



REPORT OF:	LEADER
TO:	POLICY COUNCIL
DATE:	30 NOVEMBER 2023

NATIONAL POLICY REFLECTIONS AND DELIVERING ON OUR CORPORATE PLAN CORE MISSIONS

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Policy Council is a key meeting which sets the overall policy direction of the Council each year. The report asks members to note progress and key achievements since the Corporate Plan (2023-2027) was adopted, and provides an update on performance against our core missions. It also identifies some of the main national policy challenges impacting on the Council and invites members to debate the Council's position on these issues.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy Council is invited to:

- Note the report
- Note the current national policy drivers
- Note the Council's core missions
- Note the key actions by portfolio
- Note the performance against the Corporate Plan
- Note the progress against the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan

3. NATIONAL REFLECTION AND LOCAL IMPACT

3.1 AUTUMN STATEMENT

The Autumn Statement sets out the Government's tax and spending plans for the year ahead. Key measures and updates include:

Economy: The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) has predicted an average inflation rate of 2.8% by the end of next year and 2% by 2025 and sees "overall" UK growth in 2023 of 0.6%. Looking forward, growth of 0.7% is expected in 2024, doubling to 1.4% in 2025. This represents a downgrade on predicted growth figures earlier in the year.

Wages & Taxes: A 2 percentage point cut to National Insurance (NI) affecting 28 million people. NI paid by employees has been cut from 12% to 10%, taking effect from 6

January. It is currently charged at 12% on earnings between £12,571 and £50,271 - and 2% on anything above that.

The minimum wage, or the national living wage - will rise to £11.44 per hour from April. This is an increase of £1.02 from the current rate of £10.42. This rate will now apply to Britons over 21, bringing the eligible age down from 23. For anyone under 21, the minimum wage is lower - but this is also increasing, as is the lowest legal pay for apprentices.

Business Support: Measures have been announced to that the Chancellor says will back “British businesses big and small”, unlocking £20 billion extra business investment per year over the next decade, and the abolition of Class 2 National Insurance contributions for the self-employed.

Pensions: The state pension will increase by 8.5% from April 2024 to £221.20 a week, as the Government honours the triple lock.

Benefits: A 6.7% increase in Universal Credit and disability benefits in line with September's inflation rate.

The Chancellor also announced that he will be increasing the local housing allowance rate to the 30th percentile of local market rents, which he says will give 1.6 million households an average of £800 support next year. The Chancellor also announced “Back to work” measures, which have been described as “punitive.”

Planning: New rules will mean Councils can recover the full costs of major business planning applications as long as they deal with them in a guaranteed timescale.

Devolution: The Chancellor also announced the Government would be publishing four new proposed devolution deals, including in Lancashire.

Council officers have been processing the implications of the various announcements ahead of providing further analysis.

3.2 KING’S SPEECH

Earlier this month, in his first speech as Monarch, King Charles outlined the Government's priorities for the year ahead.

The speech outlined 21 Bills that Ministers intend to pass in the next session of Parliament.

The speech - which was divided into three areas – “strengthening society,” “growing the economy” and “keeping people safe,” contained many measures that will be of relevance to councils. However, as the Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities (SIGOMA) (of which BwD is a member authority) responded, it was disappointing that there was nothing on local government finance considering the sector’s difficult financial outlook.

The elements that impact local government or place include:

- Tobacco and Vapes
- Football Governance
- Renters Reform
- Terrorism (Protection of Premises)
- Economic Activities of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters)

Tobacco and Vapes Bill: A Bill, which the Local Government Association has called a progressive piece of legislation that would undoubtedly impact on smoking prevalence, which will deliver plans for a phased ban on smoking, and introduce restrictions on the packaging and marketing of vapes. The Council is currently considering its response to a government consultation on the reforms.

