premises which the applicant is taking reasonable steps either to dispose of, or to obtain possession of, or which he intends to occupy after essential repairs or alterations;
- deposits held by a housing association, and (for 26 weeks or a longer period if the Council considers reasonable) deposits that were so held and earmarked for buying a home;
- for 26 weeks or longer if reasonable, any grant made by a local authority in order to help purchase premises that an applicant intends to occupy as his home or for essential repairs or alterations to be carried out and make fit for occupation.

Benefits

- capital already taken into account when the applicant is receiving Universal Credit, Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, or income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- payments of arrears or compensation in respect of any income-related benefit, discretionary housing payment and tax credit for a period of 52 weeks from the date of receipt of those arrears;
- payments made under a local welfare provision (formerly part of the Social Fund) sometimes known as occasional assistance;
- compensation for late payment of a social security benefit;
- any payment to rectify or compensate for an official error relating to specified social security benefits, but where the payment is £5,000 or more, only as long as the payment is made on or after the date on which council tax support is awarded and only for the duration of that award;
- for 52 weeks any payment of council tax support;

- where an applicant is entitled to council tax support solely through the alternative council tax support route (see Appendix 2), all his capital is ignored.

Compensation

- any payments made from the Macfarlane and similar trusts and certain other analogous trusts;
- any payment made to the applicant or his partner as a result of personal injury but only for a period of 52 weeks;
- compensation paid to children and young people for personal injury or the death of a parent while the capital is held by a court or administered by a responsible person;
- any £10,000 ex gratia payment made as a result of imprisonment or internment by the Japanese during the Second World War;
- the value of certain trust funds derived from payments made as a result of personal injury;
- certain trust payments made to the applicant or a member of his family to compensate those who suffer from or who have died from variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease;
- payments made to people who were slaves or forced labourers, suffered property loss or personal injury, or who were parents of a child who died during the Second World War;
- payments made to those with an annuity policy from the Equitable Life Assurance Company.

Other

- personal possessions unless they have been bought to secure or increase entitlement to council tax support;
- cash payments made by a local authority to help children in need;
- payments made by a local authority to a person aged 18 or over who was formerly in the applicant's care and continues to live with the applicant and who gives the payments to the applicant;
- any payments in kind made by a charity or made from the MacFarlane or similar specified trusts;
- the health-in-pregnancy grant paid to pregnant women to help them prepare for the birth of the baby;
- any payment other than a training allowance made to assist disabled people to obtain or retain employment;
- any payment made by a local authority under specified provisions to a blind homeworker;
- any payment made to the applicant as holder of the Victoria or George Cross;
- for 52 weeks, any arrears of a specified military pension;
- payments akin to an education maintenance allowance;
- for 52 weeks, any arrears of subsistence allowance;

- payments made by a local authority intended to enable an applicant or his partner to live independently in their accommodation;
- any direct payments for health care;
- certain payments made in respect of adoption, fostering and guardianship support;
- for 52 weeks, payments made in respect of certain NHS charges, hospital travel costs, payments in lieu of Healthy Start food vouchers, milk tokens or the supply of vitamins, and for assisted prison visits;
- the surrender value of annuities or the right to receive income under them;
- the surrender value of any life insurance policy;
- where a payment of capital is made by instalments, the value of the right to receive outstanding instalments;
- payments made to help people select, train for, obtain and retain employment under the Employment and Training Act 1973;
- for 52 weeks, any payment to a self-employed person in order to establish or develop his business;
- for 26 weeks, sports awards unless intended for basic needs;
- the value of the right to receive any income payable abroad which cannot be transferred to the United Kingdom;
- any banking charges or commission to convert a payment of capital into sterling;
- the right to receive any income under a life interest or life rent;
- the value of the right to receive an occupational or personal pension;
- the value of any funds held under a personal pension scheme;
- the value of the right to receive any rent except where the applicant has a reversionary interest in the property where rent is due.



Council Tax Support

Consultation Findings

Report

October 2018

Introduction

A public consultation for the proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2019/20 was undertaken throughout September and October 2018.

The consultation exercise was designed to engage with as many residents and interested parties as possible. The consultation sought responses on the proposed changes and in addition, alternative ideas that could be considered for inclusion in Council Tax Support scheme, or as part of a wider budget savings programme.

The overarching objectives of the consultation were to engage with customers and representative organisations alike, publicise and provide information, and obtain views and opinions about the Councils own proposals that will take effect in April 2019.

The findings of the consultation will be used to help inform and influence member discussion, and ultimately, the proposals for changing scheme in the 2019/20 financial year.

The decision on proposed changes to the scheme will be finalised by Full Council on the 24th January 2019.

Consultation Exercise

To help ensure that the consultation process was full and comprehensive, a wide range of methodologies were adopted in September and October. These included:

- Mailshot to customers and representative groups;
- Online survey on the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council website;
- Paper questionnaires were made available at the One Stop Shops;
- Customer engagement – At the One Stop Shops and the via Contact Centre enquiries;
- Internal communications – email and briefings for members and staff, and;
- Links to the survey added to customer emails;

The consultation and the online survey closed for comments on the 22nd October 2018.

Consultation Methodology

1. The Council's website featured the online survey throughout the consultation period. The online survey was also widely promoted on all email communications with customers.
2. Paper surveys were also made available to customers and were pro-actively advertised and completed with customers at the One Stop Shops at Blackburn and Darwen. Contact Centre staff also completed the online survey for customers following incoming telephone enquiries.
3. In total, 500 mailshot letters were issued to affected groups. These included, self-employed claimants, claims currently receiving or exempt from non-dependent deductions and claims currently on band C and above.

