

# Public Document Pack

## Executive Board

Thursday, 7 September 2023

Time: 6.00 pm

Venue: Meeting Room A

Address: Blackburn Town Hall

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### AGENDA

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

1. **Welcome and Apologies**
2. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**  
**Executive Board Minutes August 2023** **4 - 11**
3. **Declarations of Interest**  
**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FORM** **12**
4. **Equality Implications**  
The Chair will ask Members to confirm that they have considered and understood any Equality Impact Assessments associated with reports on this agenda ahead of making any decisions.
5. **Public Forum**  
To receive written questions or statements submitted by members of the public no later than 4pm on the day prior to the meeting.
6. **Questions by Non-Executive Members**  
To receive written questions submitted by Non-Executive Members no later than 4pm on the day prior to the meeting.
7. **Youth MPs Update**  
To receive an update from the Youth MPs along with any issues they would like to raise.
8. **Executive Member Reports**  
Verbal updates may be given by each Executive Member.

**Leader**

**Adult Social Care & Health**

8.1	<b>Government Reforms to Adult Social Care</b> <b>Government reform to Adult Social Care</b>	<b>13 - 21</b>
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#### **Children, Young People & Education**

8.2	<b>Fostering Quarter 4 22-23 report</b> <b>Fostering Report Q4</b> <b>Appendix 1 for EB Q 4 Fostering report</b>	<b>22 - 39</b>
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8.3	<b>Fostering Quarter 1 23-24 report</b> <b>Fostering Report Q1</b> <b>Appendix 1 for EB Q1 Fostering report</b>	<b>40 - 59</b>
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8.4	<b>Children's Services Improvement Journey</b> <b>Childrens Service Improvement Journey since ILAC</b> <b>Blackburn with Darwen Joint Targeted Area Inspection</b> <b>Report May 23</b>	<b>60 - 73</b>
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#### **Environment & Operations**

#### **Public Health, Prevention & Wellbeing**

8.5	<b>Longer-term position and future use of Daisyfield Pools</b> <b>Daisyfield Pools</b>	<b>74 - 85</b>
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Link to Background Papers referred to in report:

[democracy.blackburn.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13517](https://democracy.blackburn.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13517)

#### **Digital & Customer Services**

#### **Growth & Development**

8.6	<b>Local Development Scheme</b> <b>Local Development Scheme 2023</b> <b>Blackburn Local Development Scheme 2023 final</b>	<b>86 - 113</b>
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#### **Finance & Governance**

8.7	<b>Corporate Revenue Budget Monitoring Report</b> <b>Revenue Monitoring Qtr1 Final</b> <b>App1 Revenue Monitoring Quarter1 2023 24</b> <b>App 2 Revenue Monitoring Quarter1 2023 24</b> <b>App 3 Revenue Monitoring Quarter1 2023 24</b>	<b>114 - 130</b>
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- 8.8 Corporate Capital Budget Monitoring Report  
EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION Capital Monitoring Q1 131 -  
2023-24 FINAL 144  
Capital Monitoring Q1 Appendix1  
Capital Monitoring Q1 Appendix 2
9. Corporate Issues
10. Matters referred to the Executive Board

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

Date Published: Wednesday, 30 August 2023  
Denise Park, Chief Executive

## EXECUTIVE BOARD Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> August 2023

### PRESENT

#### **COUNCILLOR:**

Councillor Quesir Mahmood  
Councillor Mustafa Desai  
Councillor Jim Smith  
Councillor Damian Talbot  
Councillor Julie Gunn

#### **PORTFOLIO:**

Deputy Leader of the Council  
Adult Social Care & Health  
Environment & Operations  
Public Health, Prevention & Wellbeing  
Children, Young People & Education

#### **EXECUTIVE MEMBER**

Councillor John Slater

#### **NON PORTFOLIO**

Leader of the Conservative Group

#### **ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Muhammed Bapu  
Kazim Shah

Youth MP  
Deputy Youth MP

	Item	Action
1	<p><b><u>Welcome and Apologies</u></b></p> <p>The Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Quesir Mahmood, welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received from the Leader of the Council Phil Riley, Councillor Vicky McGurk and Councillor Mahfooz Hussain.</p>	
2	<p><b><u>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</u></b></p> <p>The Minutes of the Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2023 were agreed as a correct record.</p>	<b>Agreed</b>
3	<p><b><u>Declarations of Interest</u></b></p> <p>No Declarations of Interest were received.</p>	
4	<p><b><u>Equality Implications</u></b></p> <p>The Chair asked Members to confirm that they had considered and understood any Equality Impact Assessments associated with reports on the agenda ahead of making any decisions.</p>	<b>Confirmed</b>
5	<p><b><u>Public Forum</u></b></p> <p>No questions had been received from Public Forum.</p>	
6	<p><b><u>Questions by Non-Executive Members</u></b></p> <p>In accordance with Part 4 of the Executive Board Procedure Rules for questions/statements by Non-Executive Members, the following questions/statements had been received, details of which are set out below:-</p>	

Item			Action
Name of Non-Executive Member asking the Question	Subject Area	Executive Member and Portfolio	
Councillor Mark Russell	Council not abiding by its own Planning Conditions in building the new Prayer Room at Pleasington Cemetery and the effect on traffic and parking issues that will be caused by the new Prayer Room.	Councillor Quesir Mahmood, Growth and Development	
<p>Councillor Quesir Mahmood responded to the question and supplementary question, advising that the Council had not ignored the conditions imposed on the permission and had been working towards getting all agreed. A non-material amendment was submitted in February 2023 and approved in March 2024 to build in accordance with plans. Planting proposal around the landscaping scheme has been agreed with the principal contractor to commence in October 2023 as this must be implemented between October 2023 and April 2024. An application to remove the motorcycle parking/cycle storage conditions would be made imminently.</p> <p>Councillor Russell was advised by the Chair to send his further questions in writing on the other matters raised and provide evidence following the response that was provided by the Executive Member for Growth and Development.</p>			
7	<p><b><u>Youth MPs Update</u></b></p> <p>The Youth MP verbally reported on recent events and activities including :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Spill the Tea’ lunch held with MP Kate Hollern at Blackburn Central High School to discuss the national UK Youth Parliament ‘Free School Meals’ campaign.</li> <li>• National Youth MP Conference held at Leeds University. The conference focused on developing the free school meals campaign.</li> <li>• £8M investment from the Youth Investment Fund in facilitates across Blackburn with Darwen for young people.</li> </ul>		<b>Noted</b>

	Item	Action
	<p>The Youth MP advised that he was stepping down from his current role. His last official duty will be attending the MYP House of Commons in November to represent Blackburn with Darwen.</p> <p>The Youth MP thanked all for their support especially Councillor Julie Gunn for all her support and mentorship over the years.</p> <p>Members also thanked the Youth MP for all the hard work and his representation and involvement at events and on various issues. Muhammed Bapu has been a great ambassador and was leaving a legacy as he had done the Borough proud in highlighting and representing young people.</p> <p>Councillor John Slater added the Youth MP had done a fantastic job and has been a credit which cannot be understated, including the work carried out around the Covid vaccine.</p>	
8.1	<p><b><u>Foster Carer Allowances uplift including short breaks 2023/24</u></b></p> <p>The Executive Board was provided with a report of a payment review that has considered the Local Authority's challenges in terms of the recruitment and retention of Foster Carers.</p> <p>In order to recruit and retain foster carers, the payment rates awarded needed to be competitive and well promoted in the Borough and beyond.</p> <p>Any Foster Carer payment proposal had also taken into account Special Guardianship Carers and short break carers.</p> <p>Members were asked to note and agree a minor amendment to option 3 on the report. It was proposed to maintain the original allowance of £250.28 for 16+ with a minor additional cost of £7,800. This would also have an impact on the option 3, which is recommended in the Staying Put Allowance report with the savings figure reducing from £64,000 to £60,000.</p> <p>Councillor John Slater commended the uplift in the foster carer allowance.</p> <p>The Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education moved the report with the above amendments.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED –</b></p> <p>That the Executive Board:</p> <p>Considers the report and agrees to uplift foster carer allowances that match the national minimum allowances. This would enable the Local Authority going forward to base the annual uplift on inflationary basis against the national minimum standards.</p>	

	Item	Action
	<p>In addition, the Board considers and agrees the proposed uplift for 2023/24 of 20% for short break payments, which have not been reviewed for some time.</p>	<p><b>Recommendations Approved, following a minor amendment moved by Councillor Julie Gunn and seconded by Councillor Damian Talbot in relation to option 3 within the report.</b></p>
<p><b>8.2</b></p>	<p><b><u>Staying Put Allowance</u></b></p> <p>The Executive Board received a report on the duty on Local Authorities to support young people to continue to live with their former foster carers once they turn 18 (the ‘Staying Put’ duty) following the amendment of the Children Act 1989 by The Children and Families Act 2014. This duty came into force on 13 May 2014.</p> <p>The current payments to Staying Put carers were based on individual need and circumstance with an average payment of £336.43 per week which was funded in its entirety through Blackburn with Darwen Leaving Care budget.</p> <p>A new Staying Put policy was therefore required to ensure that a fair and consistent approach to such payments was implemented.</p> <p>Councillor Julie Gunn advised of a Staying Put grant which was due to end in 2025. There was an overspend but all efforts would be made endeavouring to keep on top of the budget.</p> <p>Savings from option 3 in the report would reduce slightly due to the implications from the Foster Carer Allowances uplift amendment.</p> <p>The Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education moved the report with the above amendment.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED –</b></p> <p>That the Executive Board:</p> <p>1. Notes the position with regard to the varying rates of payments made to BwD Staying Put carers,</p>	<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>

	Item	Action
	<p>2. Approves the implementation of Option 3 as the proposed payment structure for all new Staying Put placements, and</p> <p>3. Delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Children &amp; Education (DCS) in consultation with the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education to review and put in place a Staying Put policy for BwD, incorporating the Option 3 proposal.</p>	<p><b>Approved, following a minor amendment moved by Councillor Julie Gunn and seconded by Councillor Damian Talbot resulting from the amendment and approval of the Foster Care Allowances uplift including short breaks 2023/24.</b></p>
<p><b>8.3</b></p>	<p><b><u>Growth Programme 2023-24</u></b></p> <p>Members received the Growth Programme report, that sought to maximise the economic and financial benefit of Council owned assets, to support the creation of jobs, housing and infrastructure.</p> <p>The Growth programme supported the delivery of all four missions within the Council’s Corporate Plan by identifying and managing a pipeline of development projects and initiatives planned to be implemented over the short, medium and longer term. These projects were being delivered using a combination of private or public sector land.</p> <p>The Council’s Growth and Development Department was also in the final stages of preparing a new Local Plan, with Council adoption expected in early 2024.</p> <p>Councillor John Slater asked that the minutes reflect that he voted against the recommendation of the report.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED-</b></p> <p>That the Executive Board:</p>	



	Item	Action
	<p>1. Note the excellent growth performance in the Borough as demonstrated by the Growth KPIs attached as Annex A;</p> <p>2. Note the continued good progress made by officers in delivering the Darwen Town Deal programme;</p> <p>3. Note the success in securing, through a competitive bidding process, Government Levelling-Up Funding for projects in Blackburn Town Centre and our South East Blackburn transport corridor;</p> <p>4. Note the continued good progress made by the Council's two joint venture development companies Barnfield Blackburn Ltd and Maple Grove Blackburn Ltd;</p> <p>5. Note the Asset Review initiative being progressed by officers to assess the Council's primary buildings to identify opportunities to improve utilisation or to consolidate and rationalise to release potential disposal or redevelopment opportunities;</p> <p>6. Approve the Growth Programme for 2023-24 attached as Annex B for officers to progress projects from feasibility stage through to procurement and tender stage as required by project timelines; and</p> <p>7. Delegate authority to revise the Growth Programme for 2023/24 (by adding, removing or prioritising sites) to the Growth Director in consultation with the Executive Member for Growth &amp; Development.</p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Approved</b></p> <p><b>Approved</b></p>
<p><b>9.1</b></p>	<p><b><u>Vehicle Replacement Programme</u></b></p> <p>The Executive Board received a report identifying that a number of vehicles in the Council's fleet were old, needed replacing, to reduce the impact on the Council of increased maintenance costs and also hired replacement vehicle costs and to provide up to date conformity with emission targets for engine efficiency.</p> <p>The Council was attempting to move its fleet towards alternative fuels, although the cost effectiveness of this at present was with the smaller vehicles operated. The larger vehicles were still currently using diesel. The Council's Fleet Transport Manager was constantly reviewing options for alternative fuel usage and was seeking to switch the fleet at appropriate times, with the charging facilities also needing to be considered and available.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED –</b></p> <p>It is recommended that the Executive Board authorise:</p>	



	Item	Action
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## DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

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

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

MEETING:                      **EXECUTIVE BOARD**

DATE:                              **7<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

AGENDA ITEM NO.:

DESCRIPTION (BRIEF):

NATURE OF INTEREST:

DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY/OTHER (delete as appropriate)

SIGNED :

PRINT NAME:

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

## EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Executive Member for Adults Social Care & Health
<b>LEAD OFFICERS:</b>	Strategic Director of Adults and Health
<b>DATE:</b>	Thursday, 7 September 2023

<b>PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:</b>	Adults Social Care & Health
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>KEY DECISION:</b>	N

**SUBJECT: Government reform to Adult Social Care**

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide Executive Board with an update on the key changes in respect of Government reforms to Adult Social Care. A previous report to the Executive Board in August 2022 detailed the key changes in respect of Social Care Reforms after publication of the Governments Building Back Better Plan and White Paper for reforming the delivery of Adult Social Care ('People at the Heart of Care').

Government have now paused until 2025, a number of aspects of the Social Care reforms and a number of changes to the Statutory Framework for Adult Social Care have been introduced. The key changes will be highlighted through this briefing paper.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

- Note the update provided in relation to the Government Reforms to Adult Social Care and in particular:
  - a) Care Sector Market Management, Sustainability and Workforce
  - b) Regulation of Local Authorities by the Care Quality Commission (CQC)
  - c) The introduction of new performance measures by Local Authorities by the Office for Local Government (Oflog)
  - d) Changes to the Statutory Reporting Framework for Adults – Client Level Data and Adults Social Care Outcomes Framework

### 3. BACKGROUND

As set out in Finance Council 2023, the Government have delayed the national rollout of the Adult

Social Care charging reforms from October 2023 to October 2025, however both the Fair Cost of Care and Market Sustainability requirements of the reforms were continued. In the Autumn budget statement 2022 the Government set out funding for the Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund and have required Local Authorities to evidence how they have utilised this funding on 3 key priority areas.

Having launched the Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (MSIF), worth £1.4 billion nationally over 2023/24 and 2024/25, the Government have ring-fenced this funding to support local authorities to make improvements in adult social care capacity and services.

The Government have now announced an additional £600 million to be provided to adult social care across 2023/24 and 2024/25. The MSIF Workforce Fund is worth £570 million nationally over 2023/24 and 2024/25. This makes substantial additional in-year resource available to further boost capacity, allowing councils to support the adult social care workforce. Nationally the new funding will be worth an additional £365 million in 2023/24 and £205 million will be added to the £845 million of existing MSIF funding in 2024/25. Allocations of the MSIF for Blackburn with Darwen, and compliance with the grant determination are set out in the detail of this report.

Changes to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulation of Adult Social Care Services commenced in April 2023. CQC aim to streamline and simplify their assurance process by creating one single assessment framework against which to assess Health and Social Care. The overarching CQC strategy describes a core ambition of tackling health inequalities and ensuring that people receive high quality care and support. The revised CQC strategy has four main themes:

- People and communities: Regulation that is driven by people's needs and experiences, focusing on what is important to people and communities when they access, use and move between services
- Smarter regulation: Smarter, more dynamic and flexible regulation that provides up-to-date and high-quality information and ratings
- Safety through learning: Regulating for stronger safety cultures across health and care, prioritising learning, improvement and collaboration - valuing everyone's perspective
- Accelerating improvement: Enabling health and care services and local systems to access support to help improve the quality of care where it is needed most

CQC continue to work with Local Authorities and wider partners to develop their assurance framework, refine their approach and issue guidance to support inspection readiness. Further details around the assurance framework and BwD inspection readiness is contained within the body of this report.

Executive Board will be aware that Oflog has been introduced by the government as a new performance body aimed at understanding and supporting local government performance across England. It seeks to provide greater transparency and accountability in local authorities' performance by collecting and analysing data in key areas. It will serve as a regulatory body, will offer guidance and support to local authorities and give recognition to Councils that perform well.

The establishment of the new system will help to emphasise devolving powers and funding to communities while ensuring effective accountability. The objective is to create a framework where councillors and the public feel confident and have access to necessary information to scrutinise local decisions. The 4 initial areas of performance that will be examined include two areas from the Adults and Health Department: Adult Social Care and Adult Skills.

In addition to the Oflog changes the government have also changed policies in relation to the statutory reporting framework for Adult social Care performance metrics. Changes in respect of the

Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) and the new Client Level Dataset requirements are detailed in this report.

All of these reforms represent significant change to the legislative framework that Adult Social Care works within

#### **4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS**

The key issues and risks in respect of each of the areas of government reforms are detailed below:

##### **Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund**

The MSIF is provided to meet local pressures, and so local authorities can choose to use the funding to:

- increase fee rates paid to adult social care providers, particularly as we continue to prepare for the implementation of charging reform
- increase adult social care workforce capacity and retention
- reduce adult social care waiting times

The initial allocation of MSIF for BwD was £1.7m and this has been wholly utilised to increase the care sector provider fees in 2023/24. The local authority have complied with the first round grant conditions and submitted the required metric reporting and market sustainability plans.

The additional grant allocation announced in July 2023 totals £1.1m for BwD in 2023/24 and again the same requirement is place on local authorities to make improvements in the three areas outlined above. The remaining grant conditions are:

- that the local authorities must allocate their full funding allocation from the grant on Adult Social Care. Local authorities must confirm that this has been added to their existing ASC budgets.
- local authorities must evidence improvement in at least one of the target areas using DHSC performance metrics. The target areas chosen should support the most pressing needs in the local authority area
- local authorities must provide a final report in May 2024 on spend and progress. This must record all DHSC target area metrics: workforce recruitment and retention, reducing waiting times and increasing fee rates.

Work is underway to determine how the additional funding will be allocated across the three priority areas and any financial implications will be factored into the Medium Term Financial plans as part of the Council's budget process. It is important to acknowledge the additional burdens of reporting on the numerous grants within the Adults and Health department including MSIF.

##### **Care Quality Commission (CQC) Regulation**

CQC will be assessing all Local Authorities (LAs) with Adult Social Care (ASC) responsibilities on how they carry out their duties under Part 1 of the Care Act. There is a general focus on 4 overarching themes:

1. How local authorities work with people
2. How local authorities provide support
3. How local authorities ensure safety within the system

#### 4. Leadership

CQC have chosen their five pilot assessment sites, and at the time of writing, three councils; Lincolnshire, Nottingham City and Birmingham City Council have had their visits from the CQC assessors. North Lincolnshire and Suffolk will be assessed in the coming weeks.

For each local authority in the pilot, CQC will provide a report and indicative scores for all the 4 quality statements. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has also requested an overall indicative rating be provided. CQC will publish findings on their website.

CQC are constantly evaluating their approach throughout the pilots. They will incorporate any learning into formal assessments, which will start later this year, rather than in September as previously planned. The approach to formal assessments may be subject to further government approval, as required by the Health and Care Act 2022. The aim is still to have all LAs assessed within 2 years of the framework being released 01/04/2023.

#### BwD Preparation

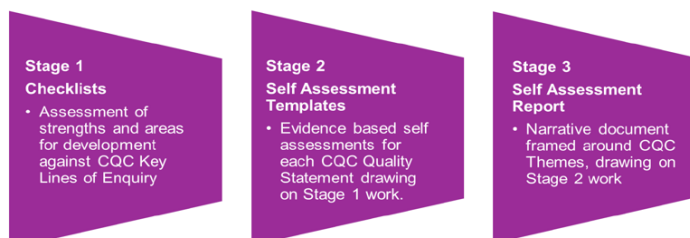
Once informed of our assessment date, CQC will submit a request for information to support their fieldwork activity in understanding how we deliver our ASC functions. This documentary evidence may include items such as plans, policies, procedures, reports and data.

The Quality Assurance Team have been working closely with subject matter leads, under the 4 topic areas, to collate as much evidence as possible given our current knowledge, informed by ADASS recommendations and feedback from the pilot sites. So far:

- 70% of evidence has been gathered and is proceeding through sign off and publication on tri-x or store in evidence library
- 27% of evidence is in the process of being gathered and has a named lead/owner
- 3% of evidence represents a gap and is currently subject to discussion and risk assessment

The Quality Assurance Team meet with subject matter leads on a weekly basis to ensure traction on evidence gathering. There is also a monthly governance Group which facilitates the official sign off of evidence and highlights any risks.

It is strongly recommended that Local Authorities complete a self-assessment as part of their assurance readiness work. We have been working on completing our self-assessment using the 3-stage approach recommended by ADASS as below:



Self-assessment is a 3-stage process

Stage 1 – Completed

Stage 2 – Completed

Stage 3 – In progress

The first iteration of our self-assessment report will be shared for discussion in the Governance Group on 29/08/2023. From there, further amendments will be made, and a final version shared for sign off.



It has been requested that LAs share a copy of their self-assessment with North West ADASS by 29/09/2023 to inform a region-wide analysis of themes. This Sector Level Improvement activity is welcomed and we plan to share our assessment.

## **Office for Local Government (OFLOG)**

The Office for Local Government (OFLOG) is an office of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

The vision for OFLOG is to provide authoritative and accessible data and analysis about the performance of local government, and to support its improvement.

OFLOG have created a Local Authority Data Explorer Tool, which is designed to present an overview of LAs performance. Currently the data explorer covers 4 areas of performance. These are:

- Adult Social Care
- Waste management
- Adult skills
- Local authority finance

Executive Board are asked to note that 50% of the indicators initially used to assess the performance of Local Authorities relate directly to the Adults and Health Department.

The following table illustrates the definition and data source of each ASC indicator which will form part of the OFLOG data return.

Indicator	Rationale/Definition	Source
Requests resulting in a service (per 100,000 pop)	The number of support requests received from new clients by local authority that resulted in a service, per 100,000 population.	Short and Long Term (SALT) Return
Workforce turnover	The proportion of directly employed staff in the formal care workforce leaving their role in the past 12 months	ASC Workforce Data Set by Skills for Care
People in ASC quality of life	This measure is intended to provide an overarching view of the quality of life of people receiving council-funded social care. Questions cover eight domains: control, dignity, personal care, food and nutrition, safety, occupation, social participation and accommodation. Each question has four possible answers ranging from 'no needs met' to 'no unmet needs'.	Adult Social Care Survey
Carers of people in ASC quality of life	This measure is intended to provide an overall view of the quality of life for unpaid carers. Life outcomes are mapped to six domains: occupation, control, personal care, safety, social participation and encouragement, and support. Each question has three possible answers and is given equal weight.	Survey of Adult Carers
Short term service provision	Individuals that received a short-term service during the year (who previously did not receive services) where the follow up was either no ongoing support or support of a lower level as a percentage of all individuals that received a short-term service.	Short and Long Term (SALT) Return
People who use services who found it easy to find information	Percentage of individuals who selected the response 'very easy to find' and 'fairly easy to find' to the question: 'In the past year, have you generally found it easy or difficult to find information and advice about support, services or benefits?'	Adult social Care Survey
Carers who found it easy to find information about services	Percentage of individuals who selected the response 'very easy to find' and 'fairly easy to find' to the question: 'In the last 12 months, have you found it easy or difficult to find information and advice about support, services or benefits?'	Survey of Adult Carers

## **The Client Level Dataset (CLD)**

Client Level Data is a new quarterly and mandatory reporting requirement introduced from April 2023 with the first submission on 31/07/2023. This will eventually replace the Adult Social Care Short and Long Term data set (SALT). Client Level Data will contain records of the main events and interventions in an adult's social care journey once they have approached the LA for care and support. This data will feed into the metrics included within the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) and will be used by the OFLOG.

Some benefits of Client Level Data include the fact that it will provide more frequent and timely national and regional data around demand, activity and the provider market, along with a better

oversight of the social care system. It will provide more flexible analysis from national client level records, including demographics and a detailed understanding of pathways and financial costs of care. Client Level data will also link health and social care records at a national level providing a greater understanding of the interactions between health and social care systems.

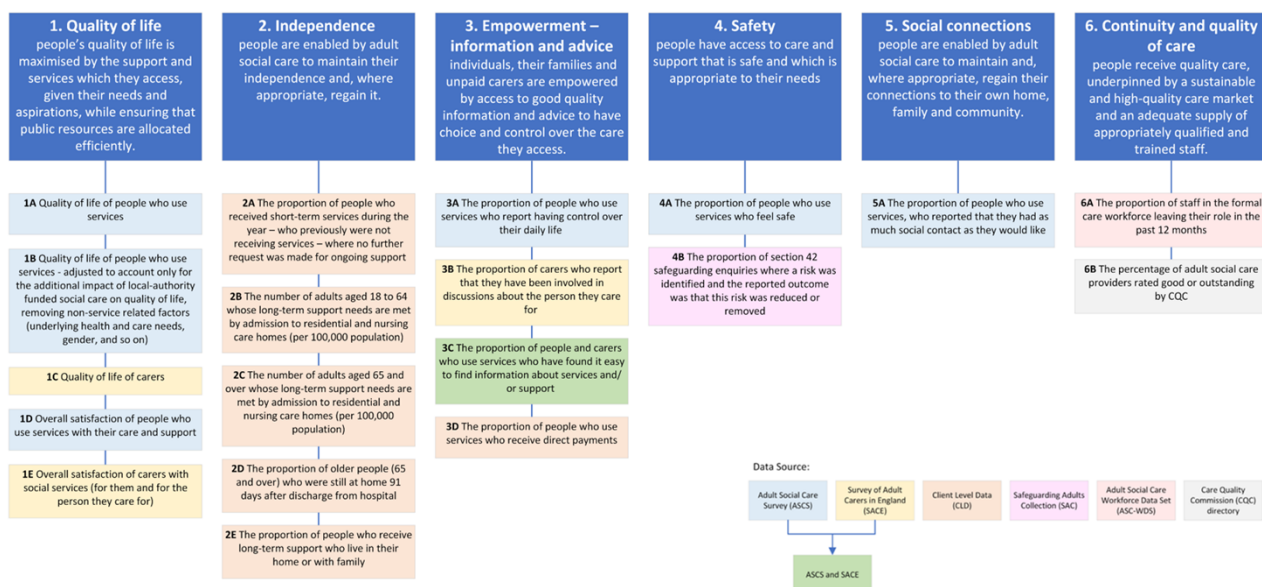
Some risks associated with introducing Client Level Data include the fact that the dataset is to be submitted quarterly rather than annually and that CLD and SALT will run concurrently for the first year whilst work continues to ensure accurate data capture and reporting against clear definitions still being developed by the Department of Health and Social Care. This will involve making changes to our client record system, Mosaic, to ensure that we can meet all requirements going forward.

## The Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF)

ASCOF has been published annually since 2011 and is used locally, regionally and nationally to measure progress against key priorities and to strengthen transparency and accountability. Importantly, it measures how well care and support services achieve the outcomes that matter most to people.

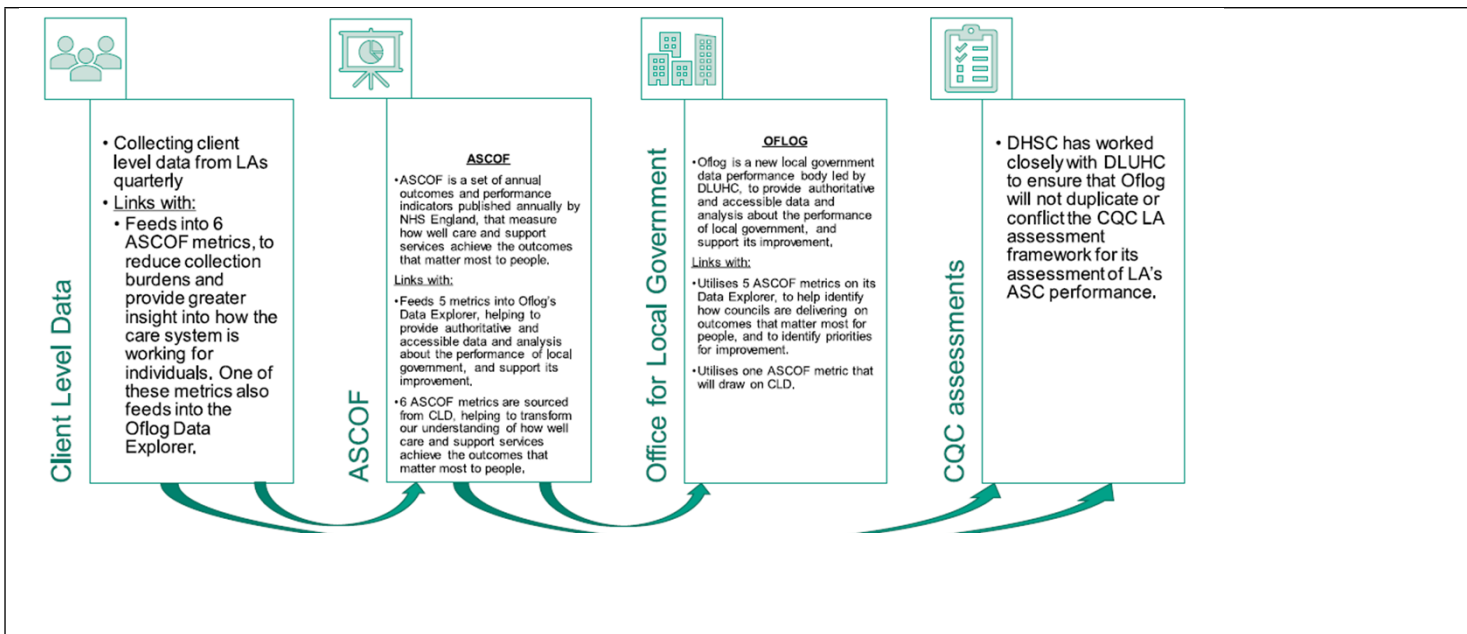
The recent regulatory and data submission changes called for a review of the framework. As a result, a number of new metrics have been introduced, various existing metrics have seen revised definitions and others have been completely removed from the framework.

The illustration below shows the 6 key objectives of the ASCOF framework, the measures under each objective, and the data return from which the measure is derived.



## Summary of Data Sets

Finally, the illustration below shows how the 4 data sets associated with Client Level Data, ASCF, OFLOG and CQC fit together.



## 5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None with this report, however policy changes required as a result of the government reforms and legislative changes within and across social care will be considered and further updates reported to Executive Board as needed.

## 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are significant financial implications associated with the changes to reforms which are not yet fully known or quantified.

At its simplest:

- There are additional costs relating to the establishment of a Performance, quality assurance and business intelligence function to manage our assurance, evidence and statutory reporting requirements. The cost of this will be managed from existing resources identified from the Adults and Health budget.
- There will be significant cost to provide sustainable fee rate for providers. Whilst the additional Market Sustainability funding in 23/24 and 24/25 is welcome any investment in provider fees is a recurring cost in the council's budget.
- The need to implement and maintain new systems or adaptations to our existing systems to fulfil our statutory reporting requirements.