Football Governance: A regulator for the top five tiers of English professional football will be established by the Football Governance Bill. Blackburn with Darwen Council works very closely with Blackburn Rovers on a number of issues including community initiatives. The Council recognises how important a sustainable football club is to the Borough as it brings people together, fosters shared identity and contributes to the local economy.

Renters Reform: The existing **Renters (Reform) Bill** will deliver a long-promised ban on "no-fault" evictions in England but this will only come into force after reforms to the court system. More commentary can be found in the housing section of this report

Terrorism (Protection of Premises): Known as Martyn's Law, this will introduce legislation requiring certain premises to consider the terrorist risk and improve security. A consultation will be held following concerns over the impact of Martyn's Law on council funding and enforcement teams. The Council will continue to track the progress of the bill and initiate and coordinate the requirements for businesses across the Borough.

Economic Activities of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) The Bill seeks to remove the possibility for public bodies, including councils, to campaign against, boycott, seek divestment from, or sanction a particular territory internationally, unless endorsed by the Government's own foreign policy.

Other proposed pieces of legislation include:

- A **Criminal Justice Bill** will introduce measures to force criminals to appear in the dock, and give police new powers to enter buildings without a warrant to seize stolen goods.
- An **Investigatory Powers (Amendment) Bill** will give law enforcement agencies greater access to certain personal data, and make tech companies clear security features with the Home Office.
- A **Leasehold and Freehold Bill** will ban leaseholds for new houses, but not new flats, in England and Wales, and increase the standard lease extension period to 990 years.
- An **Automated Vehicles Bill** will set a legal framework in Great Britain for self-driving cars.
- The existing **Data Protection and Digital Information Bill** will replace the data protection regime the UK inherited from the EU.

- **The Media Bill**, published in draft form earlier this year, will scrap a never-enacted rule forcing media companies to pay the legal bills of people who sue them, even if they win.
- A **Rail Reform Bill** creating a new body to oversee the railway in Great Britain is included, but only in draft form.

3.3 ELECTIONS

A Parliamentary election must take place by early January 2025, although it may be called sooner. The Council will continue to lobby the current Government, including through the Local Government Association, that local government needs significant investment, and that funding is fairly distributed to areas such as Blackburn with Darwen, which has been one of the areas hardest hit by austerity measures.

A raft of further changes to the administration of elections were brought into force on October 31.

The changes as a result of the Election Act 2022, include new identity verification for postal and proxy vote applications whether they are made online or by the paper route, except for emergency proxies, and postal vote application will be limited to a maximum of three years' duration, at which point the elector will need to make a new application.

In May, there will be changes to the handling of postal votes and secrecy arrangements relating to them. The restrictions on the handling of postal votes, will include:

- a prohibition of political campaigners handling postal packs, except where the postal vote is their own, that of a close family member or someone that they provide regular care for;
- Limits on the number of postal packs that a person can hand in at Polling Stations and Council Offices. This will be five postal ballot packs (in addition to their own)
- Any person who hands in postal votes at Polling Stations or Council Offices will be required to complete a declaration form.

The voting secrecy requirements will be also extended to postal and proxy vote. These will also be the second set of election where voter ID is required at polling stations.

In May the Council will facilitate a number of elections – local borough council, town and parish councils and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). Blackburn with Darwen Council's Returning Officer has agreed to act as the Police Area Returning Officer (PARO) for the Lancashire PCC Area.

Council officers are working hard to implement and communicate the latest changes so electors are not disenfranchised. The Elections team will continue to update and engage members as appropriate.

3.4 DEVOLUTION AND LEVELLING UP

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill became law on October 26 introducing reforms including strengthening devolution by making sure every area in England that wants a deal can have one by 2030. The Act also seeks to accelerate the planning system, make

developers more accountable, cut bureaucracy and encourage the adoption of a greater number of Local Plans.

In the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, the Government announced the opportunity for a devolution deal for Lancashire and proposed the creation of a Combined County Authority for the administrative area covered by the three upper tier councils, Blackburn with Darwen Council, Blackpool Council and Lancashire County Council.