The mailshot explained the reason for the public consultation and invited recipients to go online to take part in the consultation and complete the questionnaire. The

mailshot also provided details of a contact telephone number and email address for any direct enquiries in relation to the consultation.

4. A number of emails were also issued to representative groups, including local voluntary and community organisations from across the Borough as well as local registered social housing providers.
5. As many Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council staff both live and work in the area, they are potentially interested parties. The online consultation was communicated via the staff intranet and a teamtalk email to all Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council staff, inviting them to take part in the survey and to inform families and friends of the proposed changes.

Consultation Survey Results

In total there were 381 responses received during the consultation process. A total of 291 recorded that they were liable for Council Tax whilst 27 were not, with a further 63 preferring not to say, or did not answer the question.

When asked if they received Council Tax Support, 128 or 35% of the respondents recorded that they came from households currently in receipt of Council Tax Support, whilst a further 203 indicated that they were not in receipt. A further 37 respondents did not indicate either way and preferred not to say. An additional 13 respondents did not answer the question at all.

The results for the responses are presented by examining each of the consultation questions and the responses provided.

In addition to the responses mentioned above, representative groups/voluntary organisations were also contacted for opinions and views on the proposed changes. Unfortunately, only 4 organisations responded, these include; the Womens Centre, great Places, AgeUK, and the Blind Society. The views of these organisations has been summarized in section '*Representative Group responses*'.

Demographic Information from the consultation Survey

During the consultation exercise a number of questions were asked to identify demographic information from respondents.

From respondents the following information was identified:

Gender (364 responded)

Male 143 or 39.3%

Female 198 or 54.4%

Prefer not to say or entered an alternative gender 23 or 6.32%

Age (372 responded)

18-64 years of age 309 or 83.1%

65+ 43 or 11.6%

Prefer not to say 20 or 5.4%

Disability (371 responded)

With a disability or long term physical or mental health condition 91 or 24.5%

Who did not have a disability or long term physical or mental health condition 253 or 68.2%

Prefer not to say 27 or 7.3%

Ethnicity (369 responded)

White British 229 or 62.1%

White other 17 or 4.6%

Asian or Asian British – Indian 55 or 14.9%

Asian or Asian British – Pakistani 36 or 9.8%

Prefer not to say 32 or 8.7%

Equality Monitoring

Equality monitoring helps us to meet our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010. Data was requested at the end of the survey and covers some of the characteristics which are protected from discrimination as contained within the Equality Act 2010.

The response rate from Council Tax Support recipients was significantly lower (35%) than the response rate from Non-CTB recipients (55%). This disparity has also been reported by other Authorities that have consulted on this matter. However, it should be noted that the split in total number of Council Tax Support/non Council Tax Support recipients in the Borough is not too dissimilar at 27.3% to 72.7%.

Replies were received for all age groups, however the majority of responses (83.1%) were received from those aged 18 to 64. The response rate observed from those aged 65 or over appears low (11.6%) in comparison with the demographic profile of the Borough, however this could be as a result of them not being directly affected by the changes.

In keeping with the demographic profile of the Borough, the majority of the responses (62.1%) to the consultation came from respondents with a white British background, with fewer responses (24.7%) coming from respondents who indicated an Asian heritage. Again, the results from the consultation are similar to the actual demographics of the Borough which indicate an Asian heritage percentage of approximately 30%.

Responses were also received from persons with a disability.

Overall, the responses represent a wide range of views and the findings of the consultation are thought to be representative, as the level of responses are, on the whole, in-keeping with the demographic profile of the Borough.

Responses

Q1. To simplify the Council Tax Support scheme and save the council money, we propose not to rely on self-employed applicants declaring their income, and instead, intend to set a minimum income level.

Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a minimum income for self-employed claimants of £274.05 (35 hours multiplied by the National Living Wage)?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	60.48%	228
No	16.98%	64
Don't know	22.55%	85
TOTAL		377

Q2. If there is a non-dependant (adult who doesn't own or rent the property) living in the household, their income is taken into account when assessing a Council Tax Support claim. Deductions are then made based on the income of that person. At present there are four different deduction amounts that can be made.

Do you agree with the proposal to simplify the scheme and have one flat rate of deduction, for example, £5.00 per week?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	61.80%	233
No	21.75%	82
Don't know	16.45%	62
TOTAL		377

Q3. Council Tax Support is awarded based on the council tax payable. Those in higher bands can therefore receive more Council Tax Support.

Do you agree with the proposal to limit the maximum award to that of a band B property?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	53.23%	198
No	33.33%	124
Don't know	13.44%	50
TOTAL		372

Q4. To simplify the administration, the council proposes to ignore small changes to a person's Council Tax Support claim.

Do you agree with the proposal not to amend the Council Tax Support calculation if the adjustment is £2 per week or less?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	73.50%	269
No	12.84%	47
Don't know	13.66%	50
TOTAL		366

Q5. If a single applicant does not qualify for Council Tax Support but has a 2nd adult in the property (such as, a boarder/son or daughter) on low income, a rebate of up to 25% can be applied to the bill.

Do you agree with the proposal to no longer award Council Tax Support in these circumstances?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	50.68%	187
No	37.40%	138
Don't know	11.92%	44
TOTAL		369

Q6. Council Tax Support can be awarded to people who are temporarily absent from their homes for certain reasons. We propose to change the time allowed in line with other welfare benefits, for example, temporarily abroad would reduce from 13 weeks allowed to 4 weeks.

Do you agree with the proposal to reduce the current period to 4 weeks?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	62.87%	232
No	26.02%	96
Don't know	11.11%	41
TOTAL		369

Q7. Because the council is proposing to make changes to the Council Tax Support scheme it is considering extending discretionary support for the most vulnerable in the borough who may be affected by the changes.

