

Policy Council

Thursday, 3rd December, 2020

6.00 pm

Virtual Meeting

[Join Here](#)

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Apologies
2. Prayers by the Mayor's Chaplain
3. Minutes of the Council Forum Meeting held on 1st October 2020
Council Forum October 2020 4 - 6
4. Declarations of Interest
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FORM 7
5. To consider Motions submitted under Procedure Rule 12:
One Motion has been submitted as follows:

Council Motion – Save Union Learning

On Tuesday 6 October 2020, the TUC received a letter from the Department for Education saying that ministers have decided to end the Union Learning Fund from March 2021.

The Union Learning Fund (ULF) was set up in 1998 to support trade unions to widen access to learning and training in workplaces for both union members and non-members. The fund supports workplace projects across England, and is coordinated by the TUC.

Each year around 200,000 workers are supported into learning or training with union support through the ULF and the TUC. These learners undertake all sorts of job-relevant learning and training, including basic literacy and numeracy, ICT skills, apprenticeships and traineeships, vocational training, continuing professional development and many other informal and formal courses.

In 2019–20, the ULF was worth £12m. If upheld this decision will effectively end union-brokered skills training, and will undermine key government skills and retraining priorities at a crucial moment for our economy.

This Council understands that:

- 1. Union learning reaches people that other DfE programmes do not reach.*
- 2. There is an independent evaluation of the Union Learning Fund every two years. It was most recently evaluated by the University of Exeter in 2018. They spoke to 2,459 learners, and found a number of key benefits and outcomes from the Learning Fund, in terms of skills, qualifications and also benefits to both the employer and employee.*
- 3. The 2018 independent evaluation found that union learning provided excellent value for money in terms of return in investment for both the employer and employee, contribution to the economy, return to the exchequer and leverage of additional funding.*
- 4. The Government has said it will put reskilling workers at the heart of its economic recovery plans after the pandemic. In September 2020, the Government announced a new fully funded entitlement to achieve a first level 3 qualification, delivered through the National Skills Fund. Union learning is ideally placed to support this aspiration.*
- 5. Successive governments of all parties have valued this role – and have supported the Union Learning Fund. As government funding, it is paid as a contract and is subject to stringent monitoring requirements. Union Learning Fund money can only be spent on the direct costs of getting working people into learning and skills training, and the associated costs of delivering this programme.*
- 6. ULF projects adapted quickly to delivering online learning and training for workers during the pandemic and have actually surpassed the number of outcomes expected by Government since the beginning of April.*

This Council resolves to:

- 1. Express its public support for the continuation of the Union Learning Fund; and*
- 2. Raise this issue with Kate Hollern MP and Jake Berry*

MP and encourage them to call on the Government to reverse its decision.

Moved by: Councillor Brian Taylor
Seconded by: Councillor Julie Gunn

6. **2020 Local and National Reflection: 2021 - Future Priorities**
policy council 2020.final **8 - 34**
Half year performance.doc
20-21 Half-year Exceptions.doc
final tracker Nov 2020 update
7. **Community Governance Review - Parish of Livesey**
Community Governance Review **35 - 42**
CGR 2020 Terms of Reference. Livesey Parish Council
Livesey with Pleasington
8. **Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2019/20**
Audit Committee Annual Report **43 - 85**
Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report
Appendix A Annual Report 2019-20
Audit Minutes - 25th June 2019
Audit Governance Committee August 2019
Audit & Governance Committee Minutes October 2019
Audit Governance Committee 14th January 2020
9. **The Council's Organisational and Departmental Structure**
Organisational and departmental structure report **86 - 93**
10. **Year Planner 2020-21 and 2021-22**
Year Planner 2020-21 v3 **94 - 101**
Year Planner 2021-22
To approve an amendment to the existing Year-Planner for 2020/21 - change of date for Finance Council in 2021 (22nd February to 1st March 2020).

To receive the draft Year- Planner for 2021/22 and approve changes to the date of Annual Council (13th May to 20th May 2021) and Civic Sunday (23rd May to 6th June 2021).

Date Published: Wednesday, 25 November 2020
Denise Park, Chief Executive

COUNCIL FORUM **Thursday, 1st October 2020**

PRESENT – *The Mayor Councillor Iftakhar Hussain, Councillors Afzal, Akhtar, H, Akhtar P, Batan, Bateson, Brookfield, Browne, Casey, Connor, Daley, Davies, Desai, Fazal, Floyd, Gee, Gunn, Hardman, Harling, Hussain I, Hussain M, Hussain S, Jan- Virmani, Kay, Khan M, Khan Z, Khonat, Liddle, Mahmood, Marrow, McFall, McGurk, Oates, Patel, Rawat, Rigby C, Rigby J, Riley, Salton, Sidat, Shorrocks, Slater Jacq, Slater Ja, Slater Ju, Slater N, Smith D, Smith J, Talbot, Taylor and Whittle.*

RESOLUTIONS

24 Welcome and Apologies

The Chief Executive read out the notice convening the meeting and the Mayor advised how the remote meeting would operate.

25 Minutes Of The Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held of the Annual Council meeting held on 16th July 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

26 Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were received.

27 Mayoral Communications

The Mayor reflected on unprecedented and challenging times, commenting that there had also been hope and a lot of community spirit as the Borough adapted to the pandemic.

The Mayor advised that he was proud of how the Council had responded to the crisis, and gave thanks to colleagues, both Councillors and Officers of the Council, and all volunteers in the Borough, for all their hard work and support in a strange and challenging year.

28 Council Forum

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received from members of the public under Procedure Rule 12.

29 Motions

The Chief Executive reported that no Motions had been received under Procedure Rule 10.

30 Updates from Other Committees

An update from the Standards Committee was submitted, and the Chair also advised Council that an advertisement had been placed on the Council's website for an Independent Person or Persons to serve on the Committee, as the current appointments for the existing Independent Persons, Alan Eastwood and Stewart Wright were coming to an end. The terms of Mr Eastwood and Mr Wright had been extended until 3rd December 2020, where at the Policy Council meeting, the results of the recruitment process would be reported and the Council asked to ratify the successful applicant or applicants.

The Chairs of the PEOPLE and PLACE Committees gave verbal updates on the recent meetings of the Committees.

The Chair of the Policy and Corporate Resources Committee, Councillor Dave Harling, reported that the Committee had not met as scheduled, as a Call-in on Executive Member Decision on the extension of the lease of the Reel Cinema had taken its place, and that, as Vice Chair of the Call-in Committee, he had chaired the meeting.

Members of the Council debated the circumstances around the arrangement of the Call-in Committee meeting, the attendance issues and the actual meeting itself, which had resulted in the Executive Member Decision being upheld.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the update from the Standards Committee and extension of term of the Independent Persons be noted; and
- 2) That the updates from the Chairs of the PEOPLE, PLACE, Policy and Corporate Resources Committee and Vice Chair of the Call-in Committee be noted.

31 Reports of Executive Members with Portfolios

The Leader and Executive Members presented their update reports to the Council Forum, providing verbal updates as appropriate.

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

32 Questions from Members

The Chief Executive reported that no questions from Members had been received under Procedure Rule 11.

In his closing comments, thanking the Mayor for his running of the meeting, the Leader advised the Council of the Roadshow that would be arriving in the Borough to publicise the use of the Covid- 19 App.

Signed at a meeting of the Policy Coucil
on Thursday, 3rd December 2020

(being the ensuing meeting of the Council) by

MAYOR

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

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

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

MEETING: **POLICY COUNCIL**

DATE: **3rd DECEMBER 2020**

AGENDA ITEM NO.:

DESCRIPTION (BRIEF):

NATURE OF INTEREST:

DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY/OTHER (delete as appropriate)

SIGNED :

PRINT NAME:

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



REPORT OF:	LEADER
TO:	POLICY COUNCIL
ON:	3rd DECEMBER 2020

2020 LOCAL AND NATIONAL REFLECTION; 2021 - FUTURE PRIORITIES

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To outline key national and local policy challenges and proposals in relation to Local Government; reflect on the Council's performance over the last 12 months; and look ahead to the next 12 months.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy Council is invited to:

- i. Note the content of the report
- ii. Note the overall performance of the Borough against its outcome measures
- iii. Note the overall performance of the Council against its own strategic objectives

3. NATIONAL REFLECTION

Coronavirus has clearly dominated national policy throughout 2020 and the Council's focus has been on the response to Covid-19. There are however a number of other key policy areas of national interest.

Budget 2020

In March 2020, the Chancellor announced the 2020 Budget. This included initial funding for the Covid-19 response for councils, businesses and individuals. A refreshed Affordable Homes Programme was launched, as well as announcements for comprehensive reforms to bring the planning system into the 21st century with a Planning White Paper in the spring. Commitments were also made to improve waste management, boosting recycling and reducing plastic pollution. Rollout of a fast-charging network for electric vehicles was also announced, alongside rollout of gigabit-capable broadband.

Structural reform and devolution

The English Devolution White Paper expected in summer 2020, has been delayed further, and we now anticipate it to be published in early 2021. The White Paper is expected to provide clarity on Local Government Reorganisation, Combined Authority and devolution. Mayoral areas with devolution deals are already demonstrating the significant benefits of bringing power and investment decisions closer to local communities and economies – even more so as areas respond to Covid-19. In October, the Secretary of State invited three areas to come forward with proposals to form new Unitary Authorities. This unfortunately did not include Pennine Lancashire or the wider Lancashire area, despite our request for an invitation in October 2019.

Reorganisation is still a priority for Blackburn with Darwen and we will continue to press the Government for an invitation to develop proposals.

Exit from the European Union

The UK left the EU on 31 January 2020. We are in the transition period and the future relationship between the UK and the EU is still under negotiation. From 1 January 2021, there will be new rules for businesses and citizens. At the time of writing, no final deal has been achieved between the UK and EU towards the future trading relationship between the two. Until negotiations between the two parties have been concluded, the potential future impact of Brexit on the local economy or on the operations of the local authority will remain unknown. However, the Local Authority has supported national efforts to inform local business on how best prepare for the UK final departure from the institutions of the EU including the Customs Union.

COVID-19 - Tackling inequalities for UK health and productivity

The Northern Health Science Alliance commissioned a report to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on health and productivity in the Northern Powerhouse and to explore the opportunities for 'levelling up' regional health and productivity. The productivity and health gap that exists between the Northern Powerhouse and the rest of England is well documented. The productivity gap stands at £4 per person per hour and average life expectancy is two years lower in the North. The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed this regional context.

The key findings from the report show that an extra 12.4 more people per 100,000 died in the Northern Powerhouse than the rest of England due to COVID-19 and that an extra 57.7 more people per 100,000 died in the Northern Powerhouse than the rest of England due to all-causes. The extra 57.7 deaths per 100,000 could cost the UK economy an additional £6.8bn in lost productivity. Whilst reductions in mental wellbeing could cost the economy £5bn in reduced productivity. Research has found that unemployment rates, mental and financial wellbeing as well as other economic outcomes have been hardest hit in the Northern Powerhouse. In addition to the impact on adults, pre-pandemic child health in the Northern Powerhouse was poor and this has been exacerbated by adverse trends in poverty, education, employment and mental health.

The Northern Health Science Alliance is advising central government to pay particular attention to the importance of supporting the physical and mental health and development of the Northern Powerhouse as a route to increased prosperity via a COVID-19 recovery strategy that prioritises families with children.

4. LOCAL DELIVERY

Our existing Corporate Plan priorities still stand, providing the framework for our response to Covid-19 and our continuing council services. They are: People – a good quality of life for all our residents; Place – community pride in a vibrant place to live and visit; Economy – a strong and inclusive economy with continued growth; and Council – a strong and resilient council.

At Council Forum in July we provided a comprehensive report on our initial response to the pandemic including setting up the Help Hub and food distribution centre; redeploying staff to support essential services; moving our sports and cultural offer on line; distributing PPE; processing business grants at pace. Some services were paused initially and restarted as restrictions lifted. We have faced significant challenges, as other areas have. Restrictions in Blackburn with Darwen have been in place longer than any other area and our business and communities are severely impacted. Council Forum in October also received updates on our on-going response.

As reported at Executive Board on 12th November 2020, Covid-19 has created a significant shock to the national and local economy, and resulted in significant, unplanned expenditure and income losses for the Council. We will continue to monitor costs associated the pandemic and other emerging budget pressures.

Covid-19 has affected all of our lives and entwined with all of our council services in some way. Our services remain flexible to adapt to changes in restrictions, legislation and service reconfiguration.

Below reflects on some of our activity over the last 12 months whilst recognising the impact of Covid-19 on council services. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list. Highlights of all council activity are published frequently through our on-line news outlet – The Shuttle.

REFLECTION : THE LAST 12 MONTHS

PEOPLE: A good quality of life for all of our residents

1. Supporting young people and raising aspirations
2. Safeguarding and supporting the most vulnerable people
3. Reducing health inequalities and improving health outcomes

Our schools have been open throughout the pandemic for vulnerable children and children of essential workers. From September 2020, all pupils were welcomed back. We have continued to support our schools throughout this period and established the Education Response Team providing dedicated support to school staff. The team offer advice and guidance, whilst linking with DfE and PHE.

This year we celebrated our Children's Literature Festival on-line in September. The sessions have been streamed live from Blackburn Library into the Borough's primary schools via Microsoft Teams. We also hosted an event on the Saturday, which enabled families to view a range of performances, including storytelling, author chats, and poetry, rap and illustrator sessions.

In line with national guidance, we restricted visitors to our care homes. This has been a very difficult time for those with loved ones in care homes and as well as for care home residents and staff. Our care homes have responded positively and introduced virtual contact between residents and their families.

Our Transforming Lives programme continues. Social isolation, mental health and parenting ability continue to be the top three identified needs. Due to Covid-19 and lockdown, referrals from Social Work Teams were routed directly through to the Help Hub for support. Transforming Lives partnership panel meetings were on hold from the outbreak of Covid-19 as staffing resources were re-directed to the development and staffing of the Help Hub. New ways of engaging and supporting people have been developed over recent months (mainly online through groups) and numbers have now started to increase.

Throughout the pandemic social work staff and our support service staff have maintained direct face-to-face visits for those families most at risk. Our Engage team have also used other ways to maintain contact with children and families such as virtual visits, garden visits, face time as well as activities such as football, bike rides and walks. The children have responded really well to the support offered and we continue to see positive outcomes achieved.

The Childhood Obesity Trailblazer programme continues at pace, the Food Resilience Alliance has political leadership driving the agenda forwards and

	<p>we are looking at the refresh of the Local Authorities Healthy Weight Declaration. A comprehensive life course consultation and engagement exercise around food, physical activity and healthy weight will take place in the New Year. There is the new 'BwD Stride and Ride' project group focussing on active travel and supporting school streets.</p> <p>Our Holiday Activity and Food programme took place over the summer, led by a consortium of partners including the Council. We know that there is more work to do to ensure child poverty doesn't blight the futures of children and young people in our Borough, and that is why we will continue to work with partners to focus our efforts to tackle child poverty and holiday hunger over the coming months, including the government's new Holiday Hunger scheme.</p> <p>Over the last 9 months encouraging people to be and stay active, wherever possible has been more important than ever for us all. Sport England funding has supported the Active BwD network to continue to connect with local organisations, communities and individuals to work together through these challenging times. Over £76,000 of Sport England funding has been committed since March, to test different ways of supporting local people and reducing activity inequalities. Pilot approaches have been influenced by the restrictions we have experienced. These include, learning how effective online and digital support programmes are for people who are currently inactive, suffer from poor mental wellbeing and who feel they are not able to enter a face-to-face gym environment. We have also launched the new Explore BwD walking App, which can be downloaded. This interactive approach helps people to find new places to walk in and around Blackburn with Darwen, and also to create personal favourite routes.</p> <p>In September, we held our Adult Learner Awards virtually with the majority of our winners joining us on-line. There were 12 awards across all curriculum areas. All of the learners have demonstrated great resilience, commitment and dedication to progress and improve their lives whilst keeping in touch on-line.</p> <p>The Albion Mill development was significantly impacted by Covid restrictions, which subsequently delayed the completion and handover of the building. This is now due to take place by the end of the November with services mobilised and commencing in the new year.</p>
<p>PLACE: Community pride in a vibrant place to live and visit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Connected communities 5. Safe and clean environment 	<p>This year we saw our communities come together and support each other as collectively we responded to the Covid-19 pandemic. Through our status as an Integration Area, we took part in a national research study 'Beyond Us & Them', conducted in partnership with the University of Kent. Researchers wanted to understand how Covid-19 is affecting feelings of togetherness and social cohesion. The findings showed that areas that have invested in programmes to support social integration and cohesion, like we have, are doing better in terms of relationships between people from different communities at this stage of the pandemic. Residents are twice as likely to volunteer to help others and people reported higher levels of trust and social connection.</p> <p>In summer, we brought our recycled waste collection back in-house with staff transferring from Biffa into the Council and from August changed our</p>

separated recycled waste collections. 60,000 new blue bins and reusable bags were delivered across the borough to help improve recycling rates as well as saving approximately £80,000 per month. This significant change was implemented during difficult circumstances with the Covid 19 pandemic affecting lead in times for the delivery of new bins and sacks. Prior to starting the new system, all households received three separate notifications about the bin changes, with additional advertising on our social media platforms.

Covid-19 has clearly had a significant impact on our cultural offer and many of our planned events and festivals for 2020, have sadly been cancelled. However, we have been creative in our celebrations, holding award ceremonies virtually, socially distanced street parties for VE day and most recently the stunning light display on Blackburn Town Hall as part of our Remembrance commemorations.

We have also been pleased to hold our first drive-in movie screening at Witton Park in July and again at the end of October.

At the end of September 1,789 residents were signed up to support Council services. However, volunteering activity has been limited due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the closure of Libraries, Children Centres and Community Centres. To support our response to the pandemic 58 Telephone befrienders have supported 61 residents with weekly wellbeing calls and a further 113 volunteers have been on hand to support food delivery and prescription collection.

Our Libraries, cultural and heritage services have supported the local covid-19 response in a number of different ways to keep people and communities connected. Throughout the lockdown, we continued home deliveries to our most vulnerable customers and operating a click-and-collect service to all users. This has led to an increase in uptake of our e-reading with 65% increase in registration; 82% increase in e-book loans and a 68% increase in e-magazines.

Our Arts and Museums service also moved online, including our Paint the Town programme, which had 40 entrants; and a series of artist and writer residencies focussed on artists living and working in their own community. The Kick Down the Barriers exhibition at Blackburn Museum was launched in September with a two month long exhibition showcasing the work of local artists that have been working in the communities of Blackburn to redefine the labels of 'segregation' and 'division'. Unfortunately, the second national lockdown paused the exhibition but we are pleased to be able to extend the exhibition into January.

The Bureau and Festival of Light set up their work and workshops online as did the Friends of the Museum who have done a weekly zoom talk since March. The exhibition programme also went online and opened physically in July, all Turton Tower content is virtual.