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, establishes significant powers to address planning issues. Changes include:

- the digitisation of planning
- local planning authorities empowered to refuse planning applications where a developer has a track record of delayed build out
- introduction of a new infrastructure levy
- new system of environmental outcomes reports replacing environmental impact assessments
- strengthened enforcement
- powers to refuse planning permissions, which are not substantially different in effect to a previous permission on the site.

As with any new piece of legislation, its implementation will be dependent on technical consultations, secondary legislation and an update to national planning policy framework.

Members should be assured Council officers will ensure the Council engages with any further Government consultations to make sure our views are represented.

The Government recognises the Act's ambitions can only be realised in tandem with the new investment in Levelling Up projects across the country.

This Council has a strong track record in securing new Levelling Up funding. For example, the Council has secured £20m in LUF2 funding to support the development of our new Business Innovation District in Blackburn Town Centre, more specifically, to bring forward a new skills and education campus, as part of the £250m Blackburn Town Masterplan, £20m in new public investment to upgrade Junction 5 of the M65 and transport links in that surrounding area to unlock new employment opportunities.

The Government also announced a further £20m for Darwen to be drawn down over a 10-year period as part of its Long Term Plan for Towns. This will be aligned to our £100m Darwen Investment Plan which has already secured £25M in Town Deal funding support.

The Council has leveraged its Shared Prosperity Funding allocation of £7m to create a wider delivery growth-focused programme valued at £25M. The Council has recently competitively secured £8m of Youth Investment Funding, the largest single allocation in the country, to improve facilities for young people across the Borough.

Blackburn with Darwen Council is also named as one of 20 Levelling Up Partners working with Government. Our Partnership work is currently in development with the opportunity to secure a further £20M in support of the Council's place-based growth priorities.

Other recent funding the Council has secured either as the lead agency for Lancashire or for its own, include Family Hubs, Changing Futures and the Regional Fostering hub.

3.5 PROCUREMENT ACT

The Procurement Bill was given Royal Assent on October 26. The majority of the provisions of the Procurement Act 2023 (the 'Act') are not yet in force, with Cabinet Office suggesting a 'go-live' date for the new regime of October 2024. A significant amount of detail is expected in secondary legislation and there will be at least six months from this being passed to implementation.

A training programme is planned by the Cabinet Office through spring and summer. A lot of focus of the development of the Act has been on making the procurement process easier to navigate for SMEs and there is a new Competitive Flexible Procedure which will provide the opportunity to different procurement methodologies that could help drive better value for money. The Legal and Procurement team will be reviewing our Contract Procurement Procedure Rules and Procurement Strategy to align both to the requirements and opportunities of the new Act.

3.6 HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE INTEGRATION

The Health and Care Act 2022 introduced radical changes to the NHS health and care commissioning landscape, the key change being the formal creation of Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) across the country. They are made up of two parts – an Integrated Care Board (ICB) which is an NHS organisation with responsibility for allocating the NHS budget and commissioning services for the population, taking over the functions previously held by clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and an Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) which is a statutory joint committee of the ICB and local authorities in the area.

Within the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care System, it has been agreed that there will be four “places”, where commitment has been made to grow and support thriving Place-based Partnerships, aligned to Upper Tier Local Authority boundaries - Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, South Cumbria and Lancashire.

Since that agreement, Blackburn with Darwen has continued to build on its long history of joined up working, resetting its arrangements through the development of the Place-based Partnership, including refreshing ambitions and priorities, a leadership development programme for system leaders and facilitating delivery of joined up service provision to meet the needs of our communities.

Key areas of focus so far have included:

- External review of neighbourhood integration arrangements - refresh of shared ambition and delivery model, incorporating Family Hubs and Fuller recommendations.
- Progressing the transaction of Adult Community Services from LSCFT to East Lancashire Hospital Trust, subject to due diligence.

