

Public Document Pack

Executive Board

Thursday, 8 April 2021

Time: 6.00 pm

Venue: Virtual

[Join Meeting Here](#)

AGENDA

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

1. **Welcome and Apologies**
2. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**
Executive Board Minutes March 2021 **4 - 8**
3. **Declarations of Interest**
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FORM **9**
4. **Equality Implications**
The Chair will ask Members to confirm that they have considered and understood any Equality Impact Assessments associated with reports on this agenda ahead of making any decisions.
5. **Public Forum**
To receive written questions or statements submitted by members of the public no later than 4pm on the day prior to the meeting.
6. **Questions by Non-Executive Members**
To receive written questions submitted by Non-Executive Members no later than 4pm on the day prior to the meeting.
7. **Youth MPs Update**
To receive an update from the Youth MPs along with any issues they would like to raise.
8. **Executive Member Reports**
Verbal updates may be given by each Executive Member.

Leader

Adult Services & Prevention

Children, Young People & Education

Environmental Services

Public Health & Wellbeing

Digital & Customer Services

- | | | |
|------------|------------------------------------|----------------|
| 8.1 | Digital Strategy 2021-2024 | |
| | Digital Strategy | 10 - 29 |
| | Digital Strategy Appendix 1 | |

Growth & Development

- | | | |
|------------|---|----------------|
| 8.2 | Growth Programme 2021-22 | |
| | Growth Programme | 30 - 36 |
| | GP Annex 1 | |
| 8.3 | Disposal of Council land for residential development at Haslingden Road to a preferred developer | |
| | P1 Disposal of Land | 37 - 45 |
| | Appendix A | |

Finance & Governance

- | | | |
|------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| 8.4 | Covid-19 Finance Update | |
| | Covid19 Funding Report | 46 - 51 |
| | Copy of Appendix A | |

9. Corporate Issues

- | | | |
|------------|---|----------------|
| 9.1 | Replacement HR & Payroll System Procurement Decision | |
| | P1 Replacement HR & Payroll System | 52 - 56 |

10. Matters referred to the Executive Board

PART 2 – THE PRESS AND PUBLIC MAY BE EXCLUDED DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

- | | | |
|-------------|--|----------------|
| 11.1 | Disposal of Council land for residential development at Haslingden Road to a preferred bidder | |
| | P2 Disposal of Land | 57 - 65 |
| 11.2 | Replacement HR & Payroll System Procurement Decision | |

Date Published: Tuesday 30th March 2021
Denise Park, Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE BOARD Thursday 11th March 2021

PRESENT

COUNCILLOR:

Councillor Mohammed Khan CBE
Councillor Julie Gunn
Councillor Jim Smith
Councillor Vicky McGurk
Councillor Phil Riley
Councillor Damian Talbot
Councillor Quesir Mahmood

PORTFOLIO:

Leader of the Council
Children, Young People and Education
Environmental Services
Finance and Governance
Growth and Development
Public Health and Wellbeing
Digital and Customer Services

EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Councillor John Slater

NON PORTFOLIO

Leader of the Conservative Group

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Muhammed Bapu
Zainab Dassu

Deputy Youth MP
Deputy Youth MP

	Item	Action
1	<u>Welcome and Apologies</u> The Leader of the Council, Councillor Mohammed Khan, welcomed all to the meeting, and read out the statement explaining that this was a virtual meeting. Apologies were received from Councillor Mustafa Desai.	
2	<u>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</u> The Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 th February 2021 were agreed as a correct record.	Agreed
3	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> There were no Declarations of Interest submitted.	
4	<u>Equality Implications</u> The Chair asked Members to confirm that they had considered and understood any Equality Impact Assessments associated with reports on the agenda ahead of making any decisions.	Confirmed
5	<u>Public Forum</u> No questions had been received from members of the public.	
6	<u>Questions by Non-Executive Members</u> No questions had been received from Non-Executive Members.	

	Item	Action
7	<p><u>Youth MPs Update</u></p> <p>The Deputy Youth MPs verbally reported on recent events and activities including :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing work relating to the return to school, mental health and young people's views on the impact of lockdown and vaccines. In particular, a lot of recent activity had focussed on mental health issues for young people and future support including mental health first aid. • Initiatives to tackle food poverty, including a Schools Forum to be established to help gather the views of young people across the Borough. <p>Members of the Executive Board thanked the Youth MPs for their update and ongoing positive work.</p> <p><u>Executive Member Reports</u></p> <p>.</p> <p><u>Children, Young People & Education Update</u></p> <p>Councillor Julie Gunn verbally reported on the return to school, and thanked staff and parents for their support, and also advised that Lateral Flow Testing was progressing well. Councillor Gunn agreed to send data to Cllr Slater on the number of children who had not returned to school.</p>	Noted
8.1	<p><u>Quarter 3 Fostering Report 2020-21</u></p> <p>Members received a report providing information on the management and performance of the Local Authority's Fostering Service. The report alongside Appendix 1, provided analysis of the period October to December 2020, and reflected upon data and any patterns within the Service to determine development and progress. The report also outlined how the Service had responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>RESOLVED – That the Executive Board notes the Fostering Service Report for Quarter 3, alongside the Appendix 1 report for further Service delivery information. The Board to also note the detail in relation to the Fostering Friendly Employer programme.</p>	Noted
8.2	<p><u>Renewal of the Council's Microsoft Licence Agreement for Server and Database Licences</u></p> <p>A report was submitted seeking approval to enter into a new 3 year contract for Microsoft server and database licences along with the associated financial implications.</p>	

	Item	Action
	<p>The Council entered into an agreement previously with Microsoft in 2018. The SCE (Server and Cloud Enrolment scheme) was the most cost effective way to cover the Councils requirement for licences on its SQL estate (database environment), server estate and also for Sharepoint. The agreement was for a three year period and was due to end on the 31st March 2021, so in order to retain the software assurance on these products a new agreement was required.</p> <p>RESOLVED - That the Executive Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Further to the approval of the Capital Programme at Finance Council on 1st March 2021, the Executive Board is asked to approve the reallocation of £377,000 from the earmarked ICT Capital Reserve for Microsoft licences for the Councils server and database estate. 2. Approves a revenue budget increase of £49,000 from year 2 of the agreement to offset the additional costs. 	<p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p>
8.3	<p><u>Repair and Restoration of Darwen Jubilee Tower</u></p> <p>The Executive Board received a report advising that the Darwen Town Deal Board invited the Council to submit an application for funding to repair the Tower. After considering the application, the Board subsequently awarded a maximum of £225,000 towards the cost of repairing the Tower. This funding coupled with the £70,000 raised through local fund raising efforts led by Darwen Rotary and a £10,000 contribution from Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council provided sufficient funding to complete the necessary repairs to Darwen Jubilee Tower.</p> <p>The report advised of the procurement process and next steps.</p> <p>RESOLVED – That the Executive Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes the contents of the report and the procurement process to appoint a main building contractor to repair Darwen Jubilee Tower. • Approves adding the project to the Capital Programme on the basis of the funding set out below. • Notes that the Director of Place shall award the contract following the procurement process, in consultation with the Executive Member for Growth and Development. 	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
8.4	<p><u>Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22</u></p> <p>Members received a report that advised that the Council was required to approve a Treasury Management Strategy before the start of each financial year and also set Treasury and Prudential Indicators and a policy for determining a “prudent” level of</p>	

	Item	Action
	<p>Minimum Revenue Provision for repayment of debt, which was consistent with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).</p> <p>The Strategy for 2021/22 was attached at Appendix 1 of the report.</p> <p>In response to a question from Councillor John Slater on the total debt figure including historical debt and pension liability debt, Councillor McGurk advised that she would provide a full response to Cllr Slater after the meeting (see link to response below:)</p> <p>https://democracy.blackburn.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13342</p> <p>RESOLVED – It is recommended that the Executive Board:</p> <p>Approves the proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22, detailed in Appendix 1, including the proposed Treasury Management Indicators.</p>	Approved
8.5	<p><u>Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme</u></p> <p>A report was submitted, advising that the Council had been awarded a capital grant of £2.25m from the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to implement energy efficiency and renewable energy schemes in the Council's estate. The report sought approval to accept the award.</p> <p>RESOLVED – That the Executive Board:</p> <p>Approves acceptance of the grant and to add the scheme to the capital programme for 2021/22.</p>	Approved
	<p>Signed at a meeting of the Board</p> <p>on 8th April 2021</p> <p>(being the ensuing meeting on the Board)</p> <p>Chair of the meeting at which the Minutes were confirmed</p> <p>Page 7</p>	

	Item	Action

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

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

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

MEETING: EXECUTIVE BOARD

DATE: 8TH APRIL 2021

AGENDA ITEM NO.:

DESCRIPTION (BRIEF):

NATURE OF INTEREST:

DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY/OTHER (delete as appropriate)

SIGNED :

PRINT NAME:

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



REPORT OF: Executive Member for Digital and Customer Services

LEAD OFFICERS: Strategic Director of Resources (SIRO)

DATE: Thursday, 8 April 2021

PORTFOLIO(S) AFFECTED: Digital and Customer Services

WARD/S AFFECTED: (All Wards);

KEY DECISION: Y

SUBJECT:

Digital Strategy 2021 - 2024

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council's latest Digital Strategy (2021 – 2024) outlines the vision and objectives for digitisation across our services, the borough and our residents. Our vision sets out an approach to enabling digitisation across the borough for our people, creating the conditions for a high performing Council organisation and providing the best experience to our customers. The strategy details four work streams and outlines a roadmap and strategic investment plan in order for us to deliver on our vision. Implementing the strategy will enable the Council to deliver simple and effective online services, to utilise data insights and to continually improve what we do by deploying the right infrastructure, tools and skills for our workforce.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board approves the Council's new Digital Strategy.

3. BACKGROUND

We have an advanced starting point after delivering on our previous digital strategy (2018-2020), implementing a new Customer Portal, equipping our workforce with mobile computing, strengthening our IT infrastructure and beginning a move to the Cloud for our key systems. COVID has provided us many challenges but also presented opportunities, particularly around increasing the pace of digitally enabled change.

The channels that customers utilise to interact with the Council are changing. In 2020 the use of online chat with our customers has doubled to over 14,000 interactions and our website, which was re-designed in 2019, now regularly has over 130,000 visits per month. We have over 34,000 customers signed up and using our new Digital Customer Portal, with over 11,000 forms received per month during COVID. These shifts have resulted in reductions in both emails and phone calls to our customer services teams, compared to the previous year. By continuing this shift to online services, we can dedicate valuable face-to-face and phone support to those that really need it.

Since the Council signed up to the Local Government Digital Declaration in February 2019 we have embarked on the reshaping of our teams and the way we design our services to residents. By employing modern approaches, we have put customer research at the heart of what we do. The new strategy sets out how these new approaches will drive continual improvement and transformation.