We have also delivered phase 1 of the Witton Park to Blackburn Town Centre "Stride and Ride Corridor" providing a permanent safe walking/cycling route from the park to the town. The project, funded by the first tranche of the Department for Transport's Emergency Active Travel Fund, aims to build on our residents' desire to get out in the Borough to

	<p>walk and cycle in order to make sustainable transport journeys as part of healthier lifestyles. It will encourage and promote safer walking and cycling for the last 2 miles of the daily commute for students and workers through a mix of permanent cycle lanes, thermoplastic signage, and the use of bolt down separation. The Council has worked with schools along the corridor and Blackburn College to promote the scheme, which gives a great opportunity to encourage safer walking and cycling, reduce traffic and increase road safety.</p>
<p>ECONOMY: A strong and inclusive economy with continued growth</p> <p>6. Strong, growing economy to enable social mobility</p> <p>7. Supporting our town centres and businesses</p>	<p>In July, we were pleased that the Darwen Town Deal was awarded £750,000 for 'quick win' projects to help accelerate regeneration schemes in the town. The Darwen Town Deal Board is developing the business case needed for the Town Deal; early ideas for projects include restoring Darwen Tower and investing in the facilities at Darwen Football club, as well as developing Junction 4 skate park for the town's young people.</p> <p>Our Adult Learning programmes have continued offering virtual courses and face-to-face in our covid-secure centres. Thanks to Tesco Mobile, we have also been able to offer a free SIM card to those who want to join our online courses but do not have sufficient data.</p> <p>Construction works to the final Local Growth Fund 3 scheme at South East Blackburn recommenced in July, work had been paused due to the national lockdown. The widening of Haslingden Road is advancing on the section between Lions Drive and Shadsworth Road with works so far focussing on utility diversions and excavations, which will enable the construction of the widened carriageway. Hospital Barn buildings at Old Bank Lane have been demolished to enable the construction of the new Royal Blackburn Hospital roundabout entrance, with the boundary stone wall now removed. The line of the new link road between Roman Road and Guide is also now visible, with drainage and swale construction works progressing well. The project will improve congestion, improve air quality and pedestrian facilities, and enable further development of employment and housing opportunities in the South East Blackburn area.</p> <p>The opening of Carl Fogarty Way last year has delivered the final phase of the Furthergate and Burnley Road Link Road project. The scheme will unlock land to enable the future development of new employment opportunities identified within the Council's adopted Local Plan and will improve access to and from the Town Centre and M65 Junction 6. Traffic conditions will change on Burnley Road and conditions have been improved. It is now quieter for residents, with associated improvements experienced for road safety, congestion and air quality.</p> <p>The North Blackburn scheme substantially completed in March 2020. Junctions at Brownhill Roundabout, Pleckgate Road, Whalley Old Road, and Emerald Avenue all upgraded with the latest signals technology, which has significantly increased highways capacity and has improved associated road safety for pedestrians and cyclists. The scheme supports adjacent housing development in the North Blackburn area.</p> <p>The Victoria Street / Northgate Link Road scheme substantially completed in October 2020. This includes better accessibility to local businesses, more on-street parking, public realm works at Blakey Moor and improved conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.</p>

	<p>Our Hive network has kept businesses informed on Covid-19 guidance and business support measures and, whilst unfortunately the Hive awards this year have been cancelled, we have recorded a short video recognising the local businesses who have gone 'above and beyond' at a time of national crisis.</p>
<p>COUNCIL: Delivered by a strong and resilient council</p> <p>8. Transparent and effective organisation</p>	<p>This year has undoubtedly seen one of the fastest transitions to on-line and virtual services across the public sector. Overall we have seen a 70% increase in contact, across all channels, compared to 2019. In particular, we have seen an increase in demand for online Chat services. In April, we launched our customer portal, which has received 45,000 service requests and has over 20,000 registered users.</p> <p>Hundreds of residents have signed up to be part of our new Customer Panel in 2020, which will help us to design and tailor our online services going forward.</p> <p>We have increased resilience for services in 2020 by providing enhanced IT connections and capacity, enabling our staff to work anywhere. This has resulted in over 70% of council staff connected remotely at any one time during the pandemic and enabled services like contact tracing and the help hub to operate in any location. The introduction of Microsoft 365 and Teams has enabled over 400 virtual meetings per day for staff, reducing travel, saving time and money as well as contributing to our carbon efficiency targets. The use of Microsoft Teams in particular has enabled rapid collaboration between our own teams and with our partners, throughout the pandemic.</p> <p>During 2020, we have developed an online business intelligence platform. This has enabled us to provide a live Covid-19 dashboard to officers and elected members, which we have adapted through the different phases of government interventions. Internally, we have also started to develop dashboards to give us deeper insights into areas such as workforce and customer contact channels.</p> <p>We have a dedicated Covid-19 section on our website providing a range of information including support available to businesses, Help Hub, local data and details on local restrictions. We have seen a 50% increase of traffic across the whole website based on the same period last year.</p> <p>Our commitment to apprenticeships continues and this year we had our highest number of applicants yet at 291. We sent out a stage one assessment to which we received 181 returns and all were invited for interview. We have successfully recruited 21 new apprentices across a range of council services to join our existing cohort of second year apprentices.</p> <p>This year we have seen a reduction in our carbon emissions, largely as a consequence of building closures and service reductions. Some sites have however increased energy consumption, often due to extended operating hours or covid-19 compliant ventilation requirements.</p>

5. MANAGING OUR PERFORMANCE

There are 73 measures within the Corporate performance framework linked to the Council's eight strategic priorities. Appended to the report are the performance measures for the period April to September 2020 and an exception report for measures that are considered to be under performing.

Since early March, the Council has been responding to the emergencies of the Coronavirus pandemic. Therefore, in some instances we have not been able to report data for all of the 73 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Our response to the pandemic has had a profound effect on our council finances and is reflected across Local Government throughout the country.

Despite persistent financial challenges the Council has responded quickly and successfully to put in place, all of the new measures and guidance expected by the Government and in particular to support our most vulnerable residents. This is testament to the fantastic efforts of our workforce. As of November 13th, we have received 54 compliments during the covid-19 lockdown period complementing our services and efforts during this crises.

Our staff have worked tirelessly over the wide range of services in response to Covid-19. Including:

- Our Help Hub has supported 3,937 vulnerable people
- We have had 124,757 online customer transactions and forms completed, with 104,015 Social Media link clicks.
- The local authority has issued c.£43.5m in business grants. We also host regular online local business support sessions and facilitate sessions with council officers, lenders and local business experts.

Each portfolio has allocated a red, amber or green forecast to the measures that they own. Information for the period is as follows:

- 3% (2 actual) have been forecast as “red” where performance is, or is likely to be off track. Further detail is provided in appendix 2.
- 25% (18 actual) have been forecast “amber” where delivery is on track and currently being managed.
- 52% (38 actual) have been forecast “green” or on track.
- 20% (15 actual) these measures have not been RAG rated as data is unavailable this may be due to services being closed or paused due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The State of the Borough dashboard provides a general snap shot of how the borough performs on each of the corporate plan strategic themes; Place, People, Economy and provide some basic population data. A copy of the dashboard is available on the Council website <https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/pdfs/Borough-outcome-measures.pdf>.

A number of the indicators presented provide data for over a twelve-month period, so many of the recent challenges facing the borough as a result of the covid-19 pandemic will not be clearly seen. However, they still do provide a summary of the boroughs' key characteristics.

Economic activity of residents remains below regional and national averages, as does the employment rate, although the gap between regional and national averages has narrowed in recent years. Productivity, as measured by Gross Value Added per hour worked, is the lowest of

the local authorities in the Lancashire LEP area. However, the borough is home to around 10% of the employee jobs in the Lancashire LEP area and contributes 9.2% of the enterprises in Lancashire LEP.

Over the last twelve months the loss of residents due to people moving out of the borough to other areas in the UK has reduced, which is reflected in a modest increase in overall population. The number of properties in the borough has increased over the last 12 months and 37% of new homes built in 2019/20 were on brownfield land. Overall, average house prices in the borough have remained relatively stable with a slight increase in the number of homes sold in the 2019/2020 financial year, compared to the previous year. However, data for the current financial year to date does reflect a depressed housing market due to the impact of covid-19.

Recorded crime data for the twelve month period to June 2020 does include a proportion of time impacted by covid-19. Overall there had been a -12% decrease in recorded crime compared to the previous year (-16% in Lancashire as a whole).

Life expectancy of residents remains lower than regional and national averages and the borough has some of the highest levels of five year olds having had teeth extracted due to dental decay. School performance in the borough remains mixed, with some schools performing consistently above national averages. Due to the covid-19 pandemic, data for the 2019/20 academic year will not be released.

6. EQUALITY

Under the Equality Act 2010, we are bound by the Public Sector Equality Duty to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into our day-to-day business. Since the COVID-19 outbreak we have had to make significant changes to the way we deliver our services and this has had an impact on our residents and workforce.

An equality impact assessment (EIA) has been undertaken to capture the impact of the pandemic on our residents and staff and the actions we have undertaken to mitigate these impacts where possible. The EIA is a 'live' document as the situation is changing constantly and it requires individual departments to share their actions and responses with the Policy & Research team to ensure that all activity is documented.

Understandably, the EIA identifies that there has been significant negative impact on all the protected characteristics and the additional categories of *carers* and *vulnerable groups*, which the Council includes in all EIAs. This impact ranges from disruption to day services and the impact of this on older residents' mental and physical health to an increased risk of mortality to BAME residents from contracting the virus.

In addition, the EIA has helped us to recognise that there are many residents who fall into multiple protected characteristic categories and the cumulative impact this has had on them. As we continue our response to the challenges the pandemic is creating, the EIA is a helpful tool to both identify and implement mitigating actions for our residents and staff. We are working closely with our Lancashire Resilience Forum partners to share learning and good practice across the equality agenda.

7. NEXT 12 MONTHS FOR THE COUNCIL

Covid-19 continued response

Covid-19 will continue to be a significant focus for the Council over the next 12 months. Whilst we welcome news of progress towards a vaccine, we recognise that coronavirus will be part of life for the foreseeable future. We are in a strong position to continue our response. Our services are already well adapted, our workforce is flexible and our partnerships are strong.

Our business plans and performance framework is in place to keep us on track, we have strong governance with democratic oversight of our response, and we have a number of covid-specific strategies to support our response. Our Covid Core Team reports directly to the Chief Executive, co-ordinating our response. Our bespoke Covid Response Plan is underpinned by:

- Local Outbreak Management Plan: This plan guides our response to local outbreaks based on seven themes – planning for local outbreaks in care homes and schools; identifying and planning how to manage other high-risk places; methods for local testing; contact tracing; integrating national and local data; supporting vulnerable people to self-isolate; establishing governance. We have established a Blackburn with Darwen Covid-19 Health Protection Board to oversee management of local outbreaks.
- Covid Test and Trace Strategy: Our strategy is based around three core principles – containing outbreaks through testing and the use of data; accessible local testing; functioning local trace system.
- Covid Enforcement Strategy: Our strategy is based around three core principles – prevention and engagement; use of intelligence; enforcement action.
- Covid Communications and Community Engagement Strategy: Our strategy is based around three core principles – how we are communicating; local engagement; targeted community engagement.
- Covid Workplace Well-being Strategy: Our strategy is based around three main principles – improved employee morale and engagement; a healthier and more inclusive workforce and culture; lower sickness absence.

Financial position

We have continued to work hard over the period to process and administer a range of financial support packages for businesses and residents across the borough:

- We have distributed over £42million in Business Rate and Discretionary Grants to businesses, through the first tranche of Business Rate grants introduced by government in April. We are now working on the distribution of the second tranche of these grants following the implementation of our Tier 3 local restrictions and more latterly, the second national lockdown.
- Following the council's role as a pilot site, we are now delivering the government's Test and Trace Support Payment scheme to help people on low incomes to self-isolate when they test positive or are identified as a Covid-19 contact, and to encourage more people to be tested. This is intended to reduce the transmission of the virus. Individuals who need to self-isolate, and who meet the benefits-related eligibility criteria, are entitled to a £500 payment.
- We have also continued to award the government's Hardship Fund by reducing the Council Tax bill by £150 for all individuals of working age who are in receipt of Council Tax Support.

- We continue to prioritise the processing of supplier invoices and provide daily supplier payment runs, as required, to ensure we get cash out as quickly as possible to all of our suppliers, particularly those in the care sector. Payment schedules have increased in terms of frequency to aid cash flow and facilitate payment in advance or immediate payment for some services.

We are facing significant financial pressures from the increased costs and losses of income due to the pandemic. Some of the additional financial pressures we are currently forecasting for the year, as reported in our latest monthly Covid-19 financial return to MHCLG, include:

- £7.252 million on Adult Social Care including the costs of PPE, the costs of setting up the food hub and associated costs to distribute food to shielded and vulnerable groups, providing support to the social care market and meeting the additional demand pressures arising due to Covid-19.
- £0.842 million on Children's Social Care, including the additional costs of care packages for extended placements due to the pandemic
- £1.367 million on testing, contract tracing and outbreak management
- £10.113 million in respect of the loss of sales, fees, charges and commercial income.

Work to collate both the actual costs incurred and the income lost due to Covid-19 has continued throughout the year, and we will continue to review and refine the assumptions on which the forecasts are based over the remainder of the financial year. The Revenue Monitoring Report approved by the Executive Board on 12th November 2020, noted a gross forecast overspend of £19.241 million for the year across all the portfolios due to the financial impact of Covid-19; this figure excluded the losses from Council Tax and Business Rates, which are currently forecast at £1.37 million and £7.925 million respectively.

The Government has provided several funding packages for local government over the course of the last 8 months. These have assisted in addressing the budget pressures noted above, and other specific costs incurred in responding to the crisis. To date we have received £15.03 million in general Covid-19 Grant funding.

Further financial support is to be made available to assist in meeting a proportion of the losses in respect of Sales, Fees and Charges based on a set of eligibility criteria issued by MHCLG. The first of these claims was completed at the end of September. Based on the work undertaken to forecast the total eligible losses under this scheme, we estimate that we should receive £5.75 million for the year. In respect of losses on Council Tax and Business Rates, the government has also passed legislation to provide for their recovery over a period of 3 years from 1st April 2021.

The size of the net 2020/21 forecast overspend due to Covid-19 has decreased significantly over the course of the financial year as the government has fed through various tranches of financial support to assist. We are however, very much mindful that our forecasts and assumptions are based on the information available at the current time; these may well change over the remainder of the year, dependant on the impact of the 2nd wave of the pandemic, the demand pressures over the course of the winter and given the possibility of a 3rd wave.

At the time of writing, we are awaiting the delivery of the Chancellor's Spending Review on 25th November. Unfortunately, due to the pressures of Covid-19, this will again only provide for a one-year settlement and will therefore frustrate and hinder our work to build our financial plans over the medium to longer term, but we will update further on this at Finance Council on 1st March 2021.

LOOKING FORWARD : THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

PEOPLE: A good quality of life for all of our residents

1. Supporting young people and raising aspirations
2. Safeguarding and supporting the most vulnerable people
3. Reducing health inequalities and improving health outcomes

We are anticipating rollout of the Covid-19 vaccination programme from December for our NHS front line workers and care settings, with mass vaccination to follow. We will be working with NHS colleagues and the LRF on delivery through a dedicated site and also mobile for those residents who need to be vaccinated in their own homes.

Over the next 12 months, we will develop a Leaving Care Strategy to reflect the wishes of care leavers and outline the offer for care leaver's post 18. We will also be refreshing the Corporate Parenting Strategy to reflect the wishes and feelings of children in care and continue to strengthen the work of the multi-agency Corporate Parenting Executive Board to raise awareness of need.

We will be undertaking work to further understand the impact of neglect and prevalence within the borough, and ensure that it is recognised early and effectively responded to in all areas of practice. We will be embedding the multi-agency approach to neglect and understanding of the Neglect Strategy and Action Plan through further engagement and training with staff and partners.

With key partners, we are establishing an Adolescent Panel to ensure that young people get the support they need as soon as possible. We will be developing an Adolescent Framework focussing on the needs and vulnerability of young people at risk of contextual and complex safeguarding.

It is crucial that all of our children have access to good quality and consistent education, even more so given the significant impact Covid-19 has had on schools and pupils. We are working with partners to embed the School Improvement Strategy providing proportionate, timely and additional support where risk factors are identified. This includes continuing to address challenges with lower performing schools; improving attainment and progress in Reading in vulnerable schools and identified schools in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2; and ensuring that the needs of SEND pupils are being fully met in each school with a curriculum that is challenging and ambitious for these children.

Executive Board in November agreed the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2020-25 that details how we will tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the next five years. The strategy is designed to help the Council and its partners to achieve aims that cross boundaries and address issues of health, social care and community safety. We will work with partners to deliver the objectives – prevention and relief of homelessness; limiting the use of B&B and increasing the provision of suitable temporary accommodation; tackling and reducing the levels of rough sleeping; addressing the over-supply of HMOs.

Our commissioning of prevention services is continuing with integrated sexual health service retender in March 2021 and the mobilisation of a new contract. We will continue to review and monitor all of our commissioned public health services.

We will continue to develop our mental wellbeing programme, including employee mental health and wellbeing; refresh our suicide prevention strategy and lead on implementing the local action plan. We will also be developing a strategic plan for child poverty with input for stakeholders

	<p>We will continue to work in collaboration and in partnership with our communities within the provider sector, voluntary community and faith sector and with NHS partners to transform and deliver the best services possible for our communities. We will continue to promote strength and asset based working, developing our volunteer offer, building community capacity and resilience.</p> <p>We will deliver early intervention and preventative services to support communities stay safe and well by building on the momentum of integrated teams and the Help Hub and linking to our vision for Primary Care Neighbourhoods and improving health and wellbeing. We will particularly be concentrating on the intermediate tier and social prescribing.</p> <p>We will continue to work in partnerships to protect our communities, particularly the most vulnerable by tackling crime, homelessness, mental ill health and multiple health conditions. We will take a place based and population health approach to providing joined up solutions with partners around the person.</p> <p>A core function of the Adults portfolio is to work with communities who face multiple disadvantage to improve work prospects and wellbeing. The impact of Covid has disproportionately affected our most disadvantaged.</p>
<p>PLACE: Community pride in a vibrant place to live and visit</p> <p>4. Connected communities</p> <p>5. Safe and clean environment</p>	<p>Our cultural offer has always been a key part of connecting our communities and we hope to welcome back those festivals and events that we have unfortunately had to cancel this year. We have already a range of shows and events scheduled at King George's Hall and Darwen Library Theatre next year and hope these are able to go ahead.</p> <p>We hope to welcome back some of our fantastic festivals and events throughout 2021, in particular the Festival of Making, British Textile Biennial Festival, Darwen Music Live.</p> <p>The council will continue to work with partners to promote cohesion and social integration and we will continue to campaign and influence national policies to address issues of hate, domestic violence and extremism.</p> <p>The Walking and Cycling Project team are on a mission to make walking and cycling the first and easiest choice of travel for short trips across the region. Covid-19 has certainly raised the profile of active travel and how that agenda links into our Public Health and climate change targets. Within our transport planning we are looking at a greater emphasis on walking and cycling accessibility improvements and putting a greater emphasis when we are negotiating our s106 developer contributions. With increased demand for walking and cycling, both for recreation and travel to work activities, we are looking at capacity for cycling on major routes and will deliver infrastructure changes through the DfT active travel funding.</p> <p>The highways service place great emphasis on the carbon footprint of their operations and consider low carbon solutions within their road improvement programme. Through surface dressing, spray injection patching and use of low temperature tarmacs the carbon footprint can be reduced whilst still delivering on the improvements required on the road network.</p>

	<p>Over the next 12 months, we will aim to increase recycling rates by 4%, plus aim to reduce from the previous year, the amount of waste disposed of at landfill and more by energy from waste treatment. We will do this via a communications campaign and management of contamination in the recycling bins.</p> <p>We will review and revise the enforcement and regulatory operations we conduct, with the Covid 19 pandemic seeing the introduction of new legislation that takes precedent within our priorities in addition to a the review of other enforcement and regulatory activities. It is crucial that we do not overstretch the work we are statutorily obliged to undertake, without having due regard to the Council priorities and the capacity of the regulatory and enforcement services themselves.</p>
<p>ECONOMY: A strong and inclusive economy with continued growth</p> <p>6. Strong, growing economy to enable social mobility</p> <p>7. Supporting our town centres and businesses</p>	<p>We recognise that local businesses, workers, self-employed are significantly affected by Covid-19 both by the forced closure of businesses due to restrictions and reduced demand for those that have been able to remain open. Economic recovery will be difficult nationally and we will continue to lobby the Government to ensure Blackburn with Darwen businesses have access to the right funds when needed, and to promote future growth.</p> <p>In September, Executive Board agreed the Growth Programme for 2021, including feasibility, planning and delivery of housing, employment and strategic sites. A re-occupation of empty homes continues to be one of our priorities.</p> <p>Over the next 12 months, we will complete our Growth Deal 3 major transport schemes, with South East Blackburn completing in summer 2021. There will also be development related transport infrastructure schemes including North Blackburn and West Blackburn highways improvements. The Local Transport Plan also highlights a number of small to medium transport projects including walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure, in addition to capital maintenance schemes for highways and surfacing and structures.</p> <p>Our Darwen Town Deal Board has re-grouped and is making good progressing in developing our proposal, incorporating ideas and views from local residents and businesses. We expect to submit this in January with up to £25m available to help kick-start the transformation of Darwen.</p> <p>In December, we are asking Executive Board to approve the draft new Local Plan which will then be available for public consultation from 8th January – 19th February 2021. We are obviously developing solutions for a covid-secure consultation. The Local Plan affects everyone who lives or works in the borough, and there will be a significant amount of communications from December onwards. The Local Plan will illustrate many benefits in terms of job growth, housing growth and environmental improvements.</p> <p>Our Blackburn with Darwen Employment and Skills Board have identified three main areas of concern as we respond to the long-term challenges and economic recovery of Covid-19. These are youth unemployment (16-24); the transition of older employees or recently redundant employees to emerging employment opportunities, specifically the over 50s; and the need for locally led opportunities to help our residents gain the required skills to successfully find work post pandemic.</p>

	<p>We will continue to engage with the LEP and Lancashire colleagues as we plan our collective economic recovery. Senior officers are engaged in the Lancashire Economic Development Group to take work forward.</p>
<p>COUNCIL: Delivered by a strong and resilient council</p> <p>8. Transparent and effective organisation</p>	<p>The census for England and Wales will take place on 21st March 2021 and in light of Covid-19, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) have refined their planning to ensure that everyone can provide their information safely and securely. Our data is regularly updated to ensure that any new addresses in the borough will receive a census questionnaire. We will work with the Census Engagement Manager to identify groups or communities that may need additional support in completing the census. Our libraries service will also deliver a census support service to help those who need additional support to get online to complete their census digitally.</p> <p>Our workforce have worked incredibly hard over the last nine months and we will continue to ensure we respond to any workforce implications of covid-19. It is crucial that all of our employees are able to work and feel safe in a covid-secure environment, we will continue to update our advice and guidance to all settings on workforce, and health and safety related issues. As services respond to the introduction and lifting of restrictions, our workforce will remain, flexible and adaptable so that we can provide appropriately experienced and skills employees to support the Council's response to Covid-19, including mutual aid support through the LRF. In order to do this, we need to increase resilience and wellbeing in the workplace and reduce sickness absence.</p> <p>We are starting a programme of transformation and savings with a turnaround team set up to redesign processes to unlock further efficiencies, increase online customer journeys as well as leveraging advanced technologies in the Care sector.</p>

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional policy implications. The proposed activity over the next 12 months will strengthen existing policies.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional financial implications. Activity will be managed within department existing budgets.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications.