Whilst these would seem to be the most obvious cost implications there are other financial risks and issues, which have already been stated within the report that the local authority needs to understand in relation to the full impact and overall cost of the regulatory changes. These include but are not limited to:

- There are very significant costs associated with any CQC judgement which is not good or outstanding.
- Increased resources required in other parts of the Council, for instance finance, HR, procurement, legal services. With respect to legal services, we are already experiencing a significant increase in

Court of Protection activity linked to highly complex casework (approximately a 110% increase in contentious casework over the last 12 months) in addition to high levels of non-contentious court work and advice work (e.g. safeguarding, funding disputes etc).

The spending and utilisation of additional grants allocated to the portfolio in respect of these reforms are planned considering all relevant factors and the associated grant determinations. Reporting requirements and performance metrics are provided to the DHSC within the required timeframe to ensure compliance.

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None with this report however the Council is now subject to additional statutory requirements under social care legislation (CQC inspection, Oflog regulation and amended statutory reporting requirements) and must work within this updated legislative framework to comply with its statutory duties.

## 8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The initial resource implications are being managed within the existing Commissioning and Finance team within Adults and Health. Further resource implications are anticipated and will require further assessment to understand the full resource implications. Continued Member and Officer time and commitment are required in order to achieve the changes required from these reform.

## 9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

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

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

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

Consultation has been ongoing and undertaken with DHSC and Local Authority. Consultation is undertaken by the Local Authority with care providers via a number of provider forums

## 11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The

recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

## 12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

<b>VERSION:</b>	<b>1</b>
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<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Zoe Evans, Katherine White</b>
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<b>DATE:</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> August 2023
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<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	
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## EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education
<b>LEAD OFFICERS:</b>	Strategic Director of Children & Education (DCS)
<b>DATE:</b>	Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> September 2023

<b>PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:</b>	Children, Young People and Education
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>KEY DECISION:</b>	N

**SUBJECT: EB Q 4 Fostering report**

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides information on the management and performance of the Local Authority's fostering service which is revised on a quarterly basis. This report, alongside Appendix 1, provides analysis of the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 until the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2023 and reflects upon data and service development over this period and recommendations for the next three monthly period.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board notes the Fostering three monthly report for Quarter 4, alongside Appendix 1 which provides a service progress overview and summary of service development recommendations.

### 3. BACKGROUND

The Fostering Service Regulations 2011 and the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services requires that the Council Executive:

- a) Receive written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the Fostering Service;
- b) Monitor the management and outcomes of the services in order to satisfy themselves that the service is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children;
- c) Satisfy themselves that the provider is complying with the conditions of registration.

The report has been written to address the areas identified above. It will be taken into account by Ofsted when inspecting the service

### 4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

**4.1** It is positive at the end of quarter 4 that the majority of children placed in foster placements are in our own, Blackburn with Darwen provision. However, the rate at which new foster carer applications are being received and subsequently follow through to approval, remains an ongoing challenge. The current trends for the largest cohort of placements are –

- a) Males aged 11 – 16 years – this also includes Children and Young People who are seeking unaccompanied asylum.
- b) Large sibling groups.
- c) Children with a Disability
- d) PACE/Remand Beds.

As such, the Recruitment Strategy focuses on picking up pace and targeting households who have the ability to become carers for the above children and young people, with the offer of REVIVE Team support and specific training followed by appropriate allowances that match this level of care and support need.

**4.2** The Fostering Transformation Action Plan is picking up pace with support from the digital transformation team with the aim to improve the application process, assessment and approval of fostering households.

**4.3** The staffing review of both the Mainstream and Permanence Team is near completion which will provide greater management oversight and drive priorities and actions necessary on each team to meet the demands of the service.

**4.4** It is positive that most of the children and young people in our care, are in stable placements. However, for the teenage age group as well as large sibling groups, placement stability continues to remain a challenge.

As such, there continues to be specific areas of support for carers in regards to referrals into the REVIVE Service for therapeutic support which includes support and guidance to strengthen carers understanding of trauma and impact. To add to this, the team provide a high level of training including – attachment and trauma training which has had good outcomes.

**4.5** It continues to remain the case that children with disabilities primarily are placed in residential settings as opposed to fostering.

As such, there is an ongoing campaign to try to recruit foster carers for children with SEND but this remains a local and national challenge.

**4.6** Children in our Care have regular medicals at the statutory frequency appropriate for their age. There is a Designated Nurse, who takes an active role in following up health issues and assisting with health promotion work. Figures for Quarter 4 show that 88% of all Children in our Care have an up to date health assessment which is an increase from 2021/22. This figure is lower at 69% for Children in our Care who have had a dental check up in the last 12 months. This is slightly higher than the last 2 quarters which demonstrates that this has been a focus of work undertaken by practitioners and health professionals.

As such, the Children in Our care Team are doing a targeted day to ensure all dates of dental checks are inputted into the protocol system and referrals will be made to the new Lancashire and South Cumbria pathway to ensure a dental check is carried out for those without a dentist.

## **5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

No Policy Implications have been identified.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Fostering budgets are closely monitored throughout the financial year. The 2022/23 indicative

outturn position for both the fostering service and externally commissioned placements budgets saw an improvement on the forecasted position reported at quarter 3, although significant cost pressures remain. The fostering service returned an overspend of £220k in 2022/23 whilst the externally commissioned placements budget saw an overspend of £3.164m.

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

No legal implications identified.

## 8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The resource implications continue to be in regards to be in relation to the associated pressures of the Commissioning Budget.

## 9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

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

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

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

Not applicable.

## 11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

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

## 12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

**VERSION:** 1



<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Suzanne Kinder</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> June 2023
<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	

# Fostering Quarter 4 Report

January - March 2023

## Executive Report



Quarterly reports to the Executive Board are a requirement of the Fostering Service to meet Standard 25.7 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services. They are a key part of the documentation considered by OFSTED when conducting a Service inspection.

## **Introduction**

The transformation plan of the fostering service has gathered momentum since January 2023. There has been a re structure awaiting full approval via workforce which proposes a new structure aligned to the Safeguarding Teams. This removes the Deputy Team Manager posts and creates two additional Team Manager posts, one for mainstream and one for permanence which provides greater management oversight. As such, we have two Interim Team Manager posts that have been recruited too. The staffing review of the fostering service has also considered how to be best utilise resources across the teams to meet the priority of foster carer recruitment whilst ensuring that placement stability remains a priority.

In relation to the main Fostering Service Transformation Plan:

1. Digital Transformation Programme - is ongoing. All recruitment activity is planned to be digital by summer 2023, streamlining this process to ensure applicants are progressed through to assessment in a timely way reducing delay. All forms are now digital reducing the time of social workers and ensuring access to data when needed. The Fostering dashboard is in the process of being developed, again to reduce time of workers, stream line the service and provide accurate data. Foster carers have been engaged within this process to ensure a collaborative approach.
2. Recruitment and Links with the Communication Team- Recruitment has been a focus within this quarter with more oversight from senior leads. More creative digital recruitment methods are being implemented with the aim to target geographical areas where it is known that successful recruit has taken place previously.
3. Retention of Foster Carers/Allowances- A review of allowances has been undertaken and a final decision is to be made, this is to ensure that our foster carers have sufficient financial support to provide for the children they care for and to try to be as competitive as possible with our neighbouring local authorities in terms of recruitment.
4. Commissioning and Contract- A Standard Operating Procedure has been completed in relation to the Fostering Front Door role and with the Blackburn, Burnley, Cumbria and Lancashire (BBCL) framework to provide more oversight of placements, the referral system and commissioned placements. This is being reviewed 6 monthly as part of the BBCL contract.
5. Payments Panel/Governance- The Payments Policy and procedure are being updated to ensure that payments outside of typical allowances are reviewed through a more robust governance process.
6. Workforce Development- The councils TRACK values have been launched across the Fostering Service with positive feedback and investment from the teams.

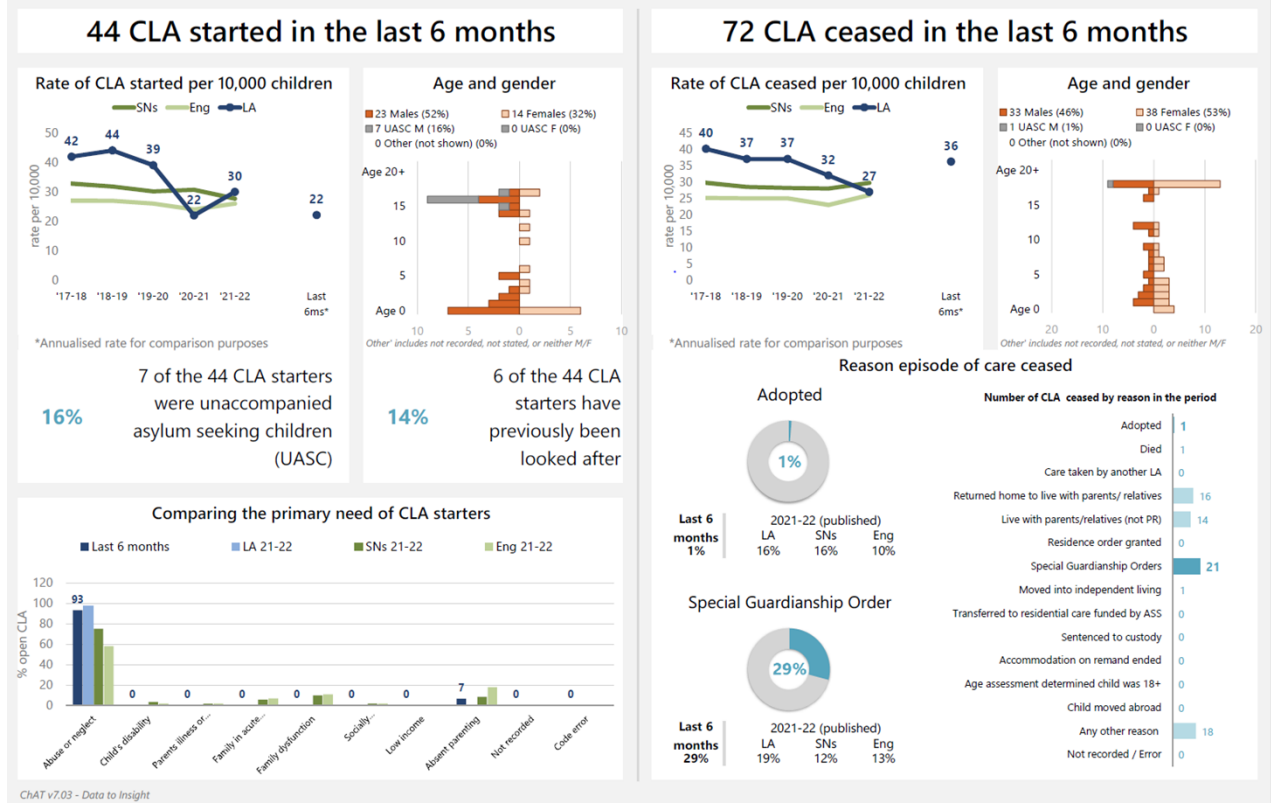
The aim of the plan continues to prioritise investment across the fostering service with strategic oversight and a focus on the above six key priority areas. This development plan has a focus on recruitment and retention of foster carers to provide more placements, to ensure our children are cared for with placements that are local and mainly in house, with highly trained foster carers who receive appropriate support from the local authority.

## **Children in our Care and Fostering Overview:**

There continues to be a decrease in the number of children who are looked after by the local authority. In the last 6 months the number of children becoming cared for by the local authority is 44 compared to the previous quarter where there were 49. The number of children being cared for in Blackburn with Darwen is above the average nationally. In the last 6 months 72 children left the care of the Local authority.

Children Looked After (CLA) started and ceased in the last 6 months

from 29/08/2022 to 28/02/2023



In this quarter, 7 children left care due to Special Guardianship Orders, taking the number of children leaving care due to SGO's over this financial year at 45.

The highest cohort of children and young people in our care who remain the most difficult to place children and young people are aged between 11-16. As with previous quarters, this is an ongoing, persistent trend both locally and nationally. Feedback from neighbouring local authorities and from Independent Fostering Agencies remains the same in that it is an increasing struggle to recruit foster carers for this age, meaning a lack of foster placements for this age range of children and young people. In BWD we have seen a number of large sibling groups needing to be placed in foster care, this presents as a challenge in trying to keep siblings together wherever possible, meaning there is a need for fostering exemptions.

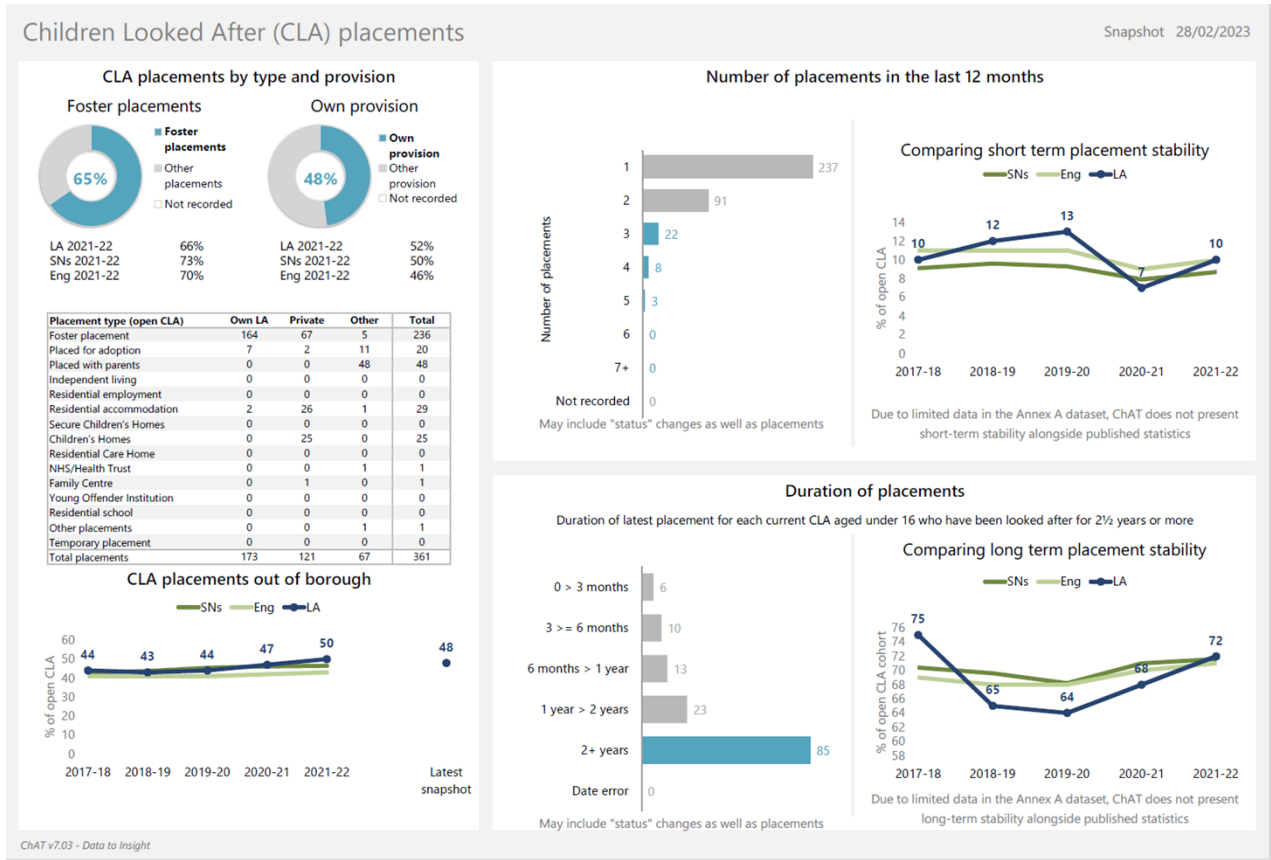
Recruitment remains ongoing for foster carers to care for children with disabilities, primarily who are now placed in residential settings as opposed to fostering. There is an ongoing campaign to try to recruit foster carers for children with Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) but this remains a local and national challenge. The Fostering Team are working in collaboration with the Children with Disabilities Team to be creative and solution focussed and to also look at how adaptations can be utilised to expand the choice of foster placements, for example for children with physical needs.

Despite these challenges, it remains positive that at the end of Quarter 4, that 164 children out of 236 children are placed with in house foster carers for Blackburn with Darwen.

The Foster Carer Register is produced weekly and Senior Managers meet with the Fostering Service to look at placement availability, data and vacancies. The fostering service continues to utilise the 'Fostering Front Door' offer whereby an experienced Social Worker is supporting the Recruitment Officer with applications, but also coordinates placement searches both in-house and on the framework with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's). This remodel has been positive in that the Social Worker has a solid overview along with the Team Manager of the placement vacancies in the team and will liaise directly with foster carers, offering at times an enhanced support offer to them at the point of placement.

framework in which we source foster placements when we cannot provide our own in house foster carers. This framework has helped to generate some success with 'closer to home' placements in the Lancashire footprint. Work has been undertaken with Fostering Front Door to build and improve on relationships with providers. The Fostering Front Door worker is now undertaking quarterly meetings with providers to identify and pre-empt placements that will become available, to ensure that we are being prioritised with those independent fostering households that are local to us. A review of this framework is due to take place in August, which will include BBCL and over 30 IFA providers.

# Placement Stability



The Department uses a definition of placement stability based on 3 or more placements in a 12 month period that is calculated on a cumulative basis over the year. Placement stability has been increasing since 2019-2020 and is the same when compared to national statistics.

Reasons for placement instability remain the same as in previous quarters and includes the disruption of placements for teenagers displaying challenging behaviours, missing from home episodes and an influx of larger sibling groups all posing challenges for foster carers to manage in the longer term. It remains the case that babies and under 2s are placed in parent and child assessment units and in foster placements for example, for the duration of care proceedings, before settling into their permanent placement. The support offer to these placements is intensive and includes foster carer training as an integral element, alongside timely, collaborative disruption meetings.

Changes in educational placements also impact significantly upon placement stability, this is mainly due to the child investing in secure teacher and peer relationships and then suffering the loss of these. It can also be challenging for the young person to emotionally invest in further foster placements when the first has disrupted. This is when the service refers to the REVIVE service where consultations and assessments take place to support this group of young people and their carers to offer therapeutic interventions.

## Engagement with Children and Young People

The VOICE group meet both in person and virtually with children in our care and care experienced young people to gather views, ideas and feedback. Young people and care experienced young people are regularly involved in the recruitment to social care posts and consist of a panel who feed into the interview and recruitment process. Young people are involved in the 'Journey to Foster' training and there are plans to introduce visits with young people to potential foster carers to inform the assessment process. There are also plans to recruit care experienced young people to the fostering panel.

Feedback is gathered from children in our foster placements regularly as part of the foster carer annual review, and at other events. Feedback is gathered to support the co-design of service delivery and to ensure children and young people with lived experience help shape services now and in the future, that services are fit for purpose and appropriately meet need.

### Feedback from Children in Foster Care:

Children and young people, and foster carers, have made the following comments over Quarter 4:

Male aged 8

'I enjoy going Rovers with the son of my Foster Carers, I enjoy going out places with my fostering family.'

Female aged 14

'I enjoy going on holiday with my Foster Family, this is always special and I have a good time'.

Female aged 14

'Everyone in the family have made me feel welcome'.

Female aged 15

'I feel safe and loved in my foster family.'

Female aged 16

What makes you happy in placement?

Being around everyone in our home, trying new foods, watching films, freedom and living with my brother.'

### Feedback from family and friends foster carers regarding his experience of achieving Special

#### Guardianship Orders for his grandchildren.

'I am writing this email on behalf of myself, and the children in my care. - We would like to thank everyone involved in the transition from Friends and Family foster carer to the recently approved Special Guardianship Order.

I would like to draw particular attention to recently appointed CSW Melvis Akwanwi, who in a very short time, completed the work previously carried out by a succession of CSW & SSW in order to meet the Magistrates Court deadline for statements and reports and facilitating home visits and discussions regarding future contact with the children and their parents.

Melvis is credit to the profession and hopefully a long term member of your staffing provision. - Extremely good at her work !!

Please pass on my thanks to all involved at BWP, and hopefully one-day I can return and provide some further contribution to the needs of so many children within the Borough. - This has been one of the best

experiences of my life so far, a true roller coaster of a ride, with so much pleasure along the way. Still some way to go until they both reach the age of 18+ , but feel truly grateful to all your Staff / Foster Carers / FCA.

Please feel free to share this e-mail with all concerned - A really happy Special Guardian & Two very special children.'

### **Engagement with Foster Carers**

Blackburn with Darwen has a Foster Carer Association (FCA), they meet regularly, and have an Elected Committee. The Chair of the FCA sits on the Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group amongst other groups. The FCA are currently updating their website, which is used to communicate messages and news updates about events. The foster carer support group also meets regularly and is attended by the Children's Services Elected Member. The FCA also meets bi monthly with Senior Managers and Team Managers from Fostering. As part of the ongoing digital transformation plan for the service, feedback has been sent to carers to provide the opportunity to work collaboratively with the process. We also have some foster carers who to be part of the digital transformation.

### **Promoting Children's Health, Emotional Development, Education and Leisure:**

Attendance at school of children in our care remained at 93% and is consistently above that national average for children who are looked after. This success is significantly contributed to due to the fantastic support of our foster carers.

New Directions continue to work with all children in our care from Year 9 and have supported all our Year 11's with applications to colleges and training providers.

Children and young people in our care are encouraged to participate in a variety of activities in which they can succeed and are supported in achieving better outcomes. All local children in our care are given access to free sport and leisure activities within the Borough. Foster carers are provided with a MAX Card, which offers heavily discounted access to a range of leisure parks and facilities around the North West.

Children in our Care have regular medicals at the statutory frequency appropriate for their age. There is a Designated Nurse, who takes an active role in following up health issues and assisting with health promotion work. Figures for Quarter 4 show that 88% of all Children in our Care have an up to date health assessment. 85% of children who are looked after have had a dental check up in the last 12 months which a significant improvement on previous quarter which was 69% is demonstrating the work that has been undertaken across the service to improve in this area.



Foster carers have a Health Passport for each child in their care, which is a record of all of the child's health details. Foster carers are provided with the relevant training and support to meet the specific needs of the child in placement and they are able to access support from the Children with Disabilities Team with aids and adaptations, Disability Links registration and information and advice where needed.

In relation to emotional wellbeing, Children in our Care have access to Clinical Psychology and related services through REVIVE and the East Lancashire Child and Adolescent Service (ELCAS) also known as Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). The REVIVE Service is a partnership between Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's Children's Services and East Lancashire Hospital Trust to provide emotional health support for children known to the Local Authority and is based at Duke Street. REVIVE delivers consultation to Foster Carers, training and direct intervention on emotional health and well-being. The Team consists of Clinical Psychologists, a Play Therapist and Mental Health Practitioners.

During this quarter there were 19 referrals to the Revive Service which is an increase from last quarter,

Interventions	Recorded contacts
Consultations	31
Face to face therapy	159
Therapeutic carer support	116
Staff drop ins	10
Psychological assessment	9
Reflective practice/training to teams	5

The Limes in Darwen continues to be used to provide therapy and is now a hub which is used by foster carers along with children and young people.

### **The Fostering Service**

There are two teams within the Fostering Service, the mainstream fostering and the permanence team. In the mainstream fostering team over the past 6 months there has been significant plans for transformation of the service. This is a 12 month Transformation Plan and the team structure will be considered to ensure this adequately meets the ongoing needs of the service. Currently the team is fully staffed with no sickness.

The Service coordinates two fostering panels, the main fostering panel and annual review panel. The Team and Deputy Managers act as Panel Advisor and maintain the panel members list along with their training. The two panels are independently chaired. Feedback and evaluation is collated from both panels in order to inform service delivery.

During this quarter, there has been two new social work appointments in the permanence team. One social worker returning back to the team and one social worker who is new to the team, but returning to BWD following a lengthy period working in other boroughs and independent agencies.

At the end of this quarter, there were 28 family and friend fostering households, with a further 11 households approved under Regulation 24. There have been 41 family and friend referrals and initial assessments completed within this quarter with 19 progressing to full combined assessment. This is a decrease from the previous quarter however, is on par with past quarters. Assessments continue to take place all over the UK for e.g. Preston, Watford, and London. 4 assessment have been presented to fostering panel and been approved as full family and friends fostering households. There have been 4 resignations in

the same quarter due to the carers becoming Special Guardians. There have been 23 SGO's issued within this quarter.

The SGO panel is held every fortnight to consider all assessments where the permanence plan is that of SGO. This includes assessments during care proceedings, the PLO process and for children placed under a care order. The Permanence Team Manager attends this panel and the Service Lead for Fostering and Resources chairs the panel which is also made up of other professionals from children's social care including the IRO Service Manager and a legal representative.

### **Foster Carer Recruitment and Retention**

It has been a slow start in relation to recruitment in the New Year. This has been mirrored through feedback in recruitment groups across the country, which includes other local authorities and Independent Fostering Agencies. Digital recruitment has been a focus with the plan to go 'back to basics'. A digital post profiling teenagers created interest. This was seen by over 3 thousand people with 76 reactions and shares evidencing the scope of digital recruitment.

The Recruitment Strategy has been updated to include a new digital recruitment method aimed at specifically targeting areas where we have been previously successful in recruitment of foster carers. This type of digital recruitment will mean less wastage of recruitment resources. This recruitment method began in April 2023. Feedback tells us that applicants come forward to consider fostering from the use of digital recruitment and through word of mouth. Our recruitment activity includes constant, targeted advertising on Google Ads and Facebook. Posts are updated on all social media accounts including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The Lets Foster website continues to be the area in which most enquires are received, which can be accessed through Google and Social Media.

Information Evenings continue to be held on a monthly basis as well as other targeted face to face activities. The plan for Fostering Fortnight has been agreed, the theme this year is community. Over this two week period, the team, colleagues and partners will be undertaking events across Blackburn and Darwen, which include litter picking, family and pet friendly walks, and coffee mornings with articles in local newspapers and interviews with local radio stations. Community partnerships continue with Blackburn Rovers, Burnley Football Club and the Hawks Ice Hockey Team to promote and embed the sense of the importance of community and the need for local carers for our children. There is partnership working between BWD Corporate Communication Team and the Recruitment Officer to ensure a targeted and collaborative approach to recruitment. There continues to be a focus on recruitment for teenagers, sibling groups, children with disabilities, Pace and short breaks.

This quarter there has been,

#### Quarter 4 January – March 2023

2021/22	Enquires	IV	Approval	Conversion
Q1	16	6	1	38%
Q2	15	5	3	33%
Q3	19	5	1	26%
<b>Q4</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>24%</b>
Total	71	21	7	30%

In comparison, Quarter 4 from 2021/22

Q4	22	3	3	14%
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## **Enquiries to become a foster carer**

Jan - 4

Feb - 9

March – 8

## **Assessment**

9 households were being assessed during this quarter, 4 of which are due to be presented to May fostering panel. 2 households are waiting on fostering medicals before they can be presented to fostering panel. 1 household made the decision to be assessed with independent fostering agency, stating financial support as the reason, and one household withdrew from the assessment process stating that as a family they had made the decision to put their application on hold. We are hoping that these assessments will provide a minimum of 10 placements if they are successfully approved.

## **Fostering Panel**

During this quarter we had 2 mainstream fostering households presented to panel, these are 2 couples approved to offer short term placements.

2 households have returned to panel for 1st annual review and 2 fostering households returned to panel following an allegation/concerns There has been 18 fostering households presented to panel for annual review.

7 households (11 children) were presented to panel with a recommendation for approval as family and friends carers.

In relation to feedback, forms are sent to all attendees and whilst the return rate is low, feedback is generally positive.

Panel have continue to provide positive feedback regarding the quality of assessments and verbal presentation of the social workers.

## **Events from January to March 2023.**

In February the Fostering Team attended the 1Voice awards as the main award sponsor. This was a fantastic event to be part of and we aim to sponsor and present this award next year.

1Voice Awards Dinner



The Fostering Team also attended the Disability information day held at King Georges Hall. There were positive networks created from this evident and information was shared across our social media. There are further events planned for the next quarter

Members of the Fostering Team participated on the One Voice Blackburn 'I'm not a Muslim but I will fast for a day' campaign.



During this quarter we had 3 mainstream fostering households presented to fostering panel. 2 couples approved to offer short term placements and 1 re-assessment of a foster carer who had separated from her partner. There has been 15 fostering households presented to panel for annual review.

### **Training for Foster Carers:**

During this Quarter period, our carers continue to access the online training offer through Me-Learning, The Scils and Eils online training continues to be offered, along with mandatory safeguarding training.

In January 2023, the team delivered Journey to Foster training, which is a two day course to 6 applicants (4 fostering households). The service received very positive feedback in regards to the content of the training and the delivery by the trainers. In March 2023, this training was again delivered to 7 applicants (4 fostering households). The applicants fed back they found real life experiences supported them to understand the role of a foster carer and they felt having a foster carer delivering was helpful in their learning.

The Revive team began a six week foundations of attachment course to carers and kinship carers, this is currently ongoing. Feedback has so far been really positive.

In regards to the service training this has been reviewed and will be available to carers from May 2023 with a plan of both online and classroom training sessions offered to our carers. This will include conference style days, where carers can attend and be offered training by a number of services in one day. Foster carers feel this would be very beneficial to those who work alongside their fostering role.

### **Complaints**

There have been 2 complaints received during this quarter. The first, a Foster carer sent a complaint regarding delay in providing a response to a discretionary payment. The 2<sup>nd</sup> complaint was from a foster carer who was not given an opportunity to undergo an adoption assessment for a child in their care.

### **Compliments**

During this quarter we have received one compliment from a Connected Carer who had been supported to obtain Special Guardianship Orders for the children in his care.

*'I am writing this email on behalf of myself, and the children in my care - We would like to thank everyone involved in the transition from Friends and Family foster carer to the recently approved Special Guardianship Order.*

*I would like to draw particular attention to recently appointed CSW, who in a very short time, completed the work previously carried out by a succession of CSW & SSW in order to meet the Magistrates Court deadline for statements and reports and facilitating home visits and discussions regarding future contact with the children and their parents.*

*SW is credit to the profession and hopefully a long term member of your staffing provision. - Extremely good at her work!!*

### **Allegations**

There have been no allegations during this quarter

### **Specific Incidents and Restraints**

There have been 0 incidents recorded over the past 6 months involving children in our care.

### **Bullying Reports**

There have been no reports of bullying over Quarter 4

### **Serious illness and accidents**

There has been no serious illnesses or accidents during this quarter

### **Commissioned Placements and Budget**

All children and young people placed in commissioned placements are part of the Case Tracking and Commissioning Panel which continues to have strategic oversight and monitoring of placements. This panel also provides oversight and planning to ensure that there are robust plans for those children and young people that could be brought back to in-house provision, as well as ensuring timely decision making to achieve permanence.

There continues to be significant pressures due to challenge of recruiting and securing placements for teenagers and large sibling groups both in fostering and residential placements. The financial position across both of these areas is closely monitored throughout the year.

The local authority continues to take its quota of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) (up to 0.1% of the population). There are referrals at least bi-weekly, via the North West Regional Strategic Migration Partnership. We currently have 19 UASC cases open to Children in Our Care (CIOC), all of whom are living in appropriate accommodation. Predominantly these children are placed with IFA and residential placements due to there not being enough foster care placements in house. Although the local authority receive funding for UASC, this does not cover the weekly costings of their placements and places additional financial pressure on the commissioning budget.