Our new strategy sets out how we will increase the use of data and insights across the Council. We have introduced systems to visualise complex data, which has aided decision making throughout COVID. Implementing the strategy will mean more integration of the data we use, less duplication and improved forecasting for key services.

The back-end infrastructure that supports the computing environment is critical to the effective running of Council services. The strategy sets out a continued approach to move more of our systems into the Cloud, reducing the need for local infrastructure. Our aim is to increase the security, reliability and total cost of ownership of the IT estate. A number of Local Authorities have suffered from high-profile cyber-attacks, in some cases it has taken organisations a period of months to return to business as usual. It is therefore critical that we continue to support and invest in the right IT infrastructure for BwD.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

The path of digitisation in the Council is well established and if we do not continue to evolve our approach and invest in new technologies this would represent a real risk to Council services.

We will need to manage and mitigate risks around people without access to digital by coordinating our assisted digital and education programmes as well as designing services for everyone, not just those already digitally enabled.

Risks around service continuity will need to be managed as we embark on increased levels of technology-enabled change. Robust implementation planning and agile delivery methods are in place to mitigate this risk.

We must ensure that we are at the forefront of the opportunities offered by technology, to ensure that we are efficient and effective as a Council and to support sustainable budgets in the years to come.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The strategy is a core part of delivering the Council's Corporate Plan and plays an enabling role in business plans to deliver services across the Council.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Detailed business cases with costings will be developed for approval within each work stream throughout the duration of the strategy, followed by published Executive Member and Officer Decisions where relevant. Some schemes are already progressing using existing or previously allocated funding. We will fund new schemes through cost savings, digital revenue reserves, existing revenue, capital bids and external funding bids.

Estimated costs by work stream across the next 4 years are;

Work stream 1 Digital First for our Services : £3.5m capital, £0.5m revenue

Work stream 2 Enable transformation for our staff : £1.5m capital, £2m revenue

Work stream 3 Data driven organisation : £0.3m capital, £0.7m revenue

Work stream 4 Secure and resilient technology : £2m capital, £1m revenue

We will need to develop long-term financial plans that reflect the changing landscape of technology goods and services, which is shifting from a traditional capital model to a revenue based market.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Supporting procurement processes shall be in accordance with relevant regulations and the Council's Contract Procurement Procedure Rules.

All new contracts will be in a form approved by legal officers in the Commissioning and Procurement team.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Implementing the strategy will require increased resources within our digital and transformation teams, which is included in the estimates in section 6. Services across the Council will continue to collaborate with core digital teams to deliver transformation. Increasing digital skills across the majority of roles in the Council will be a key part of our delivery.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below.

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

Option 2 ☐ In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision.

Option 3 ☐ In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision.

10. CONSULTATIONS

The digital strategy has engaged many individuals and groups including Digital & Customer Services teams, Finance, Trade Unions, Digital Inclusion groups, Policy & Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Corporate Leadership Team. A public launch will be planned for spring/summer 2021 to engage the local population. The strategy will be iterative and dynamic, adapting to the continual engagement that takes place.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

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

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

CONTACT OFFICER:	Paul Fleming, Ailsa Smith Strategic Director of Resources (SIRO), paul.fleming@blackburn.gov.uk, ailsa.smith@blackburn.gov.uk
DATE:	23/03/2021

Digital Strategy 2021 – 2024

Executive Board Overview April 2021

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<https://digital-blog.blackburn.gov.uk/>

Developing a Vision for Digital 2021 - 2024

- **Progress and delivery of 2018 - 20 strategy**
 - Digital Customer Portal & Website
 - Microsoft 365 & Teams
 - Mobile devices
 - Data dashboards
 - Adoption of Agile & Design methods (see [Blog](#))
- **Current drivers**
 - Reduced funding
 - Pace of change in technology and behaviours post Covid-19
 - Volatility and increased cyber threat
 - Increased need from residents and service users
- **Vision areas**
 - Borough
 - Customer Experience
 - High Performing Organisation

Digital Strategy 2021 – 2024

Digital is not just about technology, it involves behaviours, people, cultures and *the way* we do things in Blackburn with Darwen (BwD). It is our challenge to effectively engage with, understand, collaborate and better serve our customers and communities in digital first environments. The continued need for increased social distancing and remote working & living have prioritised the need to accelerate the development of a connected, converged society that enables and includes everyone, in every community. We must use digital to create more engagement, inclusion and opportunities into every corner of our Community.

Our definition of Customer is any citizen, supplier, business or partner that interacts with our services.

What we aim to achieve

1 - Our customer experience will be effortless, and digital first. Customers' first thought will be to go to our website with a question in mind, and come away with the answer they need, and wherever possible apply for the service they need online. No phone call or email required, with no confusion as to what happens next. We will focus on increasing digital skills across the borough, better opportunities for our customers through better connectivity, better access, giving increased confidence.

2 – Transformation, accelerated through more agile and customer design skills across the Council. This will rapidly improve processes with good customer journey design, user research and digital tools, allowing staff to focus on high value activities

3 - Through the smarter use of joined-up data we will continuously improve our services and inform decision making.

4 - As more services are accessible online to our customers and our staff use more digital tools, we need modern infrastructure too. This means systems that talk to each other, highly reliable hosting and platforms, the best of technology and modern, cloud-based and integrated technical architecture.

Borough : Vision

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- Increased choice of Broadband providers
- Driving better prices
- Faster connection speed
- Tackling Digital Poverty
- Access to employment & education

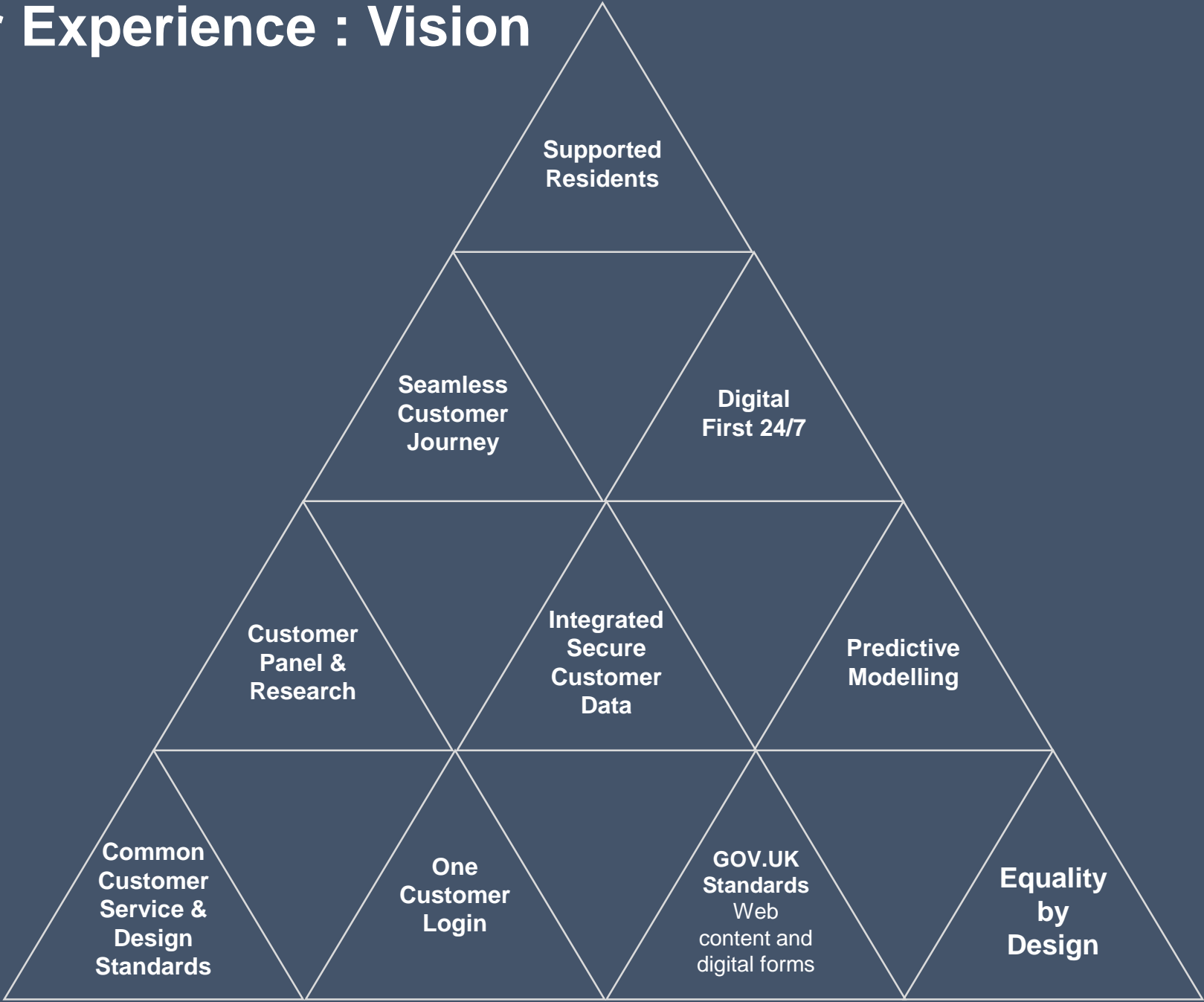


- Infrastructure that future proofs the Borough
- Fast connection for businesses
- Internet of Things
- Cyber secure
- Climate improving



- Coordinate public, private and 3rd sector skills offer
- Develop advanced digital skills for children and young people
- Align local employer's vision with local school, college and university education offer around advanced digital skills

Customer Experience : Vision



High Performing Organisation : Vision



Workstreams

WS 1
Digital First for our services

WS 2
Enable Transformation for our staff

WS 3
Data driven organisation

WS 4
Secure & resilient technology

Components

Digital First Services & Workflows

GOV.UK Standard
Web content and digital forms

Common Customer Service Standards

Digital First 24/7

Customer Panel & Research

Supported Residents

Agile Design Skills

Access Anywhere

Service Design Methods

Seamless Customer Journey

Data Driven

Predictive Modelling

Integrated Customer Data

Secure Resilient Supported

Integrated Across Services & with Partners

Cost Effective

One Customer Login

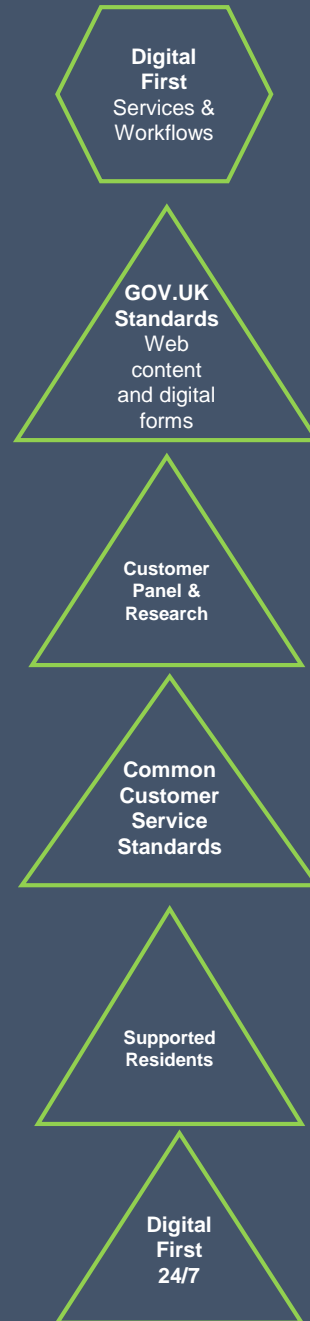
Digital Strategy Work Stream 1 - Digital First for our Services