Do you agree with the proposal to extend discretionary support?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	72.88%	266
No	12.60%	46
Don't know	14.52%	53
TOTAL		365

Q8. Currently, the maximum eligible Council Tax Support a working age person can receive is 80%.

Do you think the council should simply reduce the eligible level of support to a maximum of 75% rather than the current 80%?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	40.76%	150
No	45.92%	169
Don't know	13.32%	49
TOTAL		368

Q9. Do you have any other suggestions how the Council Tax Support scheme can be changed?

The comments are listed in Appendix A.

Q10. Do you have any suggestions how the council can make further budget savings?

The comments are listed in Appendix A.

Representative Group responses

As indicated above, only four responses were received, a summary of the responses is below

Question 1 – 2 of the respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce the minimum income floor, whilst 2 did not.

Question 2 – 2 of the respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce one flat rate of non-dependent deduction, whilst 2 did not.

Question 3 – All 4 respondents disagreed with the band cap at band B.

Question 4 – 3 of the respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce a tolerance level, whilst 1 did not.

Question 5 – 2 of the respondents agreed with the proposal to abolish of 2nd adult rebate, whilst 2 did not.

Question 6 – All respondents agreed with the proposal to reduce temporary absence to 4 weeks.

Question 7 – All respondents agreed with the proposal to extend a discretionary support scheme.

Question 8 – 2 of the respondents agreed with the proposal to reduce the eligible amount from 80% to 75%, whilst 2 did not.

Name of the activity being assessed	Policy amendments to the Council Tax Support Scheme				
Directorate / Department	Finance and Customer Services	Service	Revenues and Benefits	Assessment Author	Andy Ormerod
Is this a new or existing activity?	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Existing	Responsible manager / director for the assessment		Andy Ormerod – Head of Service Louise Mattinson – Director of Finance and Customer Services	
Date EIA started	15/09/2018	Implementation date of the activity		04/03/2019	

SECTION 1 - ABOUT YOUR ACTIVITY

<p>Page 116</p> <p>How was the need for this activity identified? i.e. Why are we doing this activity?</p>	<p>The Revenues and Benefits service constantly monitors the issues affecting claimants of Council Tax Support. In addition, a full review of the scheme has also been undertaken to highlight potential efficiencies and budget savings for the 2019/20 financial year.</p> <p>Since the roll out of Universal Credit it has become evident that the number of changes in circumstances issued by the DWP has increased significantly, this in turn has had a direct impact on Council Tax Support scheme and the amount recipients receive.</p> <p>This impact has been reviewed and modelled for the 2019/20 financial year. It is apparent that unless changes are made to the scheme the increased number of changes in circumstances will result in higher volumes of bills and correspondence being issued to customers, which could lead to confusion for customers due to the reissue of bills on one or more occasions; this will in turn increase the costs of administering the scheme and it is expected that this will impact on Council Tax collection rates.</p> <p>The review undertaken for 2019/20 highlighted a number of areas that would simplify the scheme and assist the councils need for budget savings to be made, these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The introduction of a tolerance level that would ignore changes of circumstance until a threshold figure is attained (proposed £2 per week) ▪ Introduction of a single non-dependent deduction; ▪ Band cap (proposed cap at band B); ▪ Minimum income level for self-employed; and, ▪ Abolition of 2nd adult rebate
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<p>What is the activity looking to achieve?</p> <p>What are the aims and objectives?</p>	<p>The changes to the Council Tax Support scheme have three objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align the scheme more closely with Universal Credit and therefore minimise the impact from the multiple changes resulting from Universal Credit; Simplify the scheme for customers and the council; and, To reduce the overall level of Council Tax Support awards to working age claimants which will, as a consequence, result in a potential budgetary saving to the council. <p>The analysis of the Council Tax Support database indicates that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The introduction of one non-dependent deduction rate will adversely affect 1029 claims, with a further 810 benefiting from reductions in deductions. A further 1,134 claims where non-dependent exemptions are in place will be adversely affected; The introduction of a self-employed minimum income level will adversely affect 586 claims; The introduction of a band cap will adversely affect 701 claims, and; The abolition of 2nd adult rebate will adversely affect 28 claims. <p>(figures as per Northgate Revenues and Benefits system in August 2018)</p>
<p>Page 117</p> <p>Services currently provided (if applicable)</p>	<p>The Council Tax Support scheme is a means-tested benefit administered by the council. There are different rules for Pensioners and Working Age claimants, however, in general the calculation is based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household Income - subject to certain disregards i.e. Disability Living Allowance is disregarded in the calculation of income. Capital (Savings) – Capital limits and tariff income. Non-dependants are taken into account – deductions are made from the calculated support based upon the non-dependants income. However, there are currently some categories and circumstances where no non-dependent deductions are taken. Applicable amount calculated (what the government says a person or family needs to live on) which includes personal allowances and additional premiums depending upon circumstances i.e. disability, lone parents, carers <p>Household Income is compared to Applicable Amounts, if household income is the same or less than the Applicable Amount, or the claimant or partner are in receipt of a passported benefit, the maximum amount of Council Tax support is awarded (subject to Non-dependant deductions).</p> <p>If household income is more than the Applicable Amount – they have ‘excess income’ and the award/reduction to the bill is apportioned.</p>
<p>Type of activity</p>	<div> <input type="checkbox"/> Budget changes <input type="checkbox"/> Decommissioning <input type="checkbox"/> New activity </div> <div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Change to existing activity <input type="checkbox"/> Commissioning <input type="checkbox"/> Other [please state here] </div>

SECTION 2 - UNDERSTANDING YOUR CUSTOMER**What resources will support in undertaking the equality analysis and impact assessment?**

Please identify additional sources of information you have used to complete the EIA, e.g. reports; journals; legislation etc.