**Total number of commissioned foster placements used in this period – 79, this is a reduction of 6 placements from quarter 3.**

- 55 x Non long term matched including

Information about some of these:

- 12 x children were under Interim Care Orders (ICO) in Q4 including 4 sets of 2 siblings and 4 individual children/young people) (Of these, 2 sets of 2 siblings ceased ICO's with 2 returning home and 2 being granted PO's in Q4)
- 2 x parent and child placements - under Section 20 (s20) and ICO;
- 1 x concurrency placement under ICO;
- 5 x Placements under Section 20 including 3 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (USAC) (one which disrupted down in Q4);
- 5 x UASC's (3 x of these placements were under Section 20 & 2 x placements under a Care Order (CO)
- 6 x Placements under Placement Orders
- 2 placements of siblings groups of 2 and 4 children moved IFA placements in this period
- 31 x CO with around 13 of these waiting to be long term matched in coming months and one sibling pair hopefully proceeding to SGO with their IFA carers

**Number of new commissioned foster placements made in this period – 9**

- 1 x male teenager under S20 (1 UASC) (subsequently disrupted after a week)
- 1 x parent and child (S20)
- 1 x concurrency (ICO)
- 6 children from 2 families (CO's) who, as mentioned above, had moved between IFAs to new long term placements

**Number of ended commissioned foster placements - 10**

- 6 x CO's from 2 families moved to new long term placements (2 of these had been in a long term matched foster placement)
- 1 x CO turned 18 years old and then returned home as no longer LAC
- 1 x S20 (UASC) disrupted
- 2 x CO's moved home following care proceedings concluding

**Number of long term matched commissioned foster placements used in Q4 – 24 x CO's;**

- There were no new long term matches made within this period.
- 3 long term matches ceased (18 year old & 2 moved placements)

There are 48 ongoing non long term matched placements at the end of Q4:

- 31 x CO's
- 7 x ICO's
- 6 x PO's
- 4 x S20's

There are 21 ongoing CO's in long term matched placements at the end of Q4.

**Service Priorities for the Next Quarter.**

The management team will continue to monitor compliance with Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards and will increase the number of case file audits completed each month to support this.

The transformation plan for the fostering service will be the priority. This plan and the key priorities will drive forward placement sufficiency and stability as well as recruitment and quality assurance.

Placement sufficiency and stability will continue to be a key area of focus. The relationships with independent fostering providers is the key element which will be the area of development in the next quarter to ensure that we are able to provide local placements to our children and young people within this framework.

Recruitment will focus upon our offer to potential foster carers in order for us to be competitive. The recruitment drive will focus on foster carers who can support teenagers, to respond to the increasing demand for urgent placements. This will also enable a support package of short breaks to be considered for those young people who are more challenging to place and/or in fragile placements currently and will seek to assist with placement stability alongside our Revive offer.

There continues to be the need to recruit foster carers who can offer a Remand/PACE foster carer household.

## EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education
<b>LEAD OFFICERS:</b>	Strategic Director of Children & Education (DCS)
<b>DATE:</b>	Thursday, 7 September 2023

<b>PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:</b>	Children, Young People and Education
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>KEY DECISION:</b>	N

**SUBJECT: EB: Q1 Fostering report**

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides information on the management and performance of the Local Authority's fostering service which is revised on a quarterly basis. This report, alongside Appendix 1, provides analysis of the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 until the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023 and reflects upon data and service development over this period and recommendations for the next three monthly period.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board notes the Fostering three monthly report for Quarter 1, alongside Appendix 1 which provides a service progress overview and summary of service development recommendations.

### 3. BACKGROUND

The Fostering Service Regulations 2011 and the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services requires that the Council Executive:

- a) Receive written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the Fostering Service;
- b) Monitor the management and outcomes of the services in order to satisfy themselves that the service is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children;
- c) Satisfy themselves that the provider is complying with the conditions of registration.

The report has been written to address the areas identified above. It will be taken into account by Ofsted when inspecting the service

### 4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS



**4.1** It remains the case that the majority of children placed in foster placements are in our own, Blackburn with Darwen provision. However, the rate at which new foster carer applications are being received and subsequently follow through to approval, continues to remain an ongoing challenge. The current trends for the largest cohort of placements are the same as in previous reports.

- Males aged 11 – 16 years – this also includes Children and Young People who are seeking unaccompanied asylum.
- Large sibling groups.
- Children with a Disability
- PACE/Remand Beds.

**4.2** The Fostering Transformation Action Plan in regards to digital transformation has made significant progress, the financial forms for foster carers are now digital and in use. The application form and enquiry form are to be launched digitally in July. There are two Meet and Greet sessions planned in July for foster carers to meet with the digital transformation team, to look at the plans for digital transformation across the service and to provide feedback on this.

**4.3** The staffing review of both the Mainstream and Permanence Team has now been agreed. There is now a Supervision and Support Team as well as an Assessment Team on the Mainstream Fostering Team. There are now two teams on the Permanence Team. There are now two permanent Team Manager posts, plus two Advanced Practitioner posts that will be recruited to. This will provide greater management oversight and drive priorities and actions necessary on each team to meet the demands of the service.

**4.4** Placement stability remains a positive picture in the main. However, there are no changes for the demand for placements for teenagers as well as large sibling groups.

**4.5** It continues to remain the case that children with disabilities primarily are placed in residential settings as opposed to fostering. As such, there remains an ongoing campaign to try to recruit foster carers for children with SEND but this remains a local and national challenge.

**4.6** Children in our Care continue to have regular medicals at the statutory frequency appropriate for their age. Figures for Quarter 1 show that 88% of all Children in our Care have an up to date health assessment which remains consistent. Significant progress has been made with regards to dental checks rising to 85% of children and young people.

**4.6** The launch of fostering fortnight in May was particularly successful with a collaboration of BwD employees, the fostering service, senior managers and the Elected Member all being present with drummers from the local community to create a big bang. A number of events took place over the fortnight ranging from a fun day, family friendly walks, competitions and activity on local newspapers and the radio station. It is hoped that activity generated from this event will aid fostering recruitment.

## **5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

No Policy Implications have been identified.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Recognising the importance of recruiting and retaining in-house foster carers, the medium term financial plan allocated an additional £500,000 of funding from 2023/24 onwards in order to enable a review of the financial offer made to our foster carers. The hope is that an improved and restructured

offer will enable us to remain competitive with our neighbouring authorities with regards to attracting potential new carers. The review of the fostering payments forms part of the wider Fostering Transformation Project and work on this continued throughout quarter 1.

Due to the uncertainty surrounding the financial offer to foster carers, the latest projections at quarter 1 predict a break even position on foster care payments, as any improved offer will be backdated to the 1<sup>st</sup> April. The projections for externally commissioned placements show a forecasted overspend of £230,000 at quarter 1, however there remains uncertainty around the levels of expenditure on this budget due to the receipt from numerous providers of requests for inflationary uplifts to their weekly rates for existing placements. Negotiations are ongoing with providers in order to arrive at satisfactory outcomes for all parties. Once the outcomes are known, any new rates will be applied to the budget monitoring forecasts.

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications.

## 8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The resource implications continue to be in regards to be in relation to the associated pressures of the Commissioning Budget.

## 9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

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

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

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

N/A

## 11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

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

**12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

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

**VERSION: 1**

**CONTACT OFFICER: Amy Brooks, Louise Helm, Suzanne Kinder**

**DATE: 14<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

**BACKGROUND  
PAPER:**

# Fostering Quarter 1 Report

April-June 2023

## Executive Report



Quarterly reports to the Executive Board are a requirement of the Fostering Service to meet Standard 25.7 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services. They are a key part of the documentation considered by OFSTED when conducting a Service inspection.

## **Introduction**

There continues to be significant development across the Fostering Service through the Fostering Service Transformation Plan. The plan includes,

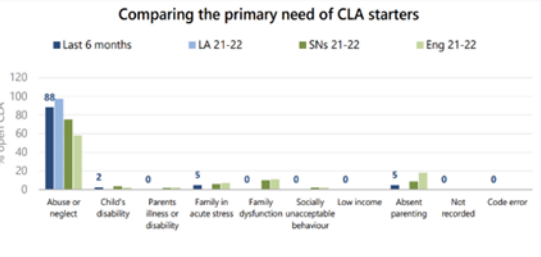
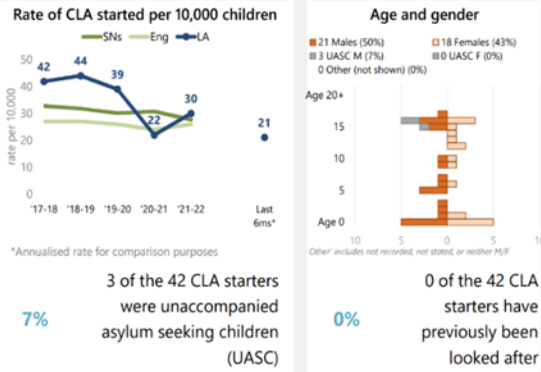
1. Digital Transformation Programme - is ongoing. There are several digital forms that have been launched for foster carers to access in relation to their financial requests. We have completed two Meet and Greet Sessions with Foster Carers to explain our Digital Transformation Programme, these were overall positive, though some foster carers are understandably anxious regarding the plan. Support will be put in place for all Foster Carers for them to access all digital forms. There are plans for a separate Kinship Care Website which will enable all Kinship Carers to access information and contact the Kinship Care Team when they require support. The Foster Carer Enquiry Form as well as the Foster Carer Application Form are now digital, meaning that all potential foster carers can apply in a more streamlined way reducing delay.
2. Recruitment of Foster Carers and Links with Communication Team- Recruitment has increased over the last quarter. The timescales of assessments being completed for potential foster carers has increased and is part of the audit activity across the fostering service. The Recruitment Officer now has links with the Communication Team who contribute to recruitment activity.
3. Retention of Foster Carers/Allowances- A review of allowances has been undertaken, there has been increases in most allowances.
4. Commissioning and Contract- The Fostering Front Door is continuing to develop relationships across our Independent Fostering Agencies, there is ongoing work to identify how placements are matched across the BBCL (BwD, Blackpool, LCC and Cumbria) Framework to ensure that we have access to local placements when needed for our children.
5. Payments Panel/Governance- The Payments Policy has been reviewed and completed. A Payments Panel has now been introduced to ensure that all discretionary and extra ordinary payments requests are scrutinised and reviewed through appropriate governance procedures.
6. Workforce Development- There has been some instability across the fostering service considering the pace and level of change that is ongoing. Efforts are being made to stabilise the teams using TRACK values.

The plan continues to focus on the development of the Fostering Service with the aim of recruitment and retention of foster carers being a priority. We have seen a clear increase in this area, which is positive however, the plan remains in the early stages, though is gathering speed and momentum.

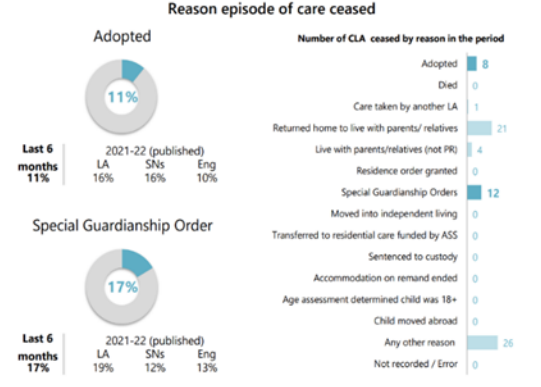
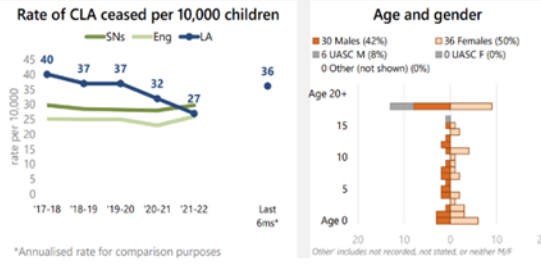
### **Children in our Care and Fostering Overview:**

There continues to be a decrease in the number of children who are looked after by the local authority. In the last 6 months the number of children becoming cared for by the local authority is 42 compared to the previous quarter where there were 44. The number of children being cared for in Blackburn with Darwen is above the average nationally. In the last 6 months 72 children left the care of the Local authority. In this quarter 6 children left care due to Special Guardianship Orders.

## 42 CLA started in the last 6 months

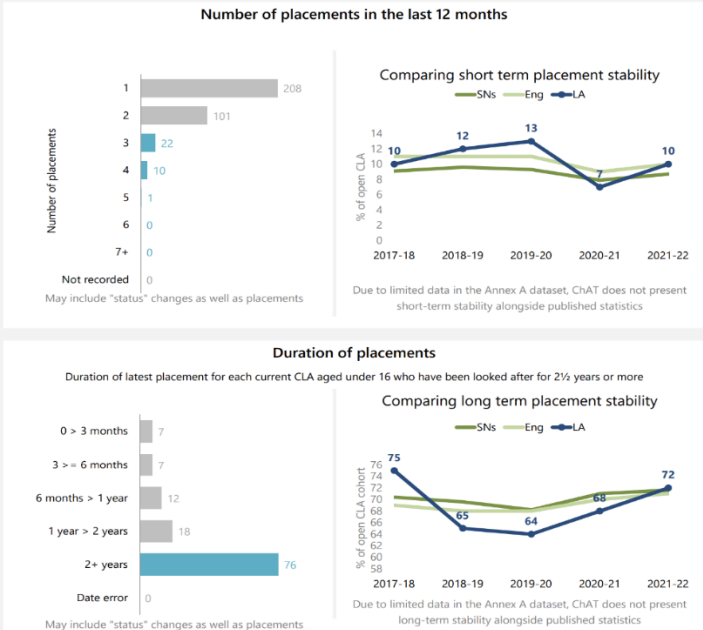
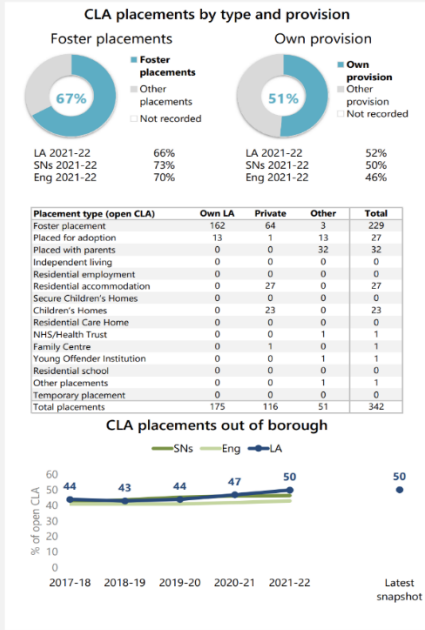


## 72 CLA ceased in the last 6 months



## Children Looked After (CLA) placements

Snapshot 30/06/2023



As with previous quarters, the highest cohort of children and young people in our care who remain the most difficult to place children and young people are aged between 11-16. This is an ongoing, persistent trend both locally and nationally. Feedback from neighbouring local authorities and from Independent Fostering Agencies remains the same in that it is an increasing struggle to recruit foster carers for this age, meaning a lack of foster placements for this age range of children and young people. In BWD we have seen several large sibling groups needing to be placed in foster care, this presents as a challenge in trying to keep siblings together wherever possible, meaning there is a need for fostering exemptions.

Recruitment remains ongoing for foster carers to care for children with disabilities, primarily are placed in residential settings as opposed to fostering. There is an ongoing campaign to try to recruit foster carers for children with Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) but this remains a local and national

challenge. The Fostering Team are working in collaboration with the Children with Disabilities Teams to be creative and solution focussed and to also look at how adaptations can be utilised to expand the choice of foster placements, for example for children with physical needs.

Despite these challenges, it remains positive that 229 children out of 342 children who are looked after in Blackburn with Darwen are placed in foster care.

The Foster Carer Register is produced weekly, and Senior Managers meet with the Fostering Service to look at placement availability, data and vacancies. The fostering service continues to utilise the 'Fostering Front Door' offer whereby an experienced Social Worker is supporting the Recruitment Officer with applications, but also coordinates placement searches both in-house and on the framework with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's). This remodel has been positive in that the Social Worker has a solid overview along with the Team Manager of the placement vacancies in the team and will liaise directly with foster carers, offering at times an enhanced support offer to them at the point of placement.

The BBCL (BwD, Blackpool, LCC and Cumbria) collaborative sub-regional framework continues to be the framework in which we source foster placements when we cannot provide our own in house foster carers. This framework has helped to generate some success with 'closer to home' placements in the Lancashire footprint. Work has been undertaken with Fostering Front Door to build and improve on relationships with providers. The Fostering Front Door worker is now undertaking quarterly meetings with providers to identify and pre-emp placements that will become available, to ensure that we are being prioritised with those independent fostering households that are local to us. A review of this framework is due to take place in August, which will include BBCL and over 30 IFA providers.

## **Placement Stability**

The Department uses a definition of placement stability based on 3 or more placements in a 12-month period that is calculated on a cumulative basis over the year. Placement stability has been increasing since 2019-2020 and is the same when compared to national statistics.

Reasons for placement instability remain the same as in previous quarters and includes the disruption of placements for teenagers displaying challenging behaviours, missing from home episodes and an influx of larger sibling groups all posing challenges for foster carers to manage in the longer term. It remains the case that babies and under 2s are placed in parent and child foster placements. The support offer to these placements is intensive and includes foster carer training as an integral element, alongside timely, collaborative disruption meetings.

Changes in educational placements also impact significantly upon placement stability, this is mainly due to the child investing in secure teacher and peer relationships and then suffering the loss of these. It can also be challenging for the young person to emotionally invest in further foster placements when the first has disrupted. This is when the service refers to the REVIVE service where consultations and assessments take place to support this group of young people and their carers to offer therapeutic interventions.

There is currently development around the process of Disruption Meetings with a view to develop these to be more collaborative and to follow the Systemic Model. This piece of work is being jointly undertaken through the Fostering Service, The Independent Review Service and through the Children in Our Care Service with the plan to provide detailed analysis on placement disruptions across the service to inform future learning to prevent further placement disruptions. Disruption Meetings are planned to take place across all placements including short- and long-term foster placements, Kinship Care placements including SGO placements.

## **Engagement with Children and Young People**

The VOICE group meet both in person and virtually with children in our care and care leavers to gather views, ideas and feedback. Young people and care leavers are regularly involved in the recruitment to social care posts and consist of a panel which provides information to the interview and recruitment process. Young people are involved in the 'Journey to Foster' training and we are currently in the application process for a care experienced young person to attend Fostering Panel as a panel member. There are plans to introduce visits with young people to potential foster carers to inform the assessment process. During this review period children and young people from the Voice group have co-produced a Children and Young People guide for children coming into care.

Feedback is gathered from children in our foster placements regularly as part of the foster carer annual review, and at other events. Feedback is gathered to support the co-design of service delivery and to ensure children and young people with lived experience help shape services now and, in the future, that services are fit for purpose and appropriately meet need.

### **Feedback from Children in Foster Care:**

Female 9 years, been in foster placements for 3 years.

When asked what she liked about her foster placement, she said, 'the foster carers are so nice, we have fun, we have 3 dogs and about 30 animals. She said she really likes it in foster carer and now doesn't feel sad as much.

Female 11 years, in a fostering kinship, placement of 2 years.

When asked what she wanted, 'I want Nanna to get the SGO'.

Male 4 years, in a family and friends fostering placement.

When asked what he liked about his placement, he said, 'everything, I have everything I need, my aunty



and uncle are the best and I love them very much.'

Male 7 years, in a foster placement.

He said, 'my home is nice and full of love, I get treats and I feel safe, nice room, nice clothes, my foster carers are like my real mum and dad.'

Female 10 years.

She said she loves horse riding and loves that her foster carers stay and watch her.

### **Engagement with Foster Carers**

Blackburn with Darwen has a Foster Carer Association (FCA), they meet regularly, and have an Elected Committee. The Chair of the FCA sits on the Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group amongst other groups. The FCA are currently updating their website, which is used to communicate messages and news updates about events. The foster carer support group also meets regularly and is attended by the Children's Services Elected Member. The FCA also meets bimonthly with Senior Managers and Team Managers from Fostering.

There are two Meet and Greet engagement sessions planned for July to gather feedback regarding the ongoing transformation plan. It is hoped that these sessions will provide opportunities for Foster Carers to engage in and co-produce the ongoing transformation work.

### **Promoting Children's Health, Emotional Development, Education and Leisure:**

Attendance at school of children in our care remained at 93% and is consistently above that national average for children who are looked after. Feedback states that Foster Carers are integral in supporting our children and young people in education and in Blackburn with Darwen this is an area of strength. Children and Young People across Blackburn with Darwen attend a wide variety of activities which contribute to their overall learning and achievements. All local children in our care are given access to free sport and leisure activities within the Borough. Foster carers are provided with a MAX Card, which offers heavily discounted access to a range of leisure parks and facilities around the Northwest.

New Directions continue to work with all children in our care from Year 9 and have supported all our Year 11's with applications to colleges and training providers.

There is a Designated Nurse, who takes an active role in following up health issues and assisting with health promotion work. Figures for Quarter 3 show that 88% of all Children in our Care have an up-to-date health assessment. 85% of children who are looked after having had a dental check up in the last 12 months which a significant improvement on previous quarter which was 69% is demonstrating the work that has been undertaken across the service to improve in this area.

Foster carers have a Health Passport for each child in their care, which is a record of all the child's health details. Foster carers are provided with the relevant training and support to meet the specific needs of the child in placement, and they can access support from the Children with Disabilities Team with aids and adaptations, Disability Links registration and information and advice where needed.

In relation to emotional wellbeing, Children in our Care have access to Clinical Psychology and related services through REVIVE and the East Lancashire Child and Adolescent Service (ELCAS) also known as Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). The REVIVE Service is a partnership between Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's Children's Services and East Lancashire Hospital Trust to provide emotional health support for children known to the Local Authority and is based at Duke Street. REVIVE delivers consultation to Foster Carers, training and direct intervention on emotional health and well-being. The Team consists of Clinical Psychologists, a Play Therapist and Mental Health Practitioners.

The Limes in Darwen continues to be used to provide therapy and is now a hub which is used by foster carers along with children and young people.

## **The Fostering Service**

### **Workforce**

The Fostering Service restructure has now been agreed, there are now four Team Manager Posts across both the Permanence Team and The Mainstream Team. There are two new Advanced Practitioner posts across both teams which are being recruited to. The Mainstream Fostering Team has been divided into two teams, the first being the Supervision and Support Team, with the second being the Recruitment and Assessment Team. This is to enable the teams with the respective team manager, to focus on each specific area. This will reduce the timescales of fostering assessments meaning placements for our children and young people will be available earlier, reducing the need for agency fostering placements. This will also ensure one team is able to focus on approved foster carers aiding foster carer retention.

During this quarter a Supervising Social Worker has been off sick with work related stress and remains off, this is being managed through the HR process.

### **Kinship Care**

At the end of this quarter, there were 28 family and friend fostering households, with a further 11 households approved under Regulation 24. There have been 41 referrals and initial assessments completed within this quarter with 19 progressing to full combined assessment. This is a decrease from the previous quarter, however, is on par with past quarters. Assessments continue to take place all over the UK for e.g., Preston, Watford, and London. 4 assessments have been presented to fostering panel and been approved as full family and friends fostering households. There have been 4 resignations in the same quarter due to the carers becoming Special Guardians.

SGO support – we have a RAG rating system in place, whereby cases that have the potential to breakdown are rated 'Red' those needing quite a bit of support 'Amber' and those rated lower are green. At the end of June, there were 17 open cases plus 3 SGO support talks. We currently have 2 cases on red; we have seen challenges particularly with adolescent girls age 12/13+, we have 6 girls aged 12, who we are mindful of and in contact with the carers to ensure they have support. There is an Action Plan in place to identify and pre-empt SGO disruptions. Part of the plan is the development of the SGO Support offer which includes, training, direct support, access to The Adoption Support Fund, escalation to other services and the development of the Kinship Care Support Group. The first support group is due to be held on the 12-07-2023.

SGO. This includes assessments during care proceedings, the PLO process and for children placed under a care order. The Permanence Team Manager attends this panel and the Service Lead for Fostering and Resources chairs the panel which is also made up of other professionals from children's social care including the IRO Service Manager and a legal representative.

### **Analysis of ethnic breakdown of carers**

There are 76 mainstream fostering household of which;

The total number of White/British fostering households consists of 47 couples and 17 single carers

The total number of Asian households is 11 households with 10 being couples and 1 being a single carer  
1 White/British and other, ethnicity being (afro Caribbean)

### **Focus on any issues that have arisen from ethnic matching**

Fostering Front Door liaises with the Social Worker following a successful offer of placement match. Where there are ethnic discrepancies, Fostering Front Door will ensure the Social Worker is aware and they are in an agreement with proceeding. If not, it is at the Social Worker's discretion whether to consider the placement as an option or not. Should a non-cultural matched placement be made, specific support is offered on a case-to-case basis, training is provided around non cultural matched places for Foster Carers.

### **Foster Carer Recruitment and Assessment**

Recruitment of Foster Carers has increased since the last quarter after a slow start in the New Year. We had a busy 2 weeks over the fortnight with activities planned for every day. From dog walks, coffee and cake mornings and information evening the fortnight was busy for the Team. The launch included drummers locally which was exciting. People spent that first week reaching out to me letting me know how nice it was that everyone was out celebrating fostering and showing the service in such a positive light. Social media reach for May alone was 40k people with the first day images being the most liked and shared. This was positive for the service as it has been some time since we have seen that amount of organic interaction. We also ran a competition with all our looked after children. Painted rocks and the top 3 were picked for prizes.



There are ongoing campaigns for emergency and short break placements, including Pace and Remand placements alongside placements for teenagers. The Let's Foster website, social media and digital targeted recruitment bring a multi-channelled approach to the recruitment of foster carers. The recruitment activity planned over the coming months includes,

- Radio and DAX (targeted digital recruitment) took place for 3 weeks over Foster Care Fortnight, this is planned again for over the summer holidays and Christmas
- Leaflet drops in new local areas
- Specific Local events attended including Blackburn Pride and BFI Event at Witton Park
- Refer a Friend relaunch across the council and out to carers, where employees can refer potential applicants and if approved will receive £250
- NHS Staff App now has a link to the Lets Foster website
- Bus stop advertising has taken place across the borough
- We have successfully filmed and collaborated with foster carers to gain their stories as foster carers for Blackburn with Darwen.

Social media had a reach of over 70k for the quarter. A new bidding structure started which has seen an increase in the number of enquires coming from Facebook which is positive. Not all the enquiries are leading to usable enquiries, but it is good to see an increase in the number. As the months go on and work is done on the bidding strategy and targeting, we should see the number of enquiries from people who are able to move forward increase, and we should see less wastage from people who are not ready to foster.

Alongside this, we are testing some new visual organic posts which performed well. Alongside the new bus stop that went out towards the end of April we have seen some good traction on other types of ads. The bus stops have performed well. QR codes on each of them have shown that people are interacting with them, and it has been commented on that people are seeing them and liking them.

Information Evenings continue to be held monthly as well as other targeted face to face activities. Community partnerships continue with Blackburn Rovers, Burnley Football Club and the Hawks Ice Hockey Team to promote and embed the sense of the importance of community and the need for local carers for our children. There is partnership working between BWD Corporate Communication Team and the Recruitment Officer to ensure a targeted and collaborative approach to recruitment.

The plan is to recruit 12 Fostering households in a 12-month period from April 2023 to April 2024. At this stage we have approved 6 Fostering Households with a further 4 households in assessment, meaning that we are well on our way to achieving this target. We are aware that we have lost 2 applications to Independent Fostering Agencies, due to the significant difference in fostering allowances. We continue to push the strengths of fostering for Blackburn with Darwen which includes the level of support offered from the Fostering Service, Foster Carer Training, close relationships with partners and other agencies as well as Blackburn with Darwen being a small family focused council. We know from discussions with neighbouring local authorities and IFA's that our data for recruitment highlights that we are on a par or above them in relation to recruitment of foster carers.

We also spent time at the family hubs opening. These were a great opportunity to speak to people around the borough as well as staff. Ads also ran over this quarter in The Pigeon Carrier, focusing on Teenagers.

We are considering the new Stable Homes agenda and how this will work for us in terms of recruitment and retention of foster carers. We are currently in discussion with neighbouring authorities around this and have been working with the DfE to develop proposals to highlight our position in being a trailblazer for this.

2023/2024				
Month	Enquiries	IV	Approval	Conversion
Apr-22	11	3	2	27%
May-22	27	4	2	15%
Jun-22	28	6	0	21%
Total	66	13	4	20%

2023/24	Enquires	IV	Approval	Conversion
Q1	66	13	4	20%

Same period last year

2022/23	Enquires	IV	Approval	Conversion
Q1	16	6	1	38%

Quick breakdown of enquiries

Facebook Paid	48
Social Media	3
Google	7
Press	1
Bus Stops	3

Current snapshot of active assessments.

- ROI – 3
- IV – 3
- Assessment – 4

### **Fostering Panel**

The Service coordinates two fostering panels, the main fostering panel and annual review panel. The Team Managers act as Panel Advisor and maintain the panel members list along with their training. The two panels are independently chaired. Feedback and evaluation are collated from both panels to inform service delivery. Meetings are now taking place regularly with the Independent Panel Chairs to inform learning and development for the panels and the Fostering Service.

During this quarter we had 5 mainstream fostering households presented to panel approved to offer short break and short-term placements. 3 households have returned to panel for 1<sup>st</sup> annual review and 1 fostering household returned to panel following an allegation.

3 households were presented to panel with a recommendation for approval as family and friends' carers

There have been 23 fostering households presented to the annual review panel for annual review.

During this quarter we have had 3 mainstream fostering households resign. 1 household transferred to an IFA. 1 foster carer made the decision to resign due to financial restraints. The 3<sup>rd</sup> resignation was due to having no spare bedroom as she had continued to support 2 young people post 18 under Staying Put arrangements.

low, feedback is generally positive.

Panel have continued to provide positive feedback regarding the quality of assessments and verbal presentation of the social workers.

### **Training for Foster Carers:**

During this Quarter period, our carers continue to access the online training offer through Me-Learning, The Scils and Eils online training continues to be offered, along with mandatory safeguarding training.

TSD training was delivered to 10 foster carers in June, and they all successfully completed their portfolios.

Regarding the service training offer for 2023, this has been made available to carers with a plan of both online and face to face training sessions offered to our carers. This includes conference style days where carers can attend and be offered training by several services in one day. Foster carers feel this would be very beneficial to those who work alongside their fostering role. We have received mixed feedback from foster carers in relation to training with many foster carers feeling the training offer is positive, with some foster carers wanting a wider range of training. Foster Carer training is an area of focus for 2024.

### **Complaints**

1 complaint has been received during this quarter. An adoptive parent sent a complaint regarding poor communication with the fostering service and a delay in identifying a short break carer for her adopted daughter. This has now been addressed and resolution sought.

### **Compliments**

4 compliments have been received this quarter. A foster carer praised the support she had received from the Fostering Front Door social worker, highlighting the support he had provided. In addition, a Team Manager shared information about a piece of collaborative work across the Children with Disability Team and Fostering Service which supported a placement and prevented a carer going into crisis.