Expected outcomes:

- Our customers are satisfied with our online services and would recommend a friend to use them
- 90% of interactions with residents are via our online channels
- All customer facing forms are via the Digital Customer Portal.
- Enhanced digital assisted services through partnership with 3rd sector and the library to support those requiring assistance and supporting our customers growing their digital skills, in turn providing greater opportunities
- All digital services will look and feel consistent as one BwD service to the customer
- Services are accessible digitally 24/7

What we will do:

- Deliver customer excellence by working with our customer panel to design our services through insight, iterative design, testing and customer endorsement
- Continue to invest in our Digital Customer Portal to span across all council services
- Work with our partners to ensure Equality by design for the services we provide, ensuring that those who cannot access digital are not disadvantaged in any way.
- Introduce more digital customer channels such as expanded use of webchat
- Ensure our web content is dynamic, up to date, accessible and easy to navigate
- Use data to drive improvements to our website and digital services
- Ensure our Digital Customer Portal replaces smaller independent applications where the functionality allows, reducing complexity and costs of our systems
- Focus on integrating line of business systems to the Digital Customer Portal enabling single sign on and a seamless experience for the Customer
- Implement a future proofed telephony and contact centre communication system
- Reduce the administration burden of our customer services team to allow them to support the digitally excluded
- We will design our processes as digital first with the front of house gateways in mind, e.g website, Notify etc
- Develop familiar repeatable functionality across all our digital services using Government Digital Service (GDS) standards



Digital Strategy Work Stream 2 – Enable Transformation for our Staff

Expected outcomes:

- Our leadership demonstrates digital and design thinking, fostering a culture across the organisation
- Our workforce understands and demonstrates agile and service design methods, enabling transformation and cost effective services
- Staff are digitally confident to support customers from a digital perspective
- Our processes are transparent and efficient to our customers
- Our staff are enabled to work effectively on the highest value activities
- All of our staff can access technology and digital tools from anywhere, anytime, reducing the need on our office estate and enabling flexibility

What we will do:

- Embed digital leadership in our core leadership attributes
- Continue to roll out our Agile training and awareness to the workforce
- Develop a Service Design skills course and roll out to identified roles who are redesigning processes
- Create a team of specialist service designers working across the Council to increase the speed of transformation with common design standards and methods
- Continue creation of self led online training of digital tools for staff and councillors that is continually updated and promoted and we will ensure digital skills are evaluated at staff entry stage
- Our processes will be mapped focusing on value add activities, removing historical steps with no value
- We will remove clunky internal processes to increase the effectiveness of the inner workings of the Council
- We will design with our staff, utilising excellent internal engagement and communication tools to reach all staff
- We will continue to replace internal applications to support our transition to Cloud and improving our internal processes
- Encouraging active disruption to current processes and an agile approach to new models of delivery

Agile Design Skills

Access Anywhere

Service Design Methods

Seamless Customer Journey

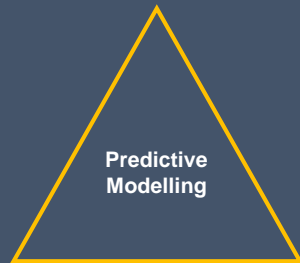
Digital Strategy Work Stream 3 – Data Driven Organisation

Expected outcomes:

- Improved insights from data so our services are enabled to make more informed decisions, more predictability and effective management of services leading to improved outcomes for our residents
- Increased interventions as a result of deeper insights that improve and reduce demand on services
- Continued collaboration with sharing data for the public good delivering better outcomes for our borough across our partners
- We will have master data for our most common data sets to remove duplication with increased confidence in the data we hold
- Elected Members are confident in accessing and utilising data as part of their roles to support and inform decision making

What we will do:

- Continue to put in place the necessary resources and technology to allow for easy appropriate data sharing across the borough
- Use innovative technologies such as machine learning and artificial intelligence to enable the council to better predict future demand
- Collaborate with data specialists from across the Council to contribute and access our growing set of shared data stores and tools
- Grow the skills to increase our use of data, using the digital tools and interpretation of data
- Only procure applications that allow data to be extracted via open API's (interfaces) and work with existing solutions to do the same
- Improve access to quality, timely insights for our Elected Members through co-design and Member development
- Continue our data and integration programme work across partnerships including the NHS Integrated Care System.



Digital Strategy Work Stream 4 – Secure and Resilient technology

Expected outcomes:

- We will have a clear architectural vision and roadmap aligned to our organisational priorities
- Our estate is resilient and secure
- We have a cost-efficient and resilient technology estate, proactively managed and regularly reviewed to ensure cost effectiveness
- We have connectivity that works for both residents and staff wherever they are on our estate
- We have full control over the data in all of our back office systems, and are able to extract and analyse that data to improve services
- Our staff are not physically constrained in any way as to where or how they access systems and data

What we will do:

- Internationally recognised accreditation of our systems and security
- Adoption of a Cloud first strategy
- Continue to consolidate and modernise our Core Infrastructure therefore minimising and then eliminating costly legacy architecture
- Fully map and understand our applications, and infrastructure to prioritise cloud technologies and their strategic value
- Migrate critical services to the Cloud
- Consolidate and rationalise independent applications
- Integrate systems where there is value
- Maximise the capability of applications by working collaboratively with suppliers

Secure
Resilient
Supported

Integrated
Across
Services &
with
Partners

Cost
Effective

One
Custom
er Login

Design Principles - *We will test everything we do against 6 points*

1. **Customer Centered Design** — We are steered by the research and experiences of our customer panel. Services are accessible, effective, simple and elegant. Delivered when and how the people we serve need them. Our methods are transparent, our work is done in the open. We will ensure Equality by Design in all of the services we provide.
2. **Secure by Design** — Our services and systems are secure and compliant with international standards. The information we collect is safeguarded, secure and used appropriately, resulting in high levels of trust by the people we serve.
3. **Cost and Quality Effective** — Our design decisions deliver evidenced financial returns and quality outcomes across Council services that contribute to our long-term budget sustainability. The people we serve are confident in our use of resources.
4. **Digital First & Inclusive** — If a process or service can be digitised, it will be. Delivering the highest proportion of people from traditional to digital channels. Coordinated digital inclusion activity mitigates against widening the digital gap and inequalities.
5. **Data Drives Insight Drives Wisdom** — Data is captured, stored, integrated and leveraged to deliver better outcomes for the people we serve and an effective, transparent organisation.
6. **Open, Flexible, Cloud First** — Infrastructure, systems and software use open technical standards, are interoperable, scalable and in the Cloud. This infrastructure and our contractual arrangements are dynamic and flexible to the high pace of technological change.

Strategic Investment Projection

The projected investment required to achieve our vision is listed against the 4 overarching work streams. Values are estimates, informed by preliminary planning and discovery work. Detailed business cases with costings will be developed for approval within each work stream throughout the duration of the strategy. Some schemes are already progressing using existing or previously allocated funding. We will fund schemes through cost savings, digital revenue reserves, capital bids and external funding bids.

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Work Stream 1 Digital First for our services	Focuses on service design for our Customers with a Digital First focus	Value Required £3.5m Capital £0.5m Revenue	Types of project Further DCP development, Web, Unified Communications, Consolidated Applications, Digital Confidence
Work Stream 2 Enable Transformation for our staff	Focuses on the internal processes within the Council design and maximum automation	Value Required £1.5m Capital £2m Revenue	Types of project Microsoft 365, HR & payroll, Rapid review of existing applications
Work Stream 3 Data driven organisation	Focuses on the build of Power Bi skills and data warehouse	Value Required £0.3m Capital £0.7m Revenue	Types of project Power Bi, Integrations to allow master data, artificial intelligence and machine learning
Work Stream 4 Secure & resilient technology	Focuses on moving our estate to the Cloud and maintaining the necessary investment of infrastructure	Value Required £2m Capital £1m Revenue	Types of project Cloud journey work, Rolling infrastructure programme

Measures of Success

1. 90% Digital access across Customer Service Processes
2. Increase speed of customers service processing times – Measuring process times for Digital versus original
3. Reduction in complaints re digital services due to improved service availability
4. 90% customers are satisfied with online council services
5. Increased digital confidence for our staff and our customers – Training delivered to 100% of staff identified
6. Staff who are confident in maximising technology to achieve outcomes for customers - improved customer feedback, channel shift
7. Extended Leadership team are all confident users of Power BI and can evidence data insight approaches throughout their services
8. Total cost of ownership of infrastructure and applications is understood and costs managed within the agreed budget
9. Critical systems will be available 99.9% of the time
10. Reduction in the total number of applications supported by 20%