- System agreement of bed based intermediate care model and working towards mobilisation of the model at Albion Mill.

The Population Health programme focusses on reducing health inequalities in residents who experience above average numbers of hospital attendances and admissions, across 11 priority wards.

Our life course developments align well to both the BwD Health and Wellbeing Board and Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Partnership strategies. A focus to date has been on the following activities:

- Start Well – ensuring health service delivery from the recently launched Family Hubs; ensuring additional mental health support for Children and Young People; integrated working to mobilise new 0-19yrs provision.
- Live/Work Well – virtual careers advice sessions; investment in homeless pods; co-produced carer’s plan in development; delivery of health checks and enhanced health checks
- Age Well – Ageing Well campaign promoted, focus on frailty to promote earlier identification of people who are becoming frail and support them to remain at home.
- Dying Well – Healthwatch End of Life insight work has been undertaken to understand what matters to people, this has supported a Partnership wide self-assessment for ‘Getting to Outstanding’ in end-of-life care and an improvement plan is in development.

To further develop integrated arrangements for planning and delivery within the four places, the Integrated Care Board agreed the high-level Place Integration Deal at their meeting on July 5. This was subsequently supported by partner organisations and bodies, including the Blackburn with Darwen Health and Wellbeing Board.

Over time, delegated decision making from the ICB will support further aligning and/or pooling of resources with local authorities, ensuring better targeting to local need and making better use of our collective resources. Delegations to our places will be through a phased approach and local partnership arrangements will continue to evolve to reflect increasing levels of delegation and earned autonomy. The timescales for first phase delegation are currently being considered in light of the financial challenges being faced by the ICB and all the upper-tier local authorities. Members of the Council and the Health and Wellbeing Board will continue to be engaged in and informed on the progression of the Place Integration Deal.

3.7 SOCIAL CARE REFORM

One of the most important recent reforms is the reintroduction of inspections of Adult Social Care departments by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). As previously noted, the CQC would be responsible for assessing local authorities’ delivery of their adult social care duties with departments judged to be failing potentially subject to government interventions.

Intensive work to get the department inspection ready is on-going and supported by the wider council.

The CQC recently published its annual report on the state of health and adult social care. The report concluded escalating cost-of-living and workforce pressures are leading to 'unfair care' with longer waits and reduced access for those who can't afford to pay for treatment. The important report highlighted again, that social care needs a dedicated workforce plan to address the recruitment and retention crisis, especially as we approach winter, including action on staff pay, conditions, skills, training and development.

The National Audit Office also published a value for money report – Reforming adult social care. The report concluded: “Adult social care reform has been an intractable political challenge for decades, and in 2019 DHSC raised expectations that it would be addressed. Working with the sector, Department of Health and Social Care now needs to demonstrate how it is delivering on these plans.

3.8 HOUSING REFORM

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 paves the way for significant changes and improvements to the social rented sector. It lays foundations for changes to how social housing is managed and includes increased regulation of social landlords and new rules for protecting tenants from serious hazards in their homes. Many of the provisions in the Act are responses to the tragedies of the 2017 Grenfell Tower fire and death of two-year old Awaab Ishak, who died in 2020 from exposure to serious mould.

Although the Act paves the way for important changes, social tenants will have to wait for these measures to come into force. The provisions need regulations before they can come into force - these are expected to be published in 2024.

In addition, the Renters (Reform) Bill will legislate for reforms set out in the private rented sector white paper published in June 2022.

As mentioned in the King's speech and following consultation over a period of 5 years, the Bill will seek to improve the system for both the 11 million private renters and 2.3 million landlords in England. The Renters (Reform) Bill will:

- Abolish section 21 'no fault' evictions and move to a simpler tenancy structure.
- Introduce more comprehensive possession grounds so landlords can still recover their property
- Provide stronger protections against backdoor eviction.
- Introduce a new Private Rented Sector Ombudsman,
- Create a Privately Rented Property Portal to help landlords understand their legal obligations and demonstrate compliance.
- Give tenants the right to request a pet in the property, which the landlord must consider and cannot unreasonably refuse.