An Independent Reviewing Officer provided the below compliment in relation to long standing Foster Carers.

*'Just wanted to acknowledge how amazing these foster carers are & how lucky we are to have them.*

*They have looked after J for the vast majority of his life & have supported J to recently move onto his potential forever home.*

*J had lived with them for about 23 months by my reckoning & thrived in their care & was very much part of their family from the outset.*

*The Foster Carers are a lovely warm couple who have a complete focus on the child & work collaboratively with parents, profs, Adopters & were so helpful in promoting J's contact with baby sibling.*

*The greatest compliment I could give is to say that I would happily allow my children & grandchildren (not that I have any grandchildren & am far too young & not past 30) to be looked after by them.'*

A Foster Carer provided the following feedback in relation to a Supervising Social Worker (SSW)

*'SSW is worth her weight in gold.... I cannot believe how efficient she is. She just gets the job done going above and beyond. Whilst handing out praise I would also like you to recognise the great work FFD also does.'*

### **Allegations**

There have been no allegations during this quarter

### **Specific Incidents and Restraints**

There have been 1 incident recorded where a Young Person went missing from home. The correct procedure was followed, and the Young Person returned to placement.

### **Bullying Reports**

There have been no reports of bullying over Quarter 1

### **Serious illness and accidents**

There has been no serious illnesses or accidents during this quarter

### **Exemptions**

During this quarter we had no new exemptions. We have 1 fostering household with an existing exemption in place which is supported by their Supervising Social Worker with no concerns noted.

### **Short Break Placements**

There are currently 8 approved short break carers. During this quarter we have had 9 children accessing short breaks.

### **Commissioned Placements and Budget**

All children and young people placed in commissioned placements are part of the Case Tracking and Commissioning Panel which continues to have strategic oversight and monitoring of placements. This panel also provides oversight and planning to ensure that there are robust plans for those children and young people that could be brought back to in-house provision, as well as ensuring timely decision making to achieve permanence.

There continues to be significant pressures due to challenge of recruiting and securing placements for teenagers and large sibling groups both in fostering and residential placements. The financial position across both areas is closely monitored throughout the year.

The local authority continues to take its quota of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) (up to 0.1% of the population). There are referrals at least by weekly, via the Northwest Regional Strategic Migration Partnership. We currently have 18 UASC cases open to Children in Our Care (CIOC), all who are living in appropriate accommodation. Predominantly these children are placed with IFA and residential placements due to there not being enough foster care placements in house. Although the local authority receives funding for UASC, this does not cover the weekly costings of their placements and places additional financial pressure on the commissioning budget.

### **Total number of commissioned foster placements used in this period – 74**

- **49 placements x** Non long term matched including: -
  - **2 x** ICO's including 1 concurrency placement and 1 YP who returned home to parent
  - **4 x** Section 20's including 2 UASCs, 1 x parent and child placement also under PLO; 1 teenage YP whose placement ended in Q1
  - **9 x** Placement Orders including a sibling group of 3; 2 x sibling pairs; 2 individual children of which 1 moved to adoptive placement during Q1
  - **32 x** FCO's, including:
    - 10 individual YP being considered for long term matching
    - pair of long term UASC's (uncle and nephew);
    - sibling pair pending SGO plan to IFA carer being approved at Permanence Panel



- sibling pair that moved from in-house to IFA
- sibling group of 4 placed together
- sibling pair placed together for over 3.5 years, but different issues needing support mean long term matching has not progressed
- 1 YP placed in November during care proceedings
- sibling pair who placed 3 months ago but is hoped this will be their long-term placement here
- parent and child placement where permanence plan for child remains undetermined
- 6 siblings split across 2 foster homes initially, and split into 3 x pairs during Q1 of which one pair moved in-house

**Number of new commissioned foster placements made in this period – 4**

- 2 siblings (of 6) moving to new IFA together
- 2 siblings moved from in-house to IFA

**Number of ended commissioned foster placements - 7**

- 1 x ICO Returned home to parent whilst care proceedings ongoing
- 4 x FCO's - 4 siblings (out of group of 6) moved to IFA and inhouse
- 1 x S20 – 16-year-old YP moved to St Silas Nightsafe after placement came to a mutual end
- 1 x PO – moved to adoptive placement

**Number of long terms matched commissioned foster placements used in Q1 – 25 x FCO's;**

- There were **3** new long-term matches made within this period, including a pair of siblings.
- No long-term matched placements ceased

Additionally, 4 placements were under a retainer for 2 pairs of siblings, however never taken up.

There were **42** ongoing non-long-term matched placements at the end of Q1:

- 30 x FCO's
- 1 x ICO's
- 8 x PO's
- 3 x S20's

There are **25** FCO's in long term matched placements at the end of Q1.

**Service Priorities for the Next Quarter., these priorities remain the same as the previous quarter.**

1. The management team will continue to monitor compliance with Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards and will increase the number of case file audits completed each month.
2. The transformation plan for the fostering service remains a priority. This plan and the key priorities will drive forward placement sufficiency and stability as well as recruitment and quality assurance.
3. Placement sufficiency and stability will continue to be a key area of focus. The relationships with independent fostering providers is the key element which will be the area of development in the next quarter to ensure that we are able to provide local placements to our children and young people within this framework.
4. Recruitment will focus upon our offer to potential foster carers for us to be competitive. The recruitment drive will focus on foster carers who can support teenagers, to respond to the increasing demand for urgent placements. This will also enable a support package of short breaks to be considered for those young people who are more challenging to place and/or in fragile placements currently and will seek to assist with placement stability alongside our Revive offer.

5. There continues to be the need to recruit foster carers who can offer a Remand/PACE foster carer household.



## EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education
<b>LEAD OFFICERS:</b>	Strategic Director of Children & Education (DCS)
<b>DATE:</b>	Thursday, 7 September 2023

<b>PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:</b>	Children, Young People and Education
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>KEY DECISION:</b>	N

**SUBJECT: Children’s Service Improvement Journey**

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The previous report to Executive Board in June 2022 updated Members on the outcomes of the Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS) conducted by HMI Ofsted Inspectorate. The report included the action plan which had been developed in response to Ofsted’s findings and recommendations.

This report provides an update on progress over the last 12 months, including the recent Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of the statutory partners’ – the Council’s Children’s Services, NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB and Lancashire Constabulary – on the identification of need and risk in Blackburn with Darwen.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Executive Board:

1. Notes the progress and improvements made over the last 12 months
2. Notes the findings of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of the statutory safeguarding partners in Blackburn with Darwen.

### 3. BACKGROUND

Since the report to Executive Board in June 2022, there have been significant changes in senior leadership within the Children’s Services and Education directorate, with:

- A new Strategic Director of Children’s Services & Education (the statutory DCS), appointed April 2023, who had been interim since November 2022;
- The Deputy Director for Children’s Social Care returned from maternity leave in February 2023;
- Two new Heads of Service in Social Work and Specialist Services and Corporate Parenting and Permanence;
- Three new Service Leads in Assessment and Social Work, Permanence and Fostering, Adoption and Kinship care;
- A new Team leader for our Independent Reviewing team;

- A Deputy Director for Schools and Education has recently been appointed to take up post in September 2023.

These changes resulted from a review in November 2022 by the interim DCS (now permanent Strategic Director Children's Services & Education), the Chief Executive and Executive Member of the improvement journey to date and a stocktake of the position against the ILACS framework with a focus on: *The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families.*

Together with senior leaders in the directorate, we have developed our improvement journey to ensure we are delivering services that are compliant, inclusive, value for money and of the highest quality providing positive outcomes for our children, young people and families.

The Strategic Director meets with both the Department for Education (DfE) and Ofsted every six weeks since December 2022. Following the most recent meeting with the DfE, and given progress to date, it has now been agreed to meet on a quarterly basis.

Further to the leadership changes there has been a renewed focus on improvement, particularly in Children's Social Care. The initial focus was on leadership and management, ensuring our corporate leadership team are clear about the task in hand, ensuring we offer services that are not only good value for money but also improve outcomes for our children, young people and families.

The improvement board which had been established met monthly to ensure change at pace with the support and challenge of our Local Government Association (LGA) advisor Linda Clegg as independent chair. There is a focus on priority areas of practice, impact and the inspection framework, with the support and challenge from wider corporate directors including Finance and HR. This gives the Council's political leadership and Chief Executive a clearer overview of the directorate as a whole and the support needed to improve. With this approach, we are confident we are building the strong foundations to move the directorate to an outcome our children, young people and families deserve.

We have developed an improvement programme and are consolidating our work across the Directorate under the 'Proud to be BwD' vision, and underpinned by our clear focus on:

- We are Systemic;
- Transitions for all ages;
- Best start in life;
- Providing the right support at the right time;
- Transforming our services building upon national best practice 'Stable homes built on love';
- Supporting children to reach their full potential.

Improvements made over the last nine months include:

- Staff engagement which has included two directorate engagements days – focusing on our priorities and improvement required. A weekly Director email and fortnightly Teams meeting keeps staff updated.
- With HR colleagues, a focus on the workforce including recruitment and retention which continues to be a challenge to all local authorities, with a monthly data set for the improvement board. All leadership posts are filled giving greater stability to staff and our social work agency rate has significantly reduced from over 30% to 14%.

- Clear plans to consolidate and strengthen our Practice Model and Social Work Practice Standards across the Children's Services workforce have been developed. We have been successful in our bid to work with Warrington Council as part of the Sector Led Improvement Programme (SLIP).
- Our restructure of social care has supported improvements to practice by supporting better workflows to provide purposeful interventions at the right time
- Revised engagement with our finance department has enabled leaders in the directorate to have a greater understanding of whole directorate budgets. It has also ensured our finance team have a greater understanding of demand to the service.
- By strengthening the relationship with our data team to one of research, analysis and insight, a monthly children's social care scorecard has been established, giving a directorate snapshot. There is a strong focus on what we need to do to improve and we are continuously developing our critical analysis of data.
- More children are receiving the right support at the earliest opportunity.
- Knowing ourselves is part of the improvement journey. Our new QA (quality assurance) framework fully commenced in June 2023, with staff engagement session taking place in May to ensure this is understood, owned and utilised by all our workforce - working with practitioners. By November 2023 we expect to have a QA framework embedded into practice, at which point we have a formal review of the impact of the framework planned, utilising our SLIP partner, North Tyneside (judged by Ofsted as Outstanding).
- Reviewed practice within Emergency Duty Team (EDT) with our SLIP partner, North Tyneside, has led to updated practice guidance being implemented. Focus is now on safety planning in EDT to allow partnership strategy meetings to take place in day time services with partners who know the child best.
- The Directorate self-evaluation is kept up to date by the wider leadership team, with progress made, and areas requiring improvement.
- Our Family Hubs model has been successfully launched with all four hubs now open.
- Purposeful partnership plans are in place via the renewed Children's Partnership Board and place based BwD Safeguarding Partnership.
- Along with the improvement to Children's Social care there has continued to be a drive on all areas for improvement across the Children's Services and Education agenda including the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) agenda, the Youth Offending Service and our School Improvement Programme. We have learnt from what works well and applied these approaches to the monitoring of improvements across the system.

Since the ILACS Jan 2022, we have engaged with further external scrutiny, this includes :

- A Peer review and challenge session led by DCS's from Warrington, Wigan and Wirral,
- the Annual Conversation with Ofsted,
- Youth Justice Inspection which resulted in the service being judged good with outstanding features,
- Peer review of the Leaving Care Service

### **JTAI – Joint Targeted Area Inspection**

In May 2023 a joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) was conducted of the multi-agency response to identification of initial need and risk in Blackburn with Darwen. This was a multi-agency partnership inspection by Ofsted, Care Quality Commission (CQC) and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The inspection found improvements since the ILACS (2022) in relation to practice and leadership.

*“Recent changes in the BwD senior leadership team have been a catalyst to this transformation, intended to enhance the quality of practice with vulnerable children. These changes have supported the framing of shared objectives and a culture of high expectation, where understanding the child’s experiences is driving improvements. Partnership working is strong.”*

Please see Appendix 1 to view the Joint area outcome letter.

Strengths were identified as follows:

- Children who are at immediate risk of significant harm receive a prompt, proportionate and effective partnership response through CADS (front door).
- Children and their families benefit from responsive, well-coordinated universal and multi-agency targeted early help services, including out of hours, which are helping to reduce harm.
- Children who go missing from home or are at risk of sexual and criminal exploitation receive effective help and protection from the police-based co-located multidisciplinary engage team.
- Schools provide a range of excellent proactive support for children and families.
- The highly effective multidisciplinary weekly ‘transforming lives panel’ ensures that individual children are provided with the right level of help from the most relevant professionals.
- Resolute practitioners and accomplished leaders across agencies work well together to understand the experiences of individual children in their families. Working relationships across the partnership are extremely positive, and staff at all levels know each other well.
- Senior leaders are working together well to accelerate the development of a cogent ‘place-based’ children’s safeguarding board, specifically designed to provide high-quality, locally and swiftly delivered child-centred services

Improvements were identified for action across the partnership, many of which had been identified within existing plans and actions were being delivered:

- Shared and consistent multi-agency processes and records of referrals when professionals identify children in need or at risk of harm.
- The quality and consistency with which the voices of children and their lived experiences are recorded in referrals, assessments, plans and multi-agency reviews.
- Formal multi-agency triage processes, or meetings to consider referrals that do not meet child protection thresholds in the children’s advice and duty service (CADS).
- Communication with and involvement of health professionals, police, schools and children’s social care in meetings and in decisions about next steps to help and protect children.
- Contingency planning and effective challenge by health professionals, police, schools and social care for children who are the subject of repeated referrals or child in need or child protection plans.
- The effectiveness of management oversight and supervision in health, police and children’s services.
- Accurate partnership performance management systems, routine multi-agency audits and rigorous evaluation and analysis of the impact on children’s experiences across services.
- The involvement of children and their families in co-creating services locally.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS**

As a directorate we continue to drive improvement across our service areas following our improvement plan.

Our three strategic areas for scrutiny include:

Corporate parenting

Children’s safeguarding partnership

School improvement.

Priorities for the next 4 months include:

Sept 2023

- Develop a plan to consolidate the QA framework and practice model.
- Develop a coherent vision for children, families and the workforce.
- Complete a place based Safeguarding partnership business plan

Oct 2023

- Embed the revised working plan
- Governance and forward work plan for key Boards
- Complete updated Children and Young people plan
- Review Improvement plan and Self Evaluation
- Develop a communication plan for Children's Services & Education

November 2023

- SEF completed in preparation for Peer Review
- Development of a social care forecasting model
- Review and develop the workforce recruitment strategy

December 2023

- Develop and coproduce the Corporate Parenting strategy with our children in care and Care Experienced young people
- Develop a policy map
- Update key policies

## 5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implication arising directly from this report. The Council's policies are reviewed to ensure they align with statutory, government and best practice guidance.

## 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional financial implications arising directly from this report. The Council has invested in Children's Services further to the ILACS reports as previously agreed and through the budget process to ensure appropriate care and quality standards for our vulnerable children and young people against a backdrop of rising demand and increasing costs, particularly post-Covid

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## 8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional resource implications identified

## 9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

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

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

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*



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**10. CONSULTATIONS**

Staff, partners, children, young people and their families and social care regulators are consulted on service delivery and improvement.

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**11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE**

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

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**12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

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

<b>VERSION:</b>	<b>1</b>
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<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Jo Siddle, Strategic Director, Children &amp; Education (DCS)</b>
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<b>DATE:</b>	7 September 2023
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<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	
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14 July 2023

Joanne Siddle, Director of Children's Services, Blackburn with Darwen  
Professor Sarah O'Brien, Chief Nursing Officer at NHS Lancashire, and South Cumbria  
ICB  
Andrew Snowden, Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner  
Chris Rowley, Chief Constable, Lancashire Constabulary

Dear Blackburn with Darwen Local Safeguarding Partnership

### **Joint targeted area inspection of Blackburn with Darwen**

This letter summarises the findings of the joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to identification of initial need and risk in Blackburn with Darwen.

This inspection took place from 22 to 26 May 2023. It was conducted by inspectors from Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

### **Headline findings**

Committed leaders across Blackburn with Darwen (BwD) safeguarding partnership fully support the Pan-Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP) decision to reconfigure its strategic safeguarding arrangements. They rightly recognise that the current CSAP arrangements do not provide sufficient assurance at a granular level. They are moving to devolved local 'place-based boards' across the three local authority areas of Lancashire, Blackpool and BwD by September 2023. CSAP will retain some shared functions.

Aspirational BwD leaders have taken decisive and effective action to expedite work aligned to the CSAP shared priorities to ensure that vulnerable children and their families can quickly access locally delivered help, support and protection. Recent changes in the BwD senior leadership team have been a catalyst to this transformation, intended to enhance the quality of practice with vulnerable children. These changes have supported the framing of shared objectives and a culture of high expectation, where understanding the child's experiences is driving improvements. Partnership working is strong. The Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board and NHS trusts' safeguarding leads, the police and children's social care are equal partners and active contributors in the development and implementation of the revised safeguarding partnership arrangements. Action by BwD senior partners to include local school leaders is a significant improvement. While it is too soon to fully evaluate the impact of these changes, credible plans are in place, building on the existing strengths to create an environment where children's

voices are consistently central to safeguarding decisions, both strategically and operationally. Leaders are outward looking and welcome external scrutiny. They fully accept the findings of the inspection. They know their services and the population needs well and have a clear understanding of their strengths and challenges.

### **What needs to improve?**

- Shared and consistent multi-agency processes and records of referrals when professionals identify children in need or at risk of harm.
- The quality and consistency with which the voices of children and their lived experiences are recorded in referrals, assessments, plans and multi-agency reviews.
- Formal multi-agency triage processes, or meetings to consider referrals that do not meet child protection thresholds in the children's advisory duty service (CADS).
- Communication with and involvement of health professionals, police, schools and children's social care in meetings and in decisions about next steps to help and protect children.
- Contingency planning and effective challenge by health professionals, police, schools and social care for children who are the subject of repeated referrals or child in need or child protection plans.
- The effectiveness of management oversight and supervision in health, police and children's services.
- Accurate partnership performance management systems, routine multi-agency audits and rigorous evaluation and analysis of the impact on children's experiences across services.
- The involvement of children and their families in co-creating services locally.

### **Strengths**

- Children who are at immediate risk of significant harm receive a prompt, proportionate and effective partnership response through CADS.
- Children and their families benefit from responsive, well-coordinated universal and multi-agency targeted early help services, including out of hours, which are helping to reduce harm.
- Children who go missing from home or are at risk of sexual and criminal exploitation receive effective help and protection from the police-based co-located multidisciplinary Engage team.
- Schools provide a range of excellent proactive support for children and families.
- The highly effective multidisciplinary weekly 'transforming lives panel' ensures that individual children are provided with the right level of help from the most relevant professionals.

- Resolute practitioners and accomplished leaders across agencies work well together to understand the experiences of individual children in their families. Working relationships across the partnership are extremely positive, and staff at all levels know each other well.
- Senior leaders are working together well to accelerate the development of a cogent 'place-based' children's safeguarding board, specifically designed to provide high-quality, locally and swiftly delivered child-centred services.

### **Main findings**

Thresholds of risk, need and harm to children are mostly understood and applied by co-located health, police, children's social care and early help professionals in CADS. The importance of obtaining parental consent for services is well understood and clearly recorded. Staff with the requisite safeguarding skills and experience represent their respective organisations. Strategic leaders have taken action to ensure that health professionals' expertise is fully utilised in CADS in response to all referrals about children. Although managers constantly discuss children's referrals, there are no formally recorded multi-agency triage processes or meetings to consider referrals that do not meet child protection thresholds or to confer when social care managers make decisions to close referrals. This is not challenged or escalated by professionals. Leaders recognise more work is needed to ensure that all partners are routinely included when social work managers make decisions about the next steps to help and protect children. Furthermore, that they are consulted when decisions are made to step children down from statutory services to early help.

The absence of an agreed or standardised multi-agency referral system means that it is not possible to ensure sufficient audit or management oversight of the quality of referrals. The police consistently provide a police safeguarding referral form to CADS when they identify children requiring help, support or protection. All other referrals to CADS are made verbally by phone. Partner agencies are reliant on the written interpretation of the relayed information by social care staff. Consequently, leaders are unable to evaluate the quality of information provided across the partnership or about children's experiences. For example, staff in the hospital emergency department make safeguarding referrals verbally to CADS and then record on the hospital system that a referral was made, but details of the concerns are not recorded. This means that the health safeguarding team is unable to monitor thresholds of harm and risk or to audit the quality of referrals. In addition, children's case records in CADS indicate that information-gathering with schools is inconsistent. For instance, some social workers send emails to school staff and ask for welfare checks; in other children's cases, social workers telephone schools. Practice notes are not consistently detailed enough to indicate what information is gathered from schools or how it is sought.

Professionals across agencies respond quickly and take effective action to protect children at immediate risk of harm. Strategy meetings are timely and involve relevant professionals, although in urgently convened child protection strategy meetings education professionals are not routinely consulted. Contributions from schools at planned child protection strategy meetings are more consistent. Health visitors or school nurses represent health services at child protection strategy meetings, and CADS health practitioners attend urgently convened strategy meetings. A designated police staff member takes appropriate responsibility for attending and sharing police information. Interventions are proportionate to risk. Detailed notes are provided by social care business support officers, but minutes are not shared consistently across the partnership.

Child protection investigations are mostly thorough. Stronger investigations and assessments are informed by the child's history and incorporate previous involvement by most agencies. Risks and strengths are identified and analysed well. Communication with the police, especially in cases of domestic abuse, continues throughout the process. Multi-agency information-sharing and interventions are evident during the assessment period. Direct work using a range of tools helps children to express their views. Sensitive work by persistent social care and family support workers, school professionals and police officers is effective. Most children are seen alone and there is evidence, across teams and services, of persistent child-centred work to engage each child and their parents, for example, joint visits with health visitors and direct work in schools. Multi-agency child in need and early help family planning meetings are held regularly and most are used effectively to review and update plans. Nevertheless, despite a clear understanding of children's experiences by practitioners, children's case records, assessments and plans do not consistently capture the voices of the children.

Several children known to services, sometimes for years, who are living with parental domestic abuse, parental substance misuse or who experience chronic neglect are subject to repeat referrals and children in need and child protection plans. In many of these children's cases, contingency thinking and planning are absent. Children and parents are often subjected to the same parenting assessments and interventions more than once, without evidence of previous changes having been sustained. This approach is insufficiently challenged or escalated by the professional partnership. It is also exacerbated by frequent changes in social work staff and a 'start again' culture. Practitioners working with the same family do not consistently make joint decisions or share pertinent information for these children.

Most children benefit from skilled and committed frontline early help, social care and health practitioners, police officers and school staff working collaboratively to support them and their families and to prevent risk and harm escalating. Police staff understand vulnerability well and complete risk assessments which they use in their role to protect children. Children presenting to East Lancashire Child and Adolescent

Service (ELCAS) at risk from domestic abuse or criminal or sexual exploitation are fast-tracked when there are safeguarding concerns, to ensure that their mental health needs are met swiftly. The school nurse team offers a universal service to children who are home educated. Children are appropriately safeguarded from harm out of office hours by the emergency duty team, which collaborates well with the police, health staff and day services.

Well-coordinated universal and multi-agency targeted early help services are helping to reduce harm across all age groups of children. Compassionate practitioners across all agencies work well together to understand the experiences of individual children in the family. Working relationships across the partnership are incredibly positive at all levels. Staff know each other and the children well. They consistently report that approachable and highly visible senior leaders listen to them and provide support. The partnership commissions an array of accessible and effective services to meet children's and young people's assessed needs. For example, these services include access to the local football club for some children who are receiving support, or specific support that is making a difference to children who experience parental domestic abuse.

The highly effective multidisciplinary weekly transforming lives panel ensures that individual children are promptly provided with the right level of help from the most relevant professional. Exemplary proactive work by school staff working collaboratively across the partnership, with assistance from skilled family support workers, is making a tangible difference to enhancing the outcomes achieved by children of all ages. Inspectors saw examples of sensitive direct work with children from diverse backgrounds and cultures that provides children with opportunities to tell their stories and to explore any worries they may have. Agencies recognise the impact that poverty and unstable housing have on families and work diligently alongside housing organisations, the Department for Work and Pensions and charities to support families to ensure that children's basic needs are met.

A Department for Education pilot project provides effective supervision and challenge for designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) in schools. Leaders have determined this has had a positive impact and will continue to provide this support locally. This project has expedited support for children and their families. Leaders have established network meetings for DSLs, which are used effectively to improve school leaders' safeguarding practice and knowledge about services. Mental health practitioners based in schools identify children with emotional difficulties quickly and support them to access appropriate resources. Well-established and effective systems are in place for schools and within health services to receive Operation Encompass domestic abuse information. Police have extended Operation Encompass to include any concerns for children, when police consider that alerting schools enables additional safeguarding support for children.

Effective and authoritative practice by the co-located multidisciplinary Engage team adds value and leads to better outcomes for vulnerable children at risk of sexual and criminal exploitation and those missing from home. Inspectors observed patient, tenacious and respectful work with children, helping them to build trust with adults. Staff spend time with children to help them understand what is happening to them and to gain a good understanding of their needs. Online abuse is taken very seriously. Links with external agencies are helping to raise awareness, and the recent inclusion of Engage staff in CADS is a strength. Increased digital support to improve effectiveness in mapping high-risk areas and disruption of perpetrators is planned. Leaders acknowledge that performance reporting and evaluation of the impact of the Engage team's work need to be strengthened.

The frequency, model and effectiveness of safeguarding supervision is inconsistent across most services. In children's social care, while supervision takes place regularly, the impact is variable. It often lacks analysis about whether requisite changes are being achieved or sustained, limiting its focus to the completion of tasks. Staff supervision in the early help service is stronger. Police staff have good access to their supervisors and specialist units when they need further help or guidance in relation to child protection matters.

The Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust safeguarding team has effective oversight of the activity completed by the CADS and 0-19 health practitioners for children and young people. This supports a positive understanding of demand, capacity and the standard of the health contribution, but formal safeguarding supervision is not in place for all health staff. There are opportunities in some services for practitioners to request advice and guidance and explore complexities in their practice, but this is not routinely recorded. In addition, there is limited management oversight of adult mental health caseloads when children are linked to adult service users, unless safeguarding risks are already known. Conversely, SPARK adult substance misuse service leaders have a strong understanding of all children linked with adult service users.

Performance management is a key priority for improvement, as BwD leaders recognise that the current CSAP partnership performance management and audit arrangements are underdeveloped. This impedes their ability to track and demonstrate continuous improvement. BwD leaders have taken action to develop a separate local multi-agency quality assurance and audit subgroup. This is augmented by increased governance and scrutiny provided by the independently chaired local authority improvement board. Strategic leaders have a shared understanding of their role, function and purpose and are focused on continuous child-centred improvement.

Practitioners across all agencies in BwD benefit from effective safeguarding children training, which is developed and delivered in the respective organisations using a range of mediums. During their initial training, police officers from Lancashire Constabulary receive training in protecting vulnerable people and children. There is also mandatory interactive e-learning available to all practitioners. Staff report that they are well supported, feel valued and have good access to a wide range of multi-agency training and development opportunities. Nonetheless, engagement with multi-agency safeguarding training by all services is limited. BwD local leaders across the partnership actively advocate the benefits of multi-agency training on practice and have identified the improvements needed to strengthen attendance by frontline staff.

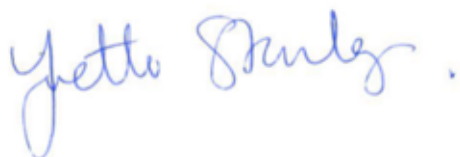
### **Next steps**

We have determined that BwD Children's Services is the principal authority and should prepare a written statement of proposed action responding to the findings outlined in this letter. This should be a multi-agency response involving the individuals and agencies that this report is addressed to. The response should set out the actions for the partnership and, when appropriate, individual agencies. The local safeguarding partners should oversee implementation of the action plan through their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

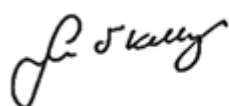
Blackburn with Darwen should send the written statement of action to [ProtectionOfChildren@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:ProtectionOfChildren@ofsted.gov.uk) by 23 October 2023. This statement will inform the lines of enquiry at any future joint or single-agency activity by the inspectorates.



Yours sincerely



**Yvette Stanley**  
National Director Regulation and Social Care, Ofsted



**Dr Sean O'Kelly BSc MB ChB MSc DCH FRCA**  
Chief Inspector of Healthcare



**Wendy Williams, CBE**  
His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services

## EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Executive Member for Public Health, Prevention & Wellbeing
<b>LEAD OFFICERS:</b>	Strategic Director of Environment & Operations
<b>DATE:</b>	Thursday, 7 September 2023

<b>PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:</b>	Environment & Operations
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>KEY DECISION:</b>	Y

**SUBJECT: Longer-term position and future use of Daisyfield Pools**

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2015/16, in the face of continuing and severe cuts in funding from central government, the Council undertook a public consultation including public meetings and customer surveys to discuss options for the future operational management of Daisyfield Pools.

During the consultation process, 'Half Fish' a local organisation informed the Council of their interest in managing and operating Daisyfield Pools. As no other interest was declared, the Council reached an agreement with Half Fish to operate Daisyfield Pools on a landlord / tenant basis from 1 September 2016. Half Fish has now independently operated Daisyfield Pools for the past seven years, but despite several attempts at face to face meetings and via correspondence by the Council to formalise the arrangement, Half Fish have declined to sign a licence to occupy and operate the facility.

Recently, the Council has been made aware of a number of health and safety issues relating to positive legionella readings in multiple areas of the building on two occasions following independent water sample analysis. Health and safety concerns have also been raised about the deteriorating condition of the building and the operation of the pool plant. These issues and concerns were raised with the operator and the risks to public safety were clearly highlighted.

As the issues identified could not be remedied immediately, a decision under Officer Delegated Powers was taken and published on 18<sup>th</sup> August to close Daisyfield Pools with effect from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2023 on grounds of health and safety to protect public health, pending full consideration and decision by Executive Board 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023 regarding the longer-term position and future use of Daisyfield Pools. [Officer Decision.Daisyfield Pools \(blackburn.gov.uk\)](https://blackburn.gov.uk/officer-decision-daisyfield-pools)

The Growth & Development Department have been tasked with undertaking an asset review of key Council assets. Daisyfield Pool was highlighted during this review due to the age of the building. Accordingly, Capita were commissioned to produce a detailed conditions report on the site. The

report has been completed and provides a budget estimate in excess of £3.135M plus VAT for the required repairs and maintenance to keep the facility and building operational.

The pool plant is also in poor condition, many pieces of equipment either need to be replaced or refurbished. A quotation for £71,000 has been obtained to undertake refurbishment works and purchase the necessary equipment.

The investment required for the repairs to the pool plant and building, as identified by the condition survey report is entirely separate and not linked to the operational and management issues, which prompted the decision on 18 August 2023 to close Daisyfield Pools.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Executive Board:

- Endorse the Officer Decision of 18 August 2023 to immediately close Daisyfield Swimming Pool, and approve the continuation of the closure based on serious health & safety failures pending the outcome of the consultation referred to in the report.
- Note the conditions survey for Daisyfield Pools which highlights that the building is in a poor state of repair and condition with numerous substantial defects and is at the end of its effective lifecycle and requires significant investment estimated to be in excess of £3.135M plus VAT for the required repairs and maintenance.
- Agrees to terminate the existing arrangement with Half Fish HQ in relation to its occupation and operation at Daisyfield Swimming Pools, and delegate authority to the Deputy Director – Legal & Governance to serve any required notices.
- Agrees for a consultation to be undertaken in relation to the future use of the building and the impact on current users of the facility, and reporting the outcome for consideration at a subsequent meeting of the Executive Board.