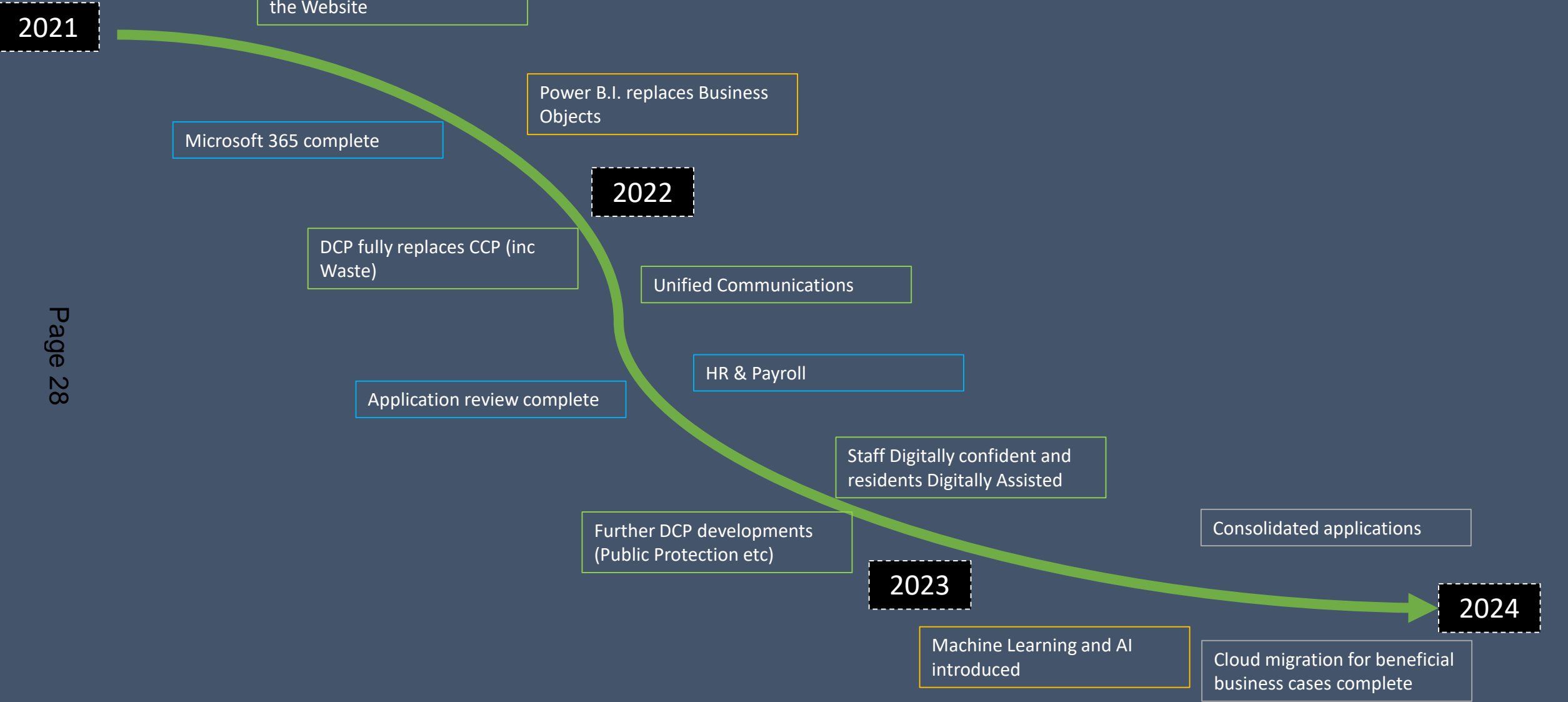
Work Stream 1
Digital First for
our services

Work Stream 2
Enable
Transformation
for our staff

Work Stream 3
Data driven
organisation

Work Stream 4
Secure &
resilient
technology

Roadmap



Engagement to date

Creation and Input

- Digital & Customer Services DMT
- Technical Input
- Design Authority
- Customer Services DMT
- Exec Members
- Trade Union
- Digital skills group inc Adults and the Libraries

Consultation and Amends

- Full Digital Team
- Trade Unions
- Directorate DMT's
- Scrutiny Committee
- Management Board
- Finance

Wider Engagement

- Via a series of videos, website launch and publications, our engagement when launched will include;
- Resources Directorate
- Team Talk
- Cascade from Design Authority in to the Directorates
- Our Blog will publish the case studies, the Exec Introduction and several follow on stories
- Public webinars and events
- Partnership presentations

EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



REPORT OF: Executive Member for Growth and Development

LEAD OFFICERS: Strategic Director of Place

DATE: Thursday, 8 April 2021

PORTFOLIO(S) AFFECTED: Growth and Development

WARD/S AFFECTED:

KEY DECISION: Y

SUBJECT:

Growth Programme 2021/22

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council has an economic Growth Programme to support the creation of jobs, housing and infrastructure within the Borough, delivering on the strategy set out in the adopted Local Plan. The Council's strategy, including the Growth Programme, has helped to deliver strategic growth since 2015 by securing the delivery of new homes and jobs in the Borough.

To deliver this Growth Programme the Council continues to identify and manage a pipeline of projects which currently comprises a working total of over 200 sites across the Borough with projects planned to be implemented over the short, medium and long term. These projects utilise a combination of private or public sector land and cover employment, housing and town centre developments.

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

- Additional Council and Business tax revenues to support the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- Accelerating economic activity to create employment opportunities for residents;
- Supporting growth and vitality in the town centres of Blackburn and Darwen;
- Removing localised blight by bringing empty homes or properties back into use;
- Generating financial benefits from strategic land receipts;
- Securing developer funding for essential infrastructure including roads, open spaces and schools; and
- Extending the choice and range of new family housing to attract and retain residents.

This report provides a summary of progress to date and outlines the programme of projects for 2021/22.

This report also requests delegated authority to vary the Growth Programme for 2021/22 by adding or removing sites as required, reflecting emerging priorities.

The report also seeks approval to grant a two-year extension to the successful Growth Framework.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

- Notes the good progress made by the Growth Team during 2020-21 through challenging operational conditions;
- Approves the Growth Programme to progress from feasibility stage through to tender stage during 2021-22;
- Delegate's authority to revise the Growth Programme for 2021/22, attached as Annexe A (by adding, removing or prioritising sites) to the Growth Programme Director in consultation with the Executive Member for Growth & Development; and
- Approves a 2-year extension to the Growth Framework to March 2024 and reappoint the following five partners to the Framework, [in alphabetical order]: Barnfield Construction Ltd, Eric Wright Group Ltd, I&H Brown Ltd, Seddon Construction and The Casey Group Ltd.

3. BACKGROUND

In order to deliver the Growth Programme the Council continually invests in a Growth Team, which promotes Council owned sites for development, works with the private sector to develop new homes by bringing forward private sector sites and works with Registered Providers to develop much needed Affordable Homes for rent. The team also maintains a pipeline of sites by ensuring an up-to-date Local Plan is produced, and pro-actively brings empty homes and other properties back into use. The Growth Team is led by a senior Council officer who is supported by a small multi-disciplined team of officers.

The Growth Team also leads on all strategic planning functions, on the initial engagement with potential investors and on the Section 106 process to secure developer funding for investment in local infrastructure.

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

- A programme and pipeline dashboard with key programmes of work covering 200 projects across employment, housing, infrastructure, empty homes and town centres;
- Creation of Joint Venture partnerships to secure the future of challenging sites, such as the former Lower Darwen Paper Mill site and former Thwaites Brewery site.
- Using a Growth Framework for selection of local contractors for delivering a variety of projects covering construction, civil engineering and developments;
- Implementation of robust section 106 procedures to test developer's viability appraisals. This will ensure the Council receives the correct amount of funding to support infrastructure such as education, affordable homes, green infrastructure and highways;
- A programme for disposing key strategic housing sites and employment land;
- Applying for public sector grants through preparing business cases and funding bids; and
- Developing key infrastructure to support the delivery of Growth in the Borough, including education and highway schemes.

To assist the delivery of the Growth Programme the Council procured a framework of partners to bring forward Council owned sites for commercial development, in addition to construction and civil

engineering works for capital projects. To date over £20m of capital value has been delivered by the framework and 11 projects completed to date. The framework partners [in alphabetical order] are: Barnfield Construction Ltd, Eric Wright Group Ltd, I&H Brown Ltd, Seddon Construction and The Casey Group Ltd. The framework commenced in January 2018 and is due to expire in January 2022 with the option to trigger an additional two-year extension. As well as the successful delivery of projects, the framework has also delivered a number of apprenticeships.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

The progress of the Growth Programme to date is detailed below with updates on key sites and overall planned delivery numbers.

- The **key programmes** are divided into two programme themes; Place and Thematic across employment, housing and town centres' sectors. These include:

Place

- Blackburn Town Centre Developments
- Darwen Town Centre Developments (now within the Darwen Town Fund Programme)
- Darwen East Development Corridor
- North Blackburn Development Corridor
- South East Blackburn Growth Zone
- Carl Fogarty Way Commercial Units
- Wainwright Way Commercial Units
- West Blackburn Development Corridor

Thematic

- Affordable Housing
 - Empty Homes (including proposals for a new Local Housing Company)
 - Infill Commercial Sites
 - Infill Housing Sites
- Estimated **housing completions for 2020/21 is expected to be circa 350**, with 292 having been completed in the first three quarters of the year (1st April 2020 – 31st December 2020).
 - **Key Housing schemes on site which will yield 1,950 units upon completion.**
 - 1) Lammack Road, Blackburn – 50 units being promoted by Miller Homes
 - 2) Gib Lane, Blackburn – 560 dwellings being promoted by Kingswood Homes and Story Homes
 - 3) Albion Mill, Blackburn – 105 extra care and dementia homes being promoted by Verum Victum
 - 4) Whinney Lane, Blackburn - 270 dwellings being promoted by Wainhomes
 - 5) Cranberry Lane, Darwen - 135 dwellings being promoted by McDermott Homes
 - 6) Pole Lane, Darwen – 260 dwellings being promoted by Kier Living and Persimmon Homes
 - 7) Roe Lee, Blackburn – 156 dwellings being promoted by Persimmon Homes and 33 by Miller Homes
 - 8) Tower View, Darwen – 17 dwellings being promoted by Hearle Homes
 - 9) Tower Road, Fenisccliffe – 30 dwellings being promoted by Applethwaite Homes
 - 10) Alaska Street, Blackburn – 73 affordable homes being promoted by Places for People
 - 11) Griffin (Phase 1), Blackburn – 56 affordable homes being promoted by Seddon and Great Places
 - 12) Former SAPPI site (phase 1a) – enabling works on site for the initial phase of 96 dwellings
 - 13) School Lane – 45 dwellings being promoted by Wainhomes

- 14) Former Beechwood Garden Centre – 14 dwellings promoted by Silverchic Developments.
- 15) Land off New Wellington St – 42 affordable homes promoted by Great Places.
- 16) Bowen St, Blackburn – 24 affordable homes promoted by Great Places.
- 17) Former Laneside Care Home, Blackburn – 16 affordable homes promoted by Great Places.

• **Key Employment schemes recently completed or on site include:**

- 1) Euro Garages Head Office, Haslingden Road
- 2) Home Bargains store at Wainwright Way, Blackburn Town Centre
- 3) Former Waves Site - new cinema, under-croft car park and leisure use development
- 4) Lidl store at Furthergate, Blackburn
- 5) Former Newmans site, Garden Street
- 6) Units at Bruce St / Gladstone St, Blackburn
- 7) Units at Commercial Road, Darwen
- 8) Units at Canterbury St, Blackburn
- 9) Site preparation (road and flood infrastructure) at Millbank Business Park (former Lower Darwen Paper Mill).