Locally, there continues to be greater demand for dispersed accommodation and Housing Needs are looking to increase their portfolio. The higher number of positive asylum decisions alongside existing high demand has led to pressures on temporary accommodation and capacity challenges within the housing system. Families are having to stay longer in temporary accommodation due to the time it takes to get housed.

The Council is currently undertaking a review of its housing functions, identifying opportunities for new ways of working, within a challenging operating context, to support the delivery of the Council's own housing priorities and work with key partners.

3.9 CHILDREN'S AND EDUCATION REFORM

Stable Homes, Built on Love: The Government have set out an ambitious plan to transform children's social care, committing to support every child to grow up in a safe, stable, and loving home.

In February 2023, the Government published *Stable Homes, Built on Love*, which responded to the recommendations of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care (the Care Review), the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's report '*Child Protection in England*' (the National Panel Review) and the Competition and Markets Authority's study of children's social care.

Following consultation, the Government has started to address urgent issues in the children's social care system by developing a foster care recruitment and retention programme in partnership with local authorities in the north-east, increasing the amount available for the care leavers' allowance, boosting the care leavers' apprenticeship bursary, and introducing national standards and Ofsted registration and inspection for supported accommodation for looked after children and care leavers aged 16 and 17, amongst other initiatives.

In October, the Government published next steps in response to a public consultation launched in February 2023, which was seeking views on the introduction of a set of national rules on the engagement of agency social work resource in local authority children's social care. Statutory guidance will be consulted on and issued next year, and local authorities are expected to comply with it by autumn 2024.

Children's Social Care National Framework and Dashboard: Also in February 2023, the government launched a consultation on the Children's Social Care Dashboard and Children's Social Care National Framework. The new National Framework describes the outcomes that local authorities should achieve for children, young people, and families. The Dashboard is being created to establish a stronger learning infrastructure for children's social care, helping to bring transparency to the system and ensuring that the impact of children's social care practice can be understood. Taken together, the National Framework and Dashboard will raise quality and consistency of practice.

In September 2023, the Government's response to the consultation and next steps was published. The Department for Education (DfE) will continue to revise the National Framework and iterate the Dashboard indicators, ahead of publishing a plan for the roll-out of the dashboard in December 2023. It is intended that the outcomes of the National Framework will shape the DfE's children's social care reform programme.

Working Together to Safeguard Children: Working Together to Safeguard Children (usually referred to as just Working Together) is statutory guidance which sets out what is expected of agencies, organisations, and individuals to safeguard and promote the

welfare of children in their area. The Government considers that updating Working Together is central to delivering on the first phase of the Stable Homes, Built on Love reforms by strengthening multi-agency working across the whole system and re-balancing the system towards help at an early point. The Government's consultation on the revised guidance closed in September 2023 and the response is set to be published this year.

SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan: In March 2023, the Government published the '*Right Support, Right Place, Right Time*' *SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan* in response to the SEND Green Paper published a year earlier. The aim of the SEND and AP Improvement Plan is to deliver a better experience for children and young people with SEND and to restore families' confidence in the system. The plan sets out a number of proposals under the following missions:

- A national system underpinned by national standards
- Successful transitions and preparation for adulthood
- A skilled workforce and excellent leadership
- Strengthened accountabilities and clear routes of redress
- A financially sustainable system delivering improved outcomes

The Department for Education (DfE) has published a roadmap which summarises the actions to be taken to improve the SEND and alternative provision system in England.

3.10 COVID INQUIRY

The UK Covid-19 Public Inquiry began in 2022, with Module 1 Public Hearings undertaken in Summer 2023, focussing on Resilience and Preparedness. At the time of writing, the public hearings for Module 2, which is dedicated to the examination of Core UK Decision-Making and Political Governance, are ongoing and will continue until December 2023. Various witnesses, including high profile figures from the UK Government are being questioned.