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional resource implications. Activity will be managed within existing resources.

11.EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment for this Policy Council report is not necessary.

Please see the information within the report regarding the Equality Impact Assessment for our response to Covid-19.

12. CONSULTATIONS

There are no consultations.

Chief Officer

Contact Officer: Denise Park, Chief Executive
Date: 24/11/2020

**Appendix One: Corporate Plan 2020/2021:
Performance Report for half year (1st April 2020 – 30th September 2020)**

	Priority	Performance measure	Portfolio	Department	Good performance is	Baseline	20/21 target	Half year performance and rating (Q1 & Q2 – April to September 20)
P E O P L E	P1 – Supporting young people and raising aspirations	1. % of children and young people in care performing at nationally expected levels: a) At the end of primary school	Children's, Young People & Education Cllr Julie Gunn	Children's Services & Education	Higher	2018/19 CIOC 12 months+ 40% Achieved expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths	% CIOC achieving the expected standards in KS2 Reading, Writing and Maths (target to be reviewed annually)	40% in 2018/19 academic year *There were no end of Key Stage 2 tests for CIOC in 2020. The target is to be reviewed annually and provisional results are expected in September 2021. (GREEN)
		2. % of children and young people in care performing at nationally expected levels: b) At the end of secondary school	Children's, Young People & Education Cllr Julie Gunn	Children's Services & Education	Higher	2017/18 CIOC 12 months + 10.5% 5+ English / Maths	% CIOC achieving GCSE English and Maths combined at 4+ and 5+ (target to be reviewed annually)	CIOC 5+ English/Maths 26% in 2018/19 CIOC 4+ English/Maths 35% in 2018/19 (see *text for data exceptions) *2020/21 KS4 results were impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Schools were not required to publish their results therefore there is no national comparative data for CIOC for 2019/2020. The target is to be reviewed annually and provisional results are expected in September 2021. (GREEN)
		3. % increase in uptake of the two years old offer by eligible children	Children's, Young People & Education Cllr Julie Gunn	Children's Services & Education	Higher	58% (2018/19)	3% increase on 2019/2020	67% take up - Q1 Spring Term 59% take up - Q2 Summer Term (AMBER)
		4. Personal Education Plans for cared for children a) % of children & young people with plans in place	Children's, Young People & Education Cllr Julie Gunn	Children's Services & Education	Higher	84% (2018/19)	95%	90% in Q2 (2019/20 academic year) (AMBER)
		5. Personal Education Plans (PEP) for cared for children b) % of audited plans rated as Good or Outstanding	Children's, Young People & Education Cllr Julie Gunn	Children's Services & Education	Higher	46% (2018/19)	55%	72% Autumn and Spring Term *The average for Autumn and Spring term at Good or better was 72% however this figure should be treated with caution as is likely higher than it would have been had a higher number been audited. It is important to note that all PEPS have had an initial QA and compliance check even though there has been less detailed auditing. (AMBER)
		6. Council Apprenticeship start-ups	Finance & Governance Cllr Vicky McGurk	HR, Legal & Governance	Higher	New measure 2019/2020	20 apprentices	20 apprentices recruited (GREEN)

	Priority	Performance measure	Portfolio	Department	Good performance is	Baseline	20/21 target	Half year performance and rating (Q1 & Q2 – April to September 20)
Page 25	P2 – Safeguarding and supporting the most vulnerable people	7. % of Transforming Lives Cases closed with outcomes achieved	Adult Services & Prevention Cllr Mustafa Desai	Adults & Prevention	Higher	50%	56%	74% (GREEN)
		8. *NEW FOR 2020/21* % of looked after children with 3 placements or more in year	Children's, Young People & Education Cllr Julie Gunn	Children's Services & Education	Lower	13.1% (2019/20)	Achieve at or below national average for 2020/21 (10.4%)	8% (GREEN)
		9. % of children in care for 2 ½ years who have remained in the same placement for at least 2 years	Children's, Young People & Education Cllr Julie Gunn	Children's Services & Education	Higher		Achieve at or above national average for 2020/21 (69%)	65% (AMBER)
		10. % of children leaving care where a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) placement is granted.	Children's, Young People & Education Cllr Julie Gunn	Children's Services & Education	Higher	23% (2018/19)	Higher than 2019/20 (16%)	24% (GREEN)
		11. Number of children open to children's social care including; those who are Child in Need, looked after or open to child protection.	Children's, Young People & Education Cllr Julie Gunn	Children's Services & Education	Lower	1,852 (open referrals as at end March 2019)	10% reduction on 2019/20 (1,533)	1,444 open referrals as at end September 2020 (GREEN)
		12. Rate of cared for children per 10,000 compared with the regional average.	Children's, Young People & Education Cllr Julie Gunn	Children's Services & Education	Lower	105* per 10k as at 31 st March 2019 *Recalculated in October 2020	At or below the regional average (Regional average yet to be published)	102 per 10,000 head of 0 to 18 population (2019/20 Regional data has not yet been published for comparison)
		13. Rate of re-referrals into Children's Social Care	Children's, Young People & Education Cllr Julie Gunn	Children's Services & Education	Lower	17.9% (BWD 2018/19)	At or below national average (national average yet to be published)	21% (October 2019 to September 2020) (2019/20 National data has not yet been published for comparison)
		14. Increase in the number of Young Carers identified	Children's, Young People & Education Cllr Julie Gunn	Children's Services & Education	Higher	183 young people (2019/20)	200 young people	184 young carers - Q1 201 young carers - Q2 (GREEN)
		14. Percentage of commissioned residential placements for Looked After Children as a total of all Looked After Children placements.	Children's, Young People & Education Cllr Julie Gunn	Children's Services & Education		7.1% (2018/19)	Maintain	5.8% (GREEN)
	P3 – Reducing health inequalities and improving health outcomes	15. Continue to achieve over 85% of Learning Disability service users living in settled accommodation	Adult Services & Prevention Cllr Mustafa Desai	Adults & Prevention	Higher	92.3% (2019/20)	85%	91.5% (GREEN)

	Priority	Performance measure	Portfolio	Department	Good performance is	Baseline	20/21 target	Half year performance and rating (Q1 & Q2 – April to September 20)
		16. Number of those in residential care aged 65 and above to be within 5% of the 2018-19 figure.	Adult Services & Prevention Cllr Mustafa Desai	Adults & Prevention	Lower	157 (2019/20)	150	67 admissions (GREEN)
		17. Increase the number in Extra Care by 10%	Adult Services & Prevention Cllr Mustafa Desai	Adults & Prevention	Higher	120 (2019/20)	176	141 as at 30/09/2020 (GREEN)
		18. Greater than 85% of people aged 65 and over independent at home for 91 days or more following hospital discharge.	Adult Services & Prevention Cllr Mustafa Desai	Adults & Prevention	Higher	89% (2019/20)	Greater than 85%	88% year to date (GREEN)
		19. Increased number of residents referred and discussed at the integrated neighbourhood team (INTs) weekly meeting	Adult Services & Prevention Cllr Mustafa Desai	Adults & Prevention	Higher	740 (2018/19)	Target yet to be agreed	Data unavailable
		20. Ensure 90% of Mental Health Act requests are responded to within 8 hours of notification	Adult Services & Prevention Cllr Mustafa Desai	Adults & Prevention	Higher	100% (2019/20)	90%	95% (GREEN)
		22. *NEW FOR 2020/21* Where outcomes are expressed by the service user in safeguarding investigations, to ensure that 85% are fully or partially achieved.	Adult Services & Prevention Cllr Mustafa Desai	Adults & Prevention	Higher	95% (2019/20)	85%	88% (GREEN)
		23. *NEW FOR 2020/21* Number of households prevented from becoming homeless.	Adult Services & Prevention Cllr Mustafa Desai	Adults & Prevention	Higher	814	550	274 (AMBER)
		24. *NEW FOR 2020/21* Number of Domestic Abuse victims contacted for support within 48 hours.	Adult Services & Prevention Cllr Mustafa Desai	Adults & Prevention	Higher	New Measure 2020/21	95%	100% (GREEN)
		25. % of alcohol retailers compliant with licensing conditions.	Environmental Services Cllr Jim Smith	Environment & Operations	Higher	≥95%	Target yet to be agreed	Data unavailable
		26. Number of leisure attendances (including pitches)	Public Health & Wellbeing Cllr Damian Talbot	Public Health & Wellbeing	Higher	917,783	230,000	Total - 77,021 (GREEN)

	Priority	Performance measure	Portfolio	Department	Good performance is	Baseline	20/21 target	Half year performance and rating (Q1 & Q2 – April to September 20)
		27. Total number of referrals into the BwD wellbeing service	Public Health & Wellbeing Cllr Damian Talbot	Public Health & Wellbeing	Higher	2,050	825	303 (GREEN)
		28. Reduce smoking in adults	Public Health & Wellbeing Cllr Damian Talbot	Public Health & Wellbeing	Lower	16.2% (2018)	15%	15.5% (2019) (AMBER)
		29. Proportion of all in drug treatment who successfully completed treatment and did not re-present within six months.	Public Health & Wellbeing Cllr Damian Talbot	Public Health & Wellbeing	Higher	22.3%	24%	21.6% Figure is a combined total between opiate and non-opiate completions until end of Q1 2020 (AMBER)
		30. Child obesity – child measurement programme survey for both reception and year 6 children – prevalence of overweight (including obesity)	Public Health & Wellbeing Cllr Damian Talbot	Public Health & Wellbeing	Lower	Reception 23.2% Year 6 34.6% (2017/18)	Target yet to be agreed	Data unavailable Due to COVID National Child Measurement Programme, measurements for school year 2019/20 are incomplete. The next data set will be due out for 2020/21 in September/October 2021.
	P4 – Connected communities	31. Number of referrals “Stepped Down” from Social Work Teams to the Neighbourhood Service for Community Connectors and Volunteers	Adult Services & Prevention Cllr Mustafa Desai	Adults & Prevention	Higher	165 (2019/20)	200	33 Due to Covid-19 and lockdown, referrals from Social Work Teams have been directed through to the Help Hub for support. (AMBER)
		32. Number of individuals engaged in activity across the Our Community Our Future Programme	Adult Services & Prevention Cllr Mustafa Desai	Adults & Prevention	Higher	N/A	Target yet to be agreed for 20/21, subject to funding being received from MHCLG	Data unavailable
		33. Number of community groups engaged in activity across the Our Community, Our Future Programme	Adult Services & Prevention Cllr Mustafa Desai	Adults & Prevention	Higher	N/A	Target yet to be agreed	Data unavailable
		34. Number of volunteers supporting Council services	Adult Services & Prevention Cllr Mustafa Desai	Adults & Prevention	Higher	1,173 volunteers (2018/19)	2,000 volunteers	1,789 volunteers (GREEN)
		35. Number of citizens engaged through Digital Health and Care Hubs	Public Health & Wellbeing Cllr Damian Talbot	Public Health & Wellbeing	Higher	N/A	110	52 (GREEN)
		36. Number of volunteer hours supporting Culture and Leisure services delivery	Public Health & Wellbeing Cllr Damian Talbot	Public Health & Wellbeing	Higher	34,866 (2018/19)	4,475	1,790 volunteer hours Libraries: 493 Arts and Heritage: 1,062 Leisure: 235

	Priority	Performance measure	Portfolio	Department	Good performance is	Baseline	20/21 target	Half year performance and rating (Q1 & Q2 – April to September 20)
Page 28								(GREEN)
		37. Number of cultural events and activities across arts and heritage services	Public Health & Wellbeing Cllr Damian Talbot	Public Health & Wellbeing	Higher	182 (2018/19)	83 cultural events & activities	52 cultural events & activities (GREEN)
		38. *NEW FOR 2020/21* Number of digital library loans	Public Health & Wellbeing Cllr Damian Talbot	Public Health & Wellbeing	Higher	New Measure 2020/21	Target to be confirmed	There has been a significant increase in the uptake of e-reading offers: 65% increase in eBook registrations 82% increase in eBook loans 68% increase in eMagazine checkouts (GREEN)
	P5 – Safe and clean environment	39. Increase in number of your call community litter pickers	Environmental Services Cllr Jim Smith	Environment & Operations	Higher	820 volunteers	1,500 volunteers	1,579 volunteers (GREEN)
		40. Increase number of S80 prosecutions for enviro-crime offences	Environmental Services Cllr Jim Smith	Environment & Operations	Higher	28	Target to be confirmed	40 Actions (GREEN)
		41. Number of 4-hour repair/make safe following inspection of dangerous defects on the highways	Growth & Development Cllr Phil Riley	Environment & Operations	Higher	96%	98%	99.12% (GREEN)
		42. Increase the household recycling rate	Environmental Services Cllr Jim Smith	Environment & Operations	Higher	28%	32%	April - September: Data not yet available. Data for Qtr. 1 (via Environment Agency web site, Waste Data Flow): 31%. (GREEN)
		43. Reduce waste to landfill	Environmental Services Cllr Jim Smith	Environment & Operations	Lower	50%	60%	April - September: 100% diversion from landfill. (GREEN)
	P6 – Strong, growing economy to enable social mobility	44. Number of adult qualifications achieved (via the Adult Learning contract)	Adult Services & Prevention Cllr Mustafa Desai	Adults & Prevention	Higher	400 (2018/19)	400	282 (2019/20 period - the Adult Learning contract runs from August to July each year) (AMBER)

	Priority	Performance measure	Portfolio	Department	Good performance is	Baseline	20/21 target	Half year performance and rating (Q1 & Q2 – April to September 20)
E C O N O M Y		45. Number of people supported into employment or learning	Adult Services & Prevention Cllr Mustafa Desai	Adults & Prevention	Higher	845	1,379 (Target is made up of National Citizen Service (NCS) and More Positive Together project (MPT))	226 People supported by the National Citizen Service and the More Positive Together project. (AMBER)
		46. Private rented sector homes, which have been inspected and have had Cat 1 and 2 hazards removed	Environmental Services Cllr Jim Smith	Environment & Operations	Higher	371 Category 1 & 2 hazards removed (2018/19)	Target to be confirmed	17 Cat 1 and 2 hazards removed. (Guidance issued by DCLG recommended that proactive inspection work should cease therefore only high-risk service requests have been responded to during the pandemic).
		47. Unlicensed properties identified and licensed, and audit/inspections undertaken.	Environmental Services Cllr Jim Smith	Environment & Operations	Higher	370 licences issued 144 inspected (2018/19)	Target to be confirmed	20 licences issued. (Housing Standards staff redeployed to deal with covid-secure enforcement and track and trace work. Only high-risk service requests are being actioned at present).
		48. Number of long term (over 6 months) empty properties brought back into use	Growth & Development Cllr Phil Riley	Growth & Development	Higher	271	400	210 long-term empty properties brought back into use and are on track to achieve the annual target. (GREEN)
		49. Monitoring against national planning performance targets 2018: Major projects decided in 13 weeks	Growth & Development Cllr Phil Riley	Growth & Development	Higher	80%	85%	95% - 11 major applications determined. (GREEN)
		50. Monitoring against national planning performance targets 2018: Non-major projects decided in 8 weeks	Growth & Development Cllr Phil Riley	Growth & Development	Higher	90%	90%	95% - 221 applications determined. (GREEN)
		51. Appeals: Major applications allowed preceding 2 years	Growth & Development Cllr Phil Riley	Growth & Development	Lower	2%	2%	0% (GREEN)
		52. Appeals: Non-major applications allowed preceding 2 years	Growth & Development Cllr Phil Riley	Growth & Development	Lower	2%	2%	0.41% (GREEN)
		53. Development of new employment space in the year (m ²)	Growth & Development Cllr Phil Riley	Growth & Development	Higher	N/A	8,000 sq.m	720 sq.m (AMBER)
	P7 – Supporting our town centres and businesses	54. Number of ticketed events at King Georges Hall (KGH)	Environmental Services Cllr Damian Talbot	Environment & Operations	Higher	129 ticketed events		Data unavailable (Service closed due to Covid restrictions in place across the Theatres industry)
		55. Total attendances for ticketed events at King Georges Hall (KGH)	Environmental Services Cllr Damian Talbot	Environment & Operations	Higher	2019/20 Baseline year		Data unavailable (Service closed due to Covid restrictions in place across the Theatres industry)

	Priority	Performance measure	Portfolio	Department	Good performance is	Baseline	20/21 target	Half year performance and rating (Q1 & Q2 – April to September 20)
		56. Number of ticketed events at Darwen Library Theatre (DLT)	Environmental Services Cllr Damian Talbot	Environment & Operations	Higher	125 ticketed events		Data unavailable (Service closed due to Covid restrictions in place across the Theatres industry)
		56. Total attendances for ticketed events at Darwen Library Theatre (DLT)	Environmental Services Cllr Damian Talbot	Environment & Operations	Higher	2019/20 Baseline year		Data unavailable (Service closed due to Covid restrictions in place across the Theatres industry)
CONCERN	P8 – Transparent and effective organisation	58. Online satisfaction rates for new Blackburn with Darwen website	Digital & Customer Services Cllr Quesir Mahmood	Digital & Business Change	Higher	New measure 2019/20	Target to be agreed end of Q3	50% increase of traffic to the new website based on the same period last year. (GREEN)
		59. Number of digital champions trained within the Council	Digital & Customer Services Cllr Quesir Mahmood	Digital & Business Change	Higher	New measure 2019/20	Target and KPI to be reviewed	Due to the interactive nature of the training course, this has paused during Covid restrictions. (GREEN)
		60. Number of online customer transactions and forms completed	Digital & Customer Services Cllr Quesir Mahmood	Digital & Business Change	Higher	152,000 (full year)	200,000	124,757 77,286 Council Customer Portal (CCP) 47,471 Digital Customer Portal (DCP) (GREEN)
		61. Response to Freedom of Information Requests (FOIs) within timescale	Digital & Customer Services Cllr Quesir Mahmood	Digital & Business Change	Higher	97.73% (2018/19)	90% Compliance rate	Compliance rate 92.27% (GREEN)
		62. Response to Environmental Information Requests (EIRs) within timescale	Digital & Customer Services Cllr Quesir Mahmood	Digital & Business Change	Higher	86.16% (2018/19)	90% Compliance rate	Compliance rate 76.63% (AMBER)
		63. Response to Subject Access Requests (SARS) under the Data Protection Act within timescale	Digital & Customer Services Cllr Quesir Mahmood	Digital & Business Change	Higher	67.98% (2018/19)	90% Compliance rate	Compliance rate 78.78% (AMBER)
		64. Undisputed and valid supplier invoices paid within 30 days	Finance & Governance Cllr Vicky McGurk	Finance & Customer Services	Higher	74% (2019/20)	95%	91% (AMBER)
		65. 95.5% collection of Council Tax	Finance & Governance Cllr Vicky McGurk	Finance & Customer Services	Higher	95.10% (2018/19)	95.5%	52.4%. (Quarter 2) (RED) See Appendix Two, Exception Reports