The equality analysis and impact assessment will be undertaken from existing resources within the Revenues and Benefits service and the wider Finance and Customer Services department.

Who are you consulting with? How are you consulting with them? *(Please insert any information around surveys and consultations undertaken)*

Consultation commenced on the 3rd September 2018.

Consultation included:

- Mail shots to a percentage of those affected by the proposals
- Emails/mailshots to voluntary sector organisations
- Online survey (including information explaining the scheme and consultation)
- Paper questionnaire (where requested)
- Member and Staff Briefings.
- Internal Teamtalk article
- Request for completion of a questionnaire following Customer contact – face to face and over the telephone.

The demographics of the Borough have also been reviewed – see Appendix A at the end of this form.

A weekly review of the demographic data supplied with completed forms has been undertaken.

Who does the activity impact upon?*	Service users	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirectly			
	Members of staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirectly			
	General public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirectly			
	Carers or families	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirectly			
	Partner organisations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirectly			
Does the activity impact positively or negatively on any of the protected characteristics as stated within the Equality Act (2010)?*	Positive impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy & maternity	<input type="checkbox"/> Vulnerable groups
		<input type="checkbox"/> Race	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/> Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/> Deprived communities	<input type="checkbox"/> Carers
	Negative impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy & maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vulnerable groups
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion or belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deprived communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carers
The groups in blue are not							


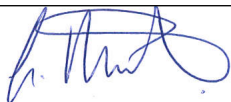
protected characteristics (please refer to p. 3 of the guidance notes)	No impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy & maternity	<input type="checkbox"/> Vulnerable groups
		<input type="checkbox"/> Race	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/> Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/> Deprived communities	<input type="checkbox"/> Carers

***If no impact is identified on any of the protected characteristics a full EIA may not be required. Please contact your departmental Corporate Equality & Diversity representative for further information.**

Does the activity contribute towards meeting the Equality Act's general Public Sector Equality Duty? *Refer to p.3 of the guidance for more information*
A public authority must have 'due regard' (i.e. consciously consider) to the following:

DUTY	DOES THE ACTIVITY MEET THIS DUTY? EXPLAIN
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act <i>(i.e. the activity removes or minimises disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristic)</i>	As indicated throughout the EIA the changes to the Council Tax Support scheme do not specifically target or impact any of equality groups.
Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not <i>(i.e. the activity takes steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people)</i>	The changes to the Council Tax Support scheme do not affect the opportunity of protected or non-protected groups.
Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not <i>(i.e. the function encourages people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low)</i>	The changes to the Council Tax Support scheme do not affect the relationships between protected and non-protected groups.

ASSESSMENT	Is a full EIA required?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>Please explain how you have reached your conclusion <i>(A lack of negative impacts must be justified with evidence and clear reasons, highlight how the activity negates or mitigates any possible negative impacts)</i></p> <p>21</p> <p>The changes proposed to the Council Tax Support scheme will adversely impact all equality groups, as a consequence, a full EIA is deemed to be required.</p>			

Author Signature		Date	22/10/2018
Head of Service/Director Signature		Date	02/11/2018
<p>The above signatures signify acceptance of the ownership of the Initial EIA and the responsibility to publish the completed Initial EIA as per the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.</p>			

Departmental E&D Lead Signature		Date	Click here to enter a date.
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FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**SECTION 3 – ANALYSIS OF IMPACT**

Does the activity have the **potential** to:

- **positively** impact (benefit) any of the groups?
- **negatively** impact/exclude/discriminate against any group?
- **disproportionately** impact any of the groups?

Explain how this was identified – through evidence/consultation.

Any negative impacts that are identified within the analysis need to be captured within the action plan in **Section 4**

N.B. Marriage & Civil Partnership is only a protected characteristic in terms of work-related activities and NOT service provision

Characteristic	Positive	Negative	Don't know	Reasons for positive and/or negative impact Please include all the evidence you have considered as part of your analysis	Action No.
Page 122 Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The Department for Communities and Local Government did state in 2012 that pensioners must continue to receive statutory assessed amounts of Council Tax Support and are therefore not affected by these changes.</p> <p>In BwD we currently have 10,708 working age claims within the borough and 5,118 pensioner claims. (Figures obtained from the Northgate system as at July 2018)</p> <p>The changes to the scheme do not differentiate between ages and therefore can affect any age group (with the exception of pensioners).</p> <p>Further detail on the age profile of the borough is detailed in Appendix A.</p>	1,2,3,5
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The changes to Council Tax support will affect those claimants of Working Age irrespective of whether they are disabled. However, disabled claimants are eligible to additional premiums within the Council Tax Support scheme which does in turn provide some protection.</p> <p>The definition of disability that is used, is based on entitlement to certain state benefits, or to entitlement to a Council Tax disabled band reduction. This can reflect the circumstances of any member of the claimant's household.</p> <p>The relevant benefits/additions to benefit include:</p>	1,2,3,4,5

- Disability Living Allowance
- Employment Support Allowance
- Disability Premium
- Severe Disability Premium
- Enhanced Disability Premium
- Disabled Child Premium
- Disabled Earnings Disregard
- Carers Allowance
- War Disablement Pension
- War Widows Pension
- Council Tax Disability Reduction

The number of Working Age Council Tax Support claimants within BwD who are in receipt of a disability premium and not passported onto full Council Tax Benefit is 3,444 (Disability Premium, Enhanced Disability Premium, Severe Disability Premium and Enhanced Disability Premium Dependents).

In respect of the specific changes to the policy, 224 disabled claims would be affected by the band cap, and 62 disabled claims by the self-employed change.