The first report on Module 1 is expected to be published by Summer 2024, shedding light on insights into the nation's response to the pandemic and identifying lessons for the future.

Beyond Modules 1 and 2, there are 5 active modules scrutinising the pandemic's impact on healthcare systems, procurement, Personal Protective Equipment, vaccines and therapeutics. Hearings for these modules are expected to continue until 2026.

The Council has responded to requests from the Local Government Association (LGA), the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) and the Inquiry team since the start of the Inquiry. The Council has submitted responses for Modules 1 and 5 (Government Procurement), and most recently Module 6 (Care Sector), following *Rule 9* requests received from the Inquiry team via the LGA.

3.11 ENVIRONMENT ACT UPDATE

As noted at last year's Policy Council, the Environment Act 2021 introduces a pivotal requirement, mandating businesses to adopt a fundamental practice: the separation of food waste from their general waste, with dedicated collection systems to be established. The implications of this legislation extend beyond mere administrative changes.

The Act contains provisions to ensure businesses and public bodies in England present recyclable materials for separate collection and arrange for its separate collection; as well as requiring Local Authorities in England to collect the same range of materials for recycling from households and ensure households have a weekly separate food waste collection.

The finalised plans for consistent collections for households and businesses in England, rebranded 'simpler recycling' in September, were initially promised by the end of 2022. The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) have now published the long-awaited proposals on standardising recycling services, including statutory collection of glass, metal, plastic, paper and card and garden waste, with food waste from 2026.

Collection of the core set of materials will start for businesses, schools, and hospitals in March 2025. Local authorities will be required to implement services in March 2026, but flexibility will be given to those in long-term contracts. Flexible plastics will be added to the core materials in March 2027. Defra also confirmed weekly food waste services will be required for "most households" from 2026.

Therefore, under the new requirements:

- All local authorities in England must collect the same recyclable waste streams for recycling or composting from households. The recyclable waste streams include paper and card, plastic, glass, metal, food waste, and garden waste
- all non-household municipal premises in England (such as businesses, schools, and hospitals), must make arrangements to have the same set of recyclable waste streams (with the exception of garden waste) collected for recycling or composting, and must present their waste in accordance with the arrangements.

3.12 PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE PLANS

The Council's first Partnership Conference since 2018 was held in March and will be established as a key event in the municipal year.

The intention is to develop the Conference as one of the main vehicles for the Council to engage with and agree new strategic directions and actions with its key partners within the framework established by the Council's Corporate Plan.

4. OUR CORE MISSIONS

At last year's Policy Council, members agreed to adopt a new corporate plan for 2023 to 2027. The Plan outlined four core missions and two supporting missions.

The four core missions are:

1. A more prosperous Borough where no-one is left behind
2. Every child and young person to have the opportunity to fulfil their potential
3. Deliver our Climate Emergency Action Plan
4. Build healthier, happier, and safer communities

The two supporting missions are:

5. Being an innovative and forward-thinking Council
6. Tackle the budget challenge

A full report on the delivery of the Corporate Plan and on the Council's missions is planned to be tabled at July's Council Forum.

4.1 PRIORITIES FOR THE COMING YEAR BY PORTFOLIO

Portfolio	Corporate Mission	Executive Member Priorities for 2024
Leader	All	<p>Combined Authority / Devolution Deal.</p> <p>Communications Plan, Place Promotion and Investor Engagement</p> <p>LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan implementation</p>
Growth and Development	1, 3 & 5	<p>Adopt and drive forward the new Local Plan for 2021-2037.</p> <p>Continue to deliver the Council's annual Growth Programme, develop new investment frameworks of scale and quality, including the Blackburn Growth Axis, Blackburn Town Centre Masterplan, and Darwen Town Investment Plan, BWD Skills Plan; and secure new public and private investment to support the Council's growth priorities.</p> <p>Continue to improve our Highway network by ensuring connectivity of transport links which are safe and reliable.</p> <p>Establish a new Cultural Investment Framework and develop a broader and higher quality range of cultural activities and creative experiences for residents and schools, leveraging the success of Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery and other local organisations achievement of securing National Portfolio Organisation status.</p> <p>Continue to develop and deliver the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, and engagement with residents</p>