	Priority	Performance measure	Portfolio	Department	Good performance is	Baseline	20/21 target	Half year performance and rating (Q1 & Q2 – April to September 20)
Page 31		66. 98.5 % collection of Business Rates	Finance & Governance Cllr Vicky McGurk	Finance & Customer Services	Higher	98.3% (2018/19)	98.5%	50.66% (Quarter 2) (RED) See Appendix Two, Exception Reports
		67. Current ratio of total useable reserves (excluding Public Health and schools) to net revenue expenditure	Finance & Governance Cllr Vicky McGurk	Finance & Customer Services	Higher	24.03% (2017/18)	Average level reported by all Unitary Authorities (Average in 2019/20 = not yet published due to delays because of Covid-19)	The data is only published after submission of the Revenue Outturn Returns to MHCLG at the year-end.
		68. Percentage change in reserves over the past 3 years	Finance & Governance Cllr Vicky McGurk	Finance & Customer Services	Higher	26.54% i.e. reduction in 2017/18	Average level reported by all Unitary Authorities (Average in 2019/20 = not yet published due to delays because of Covid-19)	The data is only published after submission of the Revenue Outturn Returns to MHCLG at the year-end.
		69. Achieve a breakeven or underspend against overall portfolio and corporate budgets	Finance & Governance Cllr Vicky McGurk	Finance & Customer Services	Higher	Breakeven	Breakeven or underspend	Forecast outturn (excl DSG) based on assumptions made and information available at 30th September 2020, we are forecasting an underspend of £1.913m across the underlying portfolio budgets. (AMBER)
		70. 10% year on year reduction of carbon emissions from Council facilities	Growth & Development Cllr Phil Riley	Growth & Development	Lower	10% reduction	10% year on year reduction	-21% (AMBER)
		71. Response time and progress of stage One complaints to the Council	Finance & Governance Cllr Vicky McGurk	HR, Legal & Governance	Higher	85% (2018/19)	85% reduced this back to previous year due to delays surrounding Covid-19 and the low levels of complaints escalating to Stage 1	Qtr. 1 - 88% Qtr. 2 - 70% (AMBER)
		72. Reduction in employee absence through sickness	Finance & Governance Cllr Vicky McGurk	HR, Legal & Governance	Lower	8.81 days per annum (2018/19)	8 days per annum	4.99 days (inclusive of Covid-19 absences) (AMBER)
		73. Information relating to RIDDOR	Finance & Governance Cllr Vicky McGurk	HR, Legal & Governance	Lower	13 per annum (2018/19)	10 per annum	3 RIDDOR (GREEN)

Corporate Plan 2020/2021: Performance Report
Half-year (1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020) Exception Reports

Priority:

P8 – Transparent and effective organisation

- KPI No. 65. 95.5% collection of Council Tax
- KPI No. 66. 98.5 % collection of Business Rates

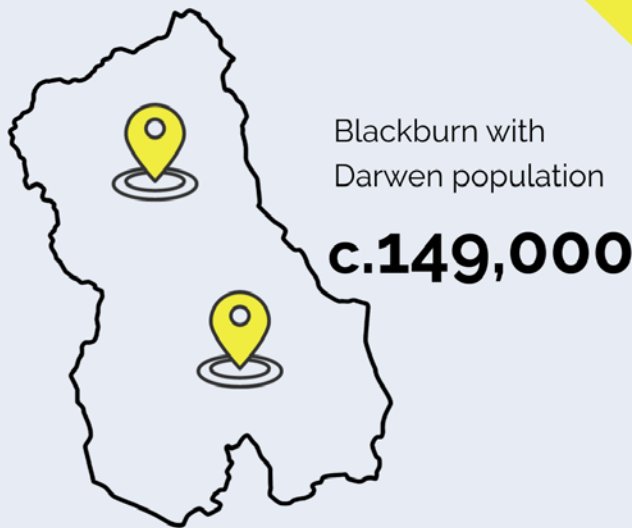
Department: Finance		
Priority: P8 – Transparent and effective organisation		
Performance Measure: No. 65. 95.5% Collection of Council Tax		Good performance is: Attaining the target
Target: Q2 53.17%, Q4 94.9%		Baseline:
Quarterly performance	Half year performance and RAG rating 52.4% (Quarter 2) (RED)	Year-end performance and RAG rating
<p>What is the reason for the performance? The collection of Council Tax provides a measure on the amount of income collected during the financial year.</p> <p>As at the 30th September, the outturn was 52.4%. This is currently 0.77% behind the target.</p> <p>It is very difficult to make direct comparisons with previous years. Whilst additional discounts have been applied to accounts through the government's introduction of a Hardship Scheme, which in turn has benefited the collection rate, the lack of recovery action (courts, enforcement activities, etc) has adversely impacted. The added pressure from job losses or reduced hours worked by residents of the borough will have also reduced the amount of Council Tax collected.</p>		
<p>What is the likely impact of continued performance? It is extremely likely that the yearly outturn of this key performance indicator will be significantly affected. The current prediction would be for a 0.5% - 0.8% reduction in the collection rate.</p>		
<p>What activities have been or are being put in place to address these issues? Where possible alternative measures have been put in place, these include additional text and email reminders to customers who have defaulted and targeted outbound telephone calls. However, without the ability to summons debtors to court, many of the recovery avenues are closed.</p>		
<p>Are there any decisions likely to be required of Executive Members in the future, in relation to this issue? No</p>		

Department: Finance		
Priority: P8 – Transparent and effective organisation		
Performance Measure: No 66. 98.5% Collection of Business Rates		Good performance is: Attaining the target
Target: Q2 55.9% Q4 98.34%		Baseline: 98.3% (2018/19)
Quarterly performance	Half year performance and RAG rating 50.66% (Quarter 2) (RED)	Year-end performance and RAG rating
<p>What is the reason for the performance? The collection of Business Rates provides a measure on the amount of income collected during the financial year.</p> <p>As at the 30th September, the outturn was 50.66%, which is currently 5.24% behind the target.</p> <p>It is very difficult to make direct comparisons with previous years. Significant additional discounts have been applied to accounts through the government's introduction of Extended Retail Relief, which in turn has benefited the collection rate. However, the corporate decision not to take Direct Payments for April and May and the lack of recovery action (courts, enforcement activities, etc) has adversely impacted the collection rate.</p>		
<p>What is the likely impact of continued performance? It is extremely likely that the yearly outturn of this key performance indicator will be significantly affected. It is not possible at this time to estimate the year-end collection rate.</p>		
<p>What activities have been or are being put in place to address these issues? Where possible alternative measures have been put in place, these include additional text and email reminders to customers who have defaulted and targeted outbound telephone calls. However, without the ability to summons debtors to court, many of the recovery avenues are closed.</p>		
<p>Are there any decisions likely to be required of Executive Members in the future, in relation to this issue? No</p>		

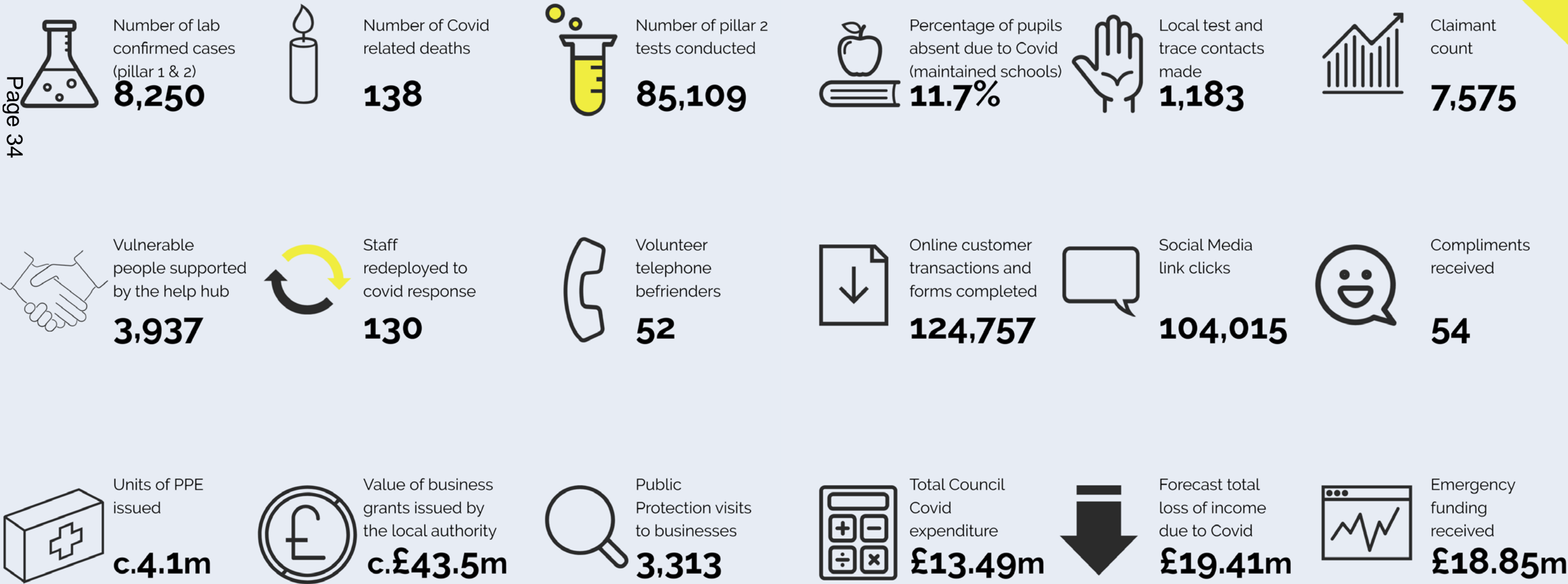
Covid 19

LOCAL RESPONSE TRACKER

This tracker attempts to provide an update to residents of the actions taken by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council in support of the national response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Where possible this tracker incorporates the latest data available at time of publication, however given the fluid nature of events some data may now differ from the source information. All information correct as of November 13th 2020



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REPORT OF:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
TO:	POLICY COUNCIL
ON:	3rd December 2020

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – PARISH OF LIVESLEY

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report sets out the requirements and procedure should the Council agree to undertake a community governance review in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the 2007 Act) and associated government guidance.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council is asked to:

1. Consider first whether it wishes to exercise its power under Section 82 of the 2007 Act and conduct a CGR of the parish of Livesley in accordance with the requirements of 2007 Act, and associated government guidance as described in this report.
2. Subject to 1) above, that the terms of reference in respect of the community governance review including the proposed timetable, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report, be approved and published.
3. Subject to 1) above, to authorise the Chief Executive to conduct the community governance review on the Council's behalf and to take all necessary action to comply with the Council's statutory obligations in that regard.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The 2007 Act amended the responsibility for parish area reviews from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to principal councils, subject to adherence to regulations and directions issued by the former Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Electoral Commission. The process for considering a change is now termed a Community Governance Review (CGR).
- 3.2 A CGR is a review of one or more areas of the borough to look at one or more of the following:
 - Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
 - The naming of a parish and the style of a new parish;
 - The electoral arrangements for parishes (including council size, the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding), and
 - Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes
- 3.3 A CGR may not change parliamentary, borough ward or county division boundaries, although it might to recommendations to the LGBCE to make consequential changes to ward or parish boundaries.

4 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Following the boundary review by LGBCE (which came into effect from May 2018) the ward boundaries changed. This was following by a polling district review in October – December 2018. Due to the LGBCE review and the ward boundary changes, the boundary for the Livesey with Pleasington ward no longer aligns exactly with the boundary of the parish of Livesey, and thereby creating an anomaly on the polling district map. This necessitated a separate polling district to be created (LP 6), which currently consists of 69 properties (mostly new builds) and 88 electors – Appendix 2 (polling district map for Livesey with Pleasington). To remove the anomaly mainly for electoral administration purposes, it would be beneficial to merge the polling district LP6 with LP5, which also forms part of the parish of Livesey. As the merger of the two polling districts will result in changes to the boundary of LP5 (and therefore the parish boundary), a Community Governance Review will need to be undertaken.

Subject to Council's agreement to conduct a Community Governance Review, the procedure requires the Council to:

- (a) to agree the terms of reference for the review including specifying the area under review
- (b) to then publish and consult on the terms of reference with the electors in LP6 and those with an interest, such as the Livesey Parish Council, and ward councillors and other persons/bodies who may have an interest
- (c) taking into account representations received, to agree final recommendations and, if required, to make a community governance reorganisation order to give effect to agreed changes.

A further report to Council will be presented for consideration in January 2021 to report on the outcome of the consultation and any recommendations. Subject to any recommendations being approved in January, the Council will make and publish a community governance order. The order will take effect from 1 February 2020, which is also the revised date for the publication of the new electoral register.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Electoral administration work needs to be undertaken efficiently and accurately, and where improvements can be made, for example by removing such anomalies they must be considered.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Although there will be some small costs in relation to the consultation process, there would be efficiencies in electoral administration with the merger of the two polling districts.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council has power under Section 82 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct CGRs. A CGR must be conducted in accordance with the requirements set out in Chapter 3 of Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (as amended) and guidance issued by the Secretary of State under Section 100(4) of the 2007 Act.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The Governance team will administer and assist in conducting the CGR.

9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

The process to be followed in conducting the CGR is laid down in legislation and guidance issued by the Government. Every attempt will be made to engage electors and interested parties in the CGR through the consultation process that will be led the Governance team.

10. CONSULTATIONS

Council Chief/Senior Officers and Members

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

Nafisha Master, Governance Manager
(01254 666800)

Date: 8th October 2020

Background Papers:

Community Governance Review 2020

(Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007)

Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

1.1 What is a community governance review?

A community governance review is a review of the whole or part of the Council's area to consider one or more of the following:

- creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
- the naming of parishes and the style of new parishes;
- the electoral arrangements for parishes (the ordinary year of election council size; the number of councillors to be elected to council and parish warding); and,
- grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.

A community governance review is required to take into account:

- the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
- the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.

If the Council is satisfied that the recommendations from a community governance review would ensure that community governance within the area under review will reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area; and is effective and convenient, the Council makes a community governance order.

1.2 Scope of the review

The review will consider:

- (a) The existing electoral arrangements and boundaries of the parish of Livesey
- (b) Any proposals for the extension of the parish boundary, excluding any other existing parish area.

The parish of Livesey form part of the Livesey with Pleasington borough ward and includes the polling districts LP2, LP3 and LP5 (see attached ward map. The current precept for Livesey Parish Council is £8.26 (band D).

All other matters that may be considered as part of a community governance review are out of the scope of this review and will therefore not be considered.

2. Consultation

2.1 How the Council proposes to conduct consultations during the Review?

Before making any recommendations or publishing final proposals, the Council must consult local government electors for the area under review and any other person or body that appears to the Council to have an interest in the review.

The Council will therefore:

- publish a notice and these terms of reference on the Council's website (www.blackburn.gov.uk) and arrange for copies to be available for public inspection by contacting the Elections Office on 01254 585920 or email: voting@blackburn.gov.uk;
- send a copy of the notice and these terms of reference to Livesey Parish Council and Ward Members;
- seek to arrange for the notice to be published on Livesey Parish Council's website and notice board; and

Before making any recommendations, the Council will take account of any representations received. The Council will publish its recommendations as soon as practicable and take such steps as it considers sufficient to ensure that persons who may be interested in the community governance review are informed of the recommendations and the reasons behind them.

The Council will notify each consultee and any other persons or bodies who have made written representations of the outcome of the review.

3. Timetable for the community governance review

3.1 The Council must complete a community governance review within twelve months from the day on which the Council publishes the terms of reference. A community governance review is concluded on the day on which the Council publishes the recommendations made by the community governance review.

The table below sets out the timetable for the review.

Action	Timetable	Outline of Action
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Start Date	3 December 2020	Council publishes the terms of reference
Draft proposals are prepared	By 3 December 2020	Draft proposals to be considered by Council

Draft proposals are published	By 3 December 2020	Council publishes draft proposals
Consultation	one month period starting with publication of draft proposals	Council invites representations from interested parties on the draft proposals
Final recommendations are prepared	By 28 January 2021	Results of consultation considered by Council and will give effect to the recommendations
Order made	28 January 2021	Council makes and publishes the community governance order
Order takes effect	1 February 2021	Dependant on the outcome and recommendations

4. Making representations

- 4.1 If you want to make a written comment about the community governance review please send them to:

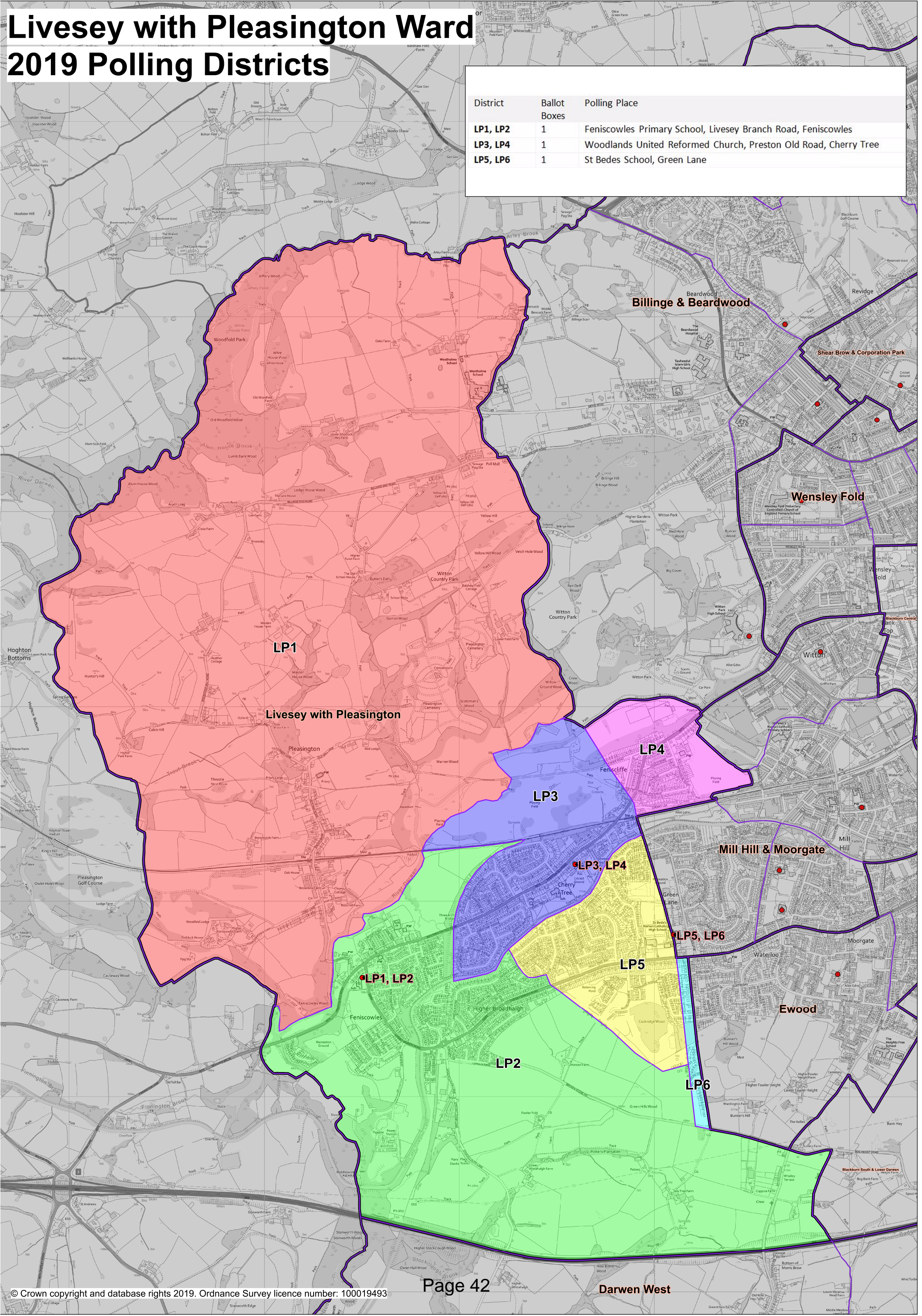
Community Governance Review
Electoral Services
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Town Hall
King William Street
Blackburn
BB1 7DY
E-mail: voting@blackburn.gov.uk

- 4.2 Written comments must be received by 4 January 2021.
- 4.3 Should you require any further information regarding the review, please contact Asad Laher, Head of Legal & Governance at the address above or by phone 01254 585920

Livesey with Pleasington Ward

2019 Polling Districts

District	Ballot Boxes	Polling Place
LP1, LP2	1	Feniscowles Primary School, Livesey Branch Road, Feniscowles
LP3, LP4	1	Woodlands United Reformed Church, Preston Old Road, Cherry Tree
LP5, LP6	1	St Bedes School, Green Lane



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Councillor Ron Whittle

PORTFOLIO COORDINATING

DIRECTOR: Louise Mattinson

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE 2019/20

Attached to this report is the Annual Report of the Audit & Governance Committee for 2019/20, which was submitted to the meeting of that Committee on 29th July 2020. As outlined in the Constitution, the Annual Report and Minutes for the relevant year are submitted to Council, and are now submitted for the Policy Council to note.