Since some of the passported claimants are also likely to be receiving a disability premium, this underestimates the total number that could be affected. It should be noted that the number of cases that would fall into this category cannot be ascertained, due to the limited amount of information that the Council is required to hold on passported claims.

It is possible that some people in this group will be affected less favourably because of the greater difficulties they may face in coping with the changes, for example by finding paid employment.

Other welfare reforms may further impact on some members of this group, as will reductions in some of the services that members of this group receive under the Government's austerity measures.

It should also be noted that in some cases (depending on the nature of the disability) there may be potential communication issues where information available in standard formats is not the best method of communicating with benefit recipients. This may cause greater difficulty in understanding a change in liability. This may lead some individuals to fall into arrears more easily.

A number of the changes do specifically affect disabled cases, these include, the introduction of Non-dependent deductions where the claimant or partner is in receipt of PiP,

				<p>DLA or Attendance Allowance.</p> <p>Currently, claimants (or partners) who are in receipt of DLA (care component), PiP, or Attendance Allowance are exempt from non-dependent deductions. Under the changes this provision will be removed and the non-dependents will be expected to contribute to the additional costs. Clearly, in some cases this may not happen, and as a consequence, the disabled recipient of Council Tax Support may be worse off.</p> <p>The change proposed for the self-employed and the introduction of the minimum income level was discussed widely with the Executive Member for Resources. These discussion highlighted the possible impact on the disabled, and as a consequence it was agreed that the 35 hour per week calculation would not be imposed on disabled recipients if they were unable to work full time. In such circumstances, the working hours would be reduced to 20 hours per week.</p> <p>Disabled Pensioners will unaffected by these changes.</p>	
Gender reassignment Page 24	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The changes to the scheme do not differentiate between those who may be included in the term gender reassignment. All working age claimants will be affected by the proposed changes.</p> <p>It is not possible to identify the number of gender reassignment claimants of Council Tax Support within the borough.</p> <p>Pensioners who may come under the term gender reassignment will unaffected by these changes.</p>	1,2,3,5
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The changes to the scheme do not differentiate between those who are married or have a civil partnership. All working age claimants will be affected by the proposed changes</p> <p>Married couple and civil partnerships are recognised equally in the current Council Tax Support scheme as are people living together as if they are in such legal partnerships.</p> <p>Pensioners who may be married or have a civil partnership will be unaffected by these changes.</p>	1,2,3,5
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The changes to the scheme do not differentiate between those who are pregnant or on maternity leave.</p>	1,2,3,5

				<p>For Council Tax Support recipients that are pregnant, self-employed and not able to work the full week (due to illness), they will be able to apply for the Discretionary award.</p> <p>Any self-employed claimant that is on maternity leave will have their circumstances amended to state maternity allowance and be reassessed for Council Tax Support.</p>	
Race Page 125	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The proposed scheme changes will have an impact on all working age claimants irrespective of race. At the moment we consider that the impact is unlikely to be disproportionately greater on households of different ethnicity within the working age group.</p> <p>There will be no difference in the way ethnic groups are treated under the changes. However, some ethnic groups experience different levels of disadvantage and tend to be resident in deprived wards, therefore they may find it more difficult to cope with the changes. This may be due to lower skills, including limited language skills in some cases.</p> <p>There may also be potential communication issues where English is not the benefit recipient's first language and where documents printed in Standard English is not the optimum method of communicating.</p> <p>Claimants whose first language is not English may have greater difficulty in understanding their changed level of Support.</p> <p>According to the 2011 census, within Blackburn with Darwen 66% of people identified themselves as White British, 28% as Asian / Asian British and 0.6% Black/African/Caribbean/Black British.</p> <p>Unfortunately, we do not have any data regarding race directly for Council Tax support recipients. However, we do not envisage this impact to be greater for people with a particular race.</p>	1,2,3,5
Religion or Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The proposed changes will have an impact on all working age claimants regardless of religion or belief.</p> <p>In BwD from the Census 2011 – Christian 52.6% Buddhist 0.2% Hindu 0.4% Jewish 0% Muslim 27% Sikh 0.1% Other 0.2% No religion 13.8% Religion not stated 5.6%.</p> <p>Unfortunately, we do not have any data regarding the religion or beliefs directly for Council Tax support recipients. However, we do not envisage this impact to be greater for people with particular religions or beliefs.</p>	1,2,3,5

Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The proposed changes will have an impact on all working age claimants regardless of gender.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the Council Tax Support scheme does not have complete data in respect of gender as not all claims have recorded the title of a claimant and partner. The only data available on gender is from the ONS 2017. Please see appendix A for the detail.</p>	1,2,3,5
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The proposed scheme will have an impact on all working age, single people and couples who are recipients of Council Tax Benefit regardless of their sexual orientation.</p> <p>Unfortunately, we have no data on the sexual orientation of Council Tax Benefit claimants locally and at this moment we consider that the impact is unlikely to be disproportionately greater on recipients with different sexual orientations.</p>	1,2,3,5
<div data-bbox="91 730 136 916" data-label="Page-Header">Page 126</div> <div data-bbox="73 1043 394 1500">Vulnerable Groups</div>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The proposed changes to the scheme will have an impact on all working age single people and couples who are recipients of Council Tax Support.</p> <p>The DCLG within the statement of intent and Localising Support for Council Tax – Vulnerable People documents (2012) identified the key Local Authority duties in relation to Vulnerable Groups. In particular, the Government asked local council tax support schemes to protect, where possible, lone parents and disabled groups.</p> <p>The Council did consider the information supplied by the Government in respect of Vulnerable Groups. However the proposed scheme changes will affect those claimants of Working Age irrespective of whether they are considered vulnerable (Disabled/Long Term Sick/Lone Parents). Additional premiums will still be in place for certain claimants (dependent upon circumstances).</p> <p>The change proposed for the self-employed, and the introduction of the minimum income level, was discussed widely with the Executive Member for Resources. These discussion highlighted the possible impact on those who may be parents with carer responsibilities, or disabled.</p> <p>It was agreed that the 35 hour per week calculation would not be imposed on those recipients if they were unable to work full time due to carer responsibilities or disability. In such circumstances, the working hours would be reduced to 20 hours per week.</p> <p>In respect of the specific changes, it is estimated that the number of disabled claims affected</p>	1,2,3,4,5