## **3. BACKGROUND**

The Council undertook a Leisure review with support from Sport England in 2012/13. The review resulted in the Council investing in leisure facilities for the long term benefit of the borough with £2.5m investment in a new athletic arena and associated leisure facilities at Witton Park, which opened in April 2014 and £8.5m investment in Blackburn Leisure Centre (a joint development with Blackburn College), which cost £13.5m and opened in March 2015. These followed on from the £12.855m investment in Darwen Leisure Centre in 2010.

These three leisure facilities are extremely popular and provide modern state of the art facilities for residents across the Borough. These three leisure facilities attract over half million attendances a year, generating over £3m income for the Council.

Alongside these investments, it was agreed at Council Forum in September 2014 that the portfolio would undertake a further review of Leisure provision across the borough to achieve a budget saving of £731k pa. In 2015/16, as part of the Council's efficiency savings, the portfolio had to consider the future operation of its other leisure facilities which were ageing, expensive to operate and unaffordable in the face of continuing and severe cuts in funding from central government.

Daisyfield Pools was originally constructed and opened in 1906, the building has undergone various alterations over the years the most significant being the changing block extension in the 1960s and

the extensive refurbishment and remodelling in 1996. There are no internal features and barely any external features, which exist in any recognisable sense from the original build in 1905/6, hence the building does not have 'listed' status under planning legislation.

### **Consultation – Daisyfield Pools**

A 28 day public consultation process took place in October 2015 in two formats, using a questionnaire and a public meeting. The consultation questionnaire was available at Daisyfield Pools and on the Council's website. A public meeting took place at Little Harwood Community Centre near to Daisyfield Pools on 22 October 2015; the date and time for the meeting was advertised in the leisure centres, the libraries and on the Council's website.

As part of the consultation process, the Council also advertised the opportunity to manage Daisyfield Pools, at nil cost to the Council, on the NW CHEST.

Following the public consultation meeting, 'Half Fish' a local organisation informed the Council of their interest in managing and operating Daisyfield Pools. Half Fish were already providing a range of aquatic activities, programmes and lessons across Pennine Lancashire and further afield. The manager of Half Fish was employed as Swimming Development Officer for the Council from 2001 to 2005 and had knowledge of the building and the pool programme. Half Fish wished to take on a 'licence to operate' Daisyfield Pools and proposed to create a charitable organisation to operate the centre and provide a pool programme to meet local community needs.

As no other interest was declared via the public meeting and local adverts, the Council reached an agreement with Half Fish to operate Daisyfield Pools on a landlord / tenant basis from 1 September 2016. The Council provided Half Fish with plans of the building, a building conditions survey, financial information relating to income and expenditure and the current pool programme. The Council also provided a three month hand over period with staff on hand to train Half Fish on the operation of the pool plant and the Heating, Ventilation and Air conditioning systems, and the related health & safety requirements.

The arrangement agreed with Half Fish was that they would have the full and free usage of the building and would receive all income generated from pool admissions, but that Half Fish would also be responsible for covering the day to day running costs of the pool. As the Council previously had a cash limited budget of £419,200 for Daisyfield Pools this sum was saved from the portfolio budget.

Half Fish has operated Daisyfield Pools under this arrangement for seven years, but despite several attempts by the Council in face to face meetings and in writing to obtain a signed licence, Half Fish have declined to sign a formal licence to operate the facility. The proposed five year licence included a licence fee of £1.00 per annum payable to the Council, and although there is no signed licence in place, there are implied rights and obligations on both the Council and Half Fish.

### **Health and Safety concerns - Legionella**

In recent months, there has been growing concern about the management of health and safety at Daisyfield Pools.

MSM (TECS Group) attended the Daisyfield Pools on 9<sup>th</sup> May to undertake the routine water hygiene service visit in accordance with HSG 274 part 2. During the service visit routine water samples were taken for legionella analysis at a UKAS accredited laboratory. The standard length of analysis for legionella is 10 working days from initial filtration, however a high interim result for legionella was

received from the laboratory on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023. The sample received showed the presence of legionella species.

The positive legionella samples were taken from the sink in the seminar room. As the affected sink and also the showers within the facility are supplied from the same water source, it was therefore a concern the showers may also have been affected. The shower outlets and the outlet to the sink were isolated with immediate effect.

MSM (TECS Group) attended the building on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June to temporarily reinstate the water supply to undertake localised flushing and disinfection of representative outlets throughout the water system, the samples were taken to a UKAS accredited laboratory for analysis. Following the works, the outlets were taken out of use until a clear result was received. The analysis on 24<sup>th</sup> June identified that water samples taken from four separate locations in the building had positive legionella counts. The results indicated the contamination was systemic rather than localised.

The Council arranged for a systemic clean and disinfection to be completed by MSM (TECS Group). Following the disinfection works the affected outlets were resampled 48 hours later to ensure that representative conditions were being analysed and the samples were sent to the same UKAS accredited laboratory. The Council issued the operator with a method statement illustrating how they are to carry out flushing of infrequently used outlets. The samples returned with a clear with no presence of bacteria. The Council have arranged for MSM (TECS Group) to undertake monthly UKAS accredited water samples for legionella to ensure the system remains clear.

MSM (TECS Group) is commissioned to test for legionella in all Council owned swimming pools. they have raised concerns that the showers are being taken out of use at Daisyfield Pools to reduce costs, as this greatly increases the risk of legionella proliferating.

The temperature of the cold water outlets throughout the building should be within 2 degrees of the nearest water outlet to the incoming water mains, this is a simple way of ensuring the water is moving through the building. At the site visit in August to test for legionella, the mains water temperature was recorded at 18 degrees, yet the initial temperature of the outlet in the plant room was recorded at 26 degrees. It took the MSM (TECS Group) technician 5 minutes to flush and record a temperature of 19 degrees. This indicates, although the flushing is being undertaken, it isn't being done for sufficient time for the mains water to be pulled through to the outlets. It is evident that water is stored within the pipework and is stagnating, allowing for the proliferation of bacteria including legionella.

### **Health and Safety concerns - condition of the building and operation of pool plant**

On 4<sup>th</sup> August 2023, Council officers from health and safety and leisure services attended a site visit at Daisyfield Pools because of ongoing health and safety concerns. The officers provided a written report, which highlighted numerous issues with the condition of the building and the operation of the centre that presented a risk to the health and safety of staff and customers at the pool.

The officers' report highlights that there are multiple cracked or missing tiles on the pool floor surround and also cracked tiles on the seating areas. There is a large amount of flaking paint around the main pool area. There are numerous leaks in the roof and when it rains, there is water ingress in the main pool, the changing rooms, the main corridors and storage rooms. Plasterwork is coming off the walls and the red grid suspended ceiling is hanging down in some areas.

There were also concerns about the pool water testing regime along with chemical dosing procedures, unsafe storage of chemicals, a lack of COSHH data sheets and unsafe pool management with some of the pool plant equipment adjudged to be in poor condition.

A large number of risk assessments were in a file, they were created several years ago and were last reviewed in 2022. Some safety data sheets were not available, including those relating to dangerous chemicals such as sulphuric acid. Other assessments were not updated as they referred to old chemicals, which are no longer used at the site.

Based on the officers concerns about unsafe management of pool plant, the Council arranged for Correct Flow, an independent swimming pool and water filtration company to audit the pool plant equipment, the chemicals in use and the general management of the pool plant. Half Fish was given a day's notice of the site visit.

The engineer visited the pool on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2023 and submitted a 21 page report of their findings to the Council on 9 August 2023, which detailed a list of concerns about the condition of pool plant equipment and the operation of the plant including the following observations:

- The pool tests results taken on the day showed unacceptably low levels of chlorine in the pools which should have prompted swimming to be suspended and the chlorine levels rectified before the pools were re-opened.
- The staff seem to be recording fairly accurate pool water test results but require guidance to interpret the test results, e.g. the small pool was open and in use by the public at the time that the engineer visited the site and there was unacceptably low levels of chlorine in the pool.
- Pool testing equipment used by the centre is in poor condition and unclean, therefore would not provide accurate readings.
- The pump which pumps chlorine into the main pool is leaking chlorine from the pump head, the operator is aware and has at some point shielded the leak with a plastic bag, which has now deteriorated. This is not good practice and will undoubtedly affect the chlorine delivery and is a danger to those entering the pool plant room.
- The pump which delivers Sulphuric Acid to the pools is switched off, this should be automated and left powered up 24/7.
- The pool water flocculation system was switched on, the system draws polyaluminium chloride (PAC) solution directly from the container. The container was full suggesting the barrel had been just changed or the system was in fault. These chemicals are dated as they have a limited shelf life of typically 12 months, the date on the product was recorded at 26/07/2017 meaning the product is six years old.
- The site advised that a backwash of the main pool is carried out every two weeks, the last recorded backwash was 17<sup>th</sup> July, some 22 days earlier with no backwash planned for the day of the site visit.

In summary, on the day of the site visit, both pools were inadequately disinfected, the chlorine delivery system is in very poor order and causing issues. The operator needs to understand the problem and take the necessary urgent action however, this does not appear to be the case which is a concern for public health. Historical pool water test sheets were reviewed and there are many recorded readings which are out of acceptable range, particularly in the morning and evenings.

As a result of the concerns raised by Correct Flow and the information provided by MSM (TECS Group), the Strategic Director of Environment and Operations published an officer decision on 18<sup>th</sup> August to close Daisyfield Pools with effect from 19<sup>th</sup> Council on grounds of health and safety, pending a further report to Executive Board on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023 regarding the longer-term position and future use of Daisyfield Pools.

## **Building Conditions Report**

The Growth & Development Department have been tasked with undertaking an asset review of key Council assets. Daisyfield Pool was highlighted during this review due to the age of the building as it was originally constructed in 1905. The operator has been allowed to use the property subject to the licence being agreed, however since occupation the operator has been unwilling or unable to sign a licence, despite numerous requests.

The findings of the initial surveys raised concerns regarding the physical condition of the building, which warranted a more detailed follow on building conditions report. Capita were commissioned to carrying out building inspections of the site, drone observations of the roof and review information, plans and drawings provided by the Council in order to produce a comprehensive conditions report for Daisyfield Pools.

The conditions report sets out the principal observations using the following risk rating:

GREEN - Satisfactory Condition / Performing as Intended, may require ongoing maintenance

AMBER - Poor Condition warranting repairs or replacement

RED - Exhibiting significant defects which severely impacts function and/or poses a significant danger

## **Key Findings**

The following key findings within the Condition report are risk rated **Red**: 'Exhibiting significant defects which severely impacts function and/or poses a significant danger':

- There is potential subsidence at the large swimming pool plant room, requires structural engineer assessment.
- The main pool upper eaves require extensive repairs, possible reconstruction. Potential of roof spread from the slate pitched roof which will necessitate further investigation by structural engineer and associated repairs.
- Slate pitched roof above the main pool is in extremely poor condition with multiple loose or missing slates, displaced ridge tiles and broken skylights. Internally there is evidence of timber cladding to the underside of the roof which has become detached, and safety netting has been provided throughout. A full roof covering replacement is urgently required due to the current risk to users.
- The profile sheet metal roof covering across small pool, offices and facilities is in poor condition with extensive corrosion at end laps and delamination of factory coatings. The sheets are at end of life span and require replacement.
- There is excessive deterioration to the brickwork and pointing along lower half of south facing elevation of the 1960's changing block. Brickwork to be replaced with new masonry.
- There is Carbonation and spalling to reinforced concrete lintels and cills to the 1960's changing block. Replacement required.

- Evidence of exposed reinforcement and previous patch repairs along concrete finlock-style gutters to the perimeter of the 1960's changing block have. Due to the carbonation defects and known issues with finlock type gutters, replacement / removal should be undertaken on health and safety grounds and for longevity.
- The Roof Deck to the supplementary plant room adjacent main pool plant room has exposed steel reinforcement likely caused by chloride attack from room function and insufficient concrete cover, specialist repairs are necessary.
- The Air bricks for the north east office block are obscured by the pedestrian pavement on the eastern elevation and earth on the northern elevation. This will may permit the growth of timber damaging fungus (e.g. dry rot) if condition are appropriate, which can spread to the wider building. New periscope vents are required.
- The external large double doorsets serving the small pool plant room are in a state of decay and disrepair, requiring extensive refurbishment.
- Internal doorsets are scuffed and exhibiting signs of damage with worn ironmongery, and overall warrant replacement.
- Floor coverings throughout are worn and in poor condition with areas posing potential trip / slip hazards. Tiles in pool areas are in dangerous condition with isolated areas broken or cracked with sharp edges, posing immediate hazard to users and should be replaced.
- An external retaining wall adjacent the car park is displaced, at risk of failure and requiring reconstruction and poses a hazard to pedestrians.
- The site's perimeter walkways and footpaths, particularly for the emergency exit points, are overgrown and vegetated which must be cleared for safety purposes. The uneven slabs pose potential trip hazards.
- The Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning system is beyond reasonable maintenance and servicing, and is considered end of life and should be replaced as large parts are no longer functioning.
- Pool plant equipment is in poor condition with temporary ad hoc solutions for chlorination introduced, this poses a health hazard to pool users. The equipment is end of life and requires replacement.
- Two reported outbreaks of legionella indicates potential problems with the site's plumbing system and maintenance, we consider large scale renewal of plumbing services a likely necessity.
- The electrical installation throughout the building is generally more than 30 years old with various defects highlighted in a recent electrical inspection. Known C2 issues are to be resolved without delay with the full electrical installation replaced in the short term as could pose a hazard to facility users in its current condition.
- The energy performance rating of the building is Grade D, though with the expected changes to Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards unless significant improvements are made to improve the EPC rating to 'C' the property will unable to be legally leased after this date. Holistic performance upgrades are necessary for EPC improvement other than carrying out works in isolation.



- The external car park surfaces are generally worn, uneven and in a friable condition with various potholes throughout. Resurfacing required to the car park along with new bay line marking to remove the risk of trips.

These findings are not exhaustive and any works or opening up is likely to uncover further defects or issues which are currently concealed or obscured:

In summary, the condition report states that the overall building is in a poor state of repair and condition with numerous substantial defects with significant health and safety implications to both the Council and the Tenant. These issues are, but aren't limited to roofing, electrical and mechanical installations, replacement of hazardous or dangerous floor finishes (e.g. tiling) which pose an immediate hazard to users.

The roof coverings are in varying states of disrepair. All the roofs save for the two-storey office should be replaced. The pitched roof above the main pool is in particularly poor condition. It has not been possible to inspect the supporting roof structure to determine its condition due to the suspended netting and ceiling grid system.

Overall, the building is at the end of its effective lifecycle and requires significant investment and repairs to remain operational. Whilst the remit of the condition report is to highlight the condition and works required to for operational continuity, it is recommended that a large-scale heavy refurbishment or redevelopment of the site would be more suitable. This would not only bring the building up to the current standards, but would also be more efficient in terms time and cost over the medium term and general overall longevity.

The Building Conditions report provides a budget estimate in excess of £3.135M plus VAT for the required repairs and maintenance to keep the facility and building operational for the short term only. These are based on BCIS, SPONS and Capita's own internal data sets, and does not allow for potential cost beyond the immediate necessities.

### **Pool plant repairs**

The pool plant is in poor condition with little or no maintenance carried out for several years. The majority of the work required would be considered a tenant responsibility, i.e. minor plant and includes the following works:

- The refurbishment of the pool water filters
- The service and repair the pool water circulation pumps
- Replacement valves, gauges and air releases
- Drain and clean the poolside balance tank
- The replacement of the pool chemical dosing units and both chlorine pumps
- Servicing of the UV system and replacement of the UV lamps
- Purchase a new pool water testing kit

The cost of undertaking the works and purchasing the necessary equipment has been quoted at £71,000.

#### 4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

- In October 2015, a public consultation was organised which included a public meeting and via surveys with customers and residents to discuss the future management arrangements for Daisyfield Pools.
- 'Half Fish' a local charitable organisation informed the Council of their interest in managing and operating Daisyfield Pools. As no other interest was declared via the public meeting and local adverts, the Council reached an agreement with Half Fish to operate Daisyfield Pools independently on a landlord / tenant basis from 1 September 2016.
- Half Fish has operated Daisyfield Pools for seven years, but despite several attempts by the Council in face to face meetings and in writing, to obtain a signed licence, Half Fish have declined to sign a licence to operate the facility.
- Half Fish provide casual swimming sessions, learn to swim lessons, school swimming and lifeguard training courses and swim teacher courses. The pools are open at the following times:
  - Monday – 6.00pm to 9.00pm
  - Tuesday to Thursday – 9.00am to 9.00pm
  - Friday – 9.00am to 8.00pm
  - Saturday – 8.00am to 2.30pm
- Daisyfield Pools was closed with effect from 19 August 2023 on grounds of health and safety. The health and safety risks were serious and if they had gone unchecked, they could have led to serious injury or fatality. As the Council was aware of the serious health and safety risks and as owners of the building, we could be held partially liable for any serious injury or fatality as a result of health and safety breaches.
- Health and safety is paramount in any swimming pool facility, which requires regular servicing, monitoring and maintenance. It is therefore essential for operators to have a proven track record in operating and managing swimming pools and are able to implement a robust regime of monitoring and compliance with suitably qualified staff.
- A building conditions survey has been produced for Daisyfield Pools which provides a budget estimate in excess of £3.135M plus VAT for the required repairs and maintenance to keep the facility and building operational for the short term only. These are based on BCIS, SPONS and Capita's own internal data sets, and does not allow for potential cost beyond the immediate necessities.
- The continuation and longer-term closure of the Daisyfield swimming pool will impact existing users of the facility. However, this can be accommodated at Blackburn Leisure Centre which is based near the town centre and has modern swimming pool facilities and access to low cost refresh swimming sessions.

#### 5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There is no statutory requirement for Councils to provide swimming pool services, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council has done so on a discretionary basis, investing over £21m in swimming pool provision at Blackburn Leisure Centre and Darwen Leisure Centres since 2010

The Sport England facilities planning model which was completed in 2012 demonstrated that the Borough had an over-provision of swimming pool facilities. The closure of Shadsworth swimming pool in 2018 reduced the over-provision but still provided sufficient swimming pool facilities for the residents of the Borough as recommended by Sport England. The closure of Daisyfield Pools would

result in an under-provision of swimming pool facilities for the residents of the Borough as recommended by Sport England.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Council's Revenue Estimates Summary for the 2015/16 estimated that Daisyfield Pools would operate with a cash limited budget of £419,200. When the pools were transferred to Half Fish, the budget for Daisyfield Pools was removed from the portfolio's overall budget, therefore the portfolio has no revenue funding available to operate Daisyfield Pools.

The Building Conditions report provides a budget estimate in excess of £3.135m plus VAT for the required repairs and maintenance to keep the facility and building operational for the short term only. These are based on BCIS, SPONS and Capita's own internal data sets, and does not allow for potential cost beyond the immediate necessities.

The pool plant report provides a quote for replacing or refurbishing the majority of the pool plant equipment at a cost of £71,000.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The provision of leisure services is a discretionary activity. The Council has powers to provide as it thinks fit and deal with leisure facilities under the general power of competence provided by section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 and section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. Currently, the Council already has provisions for swimming at Blackburn Leisure Centre and Darwen Leisure Centre.

The Council needs to ensure that its decision makers are correctly and adequately informed. As such, a timely, adequate and effective consultation needs to be undertaken with all relevant stakeholders. The outcome of the consultation will need to be considered and taken into account when determining the long-term position and future of the facility.

Since the initial offer to Half-Fish for them to operate from Daisyfield Pools, the Council has been unable to obtain a signed written formal agreement from them to regulate their operation of Daisyfield Pool. For that reason it is considered that they have occupied the pool complex as a verbal licensee or at most, a tenant at will. Both provide no security of tenure and can be ended upon notice. Reasonable notice given the stated health and safety grounds, whilst short, was forewarned verbally by the Council to Half-Fish in the days leading up to the formal notice being given. At present Half Fish can still access parts of the complex that relate to the 'office functions' until further notice.

The presented licences required health and safety regulations relevant for swimming pool operations to be adhered so even if a formal licence had been entered into, the Council would have ended the licence on similar grounds and timescales as it did in the absence of a written licence agreement.

The recommendations to continue closure would be subject to the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010. However, the continuation of the closure is due to serious health and safety issues, which impacts all users of the facility. Any subsequent decision regarding the long-term position and future use of Daisyfield Pools (following the consultation) would need to be informed by way of an Equality Impact Assessment and be considered alongside any health implications before a decision is made.

This report contains a 'key decision', but due to the urgent nature of the matter (as detailed above) it has not been practicable to comply with the procedure for taking 'key decisions' and publish the required 28 clear days' notice. Therefore, the 'key decision' in this report is to be made under 'Special Urgency' provisions under rule 16 of the Rules relating to Access to Information and Decisions and Attendance at Public Meeting.

## 8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Officer time to undertake a public consultation process in relation to future service provision and use of the building. Officer time to secure the site, ensuring the intruder alarm is fully functioning and monitored under the councils existing contracts to allow out of hours security where required. Undertake regular inspections both internally & externally.

## 9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

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

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

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

The Council has consulted with Half Fish prior to the closure of the building on 19 August 2023 and in the interim period leading up to the Executive Board meeting on 7 September 2023.

## 11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

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

## 12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

<b>VERSION:</b>	<b>1</b>
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<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Martin Eden</b>
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<b>DATE:</b>	29 August 2023
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<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	Pool plant report, Daisyfield Pools, 9 August 2023 Capita Conditions report, Daisyfield Pools, August 2023
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## EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



**REPORT OF:** Executive Member for Growth and Development

**LEAD OFFICERS:** Strategic Director of Growth & Development

**DATE:** Thursday, 7 September 2023

**PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:** Growth and Development

**WARD/S AFFECTED:** (All Wards);

**KEY DECISION:** Y

**SUBJECT:** Blackburn with Darwen Local Development Scheme (LDS)

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council is required to publish, and keep up to date, a Local Development Scheme (LDS) for the Borough. The LDS is a project plan setting out the Council's intentions with regards to preparing its new Local Plan (2021-2037) and relevant supporting documents. The primary purpose of the LDS is to set out an expected timetable for any public consultations, alongside adoption dates, of the Local Plan and its supporting documents. This helps to give certainty to all stakeholders who are involved or impacted by the Local Plan, including the public, landowners and developers.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

- Approve the updated Local Development Scheme (LDS), provided as Appendix A, to confirm the broad programme of work for the next two year period;
- Approve the commencement of procurement for the North East Blackburn Strategic Housing Site Masterplan and prepare a new collaboration agreement with landowners; and
- Note that further details will be provided to a future Executive Board meeting seeking approval of the agreed collaboration arrangements together with the funding and appointment of a masterplanner following a competitive tender exercise.

### 3. BACKGROUND

The new Local Plan (2021-2037) continues its course through its examination in public (EiP) process. Whilst the Council expects the EiP to conclude later in 2023, and formally adopt the new plan in early 2024, a number of other supporting documents will be required to ensure that:

- a) development sites can come forward within the timeframes anticipated in the Local Plan development trajectories;
- b) suitable guidance is offered to landowners and developers in helping them prepare planning applications under the new planning framework;
- c) new policies are applied appropriately in the decision making process; and
- d) to update existing supplementary planning guidance to accord with national planning policy.

The updated LDS (provided as Appendix A) identifies the following documents that are expected to be brought forward over the next 2 year period. 'SPD's are Supplementary Planning Documents which build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on particular policies within the Local Plan.

Documents are listed in the order in which work is expected to commence (or has already done so). The anticipated completion/adoption date of each is provided in brackets following.

1. Local Plan (2021-2037) (January 2024)
2. Climate Impacts Framework SPD (February 2024)
3. Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing SPD (April 2024)
4. North East Blackburn Strategic Housing Site Masterplan (estimated March 2025, to be confirmed following appointment of masterplanning consultants)
5. Natural Environment SPD (November 2024)
6. Borough Wide Design Guide / Design Code SPD (November 2024)
7. Residential Design Guide / Design Code SPD (November 2024)
8. Sustainable Transport and Movement SPD (June 2025)
9. Renewable & Low Carbon Energy SPD (June 2025)
10. Planning for Health SPD (June 2025)

The chart below summarises the expected timetable for the preparation, consultation and adoption of each document. This is taken from Appendix 2 of the LDS, which provides further details on the scope of each document, and key information around resourcing and risk management of the overall work programme.

Blackburn with Darwen Local Development Scheme timetable (2023-25)

Key:  Preparation time  Anticipated consultation period  
 Hearings  Anticipated adoption

Year	2023					2024					2025															
	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A
<b>Development Plan Document (DPDs)</b>																										
Local Plan (2021-2037)																										
<b>Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)</b>																										
Climate Impacts Framework SPD																										
Developer Contributions & Affordable Housing SPD																										
Natural Environment SPD																										
Borough Wide Design Guide SPD (Update of 2006 doc)																										
Residential Design Guide SPD (Update of 2012 doc)																										
Sustainable Transport & Movement SPD																										
Renewable & Low Carbon Energy SPD																										
Planning for Health SPD (Update of 2016 doc)																										
<b>Other Documents</b>																										
North East Blackburn Strategic Housing Site (H195) Masterplan																										
Queen's Park (H068) Design Code																										
Local Plan Authority Monitoring Reports (AMRs)	#																									
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)																										

MM Public consultation on 'main modifications' arising through the Local Plan EIP process  
 D Public consultation on a 'draft' document  
 \* Interim guidance on Biodiversity Net Gain in form of a Planning Advice Note (PAN) prior to SPD development  
 # AMR's do not require formal 'adoption' and will just be published on the Council's website once complete

#### 4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

The current Local Plan (comprised of Part 1 and Part 2, adopted in 2011 and 2015 respectively) is now considered 'out-of-date' as it is over five years since its adoption, and the Council identified the need for a review to bring policies in line with the national planning policy framework. Progression of the new Local Plan (2021-2037) to adoption is therefore key to avoiding potential reduction of powers over decision making, and to maintain the Borough's balanced growth. To ensure that the new Local Plan's policies are effectively applied and delivered, the programme of supporting documents set out in the LDS are also required.

There are risks associated with developing a new Local Plan, and these are detailed in the risk assessment that accompanies the LDS. All of the risks are in general terms common to most local plan processes and suitable mitigation has been identified in the risk assessment to reduce potential challenges that lie ahead.

## **5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

By developing and adopting a new Local Plan (and its supporting masterplan/SPDs) the Council will ensure that it has an up to date land use policy framework for the Borough. This will help to deliver the Council's growth agenda, and core missions of the Council set out in its Corporate Plan.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Remaining costs for completion and adoption of the Local Plan (2021-2037) are expected to be covered by the existing agreed budget.

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

The SPDs scheduled for the 2023/24 financial year are expected to be met through existing departmental budgets. This includes the Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing SPD, and the Climate Impacts Framework SPD.

The SPDs scheduled for the 2024/25 financial year will have some further costs associated with them as this will include urban design expertise which is currently not available within the Council (e.g. for SPD updates on design (revisions to Design Guides), and a Design Code for the Queen's Park self-build site). The Growth and Development Team will consider options for funding this work and a request will be made through normal budget setting procedure for the next financial year should it be required.

For the North East Blackburn Strategic Housing Site Masterplan, following approval to commence the procurement process, a landowner meeting will be scheduled to discuss the procurement strategy, surveys and cost allocations, and to prepare and agree a new Collaboration Agreement. Further details will be brought to an Executive Board meeting setting out financial implications to the Council once agreement has been made with all landowners.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) with further requirements and guidance set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 requires local planning authorities to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme and most relevantly for this report, requires them to be reviewed as per Regulation 10A of the 2012 regulations referred to above.

Approving the LDS will ensure the Council is continuing to meet its legal requirements.

## **8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

As identified under financial implications, a budget will be required to pursue the proposed SPDs in 2024/25. There are currently no qualified urban designers within the local authority and therefore external expertise will need to be sought to progress this work.



## 9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

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

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

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

The LDS is a work programme for the Growth Team and as a result external consultation on the document is not necessary. The LDS will be published on the Council's website, and consultation on individual documents set out in the LDS is expected to be conducted as per the timetable provided.

## 11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

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

## 12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

<b>VERSION:</b>	Rev3
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<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	PMO
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<b>DATE:</b>	September 2023
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<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	1. Appendix A – BwD Local Development Scheme (September 2023)
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# **Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council**

## **Local Development Scheme (2023-25)**

**September 2023**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Part 2 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) establishes the current system of local development planning in England<sup>1</sup>. As part of this system, the local planning authority must prepare and maintain a **Local Development Scheme (LDS)**, which sets out a list of the planning documents it intends to prepare in the forthcoming years and the timetable for the preparation of those documents.
- 1.2 Planning documents within this LDS are classified as either development plan documents (referred to as the Local Plan), or their supporting guidance documents (referred to as Supplementary Planning Documents, or SPDs).
- 1.3 Local plans are prepared by a local planning authority individually or in cooperation with one or more other local planning authorities and contain policy positions and statements regarding one or more of the following:
  - Set out the amount of development and use of land which the local planning authority wish to encourage during any specific period;
  - Allocate sites for a particular type of development or use;
  - Include development management and site allocation policies, which are intended to guide the determination of applications for planning permission.
- 1.4 A local planning authority can also prepare other documents that complement the local plan including for example, Area Action Plans or Masterplans (to cover a specific geographical part of the local authority area, or specific allocations), or Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to expand and provide further guidance on policy matters covered in the Local Plan.
- 1.5 Local Planning Regulations require local authorities to review local plans and their Statements of Community Involvement at least every five years from the date of their adoption. Local Authorities will need to carry out an assessment of whether a Local Plan or Statement of Community Involvement remains relevant and effectively addresses the needs of the local community, or whether policies need updating. Having carried out this assessment authorities must then decide:
  - that one or more policies do need updating, and update their Local Development Scheme to set out the timetable for updating their plan, and then update their plan; or
  - that their policies do not need updating, and publish their reasons for this decision.
- 1.6 For this reason, the LDS should be kept up to date. It was last reviewed in July 2021 and this September 2023 review confirms the expected adoption of the new Local Plan in early 2024. It also contains information on the proposed list of supporting documents (SPDs and Masterplan) that the Council currently intends to produce to support the new Local Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> The Planning Act 2008 then the Localism Act 2011 made a number of amendments to part 2 of the 2004 Act. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out the current system of plan making.

## Local Plans and Other Documents

- 1.7 The Local Plan for Blackburn with Darwen Council currently consists of the Core Strategy (Local Plan Part 1) and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (Local Plan Part 2).

<b>The Core Strategy (Local Plan Part 1)</b>	The Core Strategy was adopted in January 2011. The Core Strategy sets the overall spatial strategy for the Borough. This is presented through written policies and a key diagram which illustrates the overall spatial strategy and priorities for development.
<b>The Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (Local Plan Part 2)</b>	The Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (Local Plan Part 2) was adopted in December 2015. The plan provides additional policy detail on a range of topics covered at a strategic level in the Core Strategy. It also includes land allocations and development management policies. The Adopted Policies Map has been prepared alongside the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies plan and illustrates the site allocations and land designations proposed.