I'd like to thank the Committee and Officers from both Internal and External Audit for their contribution in 2019/20.

Councillor Ron Whittle, Chair

November 2019

TO: Audit & Governance Committee

FROM: Director HR, Legal & Governance
Director of Finance & Customer Services

DATE: 29 July 2020

PORTFOLIOS AFFECTED: All

WARDS AFFECTED: All

TITLE OF BRIEFING PAPER	Audit & Governance Committee Annual Report
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1. PURPOSE

The draft Audit & Governance Committee Annual Report 2019/20 is attached for consideration and approval (see Appendix A). This summarises the work undertaken by the Committee has during the year to demonstrate that it has fulfilled its agreed terms of reference.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

- Consider and approve the Committee's Annual Report, including the statement on its effectiveness during 2019/20 and the draft effectiveness self-assessment evaluation; and
- Refer the report to Full Council for endorsement.

3. BACKGROUND

The CIPFA 'Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police' 2013 edition incorporates CIPFA's Position Statement on the role and function of view of an audit committee in local authorities. This notes that although no single model of committee is prescribed, all should report regularly on their work and at least annually report an assessment of their performance.

4. RATIONALE

The Audit & Governance Committee is a key component of the maintenance of an adequate and effective governance framework. Through its annual report the Committee can demonstrate its effectiveness in fulfilling its role to provide independent assurance regarding the adequacy of risk management, the overall governance and associated control environment, and also scrutiny of the Council's financial and non financial performance to the extent that it affects its exposure to risk and weakens the control environment.

5. KEY ISSUES

Having an effective Committee brings many benefits to the Council, such as:

- increasing public confidence in the objectivity and fairness of financial and other reporting;
- providing additional assurance through a process of independent and objective scrutiny;
- raising awareness of the need for internal control and the implementation of audit recommendations; and,
- reinforcing the importance and independence of internal audit.

The Committee's activities during 2019/20 were designed to make a positive contribution to the continual improvement of control and governance arrangements across the Council, as well as performing the roles set out for the Committee in the Council's Constitution.

The Committee has had the opportunity to examine and challenge the arrangements for effective governance. The Annual Report indicates the breadth of the Committee's work in ensuring that every aspect of the Council's work should be compliant with standards and transparent to its stakeholders. The reports received by the Committee during 2019/20 indicate that there has been thorough coverage of the Committee's Terms of Reference. In this way, the Annual Report demonstrates the value of the Committee to the Council and public, ensuring that governance is on a sound footing.

Good practice guidance exists for the effective operation of audit committees across the public sector, including the most recent publication by CIPFA noted above. That guidance includes a Good Practice Self-Assessment which was considered by the Committee at its meeting on 14 January 2020. Appendix 2 of the attached report sets out the results of the self-assessment. The guidance also included a self-assessment tool for audit committees to use to evaluate their effectiveness. The results of this assessment are set out in Appendix 3 to the attached report for consideration.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct policy implications arising from this report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications from this report.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The resource implications are within the report.

10. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

The decisions to be taken do not change policy and do not require any further

consideration in respect of equality or health issues.

11. CONSULTATIONS

Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee, Director of HR, Legal & Governance, Director of Finance & Customer Services, Governance & Democratic Services Manager.

Contact Officer:	Colin Ferguson, Head of Audit & Assurance - Ext 5326
Date:	17 July 2020
Background Papers:	CIPFA Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police (2018 Edition). Audit Committee – Making it Most Effective (CIPFA Practical Guidance on Audit Committees – Action Plan), approved by Committee on 13 January 2015 and reviewed 14 January 2020.

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council



Draft Audit & Governance Committee Annual Report 2019/20

1. Background to the Governance Framework

1.1. What drives governance policy?

- 1.1.1. The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there are sound systems of control and governance which facilitate the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which include adequate arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.1.2. Effective corporate governance is a fundamental feature of any successful public sector organisation. Corporate governance initially became a major issue after several high profile failures in the private sector. As a result there were several reviews directed at improving governance in that sector.
- 1.1.3. The trend for strengthening governance arrangements spread to the public sector and resulted in the joint Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)/Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) document Delivering Good Governance in Local Government – a Framework, in 2007. The Framework, published in 2007, was intended to be used as best practice for developing and maintaining a locally adopted code of governance. It was intended to assist authorities in reviewing the effectiveness of their own governance arrangements by reference to best practice and using self-assessment.
- 1.1.4. In 2016 CIPFA/SOLACE published a revised Framework to ensure that local government continues to develop and shape its own approach to governance, taking account of the environment in which it now operates. The new Framework applied to annual governance statements prepared for the financial year 2016/17 onwards. It is based on the International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector published by CIFA and the International Federation of Accountants in 2014 and contains seven key principles.
- 1.1.5. The International framework defines governance as follows:
“Governance comprises the arrangements put in place to ensure the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved.”
- 1.1.6. It also states that:
“To deliver good governance in the public sector both governing bodies and individuals working for public sector entities must try to achieve their entities objectives while acting in the public interest at all times. Acting in the public interest implies primary consideration of the benefits for society, which should result in positive outcomes for service users and stakeholders.”
- 1.1.7. Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council operates through a governance framework that brings together an underlying set of legislative requirements, governance principles and corporate policies and management processes.
- 1.1.8. The Council recognises the seven core principles of good governance to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved, while acting in the public interest at all times, as:
 - A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law;

- B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement;
 - C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits;
 - D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes;
 - E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it;
 - F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management; and
 - G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.
- 1.1.9. The Council's local Code of Corporate Governance was revised during 2016 to ensure that it complied with the latest requirements. It was updated again during 2018/19 as part of the annual review of the Constitution, to provide improved clarity and explanation and was approved by full Council in May 2018.
- 2. Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Audit & Governance Committee**
- 2.1. Why do we need an Audit Committee?**
- 2.1.1. Whilst there is no statutory requirement to have an Audit Committee they are widely recognised as a core component of an effective governance framework and therefore reflect good practise. Regardless of a specific legislative or regulatory framework, Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires local authorities to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and appoint a Chief Financial Officer to have responsibility for those affairs. To be truly effective, the Chief Financial Officer requires an effective Audit Committee to provide support and challenge, as well as an adequate and effective Internal Audit. Both these elements are now enshrined in the 'Public Sector Internal Audit Standards' and the supporting 'Local Government Application Note' published by CIPFA. The Council's Audit & Governance Committee has a key role in overseeing and assessing the internal control, risk management and corporate governance arrangements in place and advising on the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements. This role is formalised in the Committee's terms of reference.
- 2.1.2. The Council's Audit & Governance Committee is properly constituted and is given sufficient authority and resources by the Council. The Committee has the right to obtain all the information it considers necessary and to consult directly with senior managers. In line with best practice from both the public and private sectors, the Audit & Governance Committee can report its observations and concerns directly to the Executive Board.
- 2.1.3. Good corporate governance requires independent and effective assurance about the adequacy of financial management and of management arrangements for achieving the organisation's objectives. These responsibilities require an independent and challenging approach. Through these mechanisms Committee Members are able to use their skills and experiences to influence the Council's governance, internal control processes and risk management arrangements.

- 2.1.4. An effective Committee can bring many benefits to the Council including:
- increasing public confidence in the objectivity and fairness of financial and other reporting;
 - providing additional assurance through a process of independent and objective scrutiny;
 - raising awareness of the need for internal control and the implementation of audit recommendations; and,
 - reinforcing the importance and independence of internal audit.

2.2. What does it do?

- 2.2.1. Audit Committees are a key component of corporate governance. They increase public confidence in the objectivity and fairness of financial and other reporting. They also provide a high-level focus on assurance and the organisation's arrangements for governance, managing risk, maintaining an effective control environment.
- 2.2.2. Good practice is contained within CIPFA's document 'Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and the Police' (2018 Edition). The latest edition of the document updates the core functions of an Audit Committee in relation to governance, risk management, internal control and audit. The introduction of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, along with annual governance statements and associated guidance has also been considered in relation to their impact on an Audit Committee.
- 2.2.3. During 2019/20 the Audit & Governance Committee consisted of six cross party elected Members. The Committee's purpose, as proscribed in its terms of reference, are to:
- provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework, overall governance and the associated control environment and the extent to which these meet the objectives of the Local Code of Corporate Governance;
 - provide independent review of the Council's governance, risk management and control frameworks;
 - oversee the financial reporting and annual governance processes; and
 - oversee internal and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place.
- 2.2.4. The Audit & Governance Committee provides assurance, on behalf of the Council, about the extent to which the objectives of the Local Code of Corporate Governance, as set out in its Constitution, are being met. This purpose is reflected in the Committee's Terms of Reference which are included at Appendix 1 of this report.
- 2.2.5. The CIPFA guidance includes a greater focus on the factors which support improvement. These include the knowledge and skills that Audit Committee members require and a focus on where the Audit Committee adds value. The publication provides practical support to the Committee in evaluating the existing Committee arrangements and any planned improvements.
- 2.2.6. The guidance includes a self-assessment checklist of good practice to assist both Members and Officers who are involved in the operation of the Committee. This has been reviewed and updated by Audit & Assurance on behalf of the Committee during 2019/20. It was presented for consideration at the Committee's meeting on 14 January 2020, along with an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Committee completed by Audit &

Assurance on behalf of the Committee, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, and included a summary of the results of individual members own self-assessments of the Committee's effectiveness. The results of the assessments against the CIPFA best practise and evaluation of effectiveness are included at Appendix 2 and 3 of this report for consideration. The results from the individual members own self assessments showed that there was a belief that the Committee was generally operating effectively, with average scores of satisfactory/partly agree or better for most questions.

- 2.2.7. The Audit & Governance Committee met five times during the 2019/20 financial year. Timings of the meetings throughout the year are designed to coincide with the governance timetable. The June meeting received the annual opinion and assurance reports, Health, Safety & Wellbeing and Treasury Management Annual Reports, and approved the Council's Annual Governance Statement. The August meeting approved the 2018/19 Statement of Accounts, and received the External Auditor's Findings Report for 2018/19. The January 2020 meeting received the External Auditor's Annual Audit Letter for the year ended 31 March 2019.
- 2.2.8. The Committee's terms of reference and outline work programme (see Appendices 1 and 4), and associated reports it receives, are designed to enable its Members to make a positive contribution to the continual improvement of control and governance processes and arrangements across the Council, as well as performing the roles as identified by the Constitution. Member attendance details are set out in Appendix 4
- 2.2.9. As well as the assurance provided to the Committee from the key reports received from the Council's External Auditor, the Committee also places reliance on the work carried out by Audit & Assurance in delivering the annual internal audit plan. Assurance is gained throughout the year from considering the quarterly progress reports received. These provide the Committee with an overview of the activity carried out by internal audit during the period, including counter fraud activity, and an overview of all audit reports finalised. Emphasis has been on limited or no assurance reports. Where these opinions are in respect of key or fundamental systems senior officers have been invited to update the members on progress of implementing recommendations from these reports to provide further assurance to the Committee regarding the implementation of agreed actions.
- 2.2.10. The Committee also receives a full year overview of internal audit work when the Internal Audit Annual Opinion Report is presented, alongside the Annual Counter Fraud Report. The former report provides the Head of Audit opinion on the Council's overall position in relation to the adequacy and effectiveness of risk, governance and internal control systems, based on the work completed by the internal audit team, as required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.
- 2.2.11. The details of the Committee's work programme for 2019/20 and associated reports received, (see Appendix 4), demonstrate how the Committee has fulfilled its terms of reference during the year and its commitment to monitoring and helping improve the Council's risk, control and governance environments' in the year ahead.
- 2.2.12. In addition to these meetings an induction session was held for the Committee members prior to their first meeting of the year to explain the purpose of the Committee and their role and responsibilities. There has also

been mandatory finance training for all members to provide them with an overview of the Local Authority financing regime prior to the Finance Council meeting in February 2019 where the 2019/20 budget was presented for approval

2.3. How do officers support the Committee?

2.3.1. The Audit & Governance Committee is supported by:

- The Chief Executive, as Head of the Paid Service, with overall responsibility for the Council's management and executive arrangements;
- The Director of HR, Legal & Governance, as the Monitoring Officer, who is required by law to ensure that the Council acts within its legal powers at all times; and,
- The Director of Finance and Customer Services, as Section 151 Officer, who is responsible under the law for ensuring the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.

2.3.2. The Director of HR, Legal & Governance leads on constitutional, legal, and human resource issues. The Director of Finance and Customer Services takes the lead on financial, audit, risk management and internal control matters. The Head of Audit & Assurance also has a key role to play in supporting the Committee because of the importance of the Internal Audit Service to governance. These Officers are responsible for making the Committee aware of any relevant changes in regulations, guidance, and codes of practice.

2.3.3. The Committee is also supported by External Audit colleagues, who attend each meeting to update members on the progress and results of their work, as well as providing regular sector updates for consideration. These highlight key messages from national reports and studies and include questions for consideration by the Committee.

2.3.4. During the year the Committee continued its cycle of corporate risk reviews. Corporate risk owners and/or key contacts for the risk areas have provided briefings to the Committee on a selection of risk register entries. This has included details regarding the background to the risk identified, the risk assessment process and control arrangements in place to manage or mitigate the relevant risk should it occur. This review and challenge process has improved the Committee's oversight and understanding of the likelihood and potential impact of the corporate risks identified by the Council and on the achievement of related corporate priorities.

2.4. Effectiveness of the Audit & Governance Committee

2.4.1. The Committee considers that it has been effective in fulfilling its terms of reference during 2019/20. The details provided in this report and the reports presented and considered by its members during 2019/20 demonstrate that adequate consideration has been given to all the core areas identified to enable the Committee to fulfil its role and responsibilities.

2.4.2. The Committee's terms of reference set out a range of activities that provide appropriate assurance to the Council in terms of how it manages risk, and ensures adequate and effective control and governance arrangements exist

and operate effectively to secure the efficiency and effective use of its resources. Training opportunities have been made available to members during the year to update their skills and knowledge to ensure that they are able to fulfil their role as members of the Committee.

- 2.4.3. The Committee has been active during the year in carrying out its duties in monitoring internal and external reports to ensure that it is satisfied with the effectiveness of controls and the governance and risk management arrangements in place, in accordance with its role and functions set out in its terms of reference in Appendix 1.
- 2.4.4. Based on the reports and information presented to the Audit & Governance Committee for consideration during the 2019/20 it is the members' view that the Council has, sound financial controls, risk management and governance arrangements in place.
- 2.4.5. The Committee has had the opportunity to invite those senior officers and managers to account for services or functions where they have considered there to have been significant financial, internal control or governance weaknesses identified. No significant areas of concern were identified where this was required during 2019/20. The members continue to challenge any impairment in stewardship and control of public funds and assets, seeking assurance that prompt and proportionate management actions have been taken. This provides the Council with assurance that effective internal control arrangements were in place during the year and that appropriate action has been taken to address any concerns raised as a result of any of the inspection and assurance processes in place. This is evidenced by the details provided in Appendix 4 regarding the various reports received and considered by the Committee at its meetings during the year to support its work programme and how each of these enable the Committee to fulfil its terms of reference.
- 2.4.6. The External Auditor's 2019 Audit Findings Report for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council included an opinion on value for money. The External Auditor was required to carry out sufficient work to be satisfied on whether the Council had made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources during the year ended March 2019 and to provide a conclusion on this. In doing this work the main considerations the Auditor focussed on were:
- Delivery of the revenue budget during 2018-19;
 - How the capital programme was being progressed during the year; and
 - The assumptions that support the medium term financial strategy.
- 2.4.7. Based on the work they performed to address the significant risks, External Audit were satisfied that the Council had proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2019.

AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**Statement of Purpose:**

Our Audit and Governance Committee is a key component of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's corporate governance. It provides an independent and high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards.

The purpose of the Audit and Governance Committee is to:

- provide independent assurance to the Council of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the internal control environment and the extent to which these meet the objectives of the Local Code of Corporate Governance;
- provide independent review of the Council's governance, risk management and control frameworks;
- oversee the financial reporting and annual governance processes; and
- oversee internal and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place.

Governance, Risk and Control:

The Audit and Governance Committee will:

1. Review the Council's corporate governance arrangements against the good governance framework including the ethical framework and consider the local code of governance.
2. Review the Annual Governance Statement prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, taking into account internal audit's opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and controls.
3. Consider the Council's arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements;
4. Consider the framework of assurance (including the Management Accountabilities Framework) and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the Council;
5. Monitor the effective development and operation of risk management in the Council;
6. Monitor progress in addressing risk-related issues reported to the Committee;
7. Consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions;
8. Review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the Council from fraud and corruption;
9. Monitor the Counter Fraud strategy, actions and resources; and
10. To review the Governance and Assurance arrangements for significant partnership or collaborations.

Internal Audit

The Audit and Governance Committee will:

1. Approve the internal audit charter.
2. Approve the risk-based internal audit plan, including internal audit's resource requirements, the approach to using other sources of assurance and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources.
3. Approve significant interim changes to the risk-based internal audit plan and resource requirements.
4. Make appropriate enquiries of both management and the Head of Audit & Assurance to determine if there are any inappropriate scope or resource limitations.

5. Consider reports from the Head of Audit & Assurance on internal audit's performance during the year. These will include:
 - a) Updates on the work of internal audit including key findings, issues of concern and action in hand as a result of internal audit work.
 - b) Regular reports on the results of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme.
 - c) Reports on instances where the internal audit function does not conform to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and Local Government Application Note, considering whether the non-conformance is significant enough that it must be included in the Annual Governance Statement.
6. Consider the Head of Audit & Assurance's annual report, including:
 - a) The statement of the level of conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and Local Government Application Note and the results of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme that supports the statement – these will indicate the reliability of the conclusions of internal audit.
 - b) The opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the council's framework of governance, risk management and control together with the summary of the work supporting the opinion and the implications of any significant matters identified – these will assist the Committee in reviewing the Annual Governance Statement.
 - c) An annual risk management report.
7. Consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested.
8. Receive reports outlining the action taken where the Head of Audit & Assurance has concluded that management has accepted a level of risk that may be unacceptable to the authority or there are concerns about progress with the implementation of agreed actions.
9. Contribute to the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme and in particular, to the external quality assessment of internal audit that takes place at least once every five years.
10. Consider a report on the effectiveness of internal audit to support the Annual Governance Statement, where required to do so by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
11. To provide free and unfettered access to the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee Chair for the Head of Audit and Assurance, including the opportunity for a private meeting with the Committee.

External Audit

The Audit and Governance Committee will:

1. Support the independence of external audit through consideration of the external auditor's annual assessment of its independence and review of any issues raised by Public Sector Audit Appointments;
2. Consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports, and the report to those charged with governance prior to publication of the annual accounts;
3. Consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor;
4. Comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it is effective and gives value for money;
5. Commission work from internal and external audit; and
6. Advise and recommend on the effectiveness of relationships between external and internal audit and other inspection agencies or relevant bodies.

Financial Reporting

The Audit and Governance Committee will:

1. Review the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are

- concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the council; and
2. Consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

Treasury Management

The Audit and Governance Committee will:

1. Monitor the Council's treasury management arrangements in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice;
2. Ensure effective scrutiny of the treasury management strategy and policies;
3. Review the treasury management risk profile and adequacy of risk management processes; and
4. Consider reports on treasury management activity during the year.

Accountability Arrangements

The Audit and Governance Committee will:

1. Report to those charged with governance on the Committee's findings, conclusions and recommendations concerning the adequacy and effectiveness of their governance, risk management and internal control frameworks; financial reporting arrangements, and internal and external audit functions.
2. Report to full council on an annual basis outlining the Committee's performance in relation to the terms of reference and the effectiveness of the Committee in meeting its purpose.
3. Publish an annual report on the work of the Committee.

Authority

The Committee is authorised by the Council to investigate any activity within its terms of reference. It is authorised to seek any information it requires from any employee, including those of partner organisations, and all employees are directed to co-operate with any request made by the Committee.

Frequency of Meetings

The Committee will normally meet five times each year to fulfil its requirements.

