

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Thursday, 11 April 2024

PRESENT – *Councillor Riley (Chair), Councillors Floyd, Gunn, Hussain M, Mahmood, McGurk, Slater Jo and Smith J.*

ALSO PRESENT: *Councillor John Slater, Leader of the Opposition Group.*

YOUTH MP's: *Ethan Woods and Nadeem Iqbal (Deputy Youth MPs).*

RESOLUTIONS

1 Welcome and Apologies

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Phil Riley, welcomed all to the meeting, in particular the newly elected Deputy Youth MPs. Apologies were received from Councillor Damian Talbot and Youth MP Zainab Shah.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 7th March 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

3 Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were received.

4 Equality Implications

The Chair asked Members to confirm that they had considered and understood any Equality Impact Assessments associated with the reports on the agenda ahead of making any decisions.

5 Public Forum

In accordance with Part 3 of the Executive Board Procedure Rules for questions/statements by members of the public, one question had been received from Eileen Hall, relating to concerns about the traffic calming scheme on Pole Lane, Darwen.

Councillor Quesir Mahmood gave a response to the question and supplementary question arising, advising that the information provided by Mrs Hall was anecdotal, and Mrs Hall had also submitted a considerable amount of new information which would need to be analysed by the Highways Team, but also advised that the current traffic calming measures would be reviewed and amendments considered, to further address residents concerns about vehicle speeds along Pole Lane.

6 Questions by Non-Executive Members

In accordance with Part 4 of the Executive Board Procedure Rules for questions/statements by Non-Executive Members, one question had been

received from Councillor Neil Slater, which concerned the date of commencement of works on Pole Lane, Darwen and the budget provision for them.

Councillor Qesir Mahmood advised that as stated in the report, officers would be looking at an alternative or additional scheme to further reduce speeds in the area, and if further traffic calming features were proposed, funding would need to be allocated from the Highways Capital Programme.

7 Youth MPs Update

The Deputy Youth MP's updated the Executive Board on recent events and activities including:

- - The recent Youth MP Elections, where 6005 young people voted within the borough's secondary schools and youth organisations. The 2024 Youth MP & Deputies are:
 - Zainab Shah – (Witton Park) Youth MP
 - Ethan Woods (BCHS) 1st Deputy Youth MP
 - Nadeem Iqbal (BCHS) 2nd Deputy.
 - Also, young people in the Borough were given the opportunity to participate in and vote in the Make Your Mark campaign 2024 which is the biggest referendum for young people in Europe. The top 3 local issues in the Make Your Mark Campaign for young people in the Borough were as follows.
 - 1) Jobs, Economy & Benefits
 - 2) Health & Well-being
 - 3) Culture, Media & Sport.

Over 4000 young people voted in the Make Your Mark campaign. The national issue was selected as Health & Well-being.

- - The Youth Forum had also been focussing on its work on Childhood Obesity, involvement in Interview Panels, delivering training at the Corporate Parenting Panel, and plans for the future included attendance at the Northwest Youthforia Residential at Brathay, interview training for young people from SEEDS to undertake future Youth Inspections and undertaking a Youth Inspection of Earcroft Children's centre.

Members of the Executive Board congratulated the Youth MPs on their election and invited them to become involved in the work of their portfolios.

8 Executive Member Reports

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION

8.1 **6 monthly Adoption report**

Members received a report from the Head of Service for the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) which provided a review of adoption activity for the first six months of 2023/24. It included Blackburn with Darwen (BwD) children specific information. This report fulfilled the obligations in Adoption National Minimum Standards (2011) and Adoption Service Statutory Guidance (2011) Adoption and Children Act 2002 to report to the Executive of the Local Authority. The data and information within the report was accurate as of 30th Sept 2023.

RESOLVED –

That the Executive Board:

- 1) Read and consider the content of the report.
- 2) Recommend any aspects of consideration, amendment or clarification as required.

8.2 **EB - School Holiday Pattern for Community and Controlled schools 2025/2026**

The Executive Board were advised that the Local Authority (LA) had responsibility for setting the school holiday pattern for Community and Controlled schools.

Once agreed by the LA and published, the holiday pattern is binding on all community and voluntary controlled schools in Blackburn with Darwen. Voluntary Aided, Foundation and Academies are asked to give consideration to the advice from the LA when determining their school calendars.

RESOLVED - That the Executive Board agrees the school term and holiday pattern for Community and Controlled schools for 2025/2026 (as set out in Appendix One Draft School term and Holiday Pattern 2025/2026).

ENVIRONMENT & OPERATIONS

8.3 **Tree and Woodland Strategy**

A report was submitted, which advised that a Trees and Woodland Strategy was a key tool for ensuring treescapes flourished and were protected for the future. The Tree and Woodland Strategy (TAWS) has been developed to formally acknowledge the long[1]term benefits that trees and woodland could bring to local communities in Blackburn with Darwen and the commitment to foster and protect it.

Although not a Planning document, the TAWS feed into and complimented other Strategies, Policies, and guidelines across the Council and vice versa, such as:

- Local Plan 2021-2037 Climate Emergency Action Plan
- Biodiversity 'First considerations' report and objectives/actions
- Woodland management plans

- Tree Risk Management Framework
- Open Spaces Strategy

The TAWS presented a vision of where the Council want the Borough to be by 2030 and introduced a series of objectives to achieve that vision, with those objectives then supported by a series of identified actions, set out in an Action Plan.

RESOLVED - It is recommended that the Executive Board approves the Tree and Woodland Strategy attached at appendix 1 to the report.

GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

8.4 Blackburn Town Centre Campus Development

The Business Innovation District development was central to the delivery of the £250m investment framework for Blackburn town centre, the largest development of its kind in the region, and a key strategic initiative of the newly adopted Local Plan. The report submitted sought approval for the drawdown of capital funding and approvals required to undertake various activities to support the pre-construction stage of the Blackburn Business Innovation District Phase 1 - Skills and Education Campus ('Project') and provided an update of the work completed to date since the announcement of Levelling-Up Funding in March 2023.

RESOLVED – That the Executive Board:

1. Notes the announcement of the award of up to £20m Levelling-Up Funding ('LUF') to deliver the Blackburn Business Innovation District Phase 1 - Skills and Education Campus and the ongoing discussions with the Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities ('DLUHC') to agree the final funding total and drawdown profile.
2. Notes the positive discussions and progress to date with the leadership of the University of Central Lancashire ('UCLAN') to agree the proposed relocation of their training subsidiary company, Training 2000, to new purpose-built facilities, Building 1, as indicated on the site masterplan drawings at Annex 1 (existing site plan) and Annex 2 (proposed site plan).
3. Notes future stages of the Project, linked to the drawdown of the Council's required co-funding, will be presented to a future Executive Board, once costs have been finalised, Government funding arrangements agreed with DLUHC, and any further University functions to be included by UCLAN are confirmed.
4. Notes the Council's strategic public/private joint venture company, Maple Grove Blackburn Ltd ('MGB'), an established special purpose joint venture vehicle to support the delivery of our town centre regeneration and growth plans including the redevelopment of the former Thwaites site.
5. Notes the site masterplan drawing at Annex 2 includes outline plans for Building 2 with MGB in advanced discussions with interested parties to determine interest with the delivery of Building 2 likely to be developed by MGB as a follow-on phase. Progress on Building 2 will be reported to a future meeting of the Executive Board.
6. Approves a capital budget of £750,000 for the Project to cover all planning activities including fees, surveys, site investigations, approvals, service enquiries and other costs

incurred during the planning and procurement stage of the Project. Note the capital funding is already profiled in the Council's 2024/25 capital programme and will be used until the LUF funding profile has been agreed with DLUHC.

7. Approves the Council, as shareholder of MGB, to invest £600,000 to fund the preparation and submission of a planning application for the Project and development of an enabling works package.

8. Authorises the Growth Programme Director to commence the procurement of consultants and issue tenders using the Crown Commercial Services ('CCS') Framework, or other suitable framework, with the appointment of consultants subject to a future report to the Executive Board.

9. Authorises the Growth Programme Director to commence the procurement of a civil engineering contractor using the Council's in-house Growth Framework, and to appoint the successful contractor under an Early Contractor Involvement ('ECI') pre-construction agreement, to develop designs for a highway, service diversion and enabling works contract, with the appointment of the construction work subject to a future report to the Executive Board, once costs have been finalised.

8.5 Levelling Up Partnership Update

A report was submitted which updated the Executive Board on the progress of the Levelling Up Partnership (LUP), a new Government initiative announced in March 2023.

Blackburn with Darwen was one of 25 places that secured LUP status with the prospect of securing £20M of new funding, subject to a jointly agreed Investment Plan with Government. Blackburn with Darwen's award (of £20.3M) was formally announced by the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities at the Convention of the North on 1 March, 2024.

The report welcomed the agreed LUP package and requested the Executive Board to authorise the Strategic Director of Growth and Development and the Strategic Director for Finance and Resources, in consultation with the Executive Member for Growth and Development, to finalise the Council's LUP funding package with Government, and draw-down agreed funding, aligned to the project priorities set out in this report.

Councillor John Slater did not vote on this item.

RESOLVED –

That the Executive Board:

- i) Welcomes and approves the Council's LUP Investment Programme, which has been jointly developed and agreed with Government, subject to final confirmation of funding arrangements; and
- ii) Authorises the Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Growth & Development and Strategic Director for Finance and Resource, in consultation with the Executive Member for Growth & Development, to finalise the Council's £20.3M LUP funding

package with Government, and draw-down agreed funding, aligned to the project priorities set out in this report.

- iii) Approves an update to the Council's Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2024/25 to reflect the proposed expenditure on the LUP Investment Programme projects; and
- iv) Note further reports on specific projects may be brought to the Executive Board, as required, to ensure consistency with Council procurement and financial regulations.

10.1 **Pole Lane Petition**

For Executive Board to consider a petition received from residents requesting the removal of the chicanes on Pole Lane, Darwen and a consultation exercise with residents regarding alternative traffic calming.

In 2021 a traffic calming scheme was introduced on Pole Lane in Darwen to address concerns regarding speeding vehicles along the route. The scheme comprised of a mini roundabout, two priority give way features and some marked speed cushions. Since the scheme was introduced the Network Management team had been contacted by a local resident ("lead petitioner") raising concerns about the scheme and campaigning for the priority give way features to be removed.

Whilst there was no evidence to suggest that the traffic calming scheme had made Pole Lane more dangerous, it was noted that there was still an element speeding that took place. On receipt of the petition Officers had looked at the traffic calming again on Pole Lane and there were amendments that could potentially be made to the scheme, which did include removing the features, that would help further address residents concerns about vehicle speeds along Pole Lane. Members were asked to agree for Network Management to develop the existing scheme further and identify a funding source. Once the existing scheme has been developed further, it would be shared with residents via a consultation exercise.

Councillor John Slater voted against the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED -

That the Executive Board:

1. Notes the petition of the residents and this report;
2. Request that Network Management develop an alternative or additional scheme to further reduce speeds in the area; and
3. Request that officers inform the lead petitioner of the decision.

Signed at a meeting of the Executive Board
on Thursday, 13 June 2024
(being the ensuing meeting on the Executive Board) by