## Local Plan Review (Local Plan 2021-2037)

- 1.8 In 2018 the Council concluded that, following a review of its adopted plan in the context of new regulations and proposals set out in the Housing White Paper (2017), that a full plan review was necessary. Since then, a single new Local Plan for the Borough has been prepared and submitted for examination, and the Council is now entering the final stages of this process. The new Local Plan (2021-2037), once adopted, will replace both the Core Strategy (Local Plan Part 1) and Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies. Section 3 below sets out the programme for this process, and its associated SPDs.

## Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan

- 1.9 Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council is also jointly responsible with Lancashire County Council and Blackpool Council for the Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan (JMWLP). The current JMWLP consists of the Core Strategy (adopted February 2009) and Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (adopted September 2013). It provides policies specifically for use in determining planning applications for waste or mineral developments. A revised Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (JMWLP) is being prepared by the three Waste and Minerals Planning Authorities in Lancashire. A separate LDS will be published containing details on the timetable of these Minerals and Waste documents.

## Neighbourhood Plans

- 1.10 At the present time there are no known plans from Parish / Town Councils to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) within the Borough. To date there has not been any formal applications for the establishment of a Neighbourhood Forum and there has not been any significant interest by a community group to prepare a NDP. However, if such plans do come forward, these will be reflected in future updates to the LDS. NDPs could have a knock on impact upon any work programme relating to a review of the Local Plan / SPD production. This is because the preparation of an NDP, whilst a community led document, does require input from the local planning authority in a variety of ways throughout the process.

## Other Planning Documents

- 1.11 The Local Plan is supported by other documents, which are available on the Council's website including a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs); Masterplans and Development Briefs; Advisory Notes and procedural documents such as the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) (which is produced annually).
- 1.12 Further details on proposed new documents, their scope, and what they are intended to replace (where applicable) are set out below.

## Supplementary Planning Documents

### Climate Impacts Framework SPD

- 1.13 The Climate Impacts Framework SPD will provide further guidance on completion of the Council's new Climate Impacts Framework (CIF) assessment tool. The new Local Plan will required the CIF to be submitted as part of the validation process of relevant planning applications, in line with Policy CP5: Climate Change of the new Local Plan (2021-2037).
- 1.14 Further details on the anticipated scope of the Climate Impacts Framework SPD are set out in Appendix 3.

### Developer Contributions & Affordable Housing SPD

- 1.15 The Developer Contributions & Affordable Housing SPD is intended to provide further guidance on a variety of aspects relating to Section 106 contributions and infrastructure delivery set out in the new Local Plan (2021-2037). In particular it will clarify how policy requirements set out in Policies CP4: Housing Development and CP12: Infrastructure and Delivery will be implemented through planning decisions.
- 1.16 The SPD will provide further detail on the process for calculating contributions relevant to planning applications ranging from: education/school place provision, transport infrastructure, biodiversity net gain, and open space/ public realm and leisure. Further details on the anticipated scope are set out in

Appendix 3.

### **Natural Environment SPD**

- 1.17 The Natural Environment SPD will provide further guidance around the application of Policy CP6: The Natural Environment, and DM17: Trees and Woodland. Due to the commencement of biodiversity net gain as a legal requirement prior to adoption of this SPD, the Council will seek to prepare an interim guidance note on BNG (in the form of a Planning Advice Note) for November 2023.
- 1.18 An indicative scope of the content of the Natural Environment SPD is set out in Appendix 3.

### **Borough Wide Design Guide SPD (update of 2006 doc)**

- 1.19 The Design Guide SPD will provide guidance to help promote better design of development within the borough, including detailing the planning authority's principles for high quality urban design. It will serve to update (and replace) the existing Design Guide (adopted 2006). The SPD will provide additional details on design to support Policy CP8: Securing High Quality and Inclusive Design, and DM27: Design in New Developments, and act as a Design Code for the area in line with any expectations set out in the NPPF.
- 1.20 An indicative scope of the content of the Borough Wide Design Guide SPD (update) is set out in Appendix 3.

### **Residential Design Guide SPD (update of 2012 doc)**

- 1.21 The Residential Design Guide SPD will provide an update to the 2012 SPD, providing guidance and advice to enhance the quality of new homes and residential developments across the Borough and promote the highest standards in design. As with the Borough Wide Design Guide SPD, it will serve to support Policy CP8: Securing High Quality and Inclusive Design, and DM27: Design in New Developments, and act as a Design Code for the area in line with any expectations set out in the NPPF.
- 1.22 An indicative scope of the content of the Residential Design Guide SPD (update) is set out in Appendix 3

### **Sustainable Transport & Movement SPD**

- 1.23 The Sustainable Transport and Movement SPD will provide additional guidance on implementing and monitoring Policy CP9: Transport and Accessibility and Policy DM29: Transport and Accessibility. Reference to the Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) will form part of the SPD, to ensure that the outputs of the study are integrated into local planning and transport policies and delivery plans.
- 1.24 An indicative scope of the content of the Sustainable Transport & Movement SPD is set out in Appendix 3.

## **Renewable and Low Carbon Energy SPD**

- 1.25 Policy CP5: Climate Change and Policy DM12: Clean and Green Energy guide how new development should seek to reduce energy use, improve energy efficiency and increase the generation of energy from low carbon and renewable energy sources, which is essential if we are to achieve carbon neutrality targets. The Renewable and Low Carbon Energy SPD will provide further guidance on renewable and low carbon energy related projects – whether delivered as part of new development or as stand-alone energy generation projects.
- 1.26 An indicative scope of the content of the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy SPD is set out in Appendix 3

## **Planning for Health SPD (update of 2016 SPD)**

- 1.27 The Planning for Health SPD will update the existing 2016 SPD, to provide supporting information and guidance on how places can impact on health and the considerations that should be made in designing new developments. The SPD will help ensure that opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of the borough's residents are maximised. It will provide additional guidance to support Policy DM1: Health as well as the wider objectives of the Local Plan relating to improving health and wellbeing.
- 1.28 An indicative scope of the content of the Planning for Health SPD (update) is set out in Appendix 3.

## **Masterplan: North East Blackburn Strategic Housing Site**

- 1.29 A Masterplan for the North East Blackburn Strategic Housing Site is proposed through Policy CP4: Housing Development and Growth Site Allocation Policy H195. The Masterplan will describe how the site will be developed, by providing greater detailed guidance on matters of design, character, built form, infrastructure and integration with the surrounding area.

## **Design Code for Queen's Park (H068) self-build plots**

- 1.30 Policy CP4: Housing Development states that developments proposing multiple self-custom build units will require a design code to ensure that there is a consistent and cohesive approach to design. Site H068: Queen's Park proposes up to 8 self-build units and is a Council owned site. To meet the requirement of Policy CP4, the Council will therefore prepare a design code for the self-build units on the site, however this will be subject to an enabling budget being identified.

## Monitoring and Review (Authority Monitoring Reports)

- 1.31 The Council annually publishes an authority monitoring report (AMR) that provides information on the performance of policies within the Local Plan. It also provides an update on how the Local Plan timetable is progressing against the published LDS. The AMR therefore provides important information to assess where future policy changes which may be required, and also helps to highlight whether a review of the local plan preparation timetable is necessary.

## Statement of Community Involvement

- 1.32 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). The SCI sets out how and when the Council will involve the local community in preparing local plans and processing planning applications and controlling development. The Council is legally obliged to comply with its Statement of Community Involvement and must keep it up to date through a review at least every five years.
- 1.33 The Council's current SCI was prepared in July 2020 to inform the review of the Local Plan, and will therefore be reviewed no later than July 2025.

## Statements of Common Ground

- 1.34 In accordance with Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) local authorities must engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis in any process by means of which development plan documents are prepared.
- 1.35 The NPPF sets out the requirement in paragraph 24 for local authorities to cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries. The accompanying Planning Practice Guidance outlines what a Statement of Common Ground should contain and explains that it should be "*maintained on an on-going basis throughout the plan making process*".
- 1.36 A number of Statements of Common Ground have been prepared alongside the new Local Plan (2021-2037) and will be subject to ongoing review.



## 2. Timetable for document preparation

### Development Plan Documents

2.1 The stages required in preparing a local plan are set out in The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

In summary the key stages for Development Plan Documents are:

- Reg 18 – preparation of a local plan
- Reg 19 – publication of a local plan
- Reg 20 – representations relating to a local plan
- Reg 22 – submission of documents and information to the Secretary of State
- Reg 23- consideration of representations by appointed person (Planning Inspector(s))
- Reg 24 – independent examination by the Planning Inspector(s)
- Reg 25 – publication of the recommendations of the appointed person
- Reg 26 – adoption of a local plan

<b>Document Details: Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan</b>	
Content	The Local Plan will contain the overall spatial strategy for the Borough and set out the quantum of development for housing and economic development requirements. It will provide details on allocations across a range of land uses with a key focus on housing and employment land and any necessary supporting infrastructure. It will also provide topic-based development management policies.
Status	The Local Plan will be a Development Plan Document and provide a single information point for the Council’s key land use policies.
Geographical Coverage	Borough wide
Chain of conformity	The Local Plan will conform to national policies and guidance.
<b>Local Plan Production Arrangements</b>	
Lead Team	Growth Team
Management Arrangements	The draft Local Plan will be subject to review and approvals by the Executive Board. There will be a requirement for formal approval of certain stages by Council.
Resources	Resource implications will be met from within existing Growth Team budgets.
Consultation Arrangements	Consultation will be undertaken in line with the SCI and the relevant planning regulations.

<b>Timetable</b>		
Preparation (Regulation 18)	Scoping the issues and options for the Local Plan and commission initial key evidence base	January – December 2018
	Consult on Issues and Options	February – April 2019
	Consider responses to Issues and Options	May - July 2019
	Commissioning and delivery of additional evidence base to inform emerging draft plan, site selection process & policy development	January 2019 – December 2020
	Consult on draft Local Plan under Regulation 18	January - February 2021
	Production of supporting technical papers for Publication Draft Local Plan	March - December 2021
Publication (Regulations 19/20)	Consult on Publication Draft Local Plan	January – February 2022
	Consider responses to Publication Draft and finalise Submission Draft	March - July 2022
Submission (Regulation 22)	Submit Local Plan for examination	August 2022
Examination (Regulations 23/24/25)	Process run by a Planning Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate (includes consultation on any Main Modifications to the Plan prior to receipt of the final report from the Planning Inspector).	August 2022 onwards (Planning Inspectorate estimate a period of 12 months for the examination stage.) <sup>2</sup>
Adoption (Regulation 26)	Formal Adoption by the Council	January 2024

2.2 Following submission of the Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate in August 2022, the Local Plan is currently being publically examined. Hearings were conducted January-March 2023, and the Council will undertake consultation on the proposed main modifications to the Plan in summer 2023. Timetabling then remains subject to the schedule of the Planning Inspectors, but the Council anticipate receipt of their report late 2023 to enable formal adoption of the Plan in early 2024.

<sup>2</sup> See **Procedural Practice in the Examination of Local Plans**, Planning Inspectorate February 2021 (7<sup>th</sup> Edition)

## Supplementary Planning documents

2.3 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 also set out the stages involved in preparing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). The preparation of an SPD involves fewer stages than a development plan document and the statutory process requires the Council to prepare a draft SPD, undertake public consultation on the SPD, and consider all submitted representations before progressing to finalise and adopt the SPD. The key stages therefore are:

- Preparation of the SPD
- Reg 12 – public participation (consultation) on SPD
- Reg 13 – consider representations relating to SPD
- Reg 14 – adoption of SPD

2.4 The SPDs the Council have committed to produce are set out below.

<b>SPD: Climate Impact Framework SPD</b>		
Content	The SPD will provide guidance on the completion of the Council's new Climate Impact Framework (CIF) assessment tool – including how to complete the online assessment tool, how it will be assessed and used in determining planning applications, and general guidance for designing to mitigate carbon emissions and adapting design to respond to a rapidly changing climate.	
Status	The SPD will provide additional guidance to support the policies of the Local Plan (particularly CP5: Climate Change) and guide the use of the assessment tool.	
Geographical Coverage	Borough wide	
Chain of conformity	Will conform with the Local Plan, NPPF and national guidance, including that relating to design tools.	
<b>SPD Production Arrangements</b>		
Lead Team	Growth Team	
Management Arrangements	The Executive Member for Growth and Development will be required to review the draft SPD and approve it for public consultation. The Council's Executive Board will give formal approval to adopt the SPD following public consultation.	
Resources	Expected to be met from within existing Growth Team budgets.	
Consultation Arrangements	Will be undertaken in line with the SCI and the relevant planning regulations.	
<b>Timetable</b>		
Preparation	Prepare draft SPD	July-September 2023

Public consultation (Reg 12 and 13)	Prepare Consultation Statement (Reg 12(a)) and publish alongside draft SPD to invite comments	October- November 2023
	Public consultation (Reg 13)	
Review and Finalisation	Consideration of any representations received	December 2023 – January 2024
	Finalise SPD	
Adoption (Reg 14)	Adopt SPD	February 2024

### SPD: Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing SPD

Content	The SPD will provide guidance on a variety of aspects relating to developer contributions, affordable housing and infrastructure delivery, including the process for calculating contributions for education, transport, biodiversity net gain and open space/public realm/leisure.
Status	The SPD will provide additional guidance to support the policies of the Local Plan (particularly CP4: Housing Development and CP12: Infrastructure and Delivery).
Geographical Coverage	Borough wide
Chain of conformity	Will conform with the Local Plan, NPPF and national guidance

### SPD Production Arrangements

Lead Team	Growth Team
Management Arrangements	The Executive Member for Growth and Development will be required to review the draft SPD and approve it for public consultation. The Council's Executive Board will give formal approval to adopt the SPD following public consultation.
Resources	Currently expected to be met from within existing Growth Team budgets.
Consultation Arrangements	Will be undertaken in line with the SCI and the relevant planning regulations.

### Timetable

Preparation	Prepare draft SPD	July - November 2023
Public consultation (Reg 12 and 13)	Prepare Consultation Statement (Reg 12(a)) and publish alongside draft SPD to invite comments	December 2023 – January 2024
	Public consultation (Reg 13)	
Review and Finalisation	Consideration of any representations received	February – March 2024
	Finalise SPD	
Adoption (Reg 14)	Adopt SPD	April 2024

**SPD: Natural Environment SPD**

Content	<p>The SPD will provide guidance on the natural environment policies of the Local Plan, including biodiversity net gain (BNG), the local nature recovery strategy, green and blue infrastructure, ecology networks and trees, woodlands and hedgerows.</p> <p>In the interim preparation period, a Planning Advisory Note (PAN) will be prepared to ensure that appropriate advice is available for developers regarding BNG in time for its national, mandatory implementation in November 2023.</p>
Status	The SPD will provide additional guidance to support the policies of the Local Plan (particularly CP6: Natural Environment, CP5: Climate Change, DM17: Trees and Woodland and DM16: Green Infrastructure).
Geographical Coverage	Borough wide
Chain of conformity	Will conform with the Local Plan, NPPF and national guidance

**SPD Production Arrangements**

Lead Team	Growth Team
Management Arrangements	The Executive Member for Growth and Development will be required to review the draft SPD and approve it for public consultation. The Council’s Executive Board will give formal approval to adopt the SPD following public consultation.
Resources	Currently expected to be met from within existing Growth Team budgets.
Consultation Arrangements	Will be undertaken in line with the SCI and the relevant planning regulations.

**Timetable**

Preparation	Prepare draft SPD	July 2023 – May 2024
Public consultation (Reg 12 and 13)	Prepare Consultation Statement (Reg 12(a)) and publish alongside draft SPD to invite comments	June – July 2024
	Public consultation (Reg 13)	
Review and Finalisation	Consideration of any representations received	August – November 2024
	Finalise SPD	
Adoption (Reg 14)	Adopt SPD	November 2024

**SPD: Borough Wide Design Guide SPD**

Content	The SPD will provide guidance to promote high quality design within the borough.
Status	The SPD will update the 2006 Design Guide to provide guidance to support the policies of the Local Plan (particularly CP8: Securing High Quality and Inclusive Design, and DM27: Design in New Developments).
Geographical Coverage	Borough wide
Chain of conformity	Will conform with the Local Plan, NPPF and national guidance, including any requirements around Design Codes

### SPD Production Arrangements

Lead Team	Growth Team
Management Arrangements	The Executive Member for Growth and Development will be required to review the draft SPD and approve it for public consultation. The Council's Executive Board will give formal approval to adopt the SPD following public consultation.
Resources	Additional Growth Team budget expected to be required to provide the necessary expertise.
Consultation Arrangements	Will be undertaken in line with the SCI and the relevant planning regulations.

### Timetable

Preparation	Prepare draft SPD	December 2023 – May 2024
Public consultation (Reg 12 and 13)	Prepare Consultation Statement (Reg 12(a)) and publish alongside draft SPD to invite comments	June – July 2024
	Public consultation (Reg 13)	
Review and Finalisation	Consideration of any representations received	August – November 2024
	Finalise SPD	
Adoption (Reg 14)	Adopt SPD	November 2024

### SPD: Residential Design Guide SPD

Content	The SPD will provide guidance to promote high quality residential design with in the borough.
Status	The SPD will update the 2012 Residential Design Guide to provide guidance to support the policies of the Local Plan (particularly CP8: Securing High Quality and Inclusive Design, and DM27: Design in New Developments).
Geographical Coverage	Borough wide

Chain of conformity	Will conform with the Local Plan, NPPF and national guidance, including any requirements around Design Codes	
<b>SPD Production Arrangements</b>		
Lead Team	Growth Team	
Management Arrangements	The Executive Member for Growth and Development will be required to review the draft SPD and approve it for public consultation. The Council's Executive Board will give formal approval to adopt the SPD following public consultation.	
Resources	Additional Growth Team budget expected to be required to provide the necessary expertise.	
Consultation Arrangements	Will be undertaken in line with the SCI and the relevant planning regulations.	
<b>Timetable</b>		
Preparation	Prepare draft SPD	December 2023 – May 2024
Public consultation (Reg 12 and 13)	Prepare Consultation Statement (Reg 12(a)) and publish alongside draft SPD to invite comments	June – July 2024
	Public consultation (Reg 13)	
Review and Finalisation	Consideration of any representations received	August – November 2024
	Finalise SPD	
Adoption (Reg 14)	Adopt SPD	November 2024

<b>SPD: Sustainable Transport and Movement SPD</b>		
Content	The SPD will provide guidance on supporting sustainable transport and movement within the borough. Reference to the Council's LCWIP will form part of the SPD.	
Status	The SPD will provide guidance to support the policies of the Local Plan (particularly CP9: Transport and Accessibility and DM29: Transport and Accessibility).	
Geographical Coverage	Borough wide	
Chain of conformity	Will conform with the Local Plan, NPPF and national guidance	
<b>SPD Production Arrangements</b>		
Lead Team	Growth Team	
Management Arrangements	The Executive Member for Growth and Development will be required to review the draft SPD and approve it for public consultation. The Council's Executive Board will give formal approval to adopt the SPD following public consultation.	

Resources	Currently expected to be met from within existing Growth Team budgets.	
Consultation Arrangements	Will be undertaken in line with the SCI and the relevant planning regulations.	
<b>Timetable</b>		
Preparation	Prepare draft SPD	August 2024 – January 2025
Public consultation (Reg 12 and 13)	Prepare Consultation Statement (Reg 12(a)) and publish alongside draft SPD to invite comments	February – March 2025
	Public consultation (Reg 13)	
Review and Finalisation	Consideration of any representations received	April – May 2025
	Finalise SPD	
Adoption (Reg 14)	Adopt SPD	June 2025

### SPD: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy SPD

Content	The SPD will provide guidance on renewable and low carbon energy within the borough, and outline ways to improve energy efficiency in new developments.	
Status	The SPD will provide guidance to support the policies of the Local Plan (particularly CP5: Climate Change and DM12: Clean and Green Energy).	
Geographical Coverage	Borough wide	
Chain of conformity	Will conform with the Local Plan, NPPF and national guidance	
<b>SPD Production Arrangements</b>		
Lead Team	Growth Team	
Management Arrangements	The Executive Member for Growth and Development will be required to review the draft SPD and approve it for public consultation. The Council's Executive Board will give formal approval to adopt the SPD following public consultation.	
Resources	Currently expected to be met from within existing Growth Team budgets.	
Consultation Arrangements	Will be undertaken in line with the SCI and the relevant planning regulations.	
<b>Timetable</b>		
Preparation	Prepare draft SPD	August 2024 – January 2025
Public consultation	Prepare Consultation Statement (Reg 12(a)) and publish alongside draft SPD to	February – March 2025



(Reg 12 and 13)	invite comments	
	Public consultation (Reg 13)	
Review and Finalisation	Consideration of any representations received	April – May 2025
	Finalise SPD	
Adoption (Reg 14)	Adopt SPD	June 2025

<b>SPD: Planning for Health SPD</b>		
Content	The SPD will provide guidance on how places and new developments should be designed for improved health and wellbeing (and update the existing 2016 adopted SPD).	
Status	The SPD will provide guidance to support the policies of the Local Plan (particularly DM1: Health).	
Geographical Coverage	Borough wide	
Chain of conformity	Will conform with the Local Plan, NPPF and national guidance	
<b>SPD Production Arrangements</b>		
Lead Team	Growth Team	
Management Arrangements	The Executive Member for Growth and Development will be required to review the draft SPD and approve it for public consultation. The Council's Executive Board will give formal approval to adopt the SPD following public consultation.	
Resources	Currently expected to be met from within existing Growth Team budgets.	
Consultation Arrangements	Will be undertaken in line with the SCI and the relevant planning regulations.	
<b>Timetable</b>		
Preparation	Prepare draft SPD	August 2024 – January 2025
Public consultation (Reg 12 and 13)	Prepare Consultation Statement (Reg 12(a)) and publish alongside draft SPD to invite comments	February – March 2025
	Public consultation (Reg 13)	
Review and Finalisation	Consideration of any representations received	April – May 2025
	Finalise SPD	
Adoption (Reg 14)	Adopt SPD	June 2025

## Other Documents

The proposed North East Blackburn Strategic Housing Site Masterplan is not proposed to have the same status as the SPDs listed above, and is therefore not obliged to follow the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. However, it will be subject to public consultation, and is of strategic significance, therefore details are provided below in relation to its scope, production arrangements, and timetable. The Council will be tendering for masterplanning consultants to undertake this work and the timetable set out below will therefore be subject to revisions in line with that process.

<b>Masterplan for the North East Blackburn Strategic Housing Site</b>		
Content	The Masterplan will provide the detailed guidance for the development of the strategic housing allocation (Site H195).	
Status	Will provide guidance to support the policies of the Local Plan (particularly CP4: Housing Development and Growth Site Allocation Policy H195: North East Blackburn).	
Geographical Cov.	North-East Blackburn Strategic Housing Site	
Chain of conformity	Will conform with the Local Plan, NPPF and national guidance	
<b>Production Arrangements</b>		
Lead Team	Council's Strategic Planning team and landowners (including Council as landowner)	
Management Arrangements	The Executive Member for Growth and Development will be required to review the draft and approve it for public consultation. The Council's Executive Board will give formal approval to adopt the masterplan following public consultation.	
Resources	To be agreed between the Council and landowners via a new Collaboration Agreement. Masterplan Consultants will be procured to co-ordinate and prepare the masterplan and any relevant supporting studies.	
Consultation Arrangements	Will be undertaken in accordance with relevant aspects of the SCI, planning regulations, and in line with any further advice received from masterplanning consultants following appointment.	
<b>Indicative Timetable – to be confirmed following appointment of masterplan consultants</b>		
Preparation	Prepare Masterplan	October 2023 – August 2024
Public consultation	Public consultation	September – October 2024
Review and Finalisation	Consideration of any representations received	November 2024 – February 2025
	Finalise Masterplan	
Adoption	Adopt Masterplan	March 2025

### 3. Resources and Risk Management

- 3.3 A separate risk assessment (attached at Appendix A) has been undertaken of the risks which may affect the Council's ability to meet the planned timetable set out in this LDS. The main internal risks relate to staff turnover, recruitment, absence, competing work priorities, and potential future budget priorities.
- 3.4 The increased use of outside consultants or temporary staff may be required to keep Local Plan document preparation on schedule. Alternatively, if the budget does not allow this, the timetable may have to be revised.
- 3.5 Further changes to the national planning system are another potential risk that could introduce some uncertainty and delay. The Council will monitor closely emerging proposals set out in planning reforms, the forthcoming Levelling up and Regeneration Bill, and other relevant secondary legislation (for example currently emerging around Biodiversity Net Gain).
- 3.6 Mechanisms for cooperation with other authorities and organisations on strategic issues are already in place but mean that the timing of other authorities' Local Plan preparation may have an impact on the delivery of Blackburn with Darwen's Local Plan and SPDs.

## APPENDIX 1: Risk Assessment

Nature of the Risk	Consequences of the Risk Occurring	Likelihood before mitigation (1:5) (A)	Severity / impact before mitigation (1:5) (B)	Inherent risk score (A * B)	Mitigation	Likelihood after mitigation (1:5) (C)	Severity / impact after mitigation (1:5) (D)	Post mitigation risk score (C * D)
Staff Resources to produce new Local Plan - loss of key staff due to sickness or moving to another job	Delay in timetable for delivery of the Local Plan	3	4	12	Regular review of staff work programmes. Bring in external support where appropriate.	2	3	6
Changes to legislative framework or regulations	Additional requirements placed on the form and content of the Local Plan	4	4	16	Maintain close monitoring of any future Government announcements and take on board any necessary changes.	2	3	6
Reduction in Financial Resources required for Local Plan production (either in house council budgets or other external funding)	Delays in the production of the Local Plan	5	4	20	Budget planning to ensure cost effective delivery of the Local Plan.	5	2	10
Joint working with neighbouring authorities and other organisations	Potential delays if key evidence base documents requiring joint working are not signed off by all relevant parties	3	5	15	Ensure robust approach to agreeing the briefs for any jointly commissioned evidence base/ studies.	2	5	10
Potential third party challenges to the emerging new Local	Delays in the next stage of Local Plan development where	2	5	10	Ensure robust evidence base underpins policies	1	5	5

<b>Nature of the Risk</b>	<b>Consequences of the Risk Occurring</b>	<b>Likelihood before mitigation (1:5) (A)</b>	<b>Severity / impact before mitigation (1:5) (B)</b>	<b>Inherent risk score (A * B)</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Likelihood after mitigation (1:5) (C)</b>	<b>Severity / impact after mitigation (1:5) (D)</b>	<b>Post mitigation risk score (C * D)</b>
Plan (including any legal challenge when the plan is found sound)	consultation comments require further consideration of next steps. Delays resulting from a legal challenge whilst legal arguments are considered by the Planning Courts.				and spatial approach of the Local Plan. Engage in any necessary robust defence if a legal challenge is made.			
Planning Inspectorate capacity to complete examination of the Local Plan and publish the Inspectors' Report	Delay to the examination of the Local Plan	2	4	8	Close liaison with the Planning Inspectorate around remaining requirements to complete examination.	1	4	4

## APPENDIX 2: Timetable

### Blackburn with Darwen Local Development Scheme timetable (2023-25)

Key:  Preparation time  Anticipated consultation period  
 Hearings  Anticipated adoption

Year	2023					2024					2025																
Month	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	
<b>Development Plan Document (DPDs)</b>																											
Local Plan (2021-2037)		MM																									
<b>Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)</b>																											
Climate Impacts Framework SPD				D																							
Developer Contributions & Affordable Housing SPD						D																					
Natural Environment SPD				*																							
Borough Wide Design Guide SPD (Update of 2006 doc)																											
Residential Design Guide SPD (Update of 2012 doc)																											
Sustainable Transport & Movement SPD																											
Renewable & Low Carbon Energy SPD																											
Planning for Health SPD (Update of 2016 doc)																											
<b>Other Documents</b>																											
North East Blackburn Strategic Housing Site (H195) Masterplan																											
Queen's Park (H068) Design Code																											
Local Plan Authority Monitoring Reports (AMRs)	#												#														#
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)																											

MM Public consultation on 'main modifications' arising through the Local Plan EIP process

D Public consultation on a 'draft' document

\* Interim guidance on Biodiversity Net Gain in form of a Planning Advice Note (PAN) prior to SPD development

# AMR's do not require formal 'adoption' and will just be published on the Council's website once complete

## APPENDIX 3: Scope of SPDs

The indicative scope of SPDs at the time of writing are set out below:

### Climate Impacts Framework SPD

- Introduction – purpose of SPD and status, what is the CIF
- Policy context – national and local (Local Plan links)
- Declaration of Climate Emergency
- Basic Principles – mitigation and adaptation/resilience
- Evidence base – relevant local reports
- Climate Impact Framework – detailed guidance
  - Purpose of the CIF tool and applications
  - Advice for applicants how to complete
  - Advice on how the Council will assess completed CIFs
  - Detailed guidance on the various criteria
    - Sustainable Transport criteria
    - Natural Environment criteria
    - Flooding/SUDS criteria
    - Energy criteria
- Examples of well-designed developments

### Developer Contributions & Affordable Housing SPD

- Introduction – purpose of SPD and status, key definitions
- Policy context – national and local (Local Plan links)
- Infrastructure Requirements – identification, and the IDP
- Basic Principles – types of contributions explained
- Evidence base - How will contributions be determined? Viability study etc.
- Contribution types – detailed guidance
  - Affordable housing – negotiations, off-site and commuted sums, management, design and quality considerations, procedures for working with developers etc. Include worked examples in appendix?
  - Education provision
  - Transport and travel
  - Highways infrastructure
  - Open Space, Public Realm and Leisure
  - Off-site BNG costs
  - Other requirements (link to CP12 and CP6)
- Spending, monitoring and review

## Natural Environment SPD

(A BNG PAN to be provided in interim preparation period, available for November 2023)

- Introduction – purpose of SPD and status, definitions
- Policy context – national and local (Local Plan links)
- Evidence base – CC&NC, CIF, DWS study, LNRS
- Guidance - applying the SPD
  - BNG (DM15)
  - LNRS's / ecology networks
  - Green/Blue Infrastructure (DM16, DM28)
  - EOAs (DM14)
  - Trees/Woodland (DM17)
  - Peat land
  - Landscapes (DM22)

## Borough Wide Design Guide SPD

- An update to the 2006 Design Guide to include:
  - Design Code and new Local Plan Design Policy alignment

## Residential Design Guide SPD

- An update to the 2012 Design Guide to include:
  - Design Code and new Local Plan Design Policy alignment
  - Integration of the proposed 'Open Space in New Residential Developments' SPD
    - Evidence base – OSA/PPS – identified requirements, deficits
    - On-site requirements – applying standards, what types can be required, maintenance, design principles etc.
    - Off-site requirements – when will contributions be sought? Link to Dev. Con. SPD
    - Worked examples?
  - Any necessary guidance around residential amenity guidance proposed under DM2 (MA-022).