		<p>and key partners</p> <p>Continue to work with communities to improve opportunities for residents to become more physically active through sport, and by walking and cycling as a transport choice.</p>
Public Health, Prevention and Wellbeing	1, 2 & 4	<p>Promote health, prevent ill health, and reduce health inequalities.</p> <p>Support integration between the ICB and Council, including development of governance arrangements between the Place-based Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board.</p> <p>Implement and monitor the new Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-28</p> <p>Take forward the public health strategies and programmes outlined within the Public Health Business Plan 2023/24.</p> <p>Bring together communities and partners and improve opportunities for people to become more physically active, learning from the Together an Active Future, Sport England programme.</p>
Children, Young People and Education	2 & 4	<p>Stable homes built on love - deliver a transformation programme to support the delivery of services in line with Working Together and community needs</p> <p>Right support, right time, right person - review and redesign our pathways to services to enable better aligned approach to service delivery.</p> <p>Effective transitions for all ages and needs - support children in navigating changes effectively, setting them up for success in their educational and personal journeys.</p>

		<p>Raise aspirations and fulfil potential by providing children and young people with the necessary resources, opportunities, and support to develop their skills, talents, and abilities.</p> <p>We are Systemic - promote holistic and effective support for children and their families.</p> <p>Best start in life - set children on a path of healthy development and well-being.</p>
Environment and Operations	1, 2 & 4	<p>Work with our residents and businesses to improve the cleanliness of our Borough, through waste collection, recycling and street cleansing services and by taking strong action against those who fly-tip and litter.</p> <p>Review our existing waste strategy and develop a strategy for the future, as part of the Lancashire Wastes Partnership</p> <p>Develop a Tree and Woodland Strategy and increase biodiversity within parks and council-maintained green and open spaces, supporting wilding where appropriate and identifying opportunities for promoting nature-based activities.</p> <p>Continue to engage with and support the community volunteers and their community clean-up activities, which help to keep our borough cleaner.</p>
Adult Social Care and Health	1 & 4	<p>Undertake transformation and legislative reform.</p> <p>Tackle inequalities, oppression and enable people to maximise their potential.</p> <p>Ensure the services we provide, and commission are of good quality, responsive to individual needs, provide value for money and reflect identified needs.</p>

		<p>Keep the Borough safe and protect the most vulnerable.</p> <p>Support citizens to be part of and connected to communities through work, education, leisure, and housing / accommodation models that are fit for purpose.</p> <p>Support people to stay healthy and independent at home for as long as possible.</p>
Digital and Customer Services	Provide a robust service to support all the missions and supporting missions.	<p>Implement the roadmap of transformation, including system related projects and kick start the work on developing a Transformation Strategy.</p> <p>Create new secure IT infrastructure that increases efficiency and effectiveness.</p> <p>Deploy leading digital tools through Microsoft 365.</p> <p>Continue to progress with digitisation of our services, whilst ensuring those at risk of Digital Exclusion are effectively supported.</p> <p>Refresh and implement our Customer Service standards.</p>
Finance and Governance	Budget allocation facilitates the progress of all the corporate missions.	<p>Continue work to achieve a sustainable budget.</p> <p>Provide value for money in the delivery of services.</p> <p>Ensure we retain and recruit the right people with the right skills.</p>

4.2 MANAGING OUR PERFORMANCE

In line with the refreshment of the Corporate Plan and Performance Framework, the Council also refreshed its suite of corporate key performance indicators. These were agreed at Executive Board in 2023.

