



REPORT OF:	THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
TO:	COUNCIL FORUM
DATE:	28th JULY 2022

SUBJECT CORPORATE PLAN REFRESH

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To update members on the development of the corporate plan refresh and set out a timetable for adopting it.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council Forum:

- i. Notes the progress on the engagement plan
- ii. Notes the emerging themes
- iii. Agrees the future timetable for the corporate plan development

3. BACKGROUND

At Policy Council in December 2021, members agreed to refresh the corporate plan. This is a key document that sets out the Council's core priorities and ambitions over the next four years.

It is underpinned by a range of policies, strategies and plans including the growth strategy, the local plan, the medium term financial strategy, health and wellbeing strategy, our cultural strategy, our skills strategy, early help strategy, organisational development strategy and climate change action plan.

As we continue to develop the new corporate plan 2023-27, the Council is delivering against the previous plan published in 2019. Even though COVID-19 has had a huge impact on the organisation, we have still performed well as per the update provided at the Executive Board in June 2022.

4. ENGAGEMENT UPDATE INCLUDING RESIDENTS' SURVEY

As members agreed at Policy Council in December 2021, a programme of engagement activity, including the first residents' survey since 2018, has been carried out to help inform development of the new corporate plan.

Activities have included sessions with young people, engagement with foster carers, 200 vox pops in Blackburn and Darwen town centres, as well as activity facilitated by adult learning and Age UK. Staff have been engaged through the organisational development programme. The recent Life Survey undertaken by Lancaster University¹ in Blackburn with Darwen (1,299 residents in total, made up of 543 online respondents and 756 face-to-face) has also been used to help form the evidence base for the new plan as well as engagement delivered as part of individual projects such as Blackburn's City Bid.

The residents' survey ran over a period of four weeks from May to June 2022. Two methodologies were used; the first was a self-completion survey promoted via social media, in council buildings, local media and our advertising assets. The second was a demographically-weighted interviewer-led survey.

The self-completion survey was open to everyone who lives or works in the borough over the age of 16 and 889 responses were received.

The interviewer-led survey had quotas which were designed to achieve a sample that was representative of the borough in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and area. It was undertaken primarily by phone with additional face-to-face interviews carried out to ensure the sample met its quotas. 1001 interviews were completed.

The survey was based in part on the Local Government Association's "Are you being served?" guidance². Ten pilot interviews were carried out with residents before the launch of the main fieldwork period. Bespoke questions were also included, for example, on the climate emergency and volunteering.

5. EMERGING THEMES

Several themes have emerged which will help determine the focus of the new corporate plan, with more engagement activity planned over the next few months (as set out in section six.)

Positively, the engagement activity supported by the residents' survey showed people are very proud of the borough. The residents' survey showed a high level of satisfaction with the local area as a place to live and an overwhelming majority feel they strongly belong to their area. Similar findings came from the Lancaster University study.

¹ [ImaginationLancaster - We believe in the unstoppable power of imagination.](#)

² www.local.gov.uk/are-you-being-served-benchmarking-residents-perceptions-local-government

The engagement activity found a significant number of people interested in volunteering opportunities to help make the borough a better place. The residents' survey found a quarter of people already volunteer in their local community and over a third said they are likely to in the next 12 months if there are opportunities to do so. Over a third said they are unaware of opportunities to volunteer, indicating there is potential room for increasing volunteering.

Recognising and fostering that pride of place is essential to continue to unlock the potential of our unique borough.

Residents want the Council to deliver on our climate responsibilities and provide leadership to the borough to tackle the climate emergency. More than two thirds of those responding to the residents' survey said it was important to take action on the climate emergency. The Lancaster University study also highlighted climate change as an issue for residents with just over three quarters saying they were concerned about it, with 30% expressing a high level of concern.

Other common themes across all engagement activity include building a stronger local economy, boosting skills, transport links, increasing activities available for young people and tackling crime, grime and highways.

In terms of the Council as an organisation and as a provider of services, the residents' survey showed people were both satisfied and trusted the Council. Satisfaction is higher than dissatisfaction for a number of services provided by the Council, with satisfaction highest for waste collection, sports and leisure facilities and library services.

However, across all activity including the residents' survey and supported by the Lancaster University survey, there was a perception that the Council could make improvements to how it engages with communities.

6. NEXT STEPS

Over the next few months, further engagement activity will take place with young people, partner organisations and internal staff and services. Updates will also be provided to scrutiny committees.

A further update report is planned to Council Forum on October 6th before the final draft of the corporate plan is presented to Policy Council in December for approval.

An implementation plan, incorporating the new business planning process for 2023 will be prepared by the end of the calendar year.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional policy implications from this update report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No further funding for future engagement plans will be required.

The Corporate Plan will set out the Council's corporate objectives for the next four years. Delivery of the Corporate Plan objectives will have to be considered in the context of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and ultimately the annual budget setting process.

It is inevitable that the Council will have to be innovative in its approach, optimising value for money from the use of its resources and working in partnership with a range of other organisations to achieve the outcomes that will be agreed in the Corporate Plan.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. However, the Corporate Plan provides the necessary framework and context upon which the council can direct its decision-making and significantly contributes to robust corporate governance arrangements.

The approval of the Corporate Plan and Council's objectives and priorities are a function of Full Council. Any legal issues arising from implementing the commitments in them will need to be reported and considered in accordance with relevant legislation and the Constitution.

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

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

11. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment is not required.

12. CONSULTATIONS

No formal consultations are required but engagement activity has been captured above.

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Date: July 28 2022

Background Papers: [ImaginationLancaster - We believe in the unstoppable power of imagination.
www.local.gov.uk/are-you-being-served-benchmarking-residents-perceptions-
local-government](https://www.local.gov.uk/are-you-being-served-benchmarking-residents-perceptions-local-government)