## **Sustainable Transport & Movement SPD**

- Introduction – purpose of SPD and status,
- Policy context – national and local (Local Plan links)
- Evidence Base overview
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
- Travel Plan
- Car Parking
- Electric Vehicle Charging Points
- Any other relevant clarifications on transport policy in the plan (e.g. safe access for emergency vehicles)

## **Renewable and Low Carbon Energy SPD**

- Introduction – purpose of SPD and status, what is renewable/low carbon energy
- Policy context – national and local (Local Plan links, incl. links to CIF SPD, CEAP, People’s Jury etc.)
- Basic Principles – sustainable construction practice / building regs
- Evidence base – relevant local studies (incl. CC&NCS etc.) and action
- Implementing renewable and low carbon energy
  - Current buildings – PD rights and technical/pre-app advice
    - Commercial & domestic buildings
    - Building Regulations & Futures Homes/Buildings Standards
    - Reducing energy use
    - Improving energy efficiency
    - Low carbon and renewable energies
    - Accreditation (BREEAM etc.)
  - Planning guidance, technology specific
    - Heat networks
    - Wind turbines
    - Solar PV
    - Biomass
    - Solar hydro
    - Micro CHP
    - Ground/air source heat pumps

## **Planning for Health SPD**

- Update of existing SPD to take account of any new Local Plan health policy implications (e.g. Hot food take-aways)

## EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



**REPORT OF:** Executive Member for Finance and Governance

**LEAD OFFICER:** Chief Executive

**DATE:** 7th September 2023

**PORTFOLIOS AFFECTED:** All

**WARDS AFFECTED:** All

**KEY DECISION:** Y

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**TITLE OF REPORT:** Corporate Revenue Budget Monitoring 2023/24 – Quarter 1

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### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Executive Board with an update on the Council's Revenue Budget for 2023/24 on the basis of a budget monitoring exercise undertaken at the end of June 2023 (Quarter 1).

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Executive Board:-

a) give approval to the Portfolio Cash Limit Adjustments as outlined in Appendix 1;

b) note the General Fund Budget Summary position as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023;

c) note the current forecast overspend of £1.748m at the end of Quarter 1 and request Portfolio Holders to review their budgets for the remainder of 2023/24 with a view to identifying potential mitigating actions.

d) note the Earmarked Reserves and General Fund Balance position as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

### 3. BACKGROUND

3.1 In accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, all Portfolios are required to examine their revenue budget position on a monthly basis. Quarterly reports are submitted to the Executive Board for review and action as necessary along with a final report, detailing the financial outturn for the year.

#### 4. RATIONALE

- 4.1 The development of the budget is a key element of the Council's financial governance processes. The requirement for the Council to monitor its budget during the year is set out in s28 of the Local Government Act 2003 with s28(3) requiring the Council to take action, as it considers necessary, if there has been a deterioration in its financial position.

#### 5. KEY ISSUES

##### Portfolio Cash Limits - Adjustments

- 5.1 At the meeting of Finance Council on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023, the Council agreed the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2023/24.
- 5.2 As Councillors will be aware, the budget is subject to changes for a range of reasons as the financial year progresses. **Appendix 1** provides a detailed analysis of those budget adjustments that have occurred during the period to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023. The impact of these adjustments on the Council's Budget for 2023/24 is summarised in Table 1 below:-

**Table 1: Working Budget 2023/24 (as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023)**

	Original Budget 2022/23 £000	Adjustments*1 £000	Working Budget at 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2022 £000
Portfolio Budgets	154,037	6,683	160,720
Other Corporate Income and Expenditure	(16,658)	51	(16,607)
<b>Net Revenue Expenditure</b>	<b>137,379</b>	<b>6,734</b>	<b>144,113</b>
Less Core Funding	(62,268)	-	(62,268)
Less Council Tax	(64,861)	-	(64,861)
<b>Shortfall before Reserves</b>	<b>10,250</b>	-	<b>16,984</b>
Change in Specific Reserves	(10,250)	(6,734)	(16,984)
Change in GF Balance	-	-	-
<b>Funding 'Gap'</b>	-	-	-

\*1 – See Appendix 1

- 5.3 The Executive Board is asked to approve these budget adjustments (where they haven't already been approved in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules).

##### Performance against Controllable Budgets

- 5.4 Table 2 below provides a summary of the forecast outturn position on the Council's General Fund Revenue Budget for 2023/24 compared to the Working Budget referred to in Table 1 above. As the table indicates, on the basis of the Quarter 1 budget monitoring position there is a forecast overspend of £1.748m. A more detailed analysis is provided at **Appendix 2**:-

**Table 2: Forecast Performance against Controllable Budgets**

	Working Budget at 30 Jun 2023 £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Variation £000
Portfolio Budgets	160,720	162,468	1,748
Other Corporate I & E	(16,606)	(16,606)	-
<b>Net Revenue Expenditure</b>	<b>144,113</b>	<b>145,863</b>	<b>1,748</b>
Less Core Funding	(62,268)	(62,268)	-
Less Council Tax	(64,861)	(64,861)	-
<b>Shortfall before Reserves</b>	<b>16,984</b>	<b>18,734</b>	<b>1,748</b>
Change in Specific Reserves	(16,984)	(18,732)	(1,748)
Change in GF Balance	-	-	-
<b>Funding 'Gap'</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

\*1 – See Appendix 2

- 5.5 Councillors should note that this is a forecast outturn position for the year based on the Quarter 1 monitoring position. Further budget monitoring exercises will be undertaken during the year and these will be reported to the Executive Board accordingly.

### **Portfolio Budgets**

- 5.6 As indicated in Table 2 above, the forecast outturn position on the Portfolio Budgets is an overspend of £1.748m. An analysis of this position by Portfolio is shown in the Table 3 below:-

**Table 3: Portfolio Forecast Performance against Controllable Budgets**

	Working Budget at 30 Jun 2023 £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Variation £000
Adults Social Care and Health	70,032	70,043	11
Children, Young People and Education	40,894	41,797	903
Public Health, Prevention and Wellbeing	4,526	4,257	(269)
Environment and Operations	11,963	12,766	803
Growth and Development	15,014	15,412	398
Finance and Governance	11,987	11,889	(98)
Digital and Customer Services	7,245	7,245	-
Schools and Education (DSG)	(941)	(941)	-
<b>Portfolio Budgets</b>	<b>160,720</b>	<b>162,468</b>	<b>1,748</b>

\*1 – As per Portfolio Budgets in Table 1

- 5.7 The narrative below provides more details of these forecast variances.

### *Adult Social Care and Health*

5.8 The forecast outturn position for Adult Social Care and Health is an overspend of £11k. This is summarised in the table below

**Table 4: Adult Social Care and Health – Forecast Outturn 2023/24:-**

	Working Budget at 30 Jun 2023 £000	Forecast £000	Variation £000
Independent Sector Other	(47)	260	307
Independent Sector	53,013	53,013	0
ASC and Social Work	3,140	3,090	(51)
Day Services	1,048	1,048	0
Independent Living	1,931	1,931	0
Integrated Commissioning	3,445	3,445	0
Mental Health	1,240	1,213	(27)
Safeguarding	1,134	1,077	(57)
Shared Lives	657	660	3
Strat Gov & Bus Support	1,916	1,912	(4)
Supporting People	1,069	1,069	0
Transport	330	246	(84)
Prevention, Neighbourhoods & Learning	617	541	(76)
Social Integration	133	133	0
Community Safety	404	404	0
<b>Adult Social Care and Health</b>	<b>70,032</b>	<b>70,043</b>	<b>11</b>

5.9 The key variances to note include:-

External commissioning budgets are closely monitored and reviewed throughout the year, and therefore current forecast position of spend in line with the budgets can be subject to change as we progress through the months.

*Children, Young People and Education*

5.10 The forecast outturn position for Children, Young People and Education is an overspend of £903k. This is summarised in the table below:-

**Table 5: Children, Young People and Education – Forecast Outturn 2023/24**

	Working Budget at 30 Jun 2023 £000	Forecast £000	Variation £000
Strategic Social Work	6,232	6,505	273
Permanence	21,486	22,196	710
Adolescent Services	4,238	3,998	(240)
Strategy, Policy and Performance	415	427	12
Education	3,573	3,704	131

Early Years	1,948	1,730	(218)
Directorate	3,002	3,237	235
<b>Children, Young People and Education</b>	<b>40,894</b>	<b>41,797</b>	<b>903</b>

5.11 The key variances to note include:-

At this stage in the financial year there remains a great deal of uncertainty around our year end forecasts, especially around Commissioned Placements which is based on our worst case scenario for those children currently in placement. These forecasts will be refined as the year progresses and trends become visible.

Due to the uncertainty surrounding the potential health contributions towards our jointly commissioned packages of care, we removed the associated income target as part of the budget setting process for 2023/24. With this in mind, and in line with the approach taken at year end, we have not included any contributions from Health in this first budget monitoring of the year. We are obviously still hopeful that our partners will contribute again in 2023/24 and further discussions have taken place with Health to agree the approach going forward. An invoice for quarter 1 will be raised once final agreement on the amount has been made with Health.

*Public Health, Prevention and Wellbeing*

5.12 The forecast outturn position for Public Health, Prevention and Wellbeing is an underspend of £269k. This is summarised in the table below:-

**Table 6: Public Health, Prevention and Wellbeing – Forecast Outturn 2023/24**

	Working Budget at 30 Jun 2023 £000	Forecast £000	Variation £000
Leisure Services	1,354	1,172	(182)
Parks and Open Spaces	(13)	(24)	(11)
Healthy Lifestyle	(14)	(22)	(8)
Public Health	1,248	1,248	0
Community Asset Management (incl CCTV)	1,226	1,172	(54)
Housing Needs	454	440	(14)
Directorate	271	271	0
<b>Public Health, Prevention and Wellbeing</b>	<b>4,526</b>	<b>4,257</b>	<b>(269)</b>

5.13 The key variances to note include:-

The significant variance on the portfolio is Leisure and we will continue to monitor closely energy costs and income from fees and charges.

*Environment and Operations*

5.14 The forecast outturn position for Environment and Operations is an overspend of £803k. This is summarised in the table below:-

**Table 7: Environment and Operations – Forecast Outturn 2023/24**

	Working Budget at 30 Jun 2023 £000	Forecast £000	£000
Housing Services	(27)	267	294
Management Overhead	1,549	1,492	(57)
Grounds Maintenance	392	375	(17)
Neighbourhood Health	284	245	(39)
Transport	(233)	(219)	14
Cleansing Services	3,434	3,641	207
Parking Services	(976)	(839)	137
Waste Disposal	7,267	7,452	185
Public Protection Service	231	310	79
Witton Park Café	0	0	0
s106 Agreements (Expenditure)	42	42	0
<b>Environment and Operations</b>	<b>11,963</b>	<b>12,766</b>	<b>803</b>

5.15 The key variances to note include:-

As a result of the recent fire and subsequent closure of the Crematorium the portfolio is currently making reduced income from the site and the above forecast reflects this. If this pressure cannot be contained within the overall portfolio, corporate funding will be requested at a later Executive Board.

There is a forecast variance of £294k on Housing Services mainly arising as a result of lack of resource to establish a new Selective Licensing area. The portfolio has commissioned an external consultancy to undertake the work necessary to enable this to be taken forward and a new Selective Licensing area established as soon as practicable.

There are also pressures on the Household Waste Recycling Centres, Parking Services and Taxi Licensing which the portfolio are monitoring closely and will seek to manage across the financial year.

*Growth and Development*

5.16 The forecast outturn position for Growth and Development is an overspend of £398k. This is summarised in the table below:-

**Table 8: Growth and Development – Forecast Outturn 2023/24**

	Working Budget at 30 Jun 2023 £000	Forecast £000	£000
Markets	1,389	1,184	(205)

Business/Enterprise Centres	52	(40)	(92)
Corporate Property	1,736	1,597	(139)
Commercial Investment/Tenanted Estate	(690)	(402)	288
Highways Maintenance	4,284	4,903	619
Strategic Transport/Co-ordination	2,179	2,227	48
Directorate/Growth Team	3,792	3,890	98
Building Control	137	105	(32)
Development Control/Planning	(297)	(297)	0
Town Centre Regeneration	94	163	69
RPL Office Accommodation	73	73	0
Parks and Open Spaces	(37)	0	37
Halls and Entertainment	438	289	(149)
Library Services	1,446	1,379	(67)
Museum Services	388	311	(77)
Arts Services	30	30	0
s106 Agreements (Income)	0	0	0
<b>Growth and Development</b>	<b>15,014</b>	<b>15,412</b>	<b>398</b>

5.17 The key variances to note include:-

There is a pressure across the Highways Maintenance budgets and Commercial Investment/Tenanted Estate. These are to a large extent offset by savings across the remainder of the portfolio.

#### *Finance and Governance*

5.18 The forecast outturn position for Finance and Governance is an underspend of £98k. This is summarised in the table below:-

**Table 9: Finance and Governance – Forecast Outturn 2023/24**

	Working Budget at 30 Jun 2023 £000	Forecast £000	£000
Financial Support Services	3,826	3,848	22
Democratic Services	1,347	1,163	(184)
Legal Support Services	2,159	2,171	12
Chief Executive, Policy and Support	981	971	(10)
Human Resources and Training	2,395	2,411	16
Other Non Distributable Costs	1,279	1,325	46
<b>Finance and Governance</b>	<b>11,987</b>	<b>11,889</b>	<b>(98)</b>

5.19 The key variances to note include:-

The major variation against budget is a saving across Democratic Services which is mainly made up of staff vacancies.

#### *Digital and Customer Services*



5.20 The forecast outturn position for Digital and Customer Services is breakeven. This is summarised in the table below:-

**Table 10: Digital and Customer Services – Forecast Outturn 2023/24**

	Working Budget at 30 Jun 2023 £000	Forecast £000	£000
Coroners Services	315	336	21
IT Management and Governance	6,930	6,909	(21)
<b>Digital and Customer Services</b>	<b>7,245</b>	<b>7,245</b>	<b>0</b>

5.21 There are no variances to note at this time.

*Schools and Education (DSG)*

5.22 The forecast outturn for the Schools and Education (DSG) portfolio is breakeven. Services in Schools and Education (DSG) are currently forecast to spend the funding available in 2023/24 through the DSG and Pupil Premium. Schools and Education funding from DSG is monitored by the Schools Forum and reports are considered on a regular basis.

**Other Corporate Income and Expenditure Budgets**

5.23 The forecast outturn position for Other Corporate Income and Expenditure Budgets is breakeven. Given recent increases in interest rates, the Strategic Director, Finance and Resources will be asked to review this position and include an update in a future report. This is summarised in the table below

**Table 11: Other Corporate Income and Expenditure Budgets – Forecast Outturn 2023/24**

	Working Budget at 30 Jun 2023 £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Variation £000
RCCO	8,128	8,128	-
School Contribution to Capital	(266)	(266)	-
Contingencies	6,932	6,932	-
<u>Debt Charges</u>		-	
<i>Interest and Investment Income</i>	(1,300)	(1,300)	-
<i>Debt interest payable</i>	12,760	12,760	-
<i>MRP</i>	6,565	6,565	-
Other Non-Ringfenced Grants	(49,619)	(49,619)	-
Town and Parish Council Precepts	193	193	-
<b>Other Corporate Income and Expenditure</b>	<b>(16,607)</b>	<b>(16,607)</b>	<b>-</b>

## Savings Agreed for 2023/24 – Progress on Implementation

- 5.24 As part of the approved budget for 2023/24, the Council agreed a range of savings proposals. Delivery of the savings is fundamental to a sustainable budget. The table below highlights the forecast outturn position with the implementation of the savings agreed (the forecast impact of savings not being achieved is picked up in the variations reported in each of the Portfolios referred to above).

**Table 12: Achievement of Savings Agreed for 2023/24**

	Working Budget at 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2023 £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Variation £000
Adult Social Care and Health	1,447	1,447	-
Children, Young People and Education	367	217	(150)
Public Health, Prevention & Wellbeing	207	207	-
Environment and Operations	447	447	-
Growth and Development	150	150	-
Digital and Customer Services	167	167	-
Finance and Governance	411	411	-
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>3,196</b>	<b>3,046</b>	<b>(150)</b>

- 5.25 The monitoring of the implementation of savings will continue to be a feature of subsequent quarterly monitoring reports.

### **Reserves and Balances**

- 5.26 At the start of the financial year, the Council has Reserves and Balances totalling of £74.216m. This includes a General Reserve of £6.941m (which includes the Minimum Working Balance of £6.000m)
- 5.27 In approving the Budget for 2023/24, the Council agreed to use £10.250m from specific earmarked reserves in support of the budget. This report now allocates £6.734m from earmarked reserves which arose from carrying forward grants and other contributions into specific reserves at the end of the financial year 2022//23. Taking into account the various adjustments referred to elsewhere in this report, the estimate of Balances and Reserves as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023 is £57.232m. A detailed analysis of these changes is provided at **Appendix 3**.
- 5.28 Given the forecast outturn position set out in this report, and should there be no further mitigation during the remainder of the financial year, the Council would need to draw an additional £1.748m from its Reserves and Balances to achieve a balanced budget. The extent to which this will be necessary will be subject to regular review as part of the regular budget monitoring reports presented to the Executive Board.

## **6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no policy implications arising directly from this report.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The financial implications are as given in the report.

## 8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from the contents of this report.

## 9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no other resources implications arising from the contents of this report.

## 10. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no equality and health implications arising from the contents of this report.

## 11. CONSULTATIONS

11.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

## 12. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

12.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

### Appendices

Appendix 1 – Portfolio Cash Limit Adjustments

Appendix 2 – Summary General Fund Revenue Account – Forecast Outturn Position at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Appendix 3 – Earmarked Reserves and General Fund Balance – Position as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023

<b>VERSION:</b>	1
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Simon Ross
<b>DATE:</b>	August 2023
<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS:</b>	None

**SCHEDULE OF BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS REQUESTED - QUARTER 1 - 2023/24**

	Adults Social Care & Health	Public Health, Prevention & Wellbeing	Children, Young People & Education	Environment & Operations	Growth & Development	Digital & Customer Services	Finance & Governance	Schools & Education (DSG)	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Controllable Budgets as at 1 April 2023 (approved at Finance Council February 2023)</b>	<b>68,340,580</b>	<b>2,626,847</b>	<b>40,392,025</b>	<b>15,365,159</b>	<b>9,380,250</b>	<b>7,288,816</b>	<b>11,583,929</b>	<b>(941,000)</b>	<b>154,036,606</b>
<b>Portfolio changes</b>		<b>(45,687)</b>		<b>(4,313,940)</b>	<b>4,359,627</b>				<b>0</b>
<b>Revised Controllable Budget</b>	<b>68,340,580</b>	<b>2,581,160</b>	<b>40,392,025</b>	<b>11,051,219</b>	<b>13,739,877</b>	<b>7,288,816</b>	<b>11,583,929</b>	<b>(941,000)</b>	<b>154,036,606</b>
<b>Transfers between portfolios</b>									
Base budget adjustments	(120,628)	120,628			(150,000)		150,000		0
Budget transfer relating to Executive Support	29,576	29,576	25,608			(154,128)	69,368		0
Budget transfer relating to additional legal costs			(250,000)				250,000		0
Budget transfer relating to HR training	(45,000)						45,000		0
Budget transfer for "Highways White Lining"				(260,000)	260,000				0
Budget transfer relating to Cyber Security posts						75,000	(75,000)		0
Budget realignment						35,000	(35,000)		0
									0
<b>Other transfers (to)/from earmarked reserves</b>									
									0
CCTV Hub		30,000							30,000
Transfer from Youth Offending Team Reserve for Engage Worker			25,000						25,000
									0
									0
<b>Transfers (to)/from unallocated reserves</b>									
									0
									0
									0
									0
<b>Transfers (to)/from contingency</b>									
Utilise contingency for Waste inflation				1,120,000					1,120,000
									0
									0
									0
									0
<b>Unspent grants and contributions carried forward from 2022/23</b>									
Homes for Ukraine	404,419								404,419
Market Sustainability & Fair Cost of Care	60,000								60,000
Multiply Grant	20,131								20,131
Programme Management	133,076								133,076
More Positive Together (MPT) Funding	51,066								51,066

SCHEDULE OF BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS REQUESTED - QUARTER 1 - 2023/24

APPENDIX 1

	Adults Social Care & Health	Public Health, Prevention & Wellbeing	Children, Young People & Education	Environment & Operations	Growth & Development	Digital & Customer Services	Finance & Governance	Schools & Education (DSG)	TOTAL
More Positive Together (MPT) - Steps	13,220								13,220
Locality/Community Fund	6,745								6,745
Better Care Fund	1,139,100								1,139,100
Public Health England Grant		1,137,235							1,137,235
Dovetail		11,707							11,707
RR Pathway		112,444							112,444
Afghan Scheme		66,112							66,112
Asylum Dispersal		485,250							485,250
Turnaround Grant			13,499						13,499
Safer Streets Funding			22,100						22,100
Family Hub Grant			577,349						577,349
Innovation Grant			47,075						47,075
Funding for the Dedicated Safeguarding Lead			17,313						17,313
SEND Reform / Prep for Employment Grants			25,024						25,024
Land Change				2,900					2,900
Public Health Grant				2,800					2,800
DEFRA Grant				3,800					3,800
Commuted Sum Lakeland Gardens				32,400					32,400
Roe Lee - Levelling Up Grant				9,211					9,211
White Lining Funding					86,197				86,197
Active Travel Fund					7,111				7,111
Local Transport Authority Capacity Grant					104,796				104,796
Biodiversity Net Gain Grant					26,807				26,807
Active Travel Capacity Fund					38,215				38,215
Arts Council England					9,443				9,443
Shared Prosperity Fund					265,234				265,234
Climate Change					116,426				116,426
Bus Service Improvement Plan					414,465				414,465
S278 Contributions					37,070				37,070
LEVI Capability Fund					64,800				64,800
									0
									0
									0
									0

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**Other budget adjustments**

SCHEDULE OF BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS REQUESTED - QUARTER 1 - 2023/24

	Adults Social Care & Health	Public Health, Prevention & Wellbeing	Children, Young People & Education	Environment & Operations	Growth & Development	Digital & Customer Services	Finance & Governance	Schools & Education (DSG)	TOTAL
RCCO -		(50,000)			(7,100)				(57,100)
									0
<i>Other budget adjustments</i>									
									0
									0
<b>Revised Controllable Budget as at 30th June 2023</b>	<b>70,032,285</b>	<b>4,524,112</b>	<b>40,894,993</b>	<b>11,962,330</b>	<b>15,013,341</b>	<b>7,244,688</b>	<b>11,988,297</b>	<b>(941,000)</b>	<b>160,719,046</b>

APPENDIX 1

## Corporate Budget Monitoring - Quarter 1

	Original Budget 2023/24 £000	Variations £000	Quarter 1 Budget 2023/24 £000	Forecast £000	Variation £000
Adult Social Care & Health	68,341	1,691	70,032	70,043	11
Public Health, Prevention and Wellbeing	2,627	1,899	4,526	4,257	(269)
Children, Young People and Education	40,392	502	40,894	41,797	903
Environment and Operations	15,365	(3,402)	11,963	12,766	803
Growth and Development	9,380	5,634	15,014	15,412	398
Digital and Customer Services	7,289	(44)	7,245	7,245	-
Finance and Governance	11,584	403	11,987	11,889	(98)
Schools and Education DSG	(941)	-	(941)	(941)	-
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>154,037</b>	<b>6,683</b>	<b>160,720</b>	<b>162,468</b>	<b>1,748</b>
Corporate Income and Expenditure					
RCCO	6,956	1,171	8,127	8,127	-
School Contribution to Capital	(266)	-	(266)	(266)	-
Contingencies	8,052	(1,120)	6,932	6,932	-
<i>Debt Charges</i>		-		-	
<i>Interest and Investment Income</i>	(1,300)	-	(1,300)	(1,300)	-
<i>Debt interest payable</i>	12,760	-	12,760	12,760	-
MRP	6,565	-	6,565	6,565	-
Other Non-Ringfenced Grants	(49,618)	-	(49,618)	(49,618)	-
Town and Parish Council Precepts	193	-	193	193	-
<b>Net Revenue Expenditure</b>	<b>137,379</b>	<b>6,734</b>	<b>144,113</b>	<b>145,861</b>	<b>1,748</b>
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	(10,250)	(6,734)	(16,984)	(18,732)	(1,748)
General Fund Working Balance	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>127,129</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>127,129</b>	<b>127,129</b>	<b>-</b>
Business Rates - Top Up Grant	(25,117)	-	(25,117)	(25,117)	-
Retained Business Rates	(19,794)	-	(19,794)	(19,794)	-
Revenue Support Grant	(15,695)	-	(15,695)	(15,695)	-
Collection Fund - NNDR (Surplus)/Deficit	(452)	-	(452)	(452)	-
Collection Fund - Council Tax (Surplus)/Deficit	(1,210)	-	(1,210)	(1,210)	-
Council Tax Income	(64,861)	-	(64,861)	(64,861)	-
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(127,129)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(127,129)</b>	<b>(127,129)</b>	<b>-</b>

## DETAILS OF GENERAL FUND EARMARKED RESERVES FOR USE BY THE COUNCIL

	Balance at 31 March 2023	Requested Transfers to/(from) earmarked reserves in Qtr 1			Balance at 30 June 2023
		2022/23 Outturn - As reported to Exec Board July 2023	Support to 2023/24 budget as agreed at Finance Council in February 2023	Release of grants and other budgets b fwd from 2022/23	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	Q1 £000
Welfare, council tax and business rates reforms					
Welfare and council tax reforms	1,880	(36)			1,844
Section 31 Grant - Compensation for lost Business Rates income	5,110	(650)			4,460
					-
Investment in assets and infrastructure					
Office Accommodation and property improvements	588	(526)	201		263
Highways winter maintenance	404				404
Support for the Local Plan	54				54
Flood Defence	77				77
St John's Reinstatement	3,243	(1,450)	(53)		1,740
					-
Support for Other Resources and Transformation projects					
Legal Advice Reserve	105				105
Partnerships & Transformation	78				78
Insurance risk investment fund	43				43
Brexit Preparation Funding	149				149
					-
Support for People Services					
Schools Improvement (SSIF)	486				486
Supporting Families / Targetted Youth Support	472			(208)	264
Youth Justice	357		(39)		318
Music Services	117				117
Disabled Facilities Grants	289				289
Future Demand Pressures	4,959		(60)		4,899
Better Care Fund	1,455		(1,139)		316
					-
Support for Place Services					
Investment to support business rates growth	520				520
Place Shaping Investment Reserve	400				400
					-
Contingent sums to support future downsizing and transformation programmes					
Support for future redundancy costs	1,667				1,667
Support for part year effect of future savings plans	1,187				1,187
Digital Transformation	1,842	(610)	27		1,259
Transition to the Cloud	447				447
Response and Recovery Reserve	2,500				2,500
Budget Support Reserve	4,673	(2,688)			1,985
Invest to Save Reserve	4,572	(470)	164		4,266
					-
Amounts b/fwd from previous year(s) in respect of unspent grants and contributions					
Transformation Challenge Award	64				64
SEN / SEND Reform Grant /SEND Prep for Empl	25		(25)		-
Transforming Lives	37				37
One Public Estate grant	255				255
Electoral Grant	57				57
DCLG Transparency Code New Burdens	13				13
Adult PSS - Local Reform and Community Voices	108				108
Adult PSS - War Pensions Disregard	30				30
Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (FHSG)	68				68
Social Integration funding	185				185
Section 278 contributions	37		(37)		-
NHS Funding for LPRES integration with Mosaic and spine mini services	19				19
					-
COVID-19 Funding from MHCLG	2,498				2,498
Combined Authority Grant	48				48
Burdens Fund monies	3				3
Custom build Grant	15				15
Museum & Arts Project	15				15
Museum & Schools Grant	62				62
Social Prescribing Link Workers Monies	11				11
Community Champion Funding	85				85
Virtual School Grant	293				293
Clinically Extremely Vulnerable COVID Funding	290				290
Supported Families Funding - Neighbourhood Management	152			296	448
Unspent Public Health funding	117		(1,137)		-
Arts Regeneration	26				26
Community Development Management	10				10



## DETAILS OF GENERAL FUND EARMARKED RESERVES FOR USE BY THE COUNCIL

	Balance at 31 March 2023	Requested Transfers to/(from) earmarked reserves in Qtr 1			Balance at 30 June 2023
		2022/23 Outturn - As reported to Exec Board July 2023 £000	Support to 2023/24 budget as agreed at Finance Council in February 2023 £000	Release of grants and other budgets b fwd from 2022/23 £000	
Safer Streets Fund - CCTV monitoring & Maintenance	82		(22)		60
HMLR Funding	-				-
Cyber Resilience Fund	150				150
DLUHC User Research Funding	17				17
Active Travel Fund	7		(7)		-
Arts Council England	9		(9)		-
Shared Prosperity Fund	265		(265)		-
Climate Change	117		(117)		-
Amounts c/fwd to future year(s) in respect of unspent grants and contributions					
Bus Service Improvement Plan	415		(415)		-
Public Health Funding - Business Compliance	3		(3)		-
DEFRA Grant - Business Compliance	4		(4)		-
Roe Lee - Levelling Up Funds	9		(9)		-
Family Hub	577		(577)		-
Youth Investment Fund	109				109
Innovation Funding	47		(47)		-
DSL Grant	17		(17)		-
Homes for Ukaine	404		(404)		-
Multiply Grant	20		(20)		-
Programme Management	133		(133)		-
More Positive Together (MPT) Funding	51		(51)		-
More Positive Together (MPT) - Steps	13		(13)		-
Supporting Families	88			(88)	-
Locality/Community Fund	7		(7)		-
PSS Grant	154				154
DHSC Capacity and Productivity Grant	130				130
Fitness for Life Grant	40				40
Dovetail	12		(12)		-
RR Pathway	113		(113)		-
Afghan Scheme	66		(66)		-
Asylum Dispersal	485		(485)		-
DLUHC Transparency Code New Burdens	13				13
DFT Local Transport Authority Capacity grant	105		(105)		-
DEFRA Biodiversity net gain grant	27		(27)		-
Active Travel Capability Fund	38		(38)		-
LEVI Capability Fund	65		(65)		-
Amounts committed in future year budgets/MTFS					
Budget carry over for implementation of Concerto (Property system)	20				20
Budget carry over for Intack Depot driveway	10				10
CCTV Hub carry forward	149		(30)		119
Development Investment Fund (Capital)	1				1
Strengthening Communities Volunteering in Lancashire (SCVL)	109				109
Community Support Unit - request to carry forward specific budget	72				72
Community Hygiene - request carry forward income from Land Charges	3		(3)		-
Landscaped Areas - Commuted sum Lakeside Gardens	32		(32)		-
Funding for Care Quality Commission (CQC) Inspection	600				600
White Lining - request to carry forward specific budget underspends	86		(86)		-
Reserves held for specified purposes					
Developers Contributions (S106 Income)	6,053	(3,900)	(1,454)		699
Future Maintenance of Wainwright Bridge	27				27
Future Maintenance of Witton Park 3G Pitches	175	50			225
Leisure Equipment Pay-back	90	30			120
Future remediation costs in respect of former landfill sites	400				400
Highways claims anticipated for years up to current year but not yet received	300				300
Art Acquisitions Fund	25				25
W. Ferrier Bequest (for museum re Kathleen Ferrier)	20				20
Allowance for contingent liabilities (e.g. MMI)	250				250
Blackburn Building Control Account	38				38
<b>TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES FOR DISCRETIONARY USE</b>	<b>55,469</b>	<b>(10,250)</b>	<b>(6,734)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>38,485</b>
'Other Earmarked' Reserves					

## DETAILS OF GENERAL FUND EARMARKED RESERVES FOR USE BY THE COUNCIL

	Balance at 31 March 2023  2022/23 Outturn - As reported to Exec Board July 2023 £000	Requested Transfers to/(from) earmarked reserves in Qtr 1			Balance at 30 June 2023  Q1  £000
		Support to 2023/24 budget as agreed at Finance Council in February 2023 £000	Release of grants and other budgets bfwd from 2022/23 £000	Other transfers to/(from) reserves  £000	
Reserves held in respect of joint arrangements and charitable bodies					
Darwen Market Traders Association	2				2
Joint Building Control Account	-				-
Turton Tower Charity	74				74
LSCB Safeguarding Partners Fund	41				41
Reserves held in relation to schools					
Dedicated Schools Grant - Surplus	4,221				4,221
LMS Schools Balances	7,468				7,468
<b>TOTAL 'OTHER EARMARKED' RESERVES</b>	<b>11,806</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>11,806</b>
<b>TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES</b>	<b>67,275</b>	<b>(10,250)</b>	<b>(6,734)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>50,291</b>
<b>UNALLOCATED RESERVES</b>	<b>6,941</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6,941</b>

## EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Executive Member for Finance and Governance
<b>LEAD OFFICERS:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>DATE:</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> September 2023

<b>PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:</b>	All
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	All
<b>KEY DECISION:</b>	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

**SUBJECT: CORPORATE CAPITAL BUDGET AND BALANCE SHEET MONITORING REPORT 2023/24 – Quarter 1 as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To report the overall financial position of the Council in respect of the capital programme as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023, highlighting key issues and explaining variations in the first 3 months of the year.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Board is asked;

- to approve the revised capital programme as per Appendix 1,
- to approve the variations to the programme shown in Appendix 2,

### 3. BACKGROUND

All portfolios are required to examine their capital budget position on a monthly basis.