				<p>is as follows:</p> <p>Changes to self-employed income levels - 62 claims affected</p> <p>Changes to non-dependent deductions – 895 claims affected</p> <p>Introduction of a band cap – 224 claims affected</p> <p>For those carer claims, it is estimated that they will be affected in the following way:</p> <p>Changes to self-employed income levels - 47 claims affected</p> <p>Changes to non-dependent deductions – 523 claims affected</p> <p>Introduction of a band cap – 145 claims affected</p> <p>(Figures extracted from the Northgate system on 17th September 2018).</p>	
Deprived Communities Page 127	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The distribution of residents with live Council Tax Support claims throughout the borough mirrors the pattern of deprivation. Areas with social and private rented properties, are likely to see greater proportions of support claimants. Audley, Bastwell, Little Harwood, Queens Park and Shear Brow have the greatest concentration of Council Tax Support claimants.</p> <p>The 2015 Indices of Deprivation (IMD 2010) ranks BwD 12th out of 326 local authorities in England (where 1 is the most deprived). <i>(Local authorities are ranked on the proportion of neighbourhoods in the most deprived 10 per cent nationally).</i></p>	1,2,3,5
Carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The proposed scheme will have an impact on those carers of working age who are in receipt of Council Tax Support. Whilst this impact will also be experienced by others of working age also, it is acknowledged that some carers may be affected more because of the greater difficulties they may face in responding to the changes, for example, by finding work.</p> <p>Since some of the passported claimants may also be carers, the total number above may be underestimated.</p> <p>The change proposed for the self-employed and the introduction of the minimum income level was discussed widely with the Executive Member for Resources. These discussion highlighted the possible impact on those who may be parents with carer responsibilities.</p> <p>It was agreed that the 35 hour per week calculation would not be imposed on those recipients if they were unable to work full time due to carer responsibilities. In such circumstances, the working hours would be reduced to 20 hours per week.</p>	1,2,3,4,5
Additional Equalities group added	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Following the localisation of the Council Tax Support scheme, the government included reference to vulnerable groups a reference to those on long term sickness. An additional</p>	1,2,3,4,5

Long Term Sick				<p>equalities section has therefore been included for long term sickness cases.</p> <p>House owners or tenants of properties who are considered to be long term sick would be more likely to have applied for, and be in receipt of welfare (which could include Council Tax Support).</p>	
Additional Equalities group added Lone Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Following the localisation of the Council Tax Support scheme, the government included reference to vulnerable groups and specifically Lone Parents. An additional equalities section has therefore been included for lone parent cases.</p>	

<p>Does the activity raise any issues for community cohesion?</p> <p>Does the activity contribute positively towards community cohesion?</p>	<p>All teams within the Revenues and Benefits service, including customer services promote take up at every opportunity however there is the potential for issues to arise which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The effect on families with older children e.g. some claims will have an increase in the non-dependant deductions, this may put pressure on older children to move out of the family home. ▪ Larger families in large properties may have increased council tax to pay, this may result in families wishing to move to smaller properties. Asian heritage families tend to have large families and may be disproportionately affected by the band cap change.
<p>Does the activity raise any issues in relation to human rights as set out in the Human Rights Act 1998? Details of which can be found here</p>	No.
<p>Does the activity support / aggravate existing departmental and/or corporate risk?</p>	<p>The changes do increase the overall Council Tax collectable debit which will need to be collected. This will inevitably result in additional work, including customer contact. This additional pressure will need to be considered and resourced to prevent further issues within the service.</p>

CONCLUSIONS OF THE ANALYSIS

Action following completion of the impact assessment

*It is important that the correct option is chosen depending on the findings of the analysis.
The action plan must be completed as required.*

<input type="checkbox"/> No major change in the activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Adjust activity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue with activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Stop and reconsider activity
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Please explain how you have reached your conclusion

Following discussions with the Executive Member for Resources, the Director of Finance and Customer Services and members of the Labour Resources Group it is felt that the proposed changes still need to be made to. The drivers for the proposed changes are still valid and necessary, i.e. a greater alignment with Universal Credit, a simplifying of the administration and a reduction in the cost to the council. During the consultation process and internal discussions no alternative course of action has been identified.

Whilst there will be a detrimental impact on all working age claimants of Council Tax Support, a number of mitigations have been considered and agreed. These include:

- The extending a Discretionary Fund, and;
- An exception to the self-employed minimum income level – whereby those with carer responsibilities and disabilities which prevent them from working full time will have the calculation reduced to 20hrs.