Outline Programme

In order to meet its principal responsibilities during the year the Committee will consider the following reports/activities:

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY:	TERMS OF REFERENCE NUMBER
Governance, Risk and Control	
Annual Statement (AGS)	1,2,3,4
AGS Progress Report	1,2
Risk Management Annual Report	4,5,6
Internal Audit Opinion Report	2,5,7
External Audit VFM Report	3
MAF Update	4
Risk Management Update	5,6
Corporate Health, Safety & Wellbeing Annual	4,5,6

Report	
IA Progress & Outcomes Report	7,8,9
Reports from Other Committees or agencies	3,4,5,6,7
Significant Partnerships Report	10
Internal Audit	
Annual Plan	1,2,4
IA Progress & Outcomes Report	3,4,5,7,8
Risk Management Annual Report	8
Annual Opinion Report	6,9,10,11,12
External Audit	
Annual Audit Letter	1,4,5
Annual Plan	2,5
Progress Report	2,3
Findings Report	2,5
Grant Certification Report	2
Value For Money Conclusion	3,5
Fees Letter	4,5
Financial Reporting	
Statement of Accounts	1
External Audit Findings Report	2
Treasury Management	
Strategy Report	1,2
Progress Report	1,3,4
Annual Outturn Report	1,3,4
Accountability Arrangements	
Committee Annual Report	1,2,3
Committee Self-assessment	2,3

The programme itself will develop over time as new statutory responsibilities are introduced and the timetable may vary, for example, as the Council is required to close its accounts earlier each year.

Membership

The Committee will consist of six members appointed by Full Council. In addition, the Executive Member for Resources will also attend each Committee meeting.

The Leader of the Council and all Executive Members are precluded from being voting members of the Committee.

A quorum shall be three Members.

New Committee members will be required to undertake appropriate induction training to enable them to adequately perform their duties as and when necessary.

Attendance

Committee members are expected to make every effort to attend all meetings, where this is not possible a substitute should be nominated.

To achieve these objectives the Committee will depend principally on the attendance of the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Customer Services, the Director of HR, Legal & Corporate Services and the Head of Audit & Assurance or their nominated representatives. The Council's external auditors, external advisors and Directors may be requested to attend as and when appropriate.

Reporting

The Annual Audit and Governance Committee Report will be formally reported to Full Council.

Further reports will be made in those cases where the Committee considers matters must be formally brought to the attention of Full Council.

CIPFA PRACTICAL GUIDANCE ON AUDIT COMMITTEES – GOOD PRACTICE SELF-ASSESSMENT

REF	GOOD PRACTICE QUESTIONS	YES	PARTIAL	NO	ACTION REQUIRED
<i>Audit Committee purpose and governance</i>					
1	Does the Authority have a dedicated audit committee?	√			
2	Does the audit committee report directly to full council?	√			
3	Do the terms of reference clearly set out the purpose of the committee in accordance with CIPFA's Position Statement?	√			
4	Is the role and purpose of the audit committee understood and accepted across the authority?	√			
5	Does the audit committee provide support to the authority in meeting the requirements of good governance?	√			
6	Are the arrangements to hold the committee to account for its performance operating satisfactorily?	√			
<i>Functions of the committee</i>					
7	<p>Do the committee's terms of reference explicitly address all the core areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ good governance. ▪ assurance framework. ▪ including partnerships and collaboration arrangements, ▪ internal audit. ▪ external audit. ▪ financial reporting. ▪ risk management. ▪ value for money or best value. ▪ counter-fraud and corruption. ▪ supporting the ethical framework 		√		To include consideration of the ethical framework in the committee's terms of reference.
8	Is an annual evaluation undertaken to assess whether the committee is fulfilling its terms of reference and that adequate consideration has been given to all core areas?	√			

REF	GOOD PRACTICE QUESTIONS	YES	PARTIAL	NO	ACTION REQUIRED
9	Has the audit committee considered the wider areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement and whether it would be appropriate for the committee to undertake them?	√			
10	Where coverage of core areas has been found to be limited, are plans in place to address this?	√			
11	Has the committee maintained its non-advisory role by not taking on any decision-making powers that are not in line with its core purpose?	√			
Membership and support					
12	Has an effective audit committee structure and composition of the committee been selected? This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ separation from the executive. ▪ an appropriate mix of knowledge and skills among the membership. ▪ a size of committee that is not unwieldy. ▪ consideration has been given to the inclusion of at least one independent member (where it is not already a mandatory requirement). 	√			
13	Have independent members appointed to the committee been recruited in an open and transparent way and approved by the Full council or as appropriate for the organisation?				Not applicable.
14	Does the chair of the committee have appropriate knowledge and skills?	√			
15	Are arrangements in place to support the committee with briefings and training?	√			Consider shorter more focussed meetings and prior up front information.
16	Has the membership of the committee been assessed against the core knowledge and skills framework and found to be satisfactory?	√			

REF	GOOD PRACTICE QUESTIONS	YES	PARTIAL	NO	ACTION REQUIRED
17	Does the committee have good working relations with key people and organisations, including external audit, internal audit and the chief financial officer?	√			
18	Is adequate secretariat and administrative support to the committee provided?	√			
Effectiveness of the committee					
19	Has the committee obtained feedback on its performance from those interacting with the committee or relying on its work?			√	No formal feedback but Committee members may receive feedback from member colleagues at Group meetings or on other occasions. The Committee's Annual Report is presented to Full Council. Consider including meeting minutes for the relevant year as well.
20	Are meetings effective with a good level of discussion and engagement from all the members?	√			
21	Does the committee engage with a wide range of leaders and managers, including discussion of audit findings, risks and action plans with the responsible officers?	√			
22	Does the committee make recommendations for the improvement of governance, risk and control and are these acted on?	√			
23	Has the committee evaluated whether and how it is adding value to the organisation?	√			
24	Does the committee have an action plan to improve any areas of weakness?	√			
25	Does the committee publish an annual report to account for its performance and explain its work?	√			

CIPFA'S AUDIT COMMITTEES PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES (2018 EDITION)**Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Audit Committee****Assessment key**

5	Clear evidence is available from a number of sources that the committee is actively supporting improvements across all aspects of this area. The improvements made are clearly identifiable.
4	Clear evidence from some sources that the committee is actively and effectively supporting improvement across some aspects of this area.
3	The committee has had mixed experience in supporting improvement in this area. There is some evidence that demonstrates their impact but there are also significant gaps.
2	There is some evidence that the committee has supported improvements, but the impact of this support is limited.
1	No evidence can be found that the audit committee has supported improvements in this

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Audit Committee Effectiveness Assessment 2019/20

Areas where the audit committee can add value by supporting improvement	Examples of how the audit committee can add value and provide evidence of effectiveness	Self-evaluation, examples, areas of strength and weakness	Overall assessment: 5 – 1 See key above
Promoting the principles of good governance and their application to decision making.	<p>Supporting the development of a local code of corporate governance.</p> <p>Providing robust review of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and the assurances underpinning it.</p> <p>Working with key members to improve their understanding of the AGS and their contribution to it.</p> <p>Supporting reviews/audits of governance arrangements.</p> <p>Participating in self-assessments of governance arrangements.</p> <p>Working with partner audit committees to review governance arrangements in partnerships.</p>	<p>The Committee reviews the draft AGS prior to approving it and monitors progress of actions to address the significant issues identified in the previous year's AGS. It also reviews the Risk Management Annual Report and annual opinions from Internal Audit (IA) and External Audit, which support the AGS.</p> <p>The Committee approves the IA annual audit plan, which classifies audit reviews by assurance area to ensure adequate coverage of risk, governance and control frameworks. It receives a summary of key findings and opinions from individual reviews supporting the overall opinion.</p> <p>Partnership arrangements are not covered by the current terms of reference. However, the Committee does receive a report on the Council's Significant Partnerships Register.</p>	4

Areas where the audit committee can add value by supporting improvement	Examples of how the audit committee can add value and provide evidence of effectiveness	Self-evaluation, examples, areas of strength and weakness	Overall assessment: 5 – 1 See key above
		The Committee Chair is a member of the Primary Assurance Group, which reviews the AGS and related assurance reports.	
Contributing to the development of an effective control environment.	<p>Actively monitoring the implementation of recommendations from auditors.</p> <p>Encouraging ownership of the internal control framework by appropriate managers.</p> <p>Raising significant concerns over controls with appropriate senior managers.</p>	<p>Regular IA Progress Reports are presented to the Committee. These include performance indicators relating to the percentage of recommendations implemented and commentary re outstanding 'must' level recommendations.</p> <p>Senior officers attend the Committee meetings on request to update on the progress of actions from key reports as and provide explanations and updates on progress to address significant audit concerns.</p> <p>The Committee reviews the summary of Management Accountability Framework (MAF) red priority areas of concern.</p> <p>The Committee is also authorised by the Council to investigate any activity within its terms of reference and to seek any information it requires from any employee, including those of partner organisations, and all employees are directed to co-operate with any request made by the Committee.</p>	5
Supporting the establishment of arrangements for the governance of risk and for effective arrangements to manage risks.	<p>Reviewing risk management arrangements and their effectiveness, e.g. risk management benchmarking.</p> <p>Monitoring improvements.</p> <p>Holding risk owners to account for major/strategic risks.</p>	<p>The Committee receives the annual risk management report, which includes key events and achievements for the previous year and key developments for the next 12 months.</p> <p>The corporate risk register summary identifies risk owners at Director/senior officer level and tracks changes to residual risk scores. Regular reports are presented to Committee on the corporate risk register and risk</p>	5

Areas where the audit committee can add value by supporting improvement	Examples of how the audit committee can add value and provide evidence of effectiveness	Self-evaluation, examples, areas of strength and weakness	Overall assessment: 5 – 1 See key above
		<p>management support activity during the year, including the details of the risk management support provided by Zurich Municipal.</p> <p>The Committee carries out a 'deep dive' review of one or more corporate risks with the relevant risk owner or key contact at its meetings during the year.</p>	
<p>Advising on the adequacy of the assurance framework and considering whether assurance is deployed efficiently and effectively.</p>	<p>Specifying its assurance needs, identifying gaps or overlaps in assurance.</p> <p>Seeking to streamline assurance gathering and reporting.</p> <p>Reviewing the effectiveness of assurance providers, e.g. internal audit, risk management, external audit.</p>	<p>There is regular reporting of planned and actual coverage by Internal and External Audit. The Committee challenges opportunities for reliance on IA work by External Auditors and receives Internal and External Audit and Risk Management progress reports. The IA report includes audits in progress and an in-year review of resources and achievement of plan.</p> <p>IA reviewed and provided assurance on risk management arrangements in 2015/16.</p>	4
<p>Supporting the quality of the internal audit activity, particularly by underpinning its organisational independence.</p>	<p>Reviewing the internal audit charter and functional reporting arrangements.</p> <p>Assessing the effectiveness of internal audit arrangements providing constructive challenge and supporting improvements.</p> <p>Actively supporting the quality assurance and improvement.</p>	<p>The Head of Audit & Assurance has right of access to and regular briefings for the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee.</p> <p>The Committee receives and approves the IA Charter and annual strategic statement, including reporting and monitoring arrangements, supporting the IA annual plan. The External Auditors Audit Findings Report includes commentary on Internal Audit as part of their assessment of financial control arrangements.</p> <p>The Committee reviews the Internal Audit Quality Assurance Improvement Plan. The annual Head of Audit Opinion Report includes an assessment of IA performance and quality assurance. Committee approved Peer review approach for external assessment of IA compliance with Public Service Internal Audit</p>	5

Areas where the audit committee can add value by supporting improvement	Examples of how the audit committee can add value and provide evidence of effectiveness	Self-evaluation, examples, areas of strength and weakness	Overall assessment: 5 – 1 See key above
		Standards and received the overall opinion and a summary of the findings and themes from the Peer review action plan at its April meeting 2016.	
<p>Aiding the achievement of the authority's goals and objectives through helping to ensure appropriate governance, risk, control and assurance arrangements.</p>	<p>Reviewing how the governance arrangements support the achievement of sustainable outcomes</p> <p>Reviewing major projects and programmes to ensure that governance and assurance arrangements are in place.</p> <p>Reviewing the effectiveness of performance management arrangements.</p>	<p>Work on this area is included in Internal and External Audit plans on a risk assessment basis. IA reviews are classified under one of the three headings in the plan and the annual report. Plans include reviews of key capital and revenue projects. Additional ad hoc work is carried out during the year on request from Directors.</p> <p>Internal audit progress reports include a summary of MAF red priority areas of concern.</p> <p>Performance management is not specifically identified in the Committee Terms of Reference. There are other processes in place within the Council's governance structure, which provide scrutiny and challenge for this area, as part of the Corporate Plan Scorecard monitoring arrangements, to hold Chief Officers and managers to account on a regular basis, such as Management Board and the PAM reporting process as well as Members through PDS, SPT and Executive Board reporting.</p> <p>Internal audit consider performance arrangements as part of any relevant audit and would report on them as part of our progress reporting arrangements.</p> <p>The IA plan also includes specific Key Performance Indicator audits.</p>	4

Areas where the audit committee can add value by supporting improvement	Examples of how the audit committee can add value and provide evidence of effectiveness	Self-evaluation, examples, areas of strength and weakness	Overall assessment: 5 – 1 See key above
Supporting the development of robust arrangements for ensuring value for money.	<p>Ensuring that assurance on value for money arrangements is included in the assurances received by the audit committee.</p> <p>Considering how performance in value for money is evaluated as part of the AGS.</p>	<p>Standing Financial Instruction 3, Procurement and the Payment of Creditors, and Corporate Contract & Procurement Procedure Rules are in place as part of the control framework to ensure that value for money is considered in procurement activity. Regular Creditors audits consider on compliance with these requirements. The Committee receives the External Auditors Combined Audit Findings and Value for Money Report.</p>	4
Helping the authority to implement the values of good governance, including effective arrangements for countering fraud and corruption risks.	<p>Reviewing arrangements against the standards set out in Code of Practice on managing the Risk of Fraud (CIPFA 2014).</p> <p>Reviewing fraud risks and the effectiveness of the organisation's strategy to address those risks.</p> <p>Assessing the effectiveness of ethical governance arrangements for both staff and members.</p>	<p>A Counter Fraud Policy and Strategy is in place (which was reviewed and updated in 2015/16 in accordance with latest CIPFA guidance) supported by the Counter Fraud Policy Framework which includes a Fraud Response Plan, Whistleblowing Policy, Anti Money Laundering Policy and Members and Employees' Codes of Conduct.</p> <p>The Internal Audit progress reports include oversight of counter fraud activity and results.</p> <p>The Committee consider and approve the annual fraud risk assessment as part of the External Auditor's enquiries of those charged with governance and have approved the Counter Fraud Plan as part of Internal Audit annual plan 2016/17.</p> <p>The Committee receives the Counter Annual Report as part of the suite of annual reports which is considered prior to approval of the Annual Governance Statement:</p>	5

Areas where the audit committee can add value by supporting improvement	Examples of how the audit committee can add value and provide evidence of effectiveness	Self-evaluation, examples, areas of strength and weakness	Overall assessment: 5 – 1 See key above
<p>Promoting effective public reporting to the authority's stakeholders and local community and measures to improve transparency and accountability.</p>	<p>Improving how the authority discharges its responsibilities for public reporting; for example, better targeting at the audience, plain English.</p> <p>Reviewing whether decision making through partnership organisations remains transparent and publicly accessible and encouraging greater transparency.</p> <p>Publishing and annual report from the committee.</p>	<p>Audit & Governance Committee meetings are held in public with minimal Part 2 items. Agendas and reports are published on Council internet website.</p> <p>An Annual Audit Committee report is prepared and considered by full Council.</p> <p>Council Committee agendas, reports and minutes are also available on the internet via the Council website along with Executive Members' and Officer decisions. Consideration of Partnership arrangements is not currently included in the Committee's terms of reference. However, a corporate Partnership Governance Framework is in place, which includes a Governance Checklist and the Committee receives a report on the Council's Significant Partnerships Register annually.</p>	4

2019/20 Member Attendance and Committee Work Programme

Five meetings were held during the year. The following Member attendance was recorded:

Councillor/Date	16 April 2019	25 June 2019	16 August 2019	15 October 2019	14 January 2020
Vicky McGurk (Chair from June)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Roy Davies	N/A	✓	A	✓	✓
Tasleem Fazal	N/A	✓	A	✓	✓
Zainab Rawat	N/A	✓	✓	A	✓
Neil Slater	N/A	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ron Whittle	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Salim Sidat (Chair for April)	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Colin Rigby	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kevin Connor	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Jim Casey	A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

✓ = attended meeting A = sent apologies

N/A = Not a Committee Member at the time of the meeting.

A meeting scheduled for 31 March 2020 was cancelled due to Covid-19

Audit & Governance Committee Work Programme 2019/20						
PROGRAMME ACTIVITY:	TERMS OF REF. NUMBER	APRIL	JUNE	AUGUST	OCTOBER	JANUARY
Governance, Risk and Control						
Annual Statement (AGS)	1,2,4		✓			
AGS Progress Report	1,2					✓
Risk Management Annual Report	4,5,6,7		✓			
Annual Counter Fraud Report	7,8,9		✓			

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY:	TERMS OF REF. NUMBER	APRIL	JUNE	AUGUST	OCTOBER	JANUARY
Annual Internal Audit Opinion Report	1,2,7		√			
External Audit Findings and VFM Report	3			√		
External Audit Annual Audit Letter	4,5,7			√		
MAF Update	4,5,6		√		√	√
Risk Management Update	4,5,6	√			√	√
Corporate Annual Report on Health, Safety & Wellbeing	4,5,6		√			
IA Progress & Outcomes Report	4,5,6,7,8	√	√		√	√
Significant Partnerships Register	10					√
Internal Audit						
Annual Plan & Internal Audit Charter	1,2,3,4	√				
IA Progress & Outcomes Report	3,4,5,7,8,11	√	√		√	√
Annual Internal Audit Opinion Report	4,6,9,10,11		√			
External Audit						
Annual Audit Letter	1,5,6					√
Audit Fee Letter	1,3,4,5			√		
Annual Plan	2,3,4	√				
Progress Report	2,3,5	√	√		√	√
External Audit Findings Report	2,5			√	√	
Value For Money Conclusion	2,3,4,5			√	√	
Financial Reporting						
Statement of Accounts	1			√		
External Audit Findings Report	1,2			√	√	
External Audit Annual Audit Letter	1,2					√
Treasury Management						
Strategy Report	1,2				√	
Progress Report	1,2,3,4	√	√		√	√
Annual Outturn Report	1,2,3		√			
Accountability Arrangements						
Committee Annual Report	1,2,3		√			
Committee Self-Assessment	2,3					√

AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 25 June 2019

PRESENT – Councillors McGurk (Chair), Davies, Fazal, Rawat, N Slater, Whittle

OFFICERS – Colin Ferguson (Audit & Assurance), Louise Mattinson (Director of Finance & Customer Services), David Fairclough (Director of HR, Legal & Governance), Amanda Wilkinson, Jenna Russett-Knott, Firoza Hafeji (Governance Officer)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor Kay

RESOLUTIONS

1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Simon Hardman, External Auditor.

2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th April 2019

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th April 2019 were agreed as a correct record and were duly signed by the Chair.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 Corporate Annual Report on Health, Safety & Wellbeing 2018/19

The Director of HR, Legal & Governance, David Fairclough, provided the Committee with the Council's Annual Health, Safety & Wellbeing Management Report for 2018/19.

Key aspects of the report were summarised by Jenna Russett-Knott and Amanda Wilkinson which identified that there were 13 cases reported under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

It was reported that the HSE carried out an unannounced visit in July 2018 on a Highways site, where a worker and a sub-contractor were carrying out repair work. The visit resulted in an Improvement Notice being issued to the council as the employee was not wearing appropriate PPE or using the equipment in a safe way. A full investigation was carried out and an action plan put in place, which was addressed by the service promptly.

Focus for the next 12 months were shared with the Committee which highlighted that a new Health and Safety Policy was to be implemented and disseminated to all staff appropriately.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

5 External Audit Update

In the absence of Simon Hardman, External Auditor, the Director of Finance & Customer Services provided a verbal update on the progress of the audit of the Council's financial statements, which was reported as being on track.

The Committee were informed that the draft accounts would be brought to the Audit & Governance Committee on 24th July 2019 for approval in advance of the deadline for publication of 31st July 2019.

RESOLVED –

- That the verbal update be noted.
- That the draft External Audit Report be brought to the next Audit & Governance Committee to be held on 24th July 2019.

6 Treasury Management Report - March to May 2019

The Director of Finance & Customer Services summarised the Treasury Management Report for 2019-20 and recommended that the position for the period of 1st March to 31st May 2019 be noted.

The report summarised the interest rate environment for the period and the borrowing and lending transactions undertaken, together with the Council's overall debt position. It also reported on the position against Treasury and Prudential Indicators established by the Council.

The key issues summarised the interest rate which highlighted that the Bank of England's Bank Rate held steady at 0.75%, having increased in August 2018.

At 31st May, the Council had invested approximately £21.2M, compared to £49.6M at the start of the period. The breakdown of the closing investment balance was shared with the Committee.