These indicators provide a summary of performance across the range of Council services. They are supported by a larger number of operational metrics which individual

Departments manage and report on via their internal governance arrangements. At officer level, every six months each Department provides an update on their operational performance to the Corporate Assurance Board, chaired by the Chief Executive, where progress is monitored, supported, and challenged.

There are 39 measures within the Corporate Performance Framework. In some instances we have not yet been able to report performance for all the indicators. This is mainly for indicators which are new and data is being measured for accuracy.

Policy Council is asked to note the overall performance against the delivery of the Council's Missions, as illustrated in Appendix One - Performance, and the remedial action to improve delivery against those indicators which are giving cause for concern, as outlined in Appendix Two - Exception Reports. Each portfolio has been asked to provide a red, amber or green forecast for their performance measures.

Information relating to the 39 KPIs for the first half-year of 2023/24 (April 2023 to September 2023) is as follows:

- 59% (23 actual) forecast "green" or on track and performing well
- 28% (11 actual) forecast "amber" where delivery is on track and currently being managed
- 8% (3 actual) forecast "red" where performance is, or is likely to be off track
- 5% (2 actual) of the measures' data and/or a RAG rating is currently unavailable

The Council is also monitoring the suite of indicators which have been proposed by Government as part of the new Office for Local Government (Oflog).

Office for Local Government (Oflog): Oflog is a new local government body in England with a vision to provide authoritative and accessible data and analysis about the performance of local government and support its improvement. Since introducing Oflog earlier this year, the government has been steadily expanding the amount of data that the body will publish and scrutinise. This data can be viewed by members of the public and it is expected to be a mechanism for Local Government to help benchmark its performance, and for central Government to spot warning signs of potential problems. Oflog also aim to recognise councils that perform well so that local leaders get the credit that they deserve; and showcase the very best in class so that others can learn from them.

4.3 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE

Earlier this year, we invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC). Following feedback from the Peer team, we developed an Action Plan based on the team's recommendations which was previously agreed by Council.

Progress continues on advancing the action plan and the LGA's Peer team will visit the Council in May 2024 to conduct a progress review. In July 2024, the Council will publish a Progress Review report.

Much progress has already been made including developing our Corporate Parenting Panel. Progress includes development of a terms of reference for the Panel and with a

supporting training programme. This will further embed a corporate parenting culture among all staff and councillors. The work is part of a wider focus on improving and enhancing the Council's scrutiny functions. The Council will continue to embed a culture of effective scrutiny including launching a new induction programme, improving the wider training and support plans for chairs and all members of overview and scrutiny committees.

At the time of writing, and as highlighted above, we are in the process of implementing our revised suite of Corporate Key Performance Indicators with a formal report to follow. The strategy mapping exercise is due to be finished before the end of the year.

A Budget Survey has been launched to consult with residents about what they think our spending priorities should be for the next financial year. The Council has a clear Financial Strategy and Medium-Term Financial Plan, (MTFP) 2023/24 to 2025/26, which we will continue to implement alongside the BwD Capital Strategy 2023/24 to 2025/26.

Further work is required to develop detailed proposals and related delivery plans so that the Council can set a balanced budget for 2024/25 and over the medium term, including reviewing and updating the MTFP.

In addition, we are undertaking a review of the website layout to ensure visibility and access to the Council's Forward Plan, meeting papers, decisions and minutes. A review of how we utilise the Modern.Gov system, is underway to identify any additional functionality and the benefits this would bring to stakeholders, meeting organisers, committee members and residents.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct policy implications arising from the report but policy will need to be developed to address the various changes in legislation and further government in reform.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial 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.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional resource requirements arising from the report.

9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment is not required for this report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

Extensive engagement was undertaken to provide the evidence base for the Corporate Plan. No further engagement has been undertaken corporately but individual departments engage on priorities with service users, stakeholders and partners on a regular basis.