ACTION PLAN

Action No.	What is the negative / adverse impact identified?	Actions required to reduce / mitigate / eliminate the negative impact	Resources required	Responsible officer(s)	Target completion date
1	A failure of the communication of the changes.	<p>Ensure a wide ranging and meaningful consultation is undertaken to include all potentially affected equality groups.</p> <p>Notify those affected through publicity and communications.</p> <p>Direct mailing to all those recipients adversely affected by the changes.</p>	Revenues and Benefits resources	Andy Ormerod	Feb 2019
Page 2 130	A failure to understand the scheme changes internally within the council – which will in turn have an impact on the residents affected.	Explain the changes fully to members and voluntary sector organisations. This will assist with the contact and explanation required for those affected.	Revenues and Benefits resources	Andy Ormerod	Mid Sept 2018
3	Adverse financial impact on those receiving Council Tax Support.	Publication of the Discretionary Hardship Fund to promote applications by those adversely affected.	Revenues and Benefits resources	Andy Ormerod	Feb 2018
4	Adverse financial impact on those self-employed recipients of Council Tax Support who have carer responsibilities or who may be disabled.	Amend the self-employed rules to reduce the number of hours those who have caring responsibilities, or disabilities.	Revenues and Benefits resources	Andy Ormerod	Feb 2018
5	Adverse impact on self-employed claimants who have recently commenced their own business	The council recognises the need for claimants who are setting up a business to be given time to establish themselves and develop their	Revenues and Benefits resources	Andy Ormerod	Feb 2018

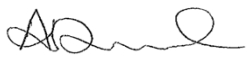
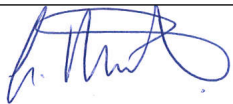
		<p>business and customer base. As a consequence, the minimum income level for self-employed will only commence after 2 years has elapsed - (taking into account DWP select committee concerns)</p> <p>The intention of the start-up period is to give claimants the breathing space they need to support themselves while running their business.</p>			
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MONITORING AND REVIEW

<p>The responsibility for establishing and maintaining the monitoring arrangements of the EIA action plan lies with the service completing the EIA. These arrangements should be built into the performance management framework.</p> <p>Monitoring arrangements for the completion of EIAs will be undertaken by the Corporate Equality & Diversity Group and the oversight of the action plans will be undertaken by the Management Accountability Framework.</p>	
If applicable, where will the EIA Action Plan be monitored?	<p>The implementation of the changes and the subsequent impact will be reviewed and monitored across a number of operational meetings. These will include team and service meetings with customer service teams, as well as Benefit assessment and Council Tax team.</p> <p>Impacts from the changes will be discussed with the Executive Member for Resources and the Director of Finance and Customer Services as and when required at the fortnightly Labour Resource Group meetings.</p> <p>The information collated and noted at all operational meetings will be considered at all management 1 to 1's and service meetings.</p>
How often will the EIA Action Plan be reviewed?	The review will be ongoing through the structure listed above.
When will the EIA be reviewed?	The review will be ongoing through the structure listed above.

Who is responsible for carrying out this review?

The review will be the responsibility of all of the management team within the Revenues and Benefits service.

Author Signature		Date	Click here to enter a date.
Head of Service/Director Signature		Date	Click here to enter a date.
<i>The above signatures signify acceptance of the ownership of the full EIA, the responsibility for the associated Action Plan (if applicable) and the responsibility to publish the completed full EIA as per the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.</i>			
Departmental E&D Lead Signature		Date	Click here to enter a date.

Appendix A – Demographic and CTS award data

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The current BwD Council Tax Benefit caseload is as follows:

BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN BC	No. claimants	% caseload
Total Council Tax Benefit caseload	15,826*	
Pensioners (Protected from changes)	5,118*	32.3%
Working Age (Passported)	10,708*	67.7%

***Figures as at July 2018**

Total population (2017)	
	Blackburn With Darwen (Numbers)
All People	148,800
Males	74,500
Females	74,300
Source: ONS Population estimates - local authority based by five year age band	
 view time-series	 compare other areas
 download (xls)	 query

Population aged 16-64 (2017)		
	Blackburn With Darwen (Numbers)	Blackburn With Darwen (%)
All People Aged 16-64	92,800	62.4
Males Aged 16-64	47,000	63.1
Females Aged 16-64	45,800	61.6
Source: ONS Population estimates - local authority based by five year age band		
Notes: % is a proportion of total population		

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Labour Supply

Employment and unemployment (Apr 2017-Mar 2018)

	Blackburn With Darwen (Numbers)	Blackburn With Darwen (%)
All People		
Economically Active†	64,600	69.7
In Employment†	60,600	65.3
Employees†	52,900	57.6
Self Employed†	7,200	7.4
Unemployed (Model-Based)§	3,800	5.8
Males		
Economically Active†	35,300	75.9
In Employment†	33,000	70.7
Employees†	26,700	58.1
Self Employed†	6,000	12.0
Unemployed§	2,300	6.6
Females		
Economically Active†	29,200	63.5
In Employment†	27,600	59.9
Employees†	26,200	57.2
Self Employed†	1,200	2.7
Unemployed§	1,600	5.5

Source: ONS annual population survey

† - numbers are for those aged 16 and over, % are for those aged 16-64

§ - numbers and % are for those aged 16 and over. % is a proportion of economically active

Religion	Blackburn with Darwen		England	
	number	%	number	%
All categories: Religion	147,489	100.0	53,012,456	100.0
Has religion	118,806	80.6	36,094,120	68.1
Christian	77,599	52.6	31,479,876	59.4
Buddhist	306	0.2	238,626	0.5
Hindu	574	0.4	806,199	1.5
Jewish	54	0.0	261,282	0.5
Muslim	39,817	27.0	2,660,116	5.0
Sikh	161	0.1	420,196	0.8
Other religion	295	0.2	227,825	0.4
No religion	20,374	13.8	13,114,232	24.7
Religion not stated	8,309	5.6	3,804,104	7.2

Source 2011 Census

REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Councillor Saima Afzal

**PORTFOLIO COORDINATING
DIRECTOR: David Fairclough**

Complaints Update to the Standards Committee

The Committee received an update on complaints received regarding Members Conduct under the Arrangements for dealing with complaints about the `Code of Conduct for Members`. The report covered the period up to Friday 5th October 2018. The Committee will be kept up to date on complaints received throughout the year, how these are being dealt with and outcomes.