The report highlighted that up to the end of May 2019, there was a decrease in short term borrowing of £30M, as loans of £54M were repaid and £24M of new loans were taken. The key elements of long term borrowing were noted by the Committee.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7 Treasury Management Annual Report 2018/19

Members were provided with the Treasury Management Annual Report 2018/19 and recommended to note the Outturn position for 2018/19.

The report summarised the Treasury Priorities, Original Strategy, Economic Review, Treasury Management Performance and Consultancy together with the Counterparty Update.

Risk management strategies were shared highlighting the Council's key priorities for managing its investments.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted

8 Audit & Assurance Progress & Outcomes to May 2019

The Head of Audit & Assurance submitted a report which updated the Committee on the achievements and progress made by Audit & Assurance in the period from 1st March 2019 to 28th May 2019 alongside the proposed arrangements for the re-assessment of Internal Audit for compliance with the Public Sector Internal Standards.

The report focused on a number of key areas in the Audit & Assurance Plan, in particular Corporate Governance and Risk, Counter Fraud Activity and progress on the data matches from the National Fraud Initiative. Recent internal audits completed and finalised were noted.

Members expressed comments that the red priorities summarised in the Corporate Governance and Risk table impacted on other service areas and required scrutinising accordingly.

The Committee noted the outcomes achieved to 28th May 2019 against the Annual Audit & Assurance Plan, which was approved by Committee on 16th April 2019.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the proposed approach for the external assessment of internal audit against requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) be noted.
- 2) That the Committee approved for a peer review which would be cost effective.
- 3) That Jayne Ivory, Director of Children Services, be invited to a future meeting to update the Committee on areas of concern which were marked as red priorities in the summary Director Exception/Dashboard Report and Assurance Statements.

9 Annual Risk Management Report 2018/19

Members were provided with the Annual Risk Management report for 2018/19 which included an overall conclusion of the effectiveness management arrangements which were in place within the Council.

The Committee were asked to consider and review the annual risk management report and agree the conclusion on the overall effectiveness of the Council's risk management arrangements in place during 2018/19.

The key elements of risk and resilience considered under the framework were shared as:

- Risk Management
- Insurance
- Emergency Planning and Business Continuity (including health aspects)
- Information Governance

- Health, Safety and Wellbeing

RESOLVED - That the annual risk management report be noted and agreed with the conclusion on the overall effectiveness of the Council's risk management arrangements in place during 2018/19

10 Annual Counter Fraud Report 2018/19

The Head of Audit & Assurance provided the Committee with the Annual Counter Fraud report for 2018/19.

The report highlighted key issues and a summary of the work undertaken during the year which supported the overall conclusion on the measures in place.

Members noted that the report provided the Committee with assurance on the effectiveness of the counter fraud arrangements in place within the Council in its roles of reviewing the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the Council from fraud or corruption, ensuring the Council maintains a robust counter fraud culture via the implementation of the Counter Fraud Strategy.

RESOLVED – That the Counter Fraud Annual Report be noted.

11 Internal Audit Annual Opinion Report 2018/19

The Head of Audit & Assurance provided the Committee with the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2018/19.

The purpose of the report was to provide independent evidence to allow the Audit & Governance Committee to fulfil its role and function of providing independent assurance to the Council on the adequacy of the risk management, and internal control arrangements in place within the Council.

RESOLVED –

- That the Committee noted the content of the Annual Internal Audit Opinion Report for 2018/19 (as set out in Appendix A)
- That the Committee noted the overall annual opinion of the Head of Audit & Assurance, which was that adequate assurance can be placed upon the Council's framework of governance, risk management and internal control; and
- That the Committee noted that the internal audit work that supports this opinion had been delivered in accordance with the Public sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and that there were no significant areas of non-conformance.

12 Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19

Members received a draft Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19 for the year ended 31st March 2019 and up to June 2019.

The report outlined key developments and on-going arrangements in governance in 2018/19.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

13

Audit & Governance Committee Annual Report 2018/19

The Head of Audit & Assurance presented the draft Audit & Governance Committee Annual Report for 2018/19 for consideration and approval by the Committee.

The report summarised the work undertaken by the Committee during the year to demonstrate that it has fulfilled its agreed terms of reference.

The report highlighted that having an effective Committee brings many benefits to the Council such as:

- Increasing public confidence in the objectivity and fairness of financial and other reporting;
- Providing additional assurance through a process of independent and objective scrutiny;
- Raising awareness of the need for internal control and the implementation of audit recommendations; and
- Reinforcing the importance and independence of internal audit.

The Annual Report indicated the breadth of the Committee's work in ensuring that every aspect of the Council's work should be compliant with standards and transparent to its stakeholders.

RESOLVED –

- That the Committee approved the Committee's Annual Report including the statement on its effectiveness during 2018/19 and the draft effectiveness self-assessment evaluation; and
- That the report be referred to the Full Council for endorsement.

Signed:

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed

AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 6 August 2019

PRESENT – Councillors McGurk (Chair), Rawat, Slater N, and Whittle.

OFFICERS – Louise Mattinson, Colin Ferguson, Simon Ross, Julie Jewson and Phil Llewellyn (Blackburn with Darwen BC), John Farrar (Grant Thornton).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor Andy Kay.

RESOLUTIONS

14 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Councillors Davies and Fazal.

15 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

16 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Ron Whittle declared an interest (Member of Lancashire Pension Fund Committee).

17 External Audit Findings Report 2018/19

John Farrar, Engagement Lead, Grant Thornton, outlined the key Audit Findings for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council for the Year ended 31st March 2019.

The majority of work was completed on site during June and July 2019. Recommendations for management were outlined in Appendix A of the report, with the follow up of recommendations from the prior year's audit detailed in Appendix B. Audit adjustments were detailed in Appendix C. In terms of financial statements, the anticipated audit opinion would be unmodified.

Following a risk based review of the Council's value for money arrangements, the audit concluded that the Council had proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, and it was therefore anticipated that an unqualified value for money conclusion would be issued, with work due to be completed to meet the deadline of 13th September 2019.

The significant finding, in terms of audit risks, related to the valuation of pension fund net liability, and reference was made to the recent McCloud Ruling. The valuation of the Authority's pension fund net liability had been identified as a significant risk.

The report also highlighted other significant findings relating to recharges in

the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, Journal Control issues and Revenue Testing issues.

Members and Officers made comments and observations of the findings of the audit and thanks were passed to internal audit and finance officers for their assistance during field work.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

18 Statement of Accounts 2018/19

A report was submitted, which outlined the issues arising from the external audit of the Council's 2018/19 Statement of Accounts, and requested Audit and Governance Committee approval of the audited accounts prior to their publication, as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 required that the accounts should be considered and approved by members prior to publication by the 31st July following the year to which they related. This would enable the Audit and Governance Committee to review and approve the accounts, having considered the issues raised by the auditors in their Audit Findings Report.

The 2018/19 draft Statement of Accounts were certified by the Director of Finance and Customer Services on 31st May 2019, and subsequently published on the Council's website. The audit of those draft accounts commenced at the beginning of June 2019 and amendments had been made to the accounts in line with audit findings to date.

The external audit of the accounts was not concluded in time for the accounts to be published by 31 July, in the main due to the additional time required to collate further information regarding pensions, and the auditors requiring additional time to agree the Council's accounting treatment of its pension costs following the McCloud judgement. This was the case for numerous local authorities across the country.

In order to comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, a notice had been published on the Council's website stating that the statement of accounts could not currently be published, and confirming that the accounts would be published as soon as reasonably practicable after the receipt of a report from the auditor which contains the auditor's final findings from their audit.

RESOLVED – That the Audit and Governance Committee:

1. Note the outcome of the audit of the Council's financial statements and the Value for Money conclusion as presented by Grant Thornton in their Audit Findings Report for 2018/19 (previous agenda item).
2. Approve the Statement of Accounts for 2018/19.
3. Approve the letter of representation from the Director of Finance & Customer Services to the external auditors for which a draft is provided at Appendix 1, with the final version to be made available at the meeting; and

4. That delegated authority be granted for the Chair to sign the Statement of Accounts 2018/19 in consultation with the Director of Finance and Customer Services.

Signed:

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed

AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 15 October 2019

PRESENT – Councillors, McGurk (in the Chair), Whittle, Davies, Fazal and Slater.

OFFICERS – Louise Mattinson, Andrew Tordoff, Chris O'Halloran, Phil Llewellyn and Becky Bird (BwDBC), John Farrar and Simon Hardman (Grant Thornton).

ALSO PRESENT – Councillor Andy Kay.

RESOLUTIONS

19 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Councillor Rawat.

20 Minutes of the meeting held on 6th August 2019

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6th August 2019 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the amendment of the third paragraph in minute number 17, with the removal of 'with work due to be completed to meet the deadline of 13th September 2019'.

21 Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were received.

22 External Audit Progress Report and Update - Year Ended 31st March 2020

John Farrar and Simon Hardman reported that the financial statements audit for 2018-19 had been completed and the report and certificate of closure had been issued on 30th September, and a Value for Money (VFM) Conclusion had also been issued on the same day. Planning was underway for the 2019-20 audit and VFM work.

It was also reported that the annual Housing Benefit Subsidy certification work was in progress for 2018-19 and would be completed by the November deadline. The Council's Teachers Pension return was also being reviewed and work would be complete by the 30th November deadline.

A Sector update was also provided, highlighting key developments and changes.

In discussing the report, the Chair and several Members of the Committee made reference to the additional fees highlighted on page 27 of the agenda, where £9k additional fees were outlined, £3k of which related to assessment of the impact of the McCloud ruling, £3k relating to work around IAS 19 (Pensions) and a further £3k relating to PPE valuations work. The Chair indicated that these additional costs were forecastable and should

have been planned work and not be an additional cost to the Council.

John Farrar explained the circumstances and advised that the IAS 19 and PPE work had been highlighted by the Financial Reporting Council nationally and that the quality of audit work in these areas needed to improve across the sector. Accordingly, the fees for the extra work had been passed on to the Council.

It was confirmed that Council officers would be pursuing this matter with the P.S.A.A, and the Chair commented that it was understood that not all auditors had charged their clients for this work.

John Farrar confirmed that there would be no additional fees for this work in 19/20.

In relation to the actual audit, the Chair advised that she requested feedback from officers on the audit, and feedback had been received that there had been repetition of work, with the same areas being looked at again from the beginning and it would have been better if a fresh approach had been taken. The External Auditors advised that some of the audit work had to be done the same way, but that changeover of staff had been part of the issue, but that handover of work would be managed moving forward and monthly meetings with Finance would also help.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

23 Treasury Management Report - June to August 2019

A report was submitted which updated Members with regard to the Treasury Management position to date and proposed Strategy for the remainder of 2019/20. The report summarised the interest rate environment for the period and borrowing and lending transactions undertaken, together with the Council's overall debt position, and the position against Treasury and Prudential Indicators established by the Council.

RESOLVED – That the Treasury Management position for the period, and proposed Strategy for the remainder of the year be noted.

24 Audit & Assurance - Progress & Outcomes to September 2019

A report was submitted outlining the achievements and progress made by Audit & Assurance in the period from 1st June 2019 to 30th September 2019.

Counter Fraud Activity relating to the National Fraud Initiative was highlighted, along with other fraud investigations, in particular two separate cases of suspected overpayments in respect of social care clients in receipt of Direct Payments for their care provision. Louise Mattinson advised that she would raise these matters with Sayyed Osman, Director (Statutory DASS) in terms of the administration around changes of circumstances.

The report also highlighted recent audits undertaken, and those ongoing, along with audit performance compared to the previous period.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

25 **Risk Management - 2019/20 Quarter 1 Review**

The Committee were advised of risk management activity for the first quarter – 1st April 2019 to 30th June 2019.

There were 13 open risks at 30th June 2019, with no change to the residual risk score for any of the risks identified since the last quarter.

In discussing the report, the risk relating to trip hazards on un-adopted roads was raised, with Louise Mattinson advising that she would check with the Council's insurance team about any potential liabilities and report back accordingly.

The Committee were asked to consider which Corporate Risk it would like to review at its next meeting, between Adult Safeguarding and Health Outcomes, with the Committee selecting Health Outcomes.

RESOLVED – 1) That the risk management activity that has occurred during the period be noted; and

2) That a review of the Corporate Risk Health Outcomes be undertaken at the next meeting in terms of its assessment, control and monitoring.

Signed:

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed

AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 14 January 2020

PRESENT – Councillors, McGurk (in the Chair), Whittle, Davies, Fazal, Rawat and Slater, N.

OFFICERS – Louise Mattinson, Colin Ferguson, Moshin Mulla and Phil Llewellyn (BwDBC), John Farrar (Grant Thornton).

ALSO PRESENT – Councillor Andy Kay, Executive Member for Finance and Governance.

RESOLUTIONS

26 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting.

27 Minutes of the meeting held on 15th October 2019

The Minutes of the last meeting were moved as a correct record. John Farrar stated that in his opinion, Minute Number 22 was not correct in terms of the following wording “John Farrar confirmed that there would be no additional fees for this work in 19/20”, John indicated that he had not made that commitment. He stated that some of the work required would be recurring and therefore would be an additional cost in future years.

The Chair stated that in her opinion the Minute was accurate and that the additional fees referred to were a one off cost. The Chair, seconded by Councillor Neil Slater then again moved the Minutes as a correct record.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 15th October 2019 be agreed as a correct record.

28 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Ron Whittle declared an interest in Agenda Item 7 – Audit & Assurance Progress Report (School Governor at Roe Lee School).

29 Significant Partnerships Register

Mohsin Mulla, Policy and Partnerships Manager, reported on the Significant Partnerships Register, which identified all the significant partnerships the local authority was involved in as per the Audit & Governance Committee's Terms of Reference, and which was reviewed and updated on a six monthly basis.

Members discussed potential omissions from the Register and also the significance of some the partnerships listed.

RESOLVED – That the significant partnerships submitted for inclusion in 2019/20 be noted.

(Councillor Tasleem Fazal in the Chair).

30 External Audit Annual Letter for Year Ended 31st March 2019.

The External Audit Annual Letter for Year Ended 31st March 2019 was submitted.

RESOLVED – That the External Audit Annual Letter for Year Ended 31st March 2019 be noted.

31 External Audit Progress Report and Sector Update

John Farrar reported on the progress of Grant Thornton in delivering their responsibilities as External Auditors, and highlighted the emerging issues and developments nationally.

Detailed planning of the 2019/20 audit commenced in January and interim fieldwork would begin in February.

The certification report for the Council's annual Housing Benefit Subsidy claim was issued on 21st November 2019, with the report relating to the annual Teacher's return issued on 23rd December 2019.

The Committee were advised that they would be kept informed of the independent review into local government audit being headed up by Tony Redmond.

John advised that Grant Thornton had recently recommended that the Audited Accounts deadline should return to the end of September each year, rather than the current deadline of the end of July.

In discussing the report, fees for 20/21 were raised, and John advised that would be liaising with Louise Mattinson as soon as possible on the fees.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

32 Audit & Assurance Progress Report November 2019

The Committee received a report which highlighted the achievements and progress made by Audit & Assurance in the period 1st October 2019 to 30th November 2019.

Further to discussions at the last meeting, Colin Ferguson updated the Committee on Counter Fraud activity, and Louise Mattinson provided information on the process for Private Care Home Payments via the Mosaic system and explained the circumstances where overpayments to Care Homes were made and how these were recovered. Colin Ferguson agreed to send further information on 28 cases to Councillor Whittle.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

33 Risk Management – 2019/20 Quarter 2 Review

The Committee were advised of risk management activity for the second quarter – 1st July 2019 to 30th September 2019. There were 21 open risks

at 30th September 2019.

During the year, officers continued to liaise with colleagues across the Council to identify areas to make use of the risk management support that was available from Zurich Municipal as part of the current long term insurance agreement. Colleagues from Zurich Risk Engineering (ZRE) had recently completed reviews of Lone Working arrangements and Inspection Regimes.

The Committee then considered a Corporate Risk to look at the next meeting, and agreed that No.10 which related to Community Cohesion Integration be reviewed.

RESOLVED – 1). That the report be noted; and
2). That Corporate Risk No.10 be reviewed at the next meeting.

34 Annual Governance Statement (AGS) – Progress of 2018/19 Actions and 2019/20 Approach/Timetable

Members were informed on progress of the actions taken to address the significant governance issues identified in the 2018/19 AGS and the planned approach and timetable for producing the 2019/20 Statement.

The Accounts & Audit Regulations required that the Council must publish an AGS on an annual basis in accordance with proper practice. The Audit & Governance Committee was also required to review and provide independent assurance on the Council's governance framework.

The following significant issues were noted in the 2018/19 AGS:

- Children's Services Financial Position - action brought forward from 2017/18); and
- Compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) - 2018/19 action).

Details of the progress made to 30 November for each of these areas was provided in Appendix 1. These showed that appropriate steps had been taken by senior officers and managers in respect of the issues identified. However, the strategies taken in Children's Services to address the issue in this area would take time to affect real change and it was forecast that the Portfolio budget would overspend at 31 March 2020. The progress made regarding the action to address GDPR compliance was largely in accordance with the plan. The issue was still assessed as red in the half-year Digital & Business Change Director's Half-year Management Accountabilities Framework (MAF) Dashboard Report. The impact of the actions on this area would not be able to be assessed until the end of Quarter 3.

The approach and timetable for 2019/20 were also outlined.

RESOLVED – That the report and approach/timetable for producing the 2019/20 AGS be noted.

The Committee received the results of the annual assessment of compliance of the Audit & Governance Committee against recognised best practise recommended by CIPFA as well as a summary of Committee members' self-assessments. The results of the various assessments were set out in appendices 1, 2 and 3 to the report.

The details included at Appendix 3 provided a summary of the responses received from the Councillors who have been members of the Committee during the Municipal Year. This also includes a comparison with the results from the 2017/18 and 2018/19 scores. The overall results show that there is a belief by the members that the Committee is operating effectively, with average scores of satisfactory/partly agree or better for most questions.

The Council's Audit & Governance Committee arrangements were largely compliant with the recommended guidance. The only areas where full compliance could not be provided was:

- Question 7: The Committee's current terms of reference does not include reference to the ethical framework.
- Question 18: The Audit & Governance Committee has not obtained feedback from others interacting or relying on its work.

However, it was recognised that that the Committee's Annual Report was presented to Full Council. This presents an opportunity to obtain feedback from Councillor colleagues at least annually.

The evaluation of effectiveness document (Appendix 2) had been completed by the Head of Audit & Assurance. The previous version was appended to the Audit & Governance Committee's annual report considered by this Committee on 25 June 2019. It noted the additional challenge of corporate risks that the Committee now carried out on a regular basis, the senior officer attendance at its meetings to update Members on progress of agreed actions from key reports. It also noted that the Committee now received a Counter Fraud Annual Report.

Across five areas the score was evaluated at 4 out of a possible 5, demonstrating: "clear evidence from some sources that the Committee is actively and effectively supporting improvement across some aspects of this area". For the remaining four areas evaluated, the assessed score was 5, demonstrating: "clear evidence is available from a number of sources that the committee is actively supporting improvements across all aspects of this area. The improvements made are clearly identifiable".

RESOLVED – That the Committee note and approve:

- the Audit & Governance Committee's position when compared to the CIPFA good practice checklist (Appendix 1) and the additional actions noted;
- the Evaluation of Effectiveness of the Audit & Governance Committee, produced by the Head of Audit & Assurance on

behalf of the Chair of the Committee (Appendix 2); and,

- the summary results from the individual Committee member self-assessments of the overall effectiveness of the Committee (Appendix 3).

36 Treasury Management Report 2019/20 – 1st September to 30th November 2019

A report was submitted which updated Members with regard to the Treasury Management position to date and draft Strategy for 2020/21. The report summarised the interest rate environment for the period and borrowing and lending transactions undertaken, together with the Council's overall debt position, and the position against Treasury and Prudential Indicators established by the Council.

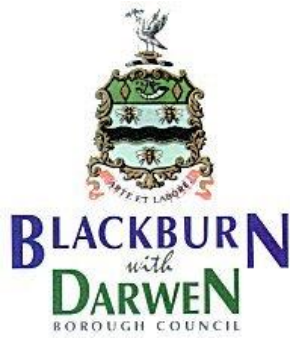
Louise Mattinson highlighted the recent increase in the cost of long term borrowing through the Public Works Loan Board, advising that short term and long term options would continue to be reviewed. Reference was also made to the recent refinancing of the Phase 2 PFI Scheme which had resulted in a financial benefit to the Council of £971,000. Additionally, it was reported that new employer contribution rates following the triennial valuation of the pension fund would commence from 1st April 2020, and options were being considered relating to prepayment savings.