• **Council owned key housing and commercial development sites coming forward in the next 12 to 24 months.**

- 1) Millbank Business Park / Milking Lane – commercial and residential development plots promoted by Barnfield Blackburn Ltd
- 2) Carl Fogarty Way, Blackburn – Plots 1 and 4.
- 3) Dock Street, Blackburn – new commercial units being promoted by Barnfield Construction Ltd
- 4) Whitebirk Industrial Estate - Pets Choice Phase 2 manufacturing facility
- 5) Wainwright Way (Phase 2), Maple Grove assessing schemes for remaining 2 plots (Plots 1 and 3)
- 6) Salisbury Road, Darwen – Hearle Homes appointed to develop 12 new dwellings
- 7) Fishmoor Drive, Blackburn – major housing development of 383 dwellings being promoted by Together Housing and Countryside with a mix of affordable and private dwellings
- 8) Haslingden Road – new housing development offering a mix of 150 family homes and up to 150 key worker apartments to support employees of the East Lancs Health Trust
- 9) Lomond Gardens, Feniscowles – McDermott Homes appointed to bring forward a housing scheme for 30 new dwellings
- 10) Ellison Fold Way, Darwen – 343 new dwellings, including 67 affordable homes, being promoted following the opening of Ellison Fold Way link road (mixture of Council and privately-owned land).
- 11) Former Thwaites and markets site, Blackburn – Council moving forward with plans for comprehensive redevelopment once Maple Grove Blackburn Ltd (the new Joint Venture Company) has been established and the site is being acquired.
- 12) Chapels Park South – new commercial plots to be promoted by Barnfield Blackburn Ltd
- 13) Blakey Moor Building / King George's Hall – redevelopment of the Blakey Moor Building (being promoted by Barnfield Blackburn Ltd) and the links with King George's Hall and the Blakey Moor Terrace Scheme.

Trading Risk

It should be acknowledged that the procurement and delivery stages for many of the housing, employment and strategic sites noted above have experienced some delay due to COVID-19. The scale of current and anticipated impacts of the pandemic and the related economic downturn on investor confidence, and, in turn, possible implications for our current delivery programme could be significant.

Furthermore, there may be additional impacts as a result of Brexit. Despite this, the Borough remains committed to maintaining Growth momentum, with encouraging signs from continued local developer presence and interest. The delivery programme will be continuously updated as the situation evolves, ensuring Growth Programme resources are always directed towards maximising development outcomes for the Borough.

Whilst the details are not yet fully known, it should also be noted that national economic recovery and levelling up plans are expected. The Council will be supporting the development of strategic project proposals to come forward for the new £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund. In addition, the Council will continue to develop new propositions for other national funding streams including the Shared Prosperity Fund and various Homes England strategic funds. This may enable the Council and its partners to bring forward strategic development opportunities and other stalled sites more quickly.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Blackburn with Darwen's Corporate Plan has a priority to accelerate the growth agenda, creating good quality jobs for the local population, providing necessary infrastructure and securing positive outcomes from capital investments. There is also a commitment to deliver the growth plan priorities for employment, town centres and housing.

The identified Growth Programme also supports delivery of the strategy and policies set out within the Council's adopted Local Plan, comprising the Core Strategy and the Local Plan Part 2. It ensures that the Council continues to meet its statutory obligations in terms of providing sufficient new homes and jobs for residents, maintaining a deliverable 5 Year Supply of housing sites and passing the Government's annual Housing Delivery Test.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Whilst there may be financial implications for individual projects, which are reported separately, there are no financial implications for this progress update report however the Council may need to consider additional revenue to support project development costs and will be dependent on the funding opportunity presented.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

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

The Growth Team is working at full capacity, and therefore opportunities to fast-track business casework to support public investment submissions, which may be subject to national competition, may require additional resourcing to enable the Council to access new growth funds. Such opportunities would be the subject of separate reports in due course.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below.

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

Option 2 ☐ In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision.

Option 3 ☐ In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision.

10. CONSULTATIONS

Consultations undertaken for each scheme in accordance with the Council's constitution, the adopted Statement of Community Involvement and other statutory planning legislation.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

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

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

CONTACT OFFICER:	Simon Jones Growth Programme Director pmogrowth@blackburn.gov.uk
DATE:	April 2021
BACKGROUND PAPER:	None

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Growth Programme

2021/2022

Council Sites (Feasibility & Procurement Stages)	Council Sites (Planning & Delivery Stages)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Housing Sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Haslingden Road, South East Blackburn ○ Griffin (Phase 2 and 3), Blackburn ○ Holden Fold, Darwen ○ Queens Park, Blackburn ○ Clarendon Road, Blackburn ○ Land at Branch Road, Mellor Brook ○ Whalley Old Road, Blackburn ○ Local Housing Company ▪ Employment Sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Carl Fogarty Way – Development Plots 2,3,5 and 6 ○ St Johns Church – Redevelopment Proposals ○ Griffin Lodge & Coach House – Redevelopment Proposals ○ Medi Park Development Site, South East Blackburn ○ Wainwright Way – Development Plots 1 and 3 ○ Whitebirk Development Site - Pets Choice Phase 2 ○ Bridge House, Blackburn Town Centre ○ Blakey Moor Building (Barnfield Blackburn Ltd), Blackburn Town Centre ▪ Strategic Sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maple Grove Blackburn Ltd (Thwaites / Fmr Markets & Exchange Sites) ○ Guide Development Site, South East Blackburn ○ Blackburn Town Centre – Tower Block Development Proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Housing Sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ellison Fold Way, Darwen (McDermott Homes) ○ Lomond Gardens, Feniscowles (McDermott Homes) ○ Griffin (Phase 1), Blackburn (Seddon and Great Places) ○ Fishmoor Drive, Blackburn (Together Housing / Countryside Homes) ○ Alaska Street, Blackburn (Places for People) ○ Salisbury Road, Darwen (Hearle Homes) ○ Tower View, Darwen (Hearle Homes) ○ Roe Lee, Blackburn (Persimmon) ○ Land at Tower Road, Fenisccliffe (Applethwaite) ○ Former Laneside Care Home, Shorrocks Lane (Great Places) ▪ Employment Sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dock Street (Barnfield Construction) ○ Blakey Moor Terrace, Blackburn Town Centre ○ Chapels South, Darwen (Barnfield Blackburn Ltd) ○ Carl Fogarty Way – Development Plots 1 (Rocstar) and 4 (Inceptum) ○ Plot C, Shadsworth Industrial Estate (GAP) ▪ Strategic Sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Barnfield Blackburn Ltd (Millbank Business Park)

EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Growth and Development
LEAD OFFICERS:	Strategic Director of Place
DATE:	Thursday, 8 April 2021

PORTFOLIO(S) AFFECTED:	Growth and Development
WARD/S AFFECTED:	Blackburn South East;
KEY DECISION:	Y

SUBJECT:

Disposal of Council land for residential development at Haslingden Road to a Preferred Developer

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Haslingden Road development site in South East Blackburn (Appendix A) is identified as a strategic site within the Council's Growth programme. The site is well placed to provide vital keyworker homes for use by staff at the Royal Blackburn Hospital alongside providing a number of family homes for market sale.
- 1.2 A number of technical surveys were undertaken for the site as part of a feasibility study to assess suitability and viability of the site to develop new homes. The feasibility study supported the development of the site to provide a mix of tenure and type of new homes.
- 1.3 The site was offered for development via a three stage tender exercise through the Homes England Developer Procurement Panel 3 (DPP3).
- 1.4 10 bidders expressed initial interest in developing the site. Officers diligently assessed bids through the three stages of the tender process and identified a suitable bidder that could develop the site to meet with the Council's aspiration.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

- 2.1 Notes the outcome of the Tender undertaken for the Haslingden Road development site through the Homes England Developer Procurement Panel 3 (DPP3)
- 2.2 Notes the financial offer for the Council owned site in the part 2 report
- 2.3 Authorise officers to confirm bidder 'A' as preferred bidder and bidder B as reserve bidder.
- 2.4 Grants permission for Council officers to negotiate Heads of Terms to finalise the terms of the disposal.
- 2.5 Delegates authority to conclude negotiations, including terms of any land sale and contracts to the Growth Programme Director and Director of Finance in consultation with the Executive

Members for Finance and Governance, and Growth and Development to approve the final heads of terms.

- 2.6 Authorises the Director of HR, Governance & Engagement to complete the necessary legal formalities.
- 2.7 Authorise the Strategic Director Place to appropriate the land at Haslingden Road shown edged red on plan attached Appendix A from the Resources and Growth & Development portfolios to the Growth & Development department for planning purposes pursuant to s226 Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 2.8 Noting that the land is generally open space in character then such appropriation must also comply with s122(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972 and hence authorise the Director of HR, Governance & Engagement to advertise the proposal to appropriate accordingly.
- 2.9 Authorise the Director of HR, Governance & Engagement to advertise the proposal to dispose of 'open space' in accordance with the statutory process under Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972
- 2.10 Note that in authorising the commencement of the appropriation process of the Haslingden Road site, the Council has considered the provisions of the Equalities Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998 as set out in this report.
- 2.11 Authorise the Strategic Director Place for the consideration of any objections to both the appropriation proposal and 'open space' disposal.
- 2.12 Note the Council's powers under s.203 – 206 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to override any third party rights and easements on the land once planning permission for the planning purpose has been obtained and so where necessary to enable the planning purpose to be achieved, authorise the Strategic Director of Place to override any said third party rights or easements.
- 2.13 If the appropriation for planning purposes is approved and any third party rights and easements have been overridden, authorise the negotiation and payment of any compensation claims potentially emerging from the appropriation.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Haslingden Road site is located in South East Blackburn (shown edged red on the attached plan Appendix A), which is an important growth area for the borough. The site was identified as being suitable for housing development providing new family homes for market sale
- 3.2 The site is also seen as an important location to develop Keyworker homes for use by medical trainees/staff working at the Royal Blackburn Hospital. Council officers have worked closely with management at East Lancs Hospital Trust to assess demand levels for keyworker homes by the trust.
- 3.3 The trust has identified a need for keyworker homes for short-term accommodation (between 12 to 24 months). The majority of the key workers will be medical trainees, nurses, specialist staff along with some junior doctors. Most are expected to work at Royal Blackburn, some accommodation will be used for staff working at Burnley General Hospital
- 3.4 A key priority for the Council and ELHT was to ensure that Keyworker accommodation should be provided as an early phase of the development. Due to this requirement, Council staff

chose the formal DPP3 route, which gave access to a large number of developers and Registered Providers.

3.5 The Council prepared a raft of technical information, which included ground condition surveys, ecological and drainage studies among others. A three stage Tender exercise was undertaken through the DPP3 process, this involved:-

- Stage 1 Expression of Interest stage
- Stage 2 Sifting Brief stage
- Stage 3 Invitation to Tender stage

3.6 The development brief outlined the Council's desire to see a two-phased development programme with Phase 1 delivered first. Phase 1 would include 50 keyworker apartments and 150 family homes for market sale. Phase 2 is planned to be commenced around 18 months after the start of phase 1 and is planned to provide a further 100 keyworker apartments.