Work Programme for the Committee

The Committee re-considered the work programme following the recent publication of the outcome of national government consultation on `Updating the Disqualification Criteria for Councillors and Mayors` and added to the programme a review of the Council's policy on the application of the Disclosure and Barring Service provisions for Councillors.

The Committee also revised the programme for the Member Strategic Development Session (3) held on 12th November 2018 to include a session on how councillors should respond to unwarranted and unreasonable e-mail correspondence.

Protocol on Member to Member Relations

At previous meetings the Committee had agreed revised a Protocol on Member/Officer relations. The current Protocol was approved by Council and is contained in the Constitution of the Council.

As reported to Council Forum in October, at their meeting in July, the Committee considered its priorities for a work programme for meetings in 2018/19. The committee identified that it was keen to consider the drafting of a Member/Member protocol to compliment the Member/Officer protocol in the constitution.

It was noted the general expectations of elected councillors are set out in the Constitution – i.e. in the Members Code of Conduct and that each individual councillor has a responsibility to comply with the Code of Conduct and its supporting Guidance. The Code is far ranging and covers matters from personal probity and integrity, to matters relating to interpersonal relationships and how others should/should not be treated.

At their meeting on 25th October 2018 the Standards Committee discussed the adoption of a new Member to Member Protocol to compliment the Member Code of Conduct. The Committee was keen to ensure that the introduction of a Protocol could not be seen as intending to deter from robust political argument and debate, but did ensure clarity on the expectation on all councillors to conduct themselves with honesty, integrity and respect in dealings with others, certainly avoiding any behaviours which could be deemed as bullying, abusive or discriminatory in any way.

If agreed by Full Council this Protocol would be inserted in the Constitution in Part 5, Section 1 immediately following the Member Code of Conduct, to provide a transparent expectation of the delivery of the intention of the Code of Conduct in respect of councillor to councillor engagement. The proposed Protocol is set out in Appendix A to this report.

Recommendation

The Standards Committee recommends to the Council the adoption of the Protocol on Member to Member Relations as set out in Appendix A to this report.

Councillor Saima Afzal
Chair of the Standards Committee.

Protocol Member to Member Relations

Councillors at all times must promote and maintain high standards and adopted a Code of Conduct for Members in line with its obligations under section 27(2) of the Localism Act 2011. Members and co-opted members must behave according to the highest standards for personal conduct in everything they do as a Member. In particular they must observe the following 10 principles of conduct as set out in the Code of Conduct, some of which are set out in law:

Selflessness, Honesty & Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Personal Judgement, Respect of others, Duty to uphold the law, Stewardship and Leadership

The Code of Conduct makes it clear that *"Members should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability"* (Respect for others). This applies to all circumstances including working with other councillors.

All councillors have a responsibility to behave in a way that is not offensive to others and to acknowledge that views and opinions held by other councillors may not always coincide with their own. Such differences being expressed are unlikely to constitute harassment. The Code is therefore not intended to deter from robust political argument and debate, but it does expect that all councillors conduct themselves in accordance with these 10 principles at all times, certainly avoiding any behaviours which could be deemed as bullying, harassing or victimising, in any way.

In this context councillors are responsible for being aware of and understanding the following definitions*:

Bullying is a particular form of harassment and may be characterised as persistent, offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, possibly through an abuse or misuse of position or power where the intention or outcome is to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Examples of bullying include: shouting at others in public or in private; personal insults; ignoring or excluding individuals; persistent, excessive, unfair or unjustified criticism; setting impossible deadlines or targets/objectives or making inconsistent demands. This list is not exhaustive.

Harassment is, in general terms, unwanted, unreasonable and offensive conduct affecting the dignity of the individual. It includes verbal, non-verbal and physical conduct that may be related to age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, nationality or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident. Examples of harassment include: unwanted physical contact, offensive jokes or banter, offensive emails, pictures or graffiti, unwelcome sexual advances, exclusion and victimisation. This list is not exhaustive.

Victimisation is treating someone less favourably than others because the individual has, in good faith, complained (whether formally or otherwise) that someone has been bullying or harassing them or someone else, or supported someone to make a complaint or given

evidence in relation to a complaint. Examples include: Isolating someone because the individual has made a complaint or treating them differently.

Councillors can therefore expect of other Councillors:

- To represent their wards effectively and efficiently
- To strive to do their best for their Wards and constituents of the Borough
- To behave in a manner which accords with the Code of Conduct for Members
- To be respectful and courteous
- To respond to enquiries fairly and efficiently
- To act lawfully and to maintain confidentiality when appropriate to do so
- To maintain confidentiality where it is appropriate to do so
- To have regards to social hours regarding contact
- To consider information for the purpose of making informed judgements
- To treat all councillors in a reasonable manner
- Not to make any inappropriate comment towards another councillor, which could be interpreted as discriminatory, demeaning, abusive or bullying.
- Not to ask Councillor's to breach council policy or procedures, or to act unlawfully
- Not to exert undue influence or pressure, or request special treatment for councillors friends or family members.
- Not to request unauthorised access to resources or information held by the council
- Not to breach confidentiality and disclose any personal/private information about another councillor

Failure to follow the Protocol

Any complaint alleging failure to follow this Protocol would be considered under the *'Arrangements for dealing with complaints about the Code of Conduct for Members'*.

Training*

Mandatory training for all Councillors will be provided annually to help support elected Members in understanding equalities, inclusivity and what behaviours may amount to discriminatory behaviour.