RESOLVED – That the Committee note the Treasury Management position for the period and draft Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/1 appended to the report.

Signed:

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed



TO:	POLICY COUNCIL
FROM:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE / HEAD OF PAID SERVICE
DATE:	3 DECEMBER 2020

The Council's Organisational and Departmental Structure

1. PURPOSE

To outline recommendations from the Chief Executive, the statutory Head of Paid Service, for a realignment and consolidation of the Council's organisational structure to reduce the number of separate and distinct Departments, to coordinate complementary services with clear synergies, to enable effective delivery of the Council's key priorities as well as the continuing response to, and planning for recovery from, the Covid-19 pandemic. This will be coupled with a corresponding realignment of responsibilities of the current Chief Officer team within a revised Senior Leadership structure which ensures resilience and maintains senior level capacity to support elected members, and to lead and deliver our key strategic priorities, against the backdrop of the Covid pandemic, in the short and medium to longer term. The report together with independent HR and employment legal advice has been considered by the Chief Officer Employment Committee who are responsible for Chief Officer appointments.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:

- Approves the organisational and departmental structure recommended by the Chief Executive/Head of Paid Services as outlined in the report (Appendix B refers)
- Notes that there is no increase in senior leadership posts or overall management costs
- Approves the revised, consolidated Chief Officer grades and posts as outlined in the report
- Agrees that the Chief Officer Employment Committee confirm appointments to the Strategic Director and Director posts

3. BACKGROUND

In December 2018, Council agreed to reduce its most senior leadership officer posts from two to one, deleting the Deputy Chief Executive role and delivering an annual saving of £130,000 after the first year. That meant that, for a unitary authority of our size, the Council then had a very flat organisational structure with eight Departments each led by a Director, together with the Chief Executive who is also responsible for the Growth Programme, Communications & Engagement, and Policy & Performance.

In 2020, throughout the ongoing response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Chief Officers have all adapted their roles and responsibilities to ensure an effective response across the whole Council and the Borough, working with key partners in the health sector and the Lancashire Local Resilience Forum (LRF). Despite funding from government to support the response to the pandemic and to compensate the Council for a proportion of the loss of income this year, ongoing budget challenges remain this year and into the medium term, along with the uncertainty of a further one year Spending Review and financial settlement expected in December.

The impact of the virus is ongoing and our response will need to continue over the medium to longer term, flexing according to the needs of our residents and businesses, the incidence and rate of spread of the virus and the success of the introduction of control measures, including potential vaccines.

Therefore it is appropriate at this time to review and realign organisational structures and senior officer responsibilities to ensure the Council is in a position to effectively coordinate and deliver on its broader key priorities and statutory responsibilities whilst also ensuring there is capacity and, importantly, resilience across and within our Chief Officer team.

A meeting of the Chief Officer Employment Committee was arranged on 23 November to consider the recommendation from the Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service to reduce and consolidate the number of separate Council departments and to consider the proposals for the corresponding realignment of Chief Officer roles and consolidation of grades, including consideration of the HR and employment implications of the proposals, and to provide assurance to Council on the proposals.

4. RATIONALE

Departmental responsibilities and alignment of key services are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect synergies and priorities. The current senior leadership structure was agreed two years ago, at Policy Council in December 2018. The new Chief Executive, the Council's statutory Head of Paid Service, commenced in post on 1st May 2019, and, although impacted and delayed by the demands of the initial response to Covid, has now reviewed the current organisational structure, senior leadership strategic capacity and resilience in view of the Council's priorities, the budget challenge and the ongoing response to and planning for recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The recommendations facilitate a leaner departmental structure with an experienced and resilient senior leadership team, both across the Council and within a reduced number of departments, focused on the Council's key strategic priorities for the longer term, whilst also managing the ongoing response to Covid-19, and ensuring the retention of key skills, knowledge and experience, avoiding potentially expensive redundancies, within a cost neutral proposal and no overall increase in management posts.

5. KEY ISSUES

This report presents proposals for the continued effective management of the Council against a backdrop of Covid-19, reflecting the resources available, the current priorities and the medium to longer-term objectives of the Council.

There have been continuing significant reductions in the Council's senior management capacity over the last 10 years which has reflected the reducing budget of the Council and the need to make savings and protect front line services as much as possible. As a relatively small unitary authority with significant financial and demand challenges, statutory responsibilities, long term structural and health inequalities, as well as plans for continuing growth and development, it would not be prudent or effective to reduce the senior leadership team further at this time. Whilst we have managed well, Covid and our response has stretched our capacity and demonstrated the risks inherent in a relatively small team and the challenge of managing risk, ensuring resilience and cover at a senior level.

The current departmental and senior leadership / Chief Officer structure is included at Appendix A. Posts include the Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service role itself and the 3 statutory posts of:

- Director of Children's Services & Education (DCS),
- Director of Adults & Prevention (DASS) and
- Director of Public Health & Wellbeing (DPH).

Other Directors with statutory roles are:

- the Director of HR, Legal & Governance, designated as Monitoring Officer,
- the Director of Finance, designated as Section 151 (chief financial) officer,
- the Director of Digital & Customer Services, designated as SIRO (senior information risk owner),

together with:

- the Director of Environment & Operations, and
- the Director of Growth & Development.

The changes proposed reflect the need to respond flexibly to ongoing and emerging challenges. They build on knowledge of what works well and look to strengthen core strategic leadership roles and skills across a smaller number of departments aligning key services and functions.

It is important to note that the proposals are not looking to create additional posts at the most senior levels. The proposals realign responsibilities within a reduced number of larger departments bringing complementary services together, led by refocused roles for Strategic Directors supported by Directors and/or Deputy Directors, supporting a more resilient senior team.

The proposals seek to support the Council's strategic management capacity through a leadership team coordinating services across Departments, with broader corporate responsibility and roles focussed on portfolio priorities and also working with senior elected members on the vision, narrative and plan around the next stages of whole council transformation and development of the borough.

The current senior leadership team comprises experienced officers who all provide confidence that the Council can continue to be effective going forward. Nevertheless, care must be taken to plan effectively to assure both the short term and the longer term organisational stability.

In this context it would not be appropriate to seek further savings from senior management at this time, especially given that, alongside the ongoing Covid-19 response and recovery, the Council has an ambitious work programme and performance agenda.

This requires the Chief Executive to continue to be supported to manage multiple agendas by a senior leadership team which provides stable, successful leadership, building upon successes in recent years, especially with ongoing budget challenges, Covid response and recovery, demand management and other pressures.

The proposal realigns and consolidates services into four large, core Departments led and coordinated by Strategic Directors with experienced and knowledgeable Directors and/or Deputy Directors, and a 5th smaller Director-led Department supporting the Chief Executive on HR, communications and engagement, and governance roles including support for the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer roles.

The proposal retains the core skills and experience of the current senior team, and enables a consolidation of current grades, removing the existing special responsibility and other allowances, contained within existing budgets and without the potential for significant costs which would likely arise from any proposals resulting in senior officer redundancies.

Given the level of the existing and proposed posts, Council approval is required. The proposed realignment of roles and alignment of key service areas within larger, service departments is shown at Appendix B. The proposed Chief Officer levels are shown at Appendix C.

There are no impacts on elected members or portfolios, although as happens periodically, the Leader of the Council may wish to review and realign Executive Member portfolios in due course and would then advise Council accordingly.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The establishment of or changes to posts with a pay grade in excess of £99,999 is a matter for Council consideration. The appointment to such posts is a matter for the Chief Executive / Chief Officer Employment Committee.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposed realignment of responsibilities, revised senior management structure and subsequent review of wider management roles in the revised Departments will be contained within existing budgets and with no requirement for costly redundancies in the senior leadership team.

The proposed structure, Strategic Director and Director roles have been independently considered by North West Employers who have advised that they are at the lower end when benchmarked against other upper tier authorities.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Under the Constitution, the Chief Executive is the statutory Head of Paid Service and reports to Council on the officer structure of the Council and the discharge of the Council's functions. There are no legal implications and there are no proposed redundancies or significant detriment for the senior officers involved.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional resource implications, independent employment law and HR advice is provided to the Chief Officer Employment Committee on the proposed processes, revised structure and consolidated grades including benchmarking information in order that the Committee can provide assurances to Council in considering the report and recommendations.

10. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no equality implications arising from this report.

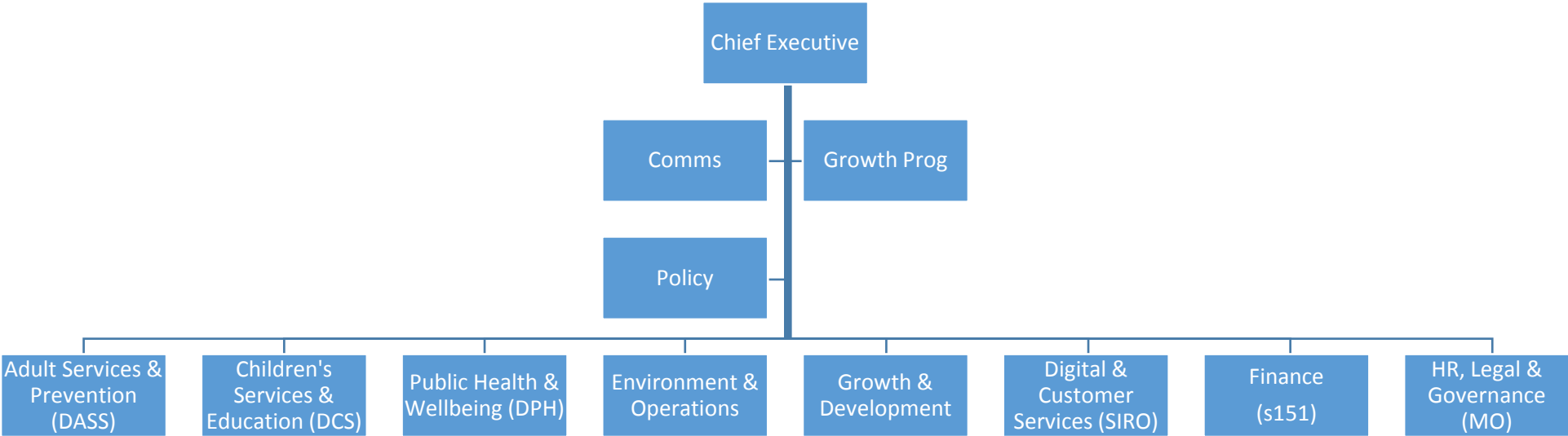
11. CONSULTATIONS

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

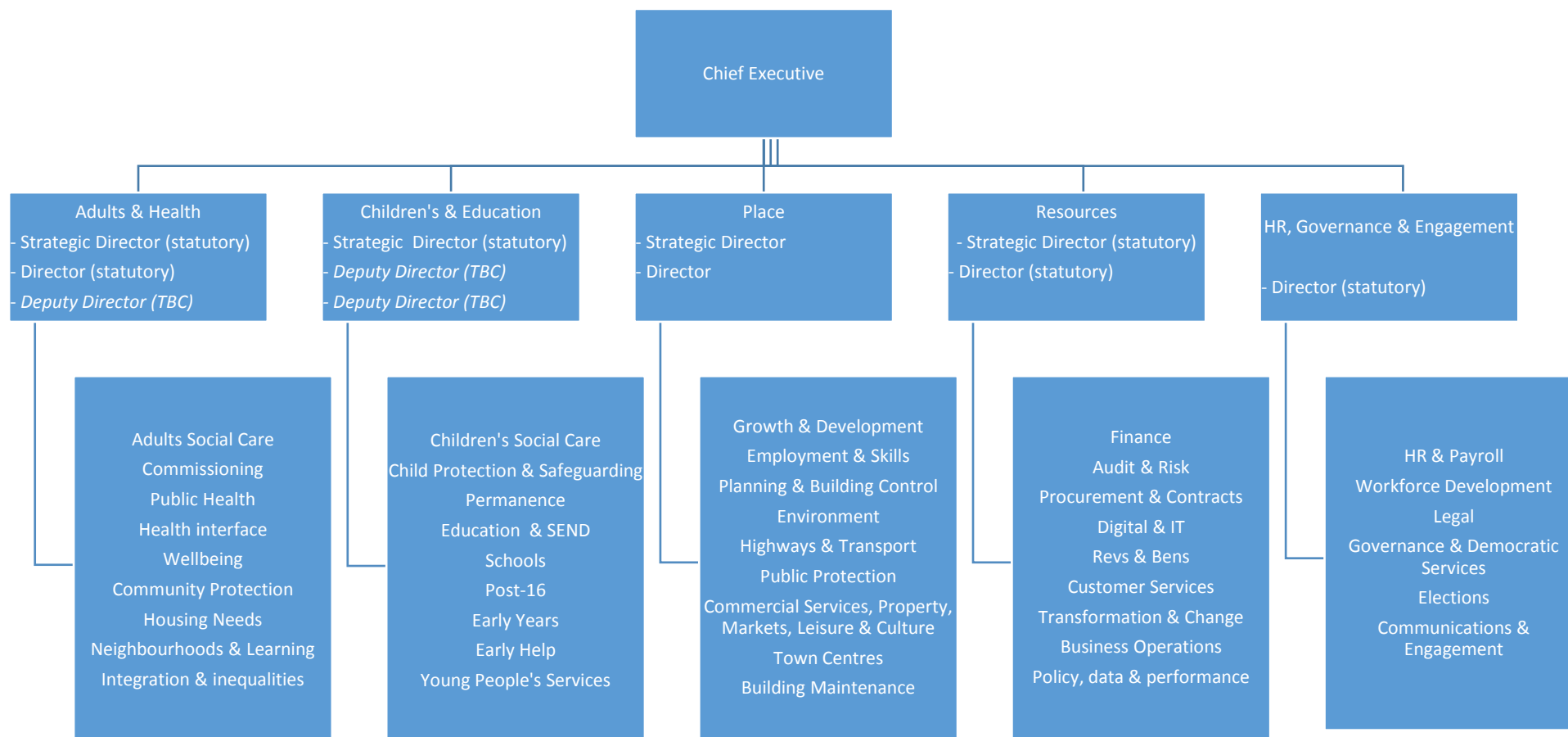
CONTACT OFFICER: Denise Park, Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)
DATE: 3 December 2020

Current Departmental and Chief Officer structure at November 2020:

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Proposed Departmental and Chief Officer structure for 2021:



Current and Proposed Chief Officer Grades and Posts

Chief Officer grades, special responsibility and any other allowances are reported in the Pay Policy Statement agreed at Finance Council each year.

Current Grades wef 1st April 2020:Proposed Grades, subject to approval:

Director 2	£79,900 - £87,947	Director 2	£79,900 - £87,947
Director 1	£93,962 - £100,580	Director 1	£91,756 - £100,580
Director 1 + SRA	£101,603 - £108,221	Strategic Director 2	£101,000 - £110,200
Director 1 + 2 x SRA	£109,244 - £115,862	Strategic Director 1	£111,000 - £120,600
Director 1 + SRA + R&R	£113,603 - £120,221		

SRA - special responsibility allowance

R&R - recruitment and retention allowance

Proposed grading of posts, subject to confirmation:

Director 1	Director in Adults & Health Director in Place Director in Resources Director, HR, Governance & Engagement
Strategic Director 2	Strategic Director, Place Strategic Director, Resources
Strategic Director 1	Strategic Director, Adults & Health Strategic Director, Children & Education

Proposed 3 x Deputy Director roles shown in Appendix B, arising from revised or remodelled existing Head of Service roles, are to be confirmed in the next phase of management review.

Year Planner 2020-21

Please note that all meeting dates are subject to change

Last Updated 9th November 2020

Changes to note:

Finance Council moved from Monday 22nd February 2020 to Monday 1st March 2020.

YEAR PLANNER 2020

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

YEAR PLANNER 2020/2021

	November	December	January	February	March	April
Monday				1	1 FC	
Tuesday		1 DTC		2 DTC	2 DTC	
Wednesday		2 HWE		3	3 SC	
Thursday		3 PC		4	4	1
Friday		4	1 New Years Day	5	5	2 Good Friday
Saturday		5	2	6	6	3
Sunday	1	6	3	7	7	4
Monday	2 Schools re-open	7 PEOPLE OSC	4 Schools re-open	8	8 PEOPLE OSC	5 Easter Monday
Tuesday	3 DTC	8 GLSC	5	9 GLSC	9 GLSC	6 DTC
Wednesday	4	9	6	10	10 HWE	7
Thursday	5	10 EB	7	11 EB	11 EB	8 EB
Friday	6	11	8	12 Schools Close	12	9
Saturday	7	12	9	13	13	10
Sunday	8 Remembrance Sunday	13	10	14	14	11
Monday	9	14 PLACE OSC	11 CPSAG	15 Half Term	15 PLACE OSC	12 Schools re-open
Tuesday	10 GLSC	15 LASC	12 AUD	16 LASC	16 CPSAG	13 Ramadan Starts GLSC
Wednesday	11	16 CI/T	13	17	17	14
Thursday	12 EB	17 PH	14 EB	18 PH	18 PH	15 PH
Friday	13	18 Schools Close	15	19	19	16
Saturday	14	19	16	20	20	17
Sunday	15	20	17	21	21	18
Monday	16	21 Christmas Holidays RESOURCES OSC	18	22 Schools re-open	22 RESOURCES OSC	19
Tuesday	17	22	19 GLSC	23	23	20 LASC
Wednesday	18	23	20	24 CI/T	24 CI/T	21 CI/T
Thursday	19 PH	24	21 PH	25	25 CF	22
Friday	20	25 Christmas Day	22	26	26 Schools Close	23
Saturday	21	26	23	27	27	24
Sunday	22	27	24	28	28	25
Monday	23	28 Boxing Day	25		29 Easter Holidays	26
Tuesday	24	29	26 L		30 AUD	27 L
Wednesday	25 CI/T	30	27 SC CI/T		31	28
Thursday	26	31	28 CF			29
Friday	27		29			30
Saturday	28		30			
Sunday	29		31			
Monday	30					
Tuesday						
Wednesday						

YEAR PLANNER 2021

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

Year Planner 2021-22

Please note that all meeting dates are subject to change

Last Updated 24.11.2020

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Changes to note: proposed change of dates from those agreed at Finance Council in relation to Annual Council and Civic Sunday.

YEAR PLANNER 2021

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

YEAR PLANNER 2021/2022

	November	December	January	February	March	April
Monday	1 schools re-open					
Tuesday	2 DTC			1 DTC	1 DTC	
Wednesday	3	1		2	2	
Thursday	4	2 PC		3	3 CPSAG	
Friday	5	3		4	4	1 Schools close
Saturday	6	4	1 New Years' Day	5	5	2
Sunday	7	5	2	6	6	3
Monday	8	6 PEOPLE OSC	3 Bank Holiday	7	7 PEOPLE OSC	4
Tuesday	9 GLSC	7 DTC	4 Schools re-open	8 GLSC	8 GLSC	5 DTC
Wednesday	10	8	5	9	9	6
Thursday	11 EB	9 EB	6	10 EB	10 EB	7
Friday	12	10	7	11 Schools close	11	8
Saturday	13	11	8	12	12	9
Sunday	14	12	9	13	13	10
Monday	15	13 PLACE OSC	10 CPSAG	14	14 PLACE OSC	11
Tuesday	16	14 GLSC	11 GLSC	15 LASC	15 HWE	12 GLSC
Wednesday	17	15	12	16	16	13
Thursday	18 PH	16 PH	13 EB	17 PH	17 PH	14 EB
Friday	19	17 Schools close	14	18	18	15 Good Friday
Saturday	20	18	15	19	19	16
Sunday	21	19	16	20	20	17
Monday	22	20 RESOURCES OSC	17	21 Schools re-open	21 RESOURCES OSC	18 Easter Monday
Tuesday	23	21 LASC	18 AUD	22	22	19 LASC Schools re-open
Wednesday	24 SC	22	18 CI/T	23	23	20
Thursday	25 CI/T	23	20 PH	24 CI/T	24 CF	21 PH
Friday	26	24	21	25	25	22
Saturday	27	25 Christmas Day	22	26	26	23
Sunday	28	26 Boxing Day	23	27	27	24
Monday	29	27 Bank Holiday	24	28 FC	28	25
Tuesday	30 HWE	28 Bank Holiday	25 L		29 AUD	26 L
Wednesday		29	26		30 SC	27
Thursday		30 CI/T	27 CF		31 CI/T	28 CI/T
Friday		31	28			29
Saturday			29			30
Sunday			30			
Monday			31			
Tuesday						
Wednesday						

YEAR PLANNER 2022

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