3.7 At stage 1 an Expression of Interest was initiated through the DPP3, this brought forward 10 interested parties. This was followed by a stage 2 Sifting Brief submission whereby interested parties were sent the detailed brief and technical surveys.

3.8 During stage 2, the Council received 6 bids; these were scored through the Sifting Stage. In line with DPP3 guidance the Council shortlisted four bidders to go through to stage 3 the final tender stage. This stage was delayed for a number of months due to the onset of the Coronavirus Epidemic.

3.9 During late 2020, an Invitation to Tender brief was sent to the four bidders asking for final bids to be submitted by the 4th February 2021.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

4.1 The Council has received two bids for the Haslingden Road tender both of which have been comprehensively assessed. Both bids are compliant and outline a programme of phased development in line with the tender brief.

Development proposals outline delivery of phase 1 to provide 50 keyworker apartments and 150 family homes for market sale.

The remaining 100-keyworker apartments will be finalised for delivery in phase 2 following feedback from ELHT for the phase 1 apartments. Phase 2 is planned for delivery 18 months after phase 1 commences.

4.2 Both bidders have submitted a land receipt for phase 1 and phase 2 as outlined in the part 2 report. Bidders have also confirmed payment of S106 in line with the Council's expectations.

4.3 The bids have been assessed in accordance with the tender scoring criteria which is set as 30% Quality and 70% Price, as such the scores for the two respective bidders is as follows:

Bidder	Quality score	Price score	Overall score
Bidder A	17.2%	61.7%	78.9%
Bidder B	16.7%	47.0%	63.7%

4.4 The proposed housing is as follows:

Bidder	Phase 1 Keyworker Apartments		Phase 1 Homes Open Market sale				Phase 2 Keyworker Apartments	Total
	1 Bed	2 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	4+ Bed		
Bidder A	0	50	15	79	56	0	100	300
Bidder B	5	51	15	72	59	4	100	306

4.5 **It is recommended that bidder A is appointed as 'preferred bidder'** and that bidder B be retained as reserve bidder whilst officers work on enhancing the scheme with bidder A.

4.6 Both bidders have presented schemes of good quality design that generally meet the tender brief. Further work is required to enhance either scheme to a level that the Council feels will provide an exemplar scheme of housing that is suitable to meet the needs and aspirations of the borough.

4.7 Council officers from the Growth and Development will work with the appointed 'preferred bidder' once they have been appointed. This will help develop the scheme in readiness to submit for planning permission in early summer. Should bidder A fall short of achieving the desired scheme enhancements, officers will engage with bidder B to work up an enhanced scheme.

4.8 Appropriation

4.8.1 The Council can appropriate land for any proper purpose for which it is authorised to acquire land by agreement. The general appropriation process is set out in section 122(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 (1972 Act).

4.8.2 The Council's powers to appropriate land for planning purposes is contained in s226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. It is also clarified here for the avoidance of doubt that in this case the Council thinks:

- the acquisition will facilitate the carrying out of development, redevelopment or

improvement on or in relation to the land (*section 226(1)(a)*); and

- the proposed development and improvement is likely to contribute to achieving the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the whole, or part of the Borough (*section 226(1)(a) and (1A)*).

4.8.3 The Council should only resolve to appropriate land for another purpose if it is satisfied that the land is not required for the purpose for which it is currently held. The land at Haslingden Road is identified for housing development in the Council's adopted Local Plan. The site is included in the Council's Growth Programme to provide residential dwellings, the proposed appropriation will bring the site forward to deliver new homes in line with the site designation and the Council's Growth Programme. Any proper objection on the proposed appropriation will need to be formally considered by a subsequent formal decision. This will be in the form of an executive member approval.

4.8.4 The Council considers there could be a small chance of some informal private rights of way and other informal easements having accrued over time over the development site due to the site being 'open' for a considerable period. Where land is appropriated for planning purposes and planning permission for the planning purpose has been achieved, the Council may rely upon the provisions of Section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016. The Council has this statutory power to override easements or rights of way affecting land.

4.9 Disposal of Open Space

4.9.1 As the land at Haslingden Road can be considered to have been reasonably open to the public for use, it considers that it is best to act cautiously and deem this site suitable as one to which ought to be considered as 'open space'. A proposed disposal of open space must follow on from the process provided for under section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972. This requires the Council to advertise the proposal twice over two consecutive weeks in a newspaper circulating in the area in which the land is situated, erect site notices, and consider any objections to the proposed disposal which may be made to them.

4.9.2 It is recommended that the council delegates authority to the Strategic Director Place in consultation with the Executive Members for Finance and Governance and Growth and Development, to consider any objections or comments raised to the proposed disposal of 'open space' at Haslingden Road and if appropriate approve the proposed disposal of 'open space' at Haslingden Road for the proposed housing development.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The proposed residential developments will:

Support delivery of new homes in line with the Local Plan, the Council's 2030 Vision and the Council's Corporate Plan.

5.2 Disposal of the site is in accordance with the Council's Disposal Policy and the approved Housing Toolkit.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Council will receive a capital receipt from the sale of the council owned site

6.2 The development will provide 50 keyworker homes and 150 family homes for market sale in phase 1. Another 100 keyworker homes are planned to be delivered in phase 2.

6.3 All new homes will contribute to the Council's MTFs by way of Council Tax income and New Homes Bonus (if still available).

6.4 The Council previously secured sustainable grant from the One Public Estate to fund masterplanning works in South East Blackburn. This amount will need to be repaid to the One Public Estate from the capital receipt on sale of the land.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The disposal of the site is in line with the Council's disposal policy and is supported by technical input from legal. The Council has ensured best value considerations by choosing to dispose of the site through the Homes England DPP3 panel, which is an approved formal procurement process.
- 7.2 The Council will look to safeguard its interests in ensuring that the land is developed in line with its future revenue benefit projections by agreeing a build programme with the developer.
- 7.3 The Haslingden Road development site is owned by the Council.
- 7.4 The National Planning Policy Framework has replaced the National Planning Policy on Housing (PPS3). However, requirements still remain with the Council to demonstrate the provision of an adequate mix of housing developments and setting of targets for affordable housing. As any future proposed disposal is likely to be for the freehold of the land or a very long lease, then various aspects of S123 of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the Act") shall apply.
- 7.5 Firstly, the Council should be seeking to achieve best consideration reasonably obtainable for the site, unless the Council can apply the exemptions permitted by Government Circular. Although the Council has a general power of competence pursuant to s1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything that individuals can legally do, the Local Government Act 1972 and General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 to seek Best Consideration still applies and so this must be minded when the Council makes any decision to sell via any process, including an informal tender process.
- 7.6 Secondly, to the extent that the land to be disposed of is considered to be "open space" then s123 (2A) of the Act shall apply. This requires the Council to advertise the proposal twice over two consecutive weeks in a newspaper circulating in the area in which the land is situated, and consider any objections to the proposed disposal which may be made to them. It is noted that for a number of years the Council has put up signage which has allowed the land to be used under licence for casual pastimes as indicated by signs posted at various access points to the land. Any rights of access under this licence will be withdrawn.
- 7.7 "Open space" is defined in section 336(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as: "means any land laid out as a public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground" (emphasis added) And it is the conclusion in the body of the report that much of the site is reasonably likely to fall into that category to the extent that it would be prudent for the Council to treat it as such. While there is case law on such matters, it may be sufficient to only look at the plain English language meaning of the phrase in this case.
- 7.8 Section 122(1) of the 1972 Act states: "Subject to the following provisions of this section, a principal Council may appropriate for any purpose for which the Council are authorised by this or any other enactment to acquire land by agreement any land which belongs to the Council and is no longer required for the purpose for which it is held immediately before the appropriation; but the appropriation of land by a Council by virtue of this sub-section shall be subject to the rights of other persons in, over or in respect of the land concerned."

7.9 This appropriation process is a helpful avenue for the Council where agreement cannot be reached or the beneficiaries of any (possible) rights are unknown. Section 203 authorises the overriding of any private rights affecting the use of land which is held for planning purposes where development is carried out in accordance with planning permission. The power extends not only to development by the local planning authority itself but also to any person authorised by that authority. The ability to interfere with these (possible) rights is important in the context of enabling any development to proceed. The power to override such rights does not prevent such rights being compensated.

7.10 Section 122(2) of the 1972 Act requires the Council, prior to any appropriation of land comprising open space, to advertise the proposal twice over two consecutive weeks in a newspaper circulating in the area in which the land is situated, and consider any objections to the proposed appropriation which may be made to them.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Growth team will lead on detailed negotiations. Legal resources will be required to support the preparation and discharge of the agreements.

8.2 Additional support will be required from Capita Property to carry out scheme assessments, viability appraisals and preparation of Heads of Terms.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Provisions of the HRA which are relevant in relation to the proposed appropriation are:

(1) The European Convention on Human Rights (the Convention) is an international treaty signed under the auspices of the Council of Europe.

(2) The HRA still does not incorporate the Convention into UK law but what it does is to enable individuals to invoke Convention rights for certain purposes and for certain effects.

(3) The main article of the Convention, which is of importance in circumstances where the Council is considering appropriating land is Article 1 of Protocol 1 – the protection of property.

(4) In appropriating land an authority must show that the appropriation is justified in the public interest.

9.2 Article 1 of Protocol 1 provides that:

(1) Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions.

(2) No one shall be deprived of those possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law.

(3) However, the above rules shall not prevent a State enforcing such laws, as it deems necessary to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest.

(4) The Council must decide in relation to Article 1 whether a fair balance has been struck between the demands of the general interest of the community and the requirements of the protection of the individual's fundamental rights. The right to compensation is a relevant factor in considering the balance.

(5) With regard to Article 1 of Protocol 1, it is considered that the interference with the individual's property is justified by the advantages accruing to the public by proceeding with the works particularly taking into account the fact that there is a legal right to compensation for the interference with rights arising from the appropriation.

9.3 In addition to the HRA, the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:

(1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;

(2) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

9.4 The Council has carried out an equality impact analysis checklist. This first of all assessed from a relevance perspective whether a full impact assessment was needed. This assessment concluded that the proposed appropriation would not negatively impact on any particular group in a disproportionate way. As such no full assessment was required. The Council considers that it has complied with its duty under the Equalities Act 2010.

Please select one of the options below.

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

Option 2 ☐ In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision.

Option 3 ☐ In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision.

10. CONSULTATIONS

The Council has carried out a Housing and Economic Needs Assessment for the Borough and has an adopted Local Plan which is currently being refreshed.

These have outlined housing demand and type; further consultation will be carried out with local residents during the planning process for the developments.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

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

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

CONTACT OFFICER:	Subhan Ali, , subhan.ali@blackburn.gov.uk
DATE:	16 th March 2021
BACKGROUND PAPER:	

The site plan illustrates the proposed development at the former Royal Blackburn Hospital site. The site is bounded by Old Bank Lane to the north and east, and the railway line to the south. The plan is divided into two main phases:

- Phase 1:** A large, irregularly shaped area in the center of the site, outlined in red. It is labeled "Phase 1" in bold black text.
- Phase 2:** A smaller, irregularly shaped area to the east of Phase 1, also outlined in red. It is labeled "Phase 2" in bold black text.

