

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Thursday 10th 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	<u>Welcome and Apologies</u> 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.	
2	<u>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</u> The Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 th July 2023 were agreed as a correct record.	Agreed
3	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> No Declarations of Interest were received.	
4	<u>Equality Implications</u> The Chair asked Members to confirm that they had considered and understood any Equality Impact Assessments associated with reports on the agenda ahead of making any decisions.	Confirmed
5	<u>Public Forum</u> No questions had been received from Public Forum.	
6	<u>Questions by Non-Executive Members</u> 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:-	

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><u>Youth MPs Update</u></p> <p>The Youth MP verbally reported on recent events and activities including :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘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. • National Youth MP Conference held at Leeds University. The conference focused on developing the free school meals campaign. • £8M investment from the Youth Investment Fund in facilitates across Blackburn with Darwen for young people. 		Noted

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	<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><u>Foster Carer Allowances uplift including short breaks 2023/24</u></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>RESOLVED –</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>	

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	<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>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.</p>
<p>8.2</p>	<p><u>Staying Put Allowance</u></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>RESOLVED –</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>Recommendations</p>

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	<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 & 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>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.</p>
<p>8.3</p>	<p><u>Growth Programme 2023-24</u></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>RESOLVED-</p> <p>That the Executive Board:</p>	

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	<p>1. Note the excellent growth performance in the Borough as demonstrated by the Growth KPIs attached as Annex A;</p>	<p>Noted</p>
	<p>2. Note the continued good progress made by officers in delivering the Darwen Town Deal programme;</p>	<p>Noted</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>Noted</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>Noted</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>Noted</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>Approved</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 & Development.</p>	<p>Approved</p>
<p>9.1</p>	<p><u>Vehicle Replacement Programme</u></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>RESOLVED –</p> <p>It is recommended that the Executive Board authorise:</p>	

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	<p>The replacement of these old and hired vehicles, using £1,350,000 of the £1.7m that has been earmarked in the 2023-2026 capital programme for vehicle replacement, as part of the procurement strategy for the replacement and management of the Council's fleet, utilising existing framework providers and/or The Chest, North West Procurement Portal.</p>	<p>Approved</p>
<p>9.2</p>	<p><u>Corporate Plan Performance Update</u></p> <p>A report was submitted to the Executive Board giving the opportunity to review progress against the Council's strategic priorities documented within the Corporate Plan (2019-23) and to provide assurance that appropriate actions are being taken to address key areas of concern.</p> <p>The new Corporate Plan 2023-2027 was published in December 2022 following review at Policy Council. The new Corporate Plan is underpinned by a new Performance Framework and refreshed suite of performance measures which will be reported to a future meeting.</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>That the Executive Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the overall performance against the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives as illustrated in Appendix One Performance. Noted 2. Note the remedial action to improve delivery against the 2019-2023 Corporate priorities which are giving cause for concern, as outlined in Appendix Two Exception Reports. Noted 3. Note the proposed suite of performance measures for the Corporate Plan 2023 -2027, detailed in Appendix 3. Noted <p style="text-align: center;">Signed at a meeting of the Board on 7th September 2023</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(being the ensuing meeting on the Board)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Chair of the meeting at which the Minutes were confirmed.</p>	

	Item	Action
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