### 4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

- a) The total cost of the Council's capital investment programme for 2023/24 has now increased from £42.264 million, as approved by Finance Council on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023, to £65.820 million at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023. The net variation of £23.556 million (detailed in Appendix 2) reflects;
  - An increase of £13.212 million in respect of variations to the programme following the finalisation of the outturn position for 2022/23 (slippage),
  - budget increases of £15.360 million (of which £6.018 million is funded by transfers from existing capital scheme budgets) made to reflect the approval of additional schemes since the programme was originally approved in February,
  - further variations during the first quarter of the year, for which approval is requested £1.002 million,
- b) As at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023, the total capital expenditure across the portfolios was £1.052 million (representing 1.60% of the current, revised projected capital spend).

c) The estimated capital receipts figure expected in 2023/24 is £5.592 million; £1.038 million has been received in the first three months of the year.

## 5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The information contained within the report accords with the capital strategy and the three-year budget forecast within the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-26, as approved at Finance Council on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

## 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

### 6.1 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The variations in actual spend and resource availability for 2023/24 are summarised by portfolio in Appendix 1. Variations in spending are set out in Appendix 2.

The capital programme for 2023/24 has increased by £23.556 million in the first quarter of the year. The main points to note are as follows:

#### 6.1.1 New Approved Capital Schemes

Several capital schemes (new schemes and amendments to existing schemes) have been approved since the original capital programme was approved in February 2023, and have now been added to the current programme as follows:

Scheme	Amount £	Approved By	Date Approved
<b>Children's and Education</b>			
Creation of New Special School Places	£3,700,000	Executive Board	09-Feb-23
Creation of New Secondary School Places	£1,249,700	Executive Board	09-Mar-23
Variations to the Schools Capital Programme	£663,000	Executive Board	08-Jun-23
<b>Growth and Development</b>			
Local Transport Plan 23-24	£8,460,121	Executive Board	09-Mar-23
Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery Roof Replacement	£89,700	Executive Member	19-May-23
Levelling Up Fund 2 – Growth Axis Transport Package	£500,000	Executive Board	31-May-23
Active Travel Fund 4	157,000	Executive Member	Aug-23
<b>Digital and Customer Services</b>			
Procurement of new Backup Solution	£70,000	Executive Board	09-Mar-23
New Software Solution for Regulatory Services	£350,000	Executive Board	06-Jul-23
Replacement Door Access System	£120,000	Executive Member	31-Mar-23
<b>Total</b>	<b>£15,359,521</b>		

#### 6.1.2 Adults and Prevention Services

##### Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

There has been a further DFG grant allocation of £423,000 and an additional contribution to the scheme of £140,000 from Together Housing. Approval is requested to increase the 2023/24 budget by these amounts.

##### Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme

A 2023/24 allocation of £183,000 was estimated in the original programme, however, this was not correct and has been removed from the budget during this quarter. There will be a revenue contribution of £50,000 to the scheme during the year, and approval is sought to increase the budget by this amount.

#### Safer Streets Fund 4

Approval is sought to create a budget for the anticipated 2023/24 grant allocation of £102,300.

### **6.1.3 Children's Young People & Education**

#### Schools Capital Schemes

Unallocated schools capital grant allocations are retained in an overarching Capital Allocations Fund within the capital programme until bids against this have been approved. Grant allocations for 2023/24 of £1.841 million for high needs provision and £1.317 million for schools condition funding have been added to the schools Capital Allocations Fund.

A number of other adjustments, approved in previous meetings of the Executive Board, have been made to schools capital scheme budgets and amounts have also been reallocated for the 2023/24 project management fee and contingency budget:

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Amount £</b>
Project Management Fees	50,000
Contingency	100,000
Longshaw Nursery Relocation	423,000
Avondale Resurface Playground	25,000
Brookhouse Primary Replace Boilers	47,000
Stansfeld Centre / St Thomas Centre Refurbishment	500,000
Newfield School Remodel	2,300,000
Crosshill Grant for Additional Places	900,000
Intack Primary Boilers	68,000
Roe Lee School Fencing	100,000
QEGS reconfiguration layout expand provision	550,000
Witton Academy reconfiguration and refurbishment	650,000
St Wilfrid's Refurbish to Create Additional Classroom	50,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,763,000</b>
Financed by transfer from Schools Capital Allocations	(5,714,000)
Financed by transfer from Two Year Old Grant	(49,000)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(5,763,000)</b>

Any forecast overspends will be covered by a transfer from the Capital Allocations Fund.

#### Family Hubs Transformation

The 2023/24 capital allocation for the Family Hubs and Start for Life programme is £53,665, of which £10,822 was spent in advance in 2022/23. Approval is sought to create a budget for the remaining grant of £42,843.

### **6.1.4 Growth and Development**

#### Equity Loans Fund

A capital receipt of £35,000 has been recycled back into the Equity Loans Fund, and approval is requested to increase the scheme by this value.

## Integrated Transport Budget and Bus Service Improvement Fund

The current budgets for the above schemes are summarised in the table below:

Description of funding	Integrated Transport Budget £	Bus Service Improvement Fund £	Total £
2023/24 Department for Transport (DfT) allocations:			
• Integrated Transport Block	1,435,000		
• Highways Maintenance Block	1,338,000		
• Pothole Fund	1,070,000		
• Bus Service Improvement Fund		804,000	
Bus Service Improvement Fund slippage from 2022/23 known at time of report		1,209,188	
S106 funding included in report to Exec Board	2,603,933		
<b>Total per Local Transport Plan report to Exec Board</b>	<b>6,446,933</b>	<b>2,013,188</b>	<b>8,460,121</b>
Active Travel Fund (ATF) 4 Scheme	157,000		
Slippage from 2022/23:			
• Department for Transport funding	1,307,000		
• S106 funding	1,412,000		
Additional Pothole Fund allocation 2023/24	428,000		
DfT funding from previous financial years	98,000		
Adjustment to limit S106 budgets to amounts actually received to date	(2,739,228)		
<b>Total Q1 budget to be approved</b>	<b>7,109,705</b>	<b>2,013,188</b>	<b>9,122,893</b>

S106 contributions are only recognised in the budget once they have actually been received. The individual budgets for highways schemes funded using S106 contributions will be increased during the year as additional contributions are collected, and these changes will be reflected in the quarterly capital monitoring.

### Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Projects

In the capital programme presented to Finance Council on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023, total funding of £27.5 million (£20 million LUF plus £7.5 million council match funding) was included for the Town Centre LUF scheme. It was subsequently announced that Blackburn with Darwen had been successful in securing £20 million of funding for two LUF schemes, the Town Centre scheme and the Junction 5 and Growth Corridor scheme. At this stage, only £500,000 of the LUF funding for the Junction 5 scheme has been included in the budget, as detailed in the report to the Executive Board on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023.

### Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery Roof Replacement

Approval was granted by the Executive Board on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2023 to transfer £89,700 from the Corporate Property Investment budget, to cover additional costs of the Museum and Art Gallery roof replacement following the outcome of the tender process.

## 6.1.5 Digital and Customer Services

### Transition to the Cloud

A grant of £150,000 from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Cyber Support Team has been secured to fund the initial capital costs of this scheme. On 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023, the Executive Board approved a budget addition of this amount, and the transfer of £80,000, which had previously been earmarked to support these costs, back to the Corporate ICT budget.

### Digital Flare Replacement

This scheme will implement a new software system for the Council's regulatory services. A transfer of £350,000 from the Corporate ICT budget was approved by the Executive Board on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

### Security Operation and Recovery Capability

A transfer of £225,000 has been made from this scheme back into the Corporate ICT budget.

### Replacement Door Access System

Approval was granted by the Executive Board on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 to transfer £120,000 from the Asset Management Strategy budget, to cover the costs of a replacement door access system throughout the Council's buildings.

### Slippage

A request is made to approve the re-profiling of the following Corporate ICT scheme budgets into 2024/25 for schemes not expected to be completed during the current financial year:

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Slippage Requested £</b>
Digital Customer Portal	20,000
Helpdesk for Everything	188,000
Digital Customer Portal (Phase 2)	150,000
Intranet/iTrent	20,000
Digital Flare Replacement	100,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>478,000</b>

## 6.1.6 Earmarked Schemes

### Corporate ICT

On 6<sup>th</sup> July 2023, the Executive Board approved the use of the Corporate ICT budget to refresh the supply of employee laptops across financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25.

## 6.2 CAPITAL RECEIPTS

Actual capital receipts at the end of June 2023 were £1.038 million. All of these receipts will be utilised in support of the Minimum Revenue Provision.

## 6.3 BALANCE SHEET POSITION

### 6.3.1 Overview

Good balance sheet management assists in the effective use and control over the Council's assets and liabilities. Key assets comprise the Council's tangible fixed assets, debtors, investments and bank balances. Key liabilities include long and short-term borrowing, creditors and reserves.

### 6.3.2 Non-current Assets

Tangible non-current assets include property, plant and equipment held by the Council for use in the production or supply of goods and services, for rental to others or for administrative purposes. Property assets are the responsibility of the Finance and Governance portfolio. One fifth of all assets are re-valued every year, and annual reviews are undertaken to establish whether any impairment or other adjustments need to be applied. New assets and enhancements to existing assets are managed by way of the capital programme, as reported in Appendix 1.

### 6.3.3 Borrowing and Investments

Long-term borrowing requirements flow from the capital programme. Regular dialogue and meetings take place between the Director of Finance, their staff and the Council's independent treasury consultants Arlingclose, and options for optimising borrowing requirements are actively reviewed.

No long-term borrowing has been taken so far this year.

The Council's surplus cash balances are managed on a day-to-day basis in line with the Treasury Management Strategy approved by Finance Council. The Council spreads its investment risk over a number of institutions and has limits on how much can be invested in any one institution and for how long. The list of approved institutions is kept under regular review by the Treasury Management Group in conjunction with information from the Council's treasury consultants.

Both short and long-term borrowing interest rates and investment interest rates have increased over the quarter, because of increases in the Bank of England Bank Rate from 4.00% at the start of the period to 5.00% by the end.

### Interest and Debt Repayments Revenue Budget

	Original Budget £	Forecast at Quarter 1 £
Interest and investment income	(1,300,000)	(1,300,000)
Debt interest payable	12,760,000	12,760,000
MRP	6,565,000	6,565,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,025,000</b>	<b>18,025,000</b>



The current borrowing and investment position is as follows:

	Amounts at 30/06/2022 £000	Amounts at 30/06/2023 £000
Short term borrowing	25,000	0
Long term borrowing	141,550	138,002
Transferred debt re Local Government Reorganisation	12,903	12,360
Recognition of debt re PFI arrangements	59,190	56,941
<b>TOTAL BORROWING</b>	<b>238,643</b>	<b>207,303</b>
Investments made by the Council	71,585	85,467

The totals include the debt recognised on the balance sheet as a result of accounting adjustments in respect of bringing the BSF school buildings in to use, which are financed through PFI arrangements. These adjustments are made to ensure that the Council's effective control over, and use of, these assets is recognised with corresponding adjustments to the debt. These changes do not add to the costs faced by the Council Tax payer as the actual capital costs for these schools form part of the ongoing stream of payments made to the PFI contractor (which are in turn largely offset by PFI grant funding from the Government).

#### 6.3.4 Debtors

The Council has a corporate debt policy, as well as other specific policies for the management of debt in the key areas of council tax, business rates and housing benefit overpayments. The table below summarises the collection performance of the various debts and the total outstanding debt in the respective areas at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023. The table also shows the corresponding level of debt at the same point in the last financial year.

	Position at 30/06/2022	Position at 30/06/2023
<b>Council tax</b>		
Current year balance (£000)	55,304	59,194
Previous year arrears (£000)	14,480	14,703
<b>Total Council tax balances</b>	<b>69,784</b>	<b>73,897</b>
Collection rates	27.0%	27.1%
<b>Business rates</b>		
Current year balance (£000)	29,343	31,655
Previous year arrears (£000)	3,895	3,482
<b>Total Business rates balances</b>	<b>33,238</b>	<b>35,137</b>
Collection rates	32.3%	25.7%
<b>Housing Benefit</b>		
Overpayments balances (£000)	2,398	2,670

## 6.4 PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

The Council measures and manages its capital expenditure, borrowing, and commercial and service investments with reference to a number of indicators. It is now a requirement of the CIPFA Prudential Code that these are reported to the Executive Board, and details will be included in the Treasury Management Report which will be on the agenda at the next meeting.

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council has a duty to ensure it can deliver a balanced budget. The Local Government Act 2003 imposes a duty on an authority to monitor its budgets during the year and consider what action to take if a potential deterioration is identified.

This report has been prepared in accordance with both the Local Government Act 1972 (Sec 151) which states that “every local authority shall make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs’ and the Local Government Act 2003 which, with its various statutory instruments, sets the legal framework within which the Council may undertake capital expenditure and empowers Councils to raise finance for capital expenditure.

## 8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None.

## 9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

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

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

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

None

## 11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

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

**12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

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

<b>VERSION:</b>	<b>V1.0</b>
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<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Jenny Bradley (267681)</b>	<b>Simon Ross (585569)</b>
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<b>DATE:</b>	August 2023
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<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	N/A
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# Overall Capital Monitoring 2023/24

	Current Year 2023/24				
	Budget Approved by Finance Council on 27 Feb 2023	Revised 2023/24 Budget at Q4 2022/23	Virement / New Scheme Approvals	Slippage	Revised Budget at Qtr 1
	£ 000	£ 000	£ 000	£ 000	£ 000
<b>Costs</b>					
Adults and Prevention Services	3,282	3,339	532	-	3,871
Children, Young People and Education	7,068	13,185	3,201	-	16,386
Environmental Services	215	982	-	-	982
Public Health and Wellbeing	-	-	-	-	-
Growth and Development	22,417	26,250	7,029	-	33,279
Digital and Customer Services	3,030	3,067	315	(478)	2,904
Finance and Governance	831	848	-	-	848
<b>Portfolios Total</b>	<b>36,843</b>	<b>47,671</b>	<b>11,077</b>	<b>(478)</b>	<b>58,270</b>
Earmarked Schemes	3,127	5,511	(135)	-	5,376
Contingent Schemes	2,294	2,294	(120)	-	2,174
<b>Total Spend</b>	<b>42,264</b>	<b>55,476</b>	<b>10,822</b>	<b>(478)</b>	<b>65,820</b>
<b>Financing</b>					
Department for Education	2,505	8,462	3,374	-	11,836
Department for Transport	22	1,339	6,539	-	7,878
Disabled Facilities Grant	3,762	3,730	423	-	4,153
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities	7,218	7,679	467	(108)	8,038
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	-	-	-	-	-
Environment Agency	14	96	-	-	96
Heritage Lottery	882	722	-	-	722
Forrestry Commission	-	20	-	-	20
Arts Council	365	365	-	-	365
Home Office	-	-	102	-	102
<b>Total Grants</b>	<b>14,768</b>	<b>22,413</b>	<b>10,905</b>	<b>(108)</b>	<b>33,210</b>
External Contributions	226	226	140	-	366
Revenue Contributions	7,656	10,856	(258)	(250)	10,348
Unsupported Borrowing	19,614	21,981	35	(120)	21,896
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>42,264</b>	<b>55,476</b>	<b>10,822</b>	<b>(478)</b>	<b>65,820</b>

## Scheme Variations to 2023/24 Capital Programme

	Current Year 2023/24									
	Budget Approved by Finance Council on 27 Feb 2023 £ 000	Slippage from Q4 2022/23 £ 000	Revised 2023/24 Budget at Q4 2022/23 £ 000	Virement / New Scheme Approvals £ 000	Slippage £000	Revised Budget at Q1 £ 000	Actual Spend to Date £ 000	Variance £ 000	Forecast £ 000	Variance After Slippage £ 000
<b>Adults and Prevention Services</b>										
Disabled Facilities Grant	2,899	(106)	2,793	563		3,356	131	(3,225)	3,356	-
Telecare Project	200	(6)	194			194	(28)	(222)	194	-
Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme	183	169	352	(133)		219	-	(219)	219	-
Safer Streets Fund 4			-	102		102	91	(11)	102	-
	<b>3,282</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>3,339</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,871</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>(3,677)</b>	<b>3,871</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Children, Young People &amp; Education</b>										
Disabled Facilities Grant	663	80	743			743	15	(728)	743	-
Two Year Old Grant	49		49	(49)		-	-	-	-	-
Education - Free School Meals Module		36	36			36	-	(36)	36	-
Liquid Logic - New Data Production		45	45			45	-	(45)	45	-
<b>Schools capital programme</b>										
Capital allocations		5,773	5,773	(2,556)		3,217	-	(3,217)	3,213	(4)
St Barnabas & St Pauls	135		135			135	-	(135)	135	-
Audley Infants & Juniors Heating System			-			-	(20)	(20)	-	-
Roe Lee Park Ventilation & New Flooring			-			-	(3)	(3)	-	-
Shadsworth Infants - Heating			-			-	(5)	(5)	-	-
Meadowhead Infants External Works			-			-	(9)	(9)	-	-
Lammack Extension	450	(173)	277			277	204	(73)	277	-
Darwen Additional School Places	3,250		3,250			3,250	-	(3,250)	3,250	-
Longshaw Nursery Relocation	200	56	256	423		679	237	(442)	679	-
Shadsworth Infants Extension and Remodel		135	135			135	102	(33)	135	-
Ashleigh Heating and Ventilation	35		35			35	-	(35)	35	-
Audley Infants Replacement of Fascias & Soffits	55		55			55	-	(55)	55	-
Audley Inf & Jnr Replace windows & upstands to lean to roof	60		60			60	-	(60)	60	-
Avondale Resurface Playground	125	(2)	123	25		148	-	(148)	148	-
Brookhouse Primary (Nursery) Replace Roof System	75		75			75	-	(75)	75	-
Brookhouse Primary Replace Boilers	40	(5)	35	47		82	-	(82)	82	-
Longshaw Juniors Replace Fire Alarm System	40		40			40	-	(40)	40	-
Lower Darwen Primary Heating Scheme			-			-	1	1	1	1
Roe Lee Roofing, Upstandings & Windows	180	11	191			191	3	(188)	191	-
Roe Lee Repairs to Service Road, Ext Areas & Auto Gates	85	13	98			98	-	(98)	98	-
Shadsworth Juniors Replacement of Boilers	40		40			40	-	(40)	40	-
Meadowhead Infants Drainage Installations		2	2			2	5	3	5	3
Stansfeld Centre / St Thomas Centre Refurbishment	470	30	500	500		1,000	-	(1,000)	1,000	-
Newfield Roof Repairs	220	30	250			250	-	(250)	250	-
Brookhouse MUGA Pitch Repairs		11	11			11	-	(11)	11	-
Belmont Primary Boiler Replacement	35		35			35	18	(17)	35	-
Longshaw Juniors Replacement of Water Main		2	2			2	-	(2)	2	-
Audley Infant Culvert Works	18	2	20			20	-	(20)	20	-
Audley Infant Dining Room Floor/gas meter/boiler	27	3	30			30	-	(30)	30	-
Audley Junior Ventilation & Heating works	9	1	10			10	-	(10)	10	-
Avondale Rebuild Steps	9	1	10			10	-	(10)	10	-
Belmont Reslate Roof inc Lead work to valleys & bell tower	30	3	33			33	-	(33)	33	-
Brookhouse Upgrade Lighting	34	4	38			38	-	(38)	38	-
Brookhouse Kitchen Upgrade	45	5	50			50	-	(50)	50	-

## Scheme Variations to 2023/24 Capital Programme

	Current Year 2023/24									
	Budget Approved by Finance Council on 27 Feb 2023 £ 000	Slippage from Q4 2022/23 £ 000	Revised 2023/24 Budget at Q4 2022/23 £ 000	Virement / New Scheme Approvals £ 000	Slippage £000	Revised Budget at Q1 £ 000	Actual Spend to Date £ 000	Variance £ 000	Forecast £ 000	Variance After Slippage £ 000
Brookhouse Replace Windows & Doors	9	1	10			10	-	(10)	10	-
Daisyfield Replace External Doors	13	2	15			15	-	(15)	15	-
Daisyfield SEND Works DDA Compliance	30	3	33			33	-	(33)	33	-
Feniscowles Juniors Upgrade Windows	27	(4)	23			23	-	(23)	23	-
Lammack Security Fencing & Electronic Gates	198	22	220			220	-	(220)	220	-
Lammack Resurface Playground	36	4	40			40	-	(40)	40	-
Lower Darwen Send Works DDA Compliance	36	4	40			40	-	(40)	40	-
Lower Darwen Fire Risk Assessment Works	23	2	25			25	-	(25)	25	-
Lower Darwen Perimeter Fencing Repair/Replace	9	1	10			10	-	(10)	10	-
Meadowhead Infant Replace External Rubber Flooring	9	1	10			10	-	(10)	10	-
Meadowhead Junior Replace Floor Covering to Hall	18	(11)	7			7	-	(7)	7	-
Meadowhead Junior Replace doors & RollerShutters	14	(1)	13			13	-	(13)	13	-
Meadowhead Junior External Path Works	45	5	50			50	-	(50)	50	-
Meadowhead Junior Fire Risk Assessment Ceiling Works	18	2	20			20	-	(20)	20	-
Roe Lee Park Toilet Works	18	2	20			20	-	(20)	20	-
Shadsworth Juniors Send Works DDA Compliance	51	6	57			57	-	(57)	57	-
St Michael with St John Roofing Works	135	15	150			150	-	(150)	150	-
Newfield School Remodel			-	2,300		2,300	3	(2,297)	2,300	-
Crosshill Grant for Additional Places			-	900		900	-	(900)	900	-
Intack Primary Boilers			-	68		68	-	(68)	68	-
Roe Lee School Fencing			-	100		100	-	(100)	100	-
QEGS reconfiguration layout expand provision			-	550		550	-	(550)	550	-
Witton Academy reconfiguration and refurbishment			-	650		650	-	(650)	650	-
St Wilfrid's Refurbish to Create Additional Classroom			-	50		50	-	(50)	50	-
Contingency			-	100		100	5	(95)	100	-
Project Management Fee			-	50		50	-	(50)	50	-
Family Hubs Transformation			-	43		43	6	(37)	43	-
	<b>7,068</b>	<b>6,117</b>	<b>13,185</b>	<b>3,201</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>16,386</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>(15,824)</b>	<b>16,386</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Environmental Services</b>										
Land Remediation Scheme		104	104			104	-	(104)	104	-
Blakewater Car Park	115	230	345			345	-	(345)	345	-
Prayer Shelter at Pleasington Cemetery	100	83	183			183	-	(183)	183	-
Childrens Play Area Witton Park		350	350			350	-	(350)	350	-
	<b>215</b>	<b>767</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(982)</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Growth &amp; Development</b>										
Bank Top and Griffin Clearance	186		186			186	-	(186)	186	-
Neighbourhood Intervention Fund	613	(30)	583			583	9	(574)	583	-
Equity Loans	235		235	35		270	-	(270)	270	-
Empty Homes Cluster	360		360			360	-	(360)	360	-
Other Acquisition costs	10		10			10	-	(10)	10	-
Development Investment Fund	740	13	753			753	7	(746)	753	-
Land Release Fund	934	8	942			942	5	(937)	942	-
Assistance to Industry	250	31	281			281	62	(219)	281	-
Blakey Moor	1,210	580	1,790			1,790	157	(1,633)	1,790	-
Integrated Transport Budget		2,719	2,719	4,391		7,110	(43)	(7,153)	7,110	-

# Scheme Variations to 2023/24 Capital Programme

Current Year 2023/24										
	Budget Approved by Finance Council on 27 Feb 2023 £ 000	Slippage from Q4 2022/23 £ 000	Revised 2023/24 Budget at Q4 2022/23 £ 000	Virement / New Scheme Approvals £ 000	Slippage £000	Revised Budget at Q1 £ 000	Actual Spend to Date £ 000	Variance £ 000	Forecast £ 000	Variance After Slippage £ 000
Bus Service Improvement Fund			-	2,013		2,013	-	(2,013)	2,013	-
Reel Cinema	22	17	39			39	-	(39)	39	-
Bury Fold Brook	14		14			14	-	(14)	14	-
Brecon Road Drainage		37	37			37	-	(37)	37	-
Quick Win Fund (Hope Street)		9	9			9	3	(6)	9	-
Natural Flood Management		36	36			36	-	(36)	36	-
Affordable Warmth Grants		6	6			6	-	(6)	6	-
Darwen Tower			-			-	(9)	(9)	-	-
Darwen Towns Fund	10,250	226	10,476			10,476	121	(10,355)	10,476	-
Thwaites SPV	145		145			145	-	(145)	145	-
Carbon Management Plan		4	4			4	-	(4)	4	-
Greenfields CC and Mill Hill Juniors FC Grants	48		48			48	-	(48)	48	-
St Johns Refurbishment	1,450	53	1,503			1,503	1	(1,502)	1,503	-
Griffin Lodge /Coach House	300	-	300			300	-	(300)	300	-
Levelling Up (LUF) Projects - Junction 5 & Growth Corridor	-	-	-	500		500	-	(500)	500	-
Levelling Up (LUF) Projects - Town Centre	1,500		1,500			1,500	-	(1,500)	1,500	-
UK Prosperity Fund		59	59			59	-	(59)	59	-
Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery Roof Replacement	400	65	465	90		555	2	(553)	555	-
MediPark	1,000		1,000			1,000	-	(1,000)	1,000	-
Blackburn Town Centre Highways & Public Realm Works	1,750		1,750			1,750	-	(1,750)	1,750	-
Imperial Mill Acquisition, Essential Works & Site Enabling	1,000		1,000			1,000	-	(1,000)	1,000	-
	<b>22,417</b>	<b>3,833</b>	<b>26,250</b>	<b>7,029</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>33,279</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>(32,964)</b>	<b>33,279</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Digital &amp; Customer Services</b>										
Corporate ICT - Finance System		18	18			18	-	(18)	18	-
Corporate ICT - Core Infrastructure Programme	71	30	101			101	-	(101)	101	-
Corporate ICT - Legal Services Case Management System	28	3	31			31	-	(31)	31	-
Coporate ICT - Town Hall IT Infrastructure Upgrade	143	-	143			143	2	(141)	143	-
Coporate ICT - Digital Customer Portal	80	19	99		(20)	79	(15)	(94)	79	-
Coporate ICT - Round Management System	13	3	16			16	-	(16)	16	-
Coporate ICT - Replacement HR and Payroll System	273	(41)	232			232	(27)	(259)	232	-
Coporate ICT - Microsoft 365 and Unified Comms	550	22	572			572	-	(572)	572	-
Coporate ICT - Transition to the Cloud	134	5	139	70		209	-	(209)	209	-
Coporate ICT - Helpdesk for Everything	188	-	188		(188)	-	-	-	-	-
Coporate ICT - Digital Customer Portal (Phase 2)	390	13	403		(150)	253	-	(253)	253	-
Coporate ICT - Core Network Upgrade	530	(28)	502			502	19	(483)	502	-
Coporate ICT - Intranet/iTrent	80	(7)	73		(20)	53	-	(53)	53	-
Digital Flare Replacement	200		200	350	(100)	450	-	(450)	450	-
New BwD Security Operation and Recovery Capability	350		350	(225)		125	-	(125)	125	-
Replacement Door Access System				120		120	-	(120)	120	-
	<b>3,030</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>3,067</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>(478)</b>	<b>2,904</b>	<b>(21)</b>	<b>(2,925)</b>	<b>2,904</b>	<b>-</b>

# Scheme Variations to 2023/24 Capital Programme

	Current Year 2023/24									
	Budget Approved by Finance Council on 27 Feb 2023 £ 000	Slippage from Q4 2022/23 £ 000	Revised 2023/24 Budget at Q4 2022/23 £ 000	Virement / New Scheme Approvals £ 000	Slippage £000	Revised Budget at Q1 £ 000	Actual Spend to Date £ 000	Variance £ 000	Forecast £ 000	Variance After Slippage £ 000
<b>Finance &amp; Governance</b>										
Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme		-	-			-	(45)	(45)	-	-
Corporate Accommodation Strategy Phase 2	831	(3)	828			828	17	(811)	828	-
Witton 3G Changing Room Roof		-	-			-	(6)	(6)	-	-
Mill Hill Community Centre Roof		-	-			-	(2)	(2)	-	-
Treescaping Fund		20	20			20	-	(20)	20	-
	<b>831</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>(36)</b>	<b>(884)</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Portfolios Total</b>	<b>36,843</b>	<b>10,828</b>	<b>47,671</b>	<b>11,077</b>	<b>(478)</b>	<b>58,270</b>	<b>1,014</b>	<b>(57,256)</b>	<b>58,270</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Earmarked schemes:</b>										
Corporate ICT	700	37	737	(45)		692	-	(692)	692	-
Corporate Property Investment	1,727	826	2,553	(90)		2,463	-	(2,463)	2,463	-
Vehicles (funded from capital or leased)	700	1,521	2,221			2,221	38	(2,183)	2,221	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,127</b>	<b>2,384</b>	<b>5,511</b>	<b>(135)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,376</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>(5,338)</b>	<b>5,376</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Contingent schemes:</b>										
Asset Management Strategy	2,294		2,294	(120)		2,174	-	(2,174)	2,174	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,294</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,294</b>	<b>(120)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,174</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(2,174)</b>	<b>2,174</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>42,264</b>	<b>13,212</b>	<b>55,476</b>	<b>10,822</b>	<b>(478)</b>	<b>65,820</b>	<b>1,052</b>	<b>(64,768)</b>	<b>65,820</b>	<b>-</b>