Key features and labels on the plan include:

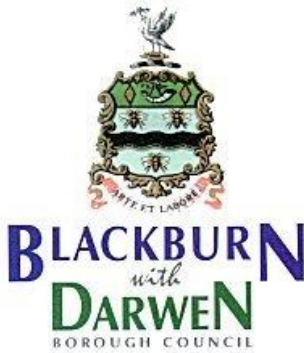
- Old Bank Lane:** The main road running along the top and right sides of the site.
- Royal Blackburn Hospital:** The existing hospital buildings located to the north and east of the development site.
- Queens Lodge Nursing Home:** A building located to the west of Phase 1.
- Gas Coy:** A small building located near the top center of the site.
- Chy:** A small building located near the top center of the site.
- Track:** A railway track running along the bottom edge of the site.
- Phase 1 and Phase 2:** The two main development areas, outlined in red.
- Phase 1 and Phase 2:** The two main development areas, outlined in red.



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EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Finance and Governance
LEAD OFFICERS:	Director of Finance
DATE:	8 April 2021

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED: Finance and Governance

WARD/S AFFECTED: ALL

KEY DECISION: YES ☐ NO ☒

SUBJECT: Covid-19 Funding

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the Covid-19 funding received by the Council to date including direct financial support for businesses, partners, community organisations and residents as well as funding in respect of the Council's ongoing response to and impact of the pandemic.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Executive Board notes the contents of the report.

3. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

Blackburn with Darwen is one of the areas that has suffered most during the Covid-19 pandemic, with the highest cumulative cases per 100,000 nationally and with the borough, our residents and businesses, in some form of local or national restrictions for almost the whole time since late March 2020. This has impacted significantly on individuals, families, communities, businesses and the broader economy and the Council prioritised the vast majority of its resources and staff towards supporting the ongoing response to the pandemic as has been reported to Council regularly throughout the year.

During the first 6 months of the pandemic, from March 2020, government funding to cover the significant additional costs being incurred by the council, along with the substantial income losses sustained due to lockdown and ongoing various local and national restrictions put in place through most of the last year, came through on an adhoc basis. In the absence of any assurances that our additional Covid related cost pressures would be met, it became increasingly possible that the council would have to consider issuing a Section 114 notice at some point during the course of the last financial year; a Section 114 notice being a report made by the Chief Finance Officer if it appears that the expenditure incurred by the authority (including expenditure it proposes to incur) in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources (including sums borrowed) it has available to meet this.

Should this have materialised, this would have meant that no new expenditure would be permitted, with the exception of that required to fund statutory services, including safeguarding vulnerable people, albeit that existing commitments and contracts would continue to be honoured.

Over the course of the summer, when the first local restrictions were introduced, it appeared that the ongoing and emerging cost pressures would easily outstrip the funding provided at that time and, without any assurance of further financial support, it looked increasingly possible that the council would have insufficient resources to continue operating to the end of the financial year, given the low level of reserves which have been depleted to enable the Council to manage its budgets over the last 10 years of austerity.

Since then, over the course of the last 12 months, various departments within central government have subsequently provided funding to support local government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This has been primarily through the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), who have provided a number of funding streams in relation to both specific and general costs, as well as to cover some losses of income incurred by councils across the country during the crisis.

As the year progressed, and further to intense lobbying from councils and their representative bodies, central government departments continued to announce further packages of financial assistance and the risk subsided. Whilst this was welcome relief in alleviating the financial pressures in year, it nonetheless placed significant pressures on officers within finance and revenues and benefit teams across the country in ensuring the funding was allocated, managed and monitored, as authorities sought to urgently respond to the crisis; this work continues today and is expected to continue well into 2021/22.

Since the first national lockdown was imposed on 23rd March 2020, councils have been allocated funding to spend on their Covid-19 response from over 30 different funding pots, totalling over £10 billion. On top of this, they have also been responsible for distributing more than £16 billion in grants to businesses from six separate funds, with each of these funding streams having their own specific terms, conditions and qualifying criteria.

The administrative cost for councils in administering ring-fenced funds, in applying specific terms and conditions to individual 'pots' of funding, and in completing a myriad of monitoring returns to account for expenditure has been resource intensive, especially whilst balancing the day to day work required to manage the finances of the organisation with a workforce based at home.

One example of this would be the Infection Control Fund provided by the DHSC for care providers; this was paid in two tranches nationally of £600 million and £546 million respectively, each with slightly different terms and conditions. Additional resource has been required to support the administration of this funding, and in the work undertaken with social care providers to collect information and report on exactly what the funding has been utilised for, to confirm and evidence that it is within the criteria set out by the DHSC.

Most of the funding provided in 2020/21 from MHCLG has been in the form of the £4.6 billion Covid Emergency Funding grant. This has been paid out in four tranches and is un-ringfenced. A fifth tranche of funding has been announced for 2021/22 to assist in meeting the ongoing additional costs and continuing income losses as we continue to respond and start to recover from the initial sustained phases of the pandemic.

BEIS has issued more than £16 billion of funding to councils, the vast majority of which has been provided by them for councils to administer on behalf of government and pass funding straight on to Business Rate paying businesses who meet a stringent set of eligibility criteria, with pre and post payment checks and assurance systems required to minimise the risk of fraud.

A much smaller element of the funding has been provided to all councils for distribution through their own individual Discretionary Grant Schemes established for this purpose, which enables payments to

be made to businesses who do not meet the eligibility criteria set by government for the Business Rates Grant scheme. Discretionary grants are included in spending information for payments over £500 to external suppliers on the datashare website. The administration of the Business Rate Grant, Local and Additional Restrictions Grant schemes and the various Discretionary Grant schemes has been a very resource intensive exercise which will continue into the new financial year and will now cover the government's more recently announced Restart Grant scheme that will go live in April.

Other smaller elements of funding have included local government's 50% share of the £60m compliance and enforcement funding from MHCLG and the Home Office, which has been provided to assist with the deployment of Covid marshals and other measures to ensure ongoing support for and compliance with Covid restrictions.

The complexity of the multitude of funding pots provided, and the variety of sources from which they come, have been further frustrated by the fact that on occasion funding has been distributed by government to individual local authorities without any description of what it is for, and for other funding streams, the terms and conditions attached to them have been hard to locate, and/or the guidance provided for their administration has changed over a short space of time, resulting in additional time and resource required for reconciliation.

We have now reached the 2020/21 financial year end, although the cost pressures of our continuing response to Covid and moving more into recovery will continue in the medium to longer term, therefore some funding received to date will be carried forward into 2021/22 in line with the grant conditions to meet the ongoing costs of Covid-19, and associated loss of income through fees and charges, which is likely to take longer to recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

As we emerge from the 3rd wave in the North West and more locally, and with a programme to vaccinate the whole adult population progressing at pace, we are hopeful that we will not have to revert to the same emergency measures, and incur the same level of costs, that we did in 2020/21; nonetheless the financial impact will be felt for some time to come, be that in meeting emerging and rising demand in adult and children's social care, particularly for mental health services; in restarting and regenerating our economy and town centres, particularly in retail, and in opening up our leisure and culture services over time to pre-pandemic customer numbers. The funding carried forward will undoubtedly be called upon to address this in the coming year ahead, and potentially beyond this. Further to setting a balanced budget for 2021/22 at Finance Council in early March, the Council's financial position beyond the current year is far from clear.

To provide an overview of the funding received by the council to support businesses and individuals and our continuing response to the Covid-19 crisis, Appendix A to the report sets out the funding received by the council and briefly what the funding is provided for.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The information contained within the report supports the approach taken to delivering a balanced budget for the Council.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Appendix A outlines the £124.77m funding that the Council has received, the majority of which is to be administered on behalf of government to support businesses, and other funding applied to support the ongoing response to Covid-19 in the borough, supporting the Council in its response, the social care sector, individuals and community groups.

Support for businesses administered by the Council through business rate relief, specific restrictions and other grants	£91.85M
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Support for social care providers	£3.53M
Support for individuals/CEV*/partners etc	£4.17M
Support for the Council	
Additional costs	£15.55M
Test, Trace & Isolate	£6.08M
Partial support for loss of income	£3.59M
*Clinically Extremely Vulnerable / shielding	

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council has a duty to ensure it can deliver a balanced budget. The Local Government Act 2003 imposes a duty on an authority to monitor its budgets during the year and consider what action to take if a potential deterioration is identified. The report outlines the funding received to meet the costs and income losses due to the pandemic and summarises the application of this to ensure delivery of a balanced budget.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None as a direct consequence of this report.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

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

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

Option 2 ☐ In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision.

Option 3 ☐ In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision.

10. CONSULTATIONS

Not applicable.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

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

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

VERSION:	1.0
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Louise Mattinson - Director of Finance
DATE:	April 2021
BACKGROUND PAPER:	None

APPENDIX A

Note: This sheet only includes funding for the financial year 2020/21 and does not include any funding allocated for the year 2021/22.

Funding Source	Funding Department	£ Funding Received by BwD £mill	Notes
Support for businesses			
Business Rate Relief - S31 Grant	MHCLG	16.30	100% rates discount - all hospitality, leisure and retail businesses with a rateable value of less than £51,000, and retailers of any size, irrespective of their rateable value. Government also applied 100% relief to all premises occupied by providers on Ofsted’s Early Years Register and wholly or mainly used for the provision of the Early Years Foundation
Business Grants	BEIS	68.97	Grants to be made to business rate paying businesses according to criteria set by central government. Allocation are based on government's estimate of the number of businesses in the borough with any shortfall of funding to be provided if required, and any surplus to be returned to them.
Discretionary Business Grants	BEIS	6.57	Grants to support those businesses with ongoing premises costs but who did not meet the criteria to qualify for funding through the Government’s other business grant support schemes.
Support for individuals			
Self-Isolation payments	BEIS	0.66	Funding provided for payments of £500 for qualifying individuals who are required to self-isolate and who have suffered and can evidence a financial loss as a consequence.
Hardship Grant Funding 2020/21	MHCLG	2.19	To provide further Council Tax relief for vulnerable residents, each working age Local Council Tax Scheme (LCTS) recipient has received a further discount of £150 off their 20/21 Council Tax bill (or less if their current liability was less than £150)
DWP Covid Winter Support Grant Scheme	DWP	0.65	The Covid Winter Grant Scheme is ring-fenced, with at least 80% earmarked to support with food and bills. Councils can directly help the hardest-hit families and individuals, as well as provide food for children who need it over the holidays whilst schools will continue providing meals for disadvantaged children during term-time.
Support for care providers			
Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund	DHSC	2.80	The fund is ringfenced for social care and was given to local authorities to ensure care homes can continue to halt the spread of coronavirus by helping them cover the costs of implementing measures to reduce transmission. Care homes were asked to restrict permanent and agency staff to working in only one care home wherever possible and the funding could be used to meet the additional costs of this restriction and to pay the wages of those self-isolating.
Workplace capacity and rapid testing	MHCLG & DHSC	0.73	To support providers to restrict staff movement between care homes in all but exceptional circumstances and to enable rapid testing of staff twice a week to help protect workers and residents from the virus
Support for outbreak management			
Test and Trace and Contain Outbreak Management Fund	DHSC	6.08	The purpose of the grant is to provide support to local authorities in England in meeting expenditure incurred in relation to the mitigation against, and management of, local outbreaks of COVID-19. In BwD this has covered a wide variety of expenditure including; targeted testing for hard-to-reach groups, additional contact tracing, enhanced communication and marketing e.g. towards hard-to-reach groups and other localised messaging, targeted interventions for specific sections of the local community and workplaces. Further funding will continue whilst we remain in lockdown.
Covid-19 Unringfenced Tranche Funding			
	MHCLG	15.03	Payments made to councils over the course of the year to provide assistance in meeting the additional costs incurred due to Covid and the losses in income not covered by the Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation scheme (detailed below). The funding is not ring-fenced and can be used as the council chooses; it can also be carried forward to assist in meeting future expenditure pressures and income losses as we emerge out of the pandemic. This has been a key resource in meeting the costs of PPE, the Food Hub, the Help Hub and COVID related cost pressures across the Council portfolios.
Sales Fees and Charges Compensation Scheme			
	MHCLG	3.59	COVID-19 has impacted upon the Council's ability to generate revenues in several service areas as a result of lockdown, government restrictions and social distancing measures. This scheme will compensate for irrecoverable and unavoidable losses from sales, fees and charges income in 2020/21. The scheme will involve a 5% deductible rate, whereby authorities will absorb losses up to 5% of their planned 2020/21 sales, fees and charges income, with government compensating them for 75p in every pound of relevant loss thereafter.
Other targeted ringfenced funding			
	MHCLG/DEFRA/DfT/ DHSC	1.20	Support for the Council, individuals, partners and the clinically extremely vulnerable
TOTAL COVID FUNDING 2021/22		124.77	

EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



REPORT OF: Executive Member for Digital and Customer Services,
Executive Member for Finance and Governance

LEAD OFFICERS: Director of HR, Governance and Engagement (MO),
Strategic Director of Resources (SIRO)

DATE: Thursday, 8 April 2021

PORTFOLIO(S) AFFECTED: ALL

WARD/S AFFECTED: (All Wards);

KEY DECISION: Y

SUBJECT:

EB Replacement HR & Payroll System Procurement Decision

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is to advise the Executive Board on the procurement of a replacement HR and Payroll system and to seek approval to award the contract to the successful bidder with the associated financial implications.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

- Further to the approval of the Capital Programme at Finance Council in March 2021, the Executive Board is asked to approve the reallocation of £716,000 from the earmarked ICT Capital Reserve, to commence the programme of works to replace the Council's current HR and Payroll system.
- Approves the awarding of the contract to the successful bidder
- Notes the potential additional modules that may be implemented

3. BACKGROUND

The Council previously entered into a contract for its current HR system on the 10th March 2014 which was for up to an 8 year period with the current contract due to end in March 2022. The current solution is hosted in the Council's data centre, over recent years the market has seen a shift from on premise solutions to those hosted by the supplier. This has meant that suppliers are now no longer investing in on premise solutions and are implementing modules that are available to customers who move to their hosted solution. Due to the costs involved in moving to a hosted solution this left the Council with no legal alternative, but to tender for a new solution.

The department undertook soft market testing to look at the current state of the market in providing a new solution and to engage with suppliers. Following this, approval was given from the Head of Corporate Contracting & Procurement to progress via the recommended strategy for the procurement being an OJEU restricted process. This process allows for an initial pre-qualification stage (PQQ) to narrow down the number of suppliers to be invited to bid for the main tender.

PQQ Stage

62 companies expressed an interest in the opportunity with 12 responses received from suppliers; these were evaluated by a panel of senior leads. The responses were initially evaluated on pass/fail criteria in relation to exclusion grounds, economic and financial standing, insurance,

quality management and audit and information security. The suppliers then responded to 13 questions in relation to their technical and professional ability to provide the services. Based on their overall scores 5 suppliers were selected to progress to the full tender stage of the process.

Tender Stage

The tender documents asked each bidder to respond to 240 questions regarding their solution split into the following sections;

Strategic Differentiators – To address the Council's strategic aims of the project including the likes of partnership, analytics and vision.

User Stories – To address the needs of the business gathered from speaking to individuals within service areas.

Non-functional - To address IT, security and project implementation.

During the tender process 4 out of the 5 opted out of the bidding process. This was due to the likely impact of COVID, which has seen some suppliers driving down prices in the market making it uneconomical for certain providers to bid and some concerns that they would not be able to comply with the mandatory criteria within the tender.

The winning bidder provided a fully compliant tender response and currently provides HR and Payroll solutions to in excess of 1,100 customers and is a well-known provider to local authorities. The department has undertaken due diligence and engaged with other authorities who use the solution and is happy to proceed with the supplier. The contract will be for a period of 5 years with the Council having an option to extend for a further period of up to five number two-year periods (15 years in total).

The implementation of the new solution will be split into 2 phases.

Phase 1 will look to replace core functionality by the end of December 2021;

- Data migration
- Integrated HR & Payroll solution
- Recruitment & Onboarding.
- Payroll & pensions processing.
- Establishment management.
- Integration with Office 365, corporate finance system.
- External customer web portal – Customer support.
- Full manager and employee self-service including mobile app functionality.
- Self-service modules to include recruitment & onboarding, time & attendance, mileage & expenses.
- Flexible and proactive reporting and data analytics.
- Security profile for HR service users to access the solution at various levels.
- Electronic document, content and records management.
- Communication and customer feedback facility.

Phase 2 will look to review and redesign existing services to improve employee and customer experience by achieving channel shift for full manager and employee self-service and the use of AI and machine learning to complete transactional activity during Q4 of 2021 and Q1 and Q2 of 2022;

- Service redesign and enhancements from Phase 1
- Performance management
- Workforce development
- Employee relations
- Health & safety and incident management
- Organisational design & workforce planning

There are other modules available within the system which as part of the contract the department will have the option of adding to the contract, integrated learning platform, PowerBI interface, rostering & enhanced AI. These will be subject to further evaluation by the department to demonstrate return on investment before a decision is made on their implementation. Although the system has a built in recruitment module which was compliant with the Councils specification a further review will be taken in this area to compare with the applicant tracking and recruitment systems used by other authorities to ensure the correct solution is chosen for the Council moving forwards. This will be subject to a separate business case.

It is expected that the following benefits will be gained by the Council by entering into the new contract;

- Ensure that systems and data are integrated and that data and processes across systems are open and effective.
- Reducing support complexity, risks and limitations of the current system; improving disparate peripheral systems and processes by introducing standardisation and simplification of processes.
- Deliver improvements in effectiveness by removing any outstanding manual processes and 'off-line' manipulation and processing of data in spreadsheets.
- Potential options for commercialisation and shared services opportunities.
- Improve workforce planning and deployment.
- Enabling our staff to work with optimum agility and effectiveness, enhancing governance and controls and releasing front-line staff time.
- To unlock the potential of the data with better analytics informing service improvement and demand management.
- Enable real-time flexible reporting across strategic purposes
- Deliver some savings from improved working practices and further automation of processes.
- Standardise work processes and workflows within the departments as well as standardising data as much as possible to enable sharing of information more easily between teams and reducing keying of data as well as creating consistent management information.
- Provide an opportunity to reset management culture, through the reinvestment of HR resource saved in to proactive support to managers and better analysis of workforce MI to shape future workforce needs.
- Improvement to the whole recruitment and on-boarding process from start to finish. From the posting of the first job advert to interviews, provision of welcome packs, and the creation of training plans, Employee on-boarding helps organisations to build engaging relationships with new recruits from the start. This helps drive up retention rates through a more thorough process that makes people immediately feel part of the organisation and is known to increase retention levels.
- Deliver access to real-time data insights, trends and clear visualisations of HR and payroll information, empowering better decisions across the organisation based on accurate and easily understood information
- Time & Attendance - The Time and Attendance module can make life easier for employees and HR managers through simplified, faster management of time sheets, complex work patterns, time off in lieu (TOIL) and so on.
- HR Chatbot - The HR Chatbot module is a digital assistant that will give employees fast answers to HR queries.
- The introduction of single-sign on and the use of the HR platform to improve employee communication and engagement.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

- The current contract ends in March 2022 and therefore the new system needs to have a "Go Live date" prior to 1st April 2022.
- Suppliers are no longer investing in on premise forcing a move to cloud hosted solutions.

- The current on premise solution is based on infrastructure where there is a skills shortage in the market and is therefore difficult to support moving forwards. Moving to a cloud hosted solution puts this onus on the supplier freeing up internal resource time.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The project will enable the Council to harness the opportunities that digital offers to drive improvement across services and staff experience. It will unlock further potential efficiencies within our workforce by giving them the right tools, systems and skills to drive change. Decisions will be increasingly driven by high quality data.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Capital costs are made up of supplier module / implementation costs, internal IT project costs, backfill for HR staff and a 10% contingency.

The current system support costs are less than those required for the new solution, the remainder of the support costs will be made up by savings across the resources portfolio.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The procurement process used complies with the regulations of the Council's Contract and Procurement rules and the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

All contracts and contract variations will be in a form approved by legal officers in the Contracts and Procurement team.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

It is estimated that a considerable amount of internal resource will be required to implement the new system, some staff will require backfill within the HR and Payroll function, for other staff this will be built into existing work plans.

Backfill for HR project Team

Grade	Posts	Duration (months)
E	6	12
H	2	12

IT Project Team

Role	Grade	FTE
Service Desk	F	0.1
Operations Analyst	H	0.1
Business Analyst	I	0.6
Project Manager	I	0.8
Systems Specialist	I	0.64
Technical Manager	J	0.02

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below.

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

Option 2 ☐ In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision.

Option 3 ☐ In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision.

10. CONSULTATIONS

Consultations have already taken place within the Council with representatives from portfolios being invited to participate in the tender scoring. As the project progresses further consultations will occur with service users and schools.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

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

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

CONTACT OFFICER:	Peter Hughes, , peter.hughes@blackburn.gov.uk
DATE:	25/03/2021
BACKGROUND PAPER:	None

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted