

## Live Well Priority 4: Good Quality Work and Maximising Income

### APPENDIX B: Highlight reports from Key Groups

<b>Name of Group:</b>	Employment and Skills Board
<b>Name and role of Contact:</b>	Martin Kelly, Strategic Director Growth & Development.

<b>Objective(s) aligned to group activity</b>	
Please tell us which objectives from the BwD Health and Wellbeing Strategy ( <a href="#">Priority 4 – page 14</a> ) best align with the work of your group (also see attached slide)	
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Increase health and care sector career opportunities, including apprenticeships, and pathways to employment.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Employment and skills opportunities for working age people inc. volunteering, adult learning, digital skills and employability programmes.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ensure people stay well in work through promotion of health and wellbeing activities.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Work with large scale organisations and anchor institutions to improve social value and wellbeing.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve accessibility to benefit and debt advice through our commissioned services and wider partners.	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Brief overview of group purpose</b>

### Highlight Report

Please provide a brief summary of key activity of your group over the past 12 months and planned activity/key milestones for the next year. **(300 words max)**

The BWD Skills Board, chaired by the Council's Chief Executive, and comprising a range of public, private and voluntary sector leaders, is currently developing a new Strategy, with a view to being publishing in Summer 2024. The Strategy will focus on key skills demands and unlocking productivity opportunities within new and established business growth sectors, including manufacturing, digital / cyber, health & social care, low carbon, professional services, and creative & cultural sectors. The Strategy will link with wider local economic frameworks which are looking to deliver a £1 billion growth programme and support over 100,000 jobs by 2037.

The Board will also seek to ensure the Strategy focuses partner action to reduce high levels of economic inactivity and improve employment rates of key target groups of residents, including care leavers, SEND leavers and learning disabled residents, as part of wider local partnership action to help ensure *no one is left behind*, a key inclusive growth mission of the Council's Corporate Plan.

The Board will also play a key role in developing and influencing regional strategic skills and employability initiatives relevant to BWD, including new skills opportunities to better deploy our devolved Adult Education Budget from 2026, in conjunction with the new Lancashire Combined County Authority, and in helping to shape major employability and health measures such as the recently secured Lancashire Well Being Pilot and emerging Universal Service opportunity with partners across Lancashire.

<b>Name of Group:</b>	L2050 Economic inactivity group including Work Well
<b>Name and role of Contact:</b>	Abdul Razaq – Director of Public Health Richard Brown – Head of Neighbourhoods & Community Safety

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<b>Brief overview of group purpose</b>
<p>Having a good-quality job is vital to protecting and improving health and wellbeing. The effects of unemployment are linked to high rates of long-term conditions, mental illness and unhealthy lifestyles. Being in work can make people feel useful to society, make families better off, and help to reduce health inequalities, while unstable work and frequent unemployment lowers confidence, leading to poorer mental and physical health. With the lifting of retirement age, we need to ensure that as many people as possible can be supported to live longer working lives. People with inadequate income are likely to experience poorer quality of life and less opportunity than others. Helping people to maximise their income by being in work, accessing their full lawful entitlements to financial support and managing outgoings and debts helps people become wealthier, healthier, happier and safer.</p>

### Highlight Report

Please provide a brief summary of key activity of your group over the past 12 months and planned activity/key milestones for the next year. **(300 words max)**

The Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub together with Directors of Public Health commissioned research on economic inactivity across Lancashire upper tier authorities. The research highlighted five key recommendations:

#### **Building a healthy, resilient Lancashire**

To help ensure the current and future workforce is less likely to fall ill and find their employment at risk.

#### **2. Better management of health at work**

To stem the flow of Lancashire residents moving out of work and onto key health-related “inactive” working age benefits.

#### **3. Targeted, timely interventions**

To get people who leave jobs due to a health condition back into work at the earliest opportunity.

#### **4. An enhanced support offer for claimants, particularly those under 40.**

For those who are already economically inactive, and claiming benefits (including carers)

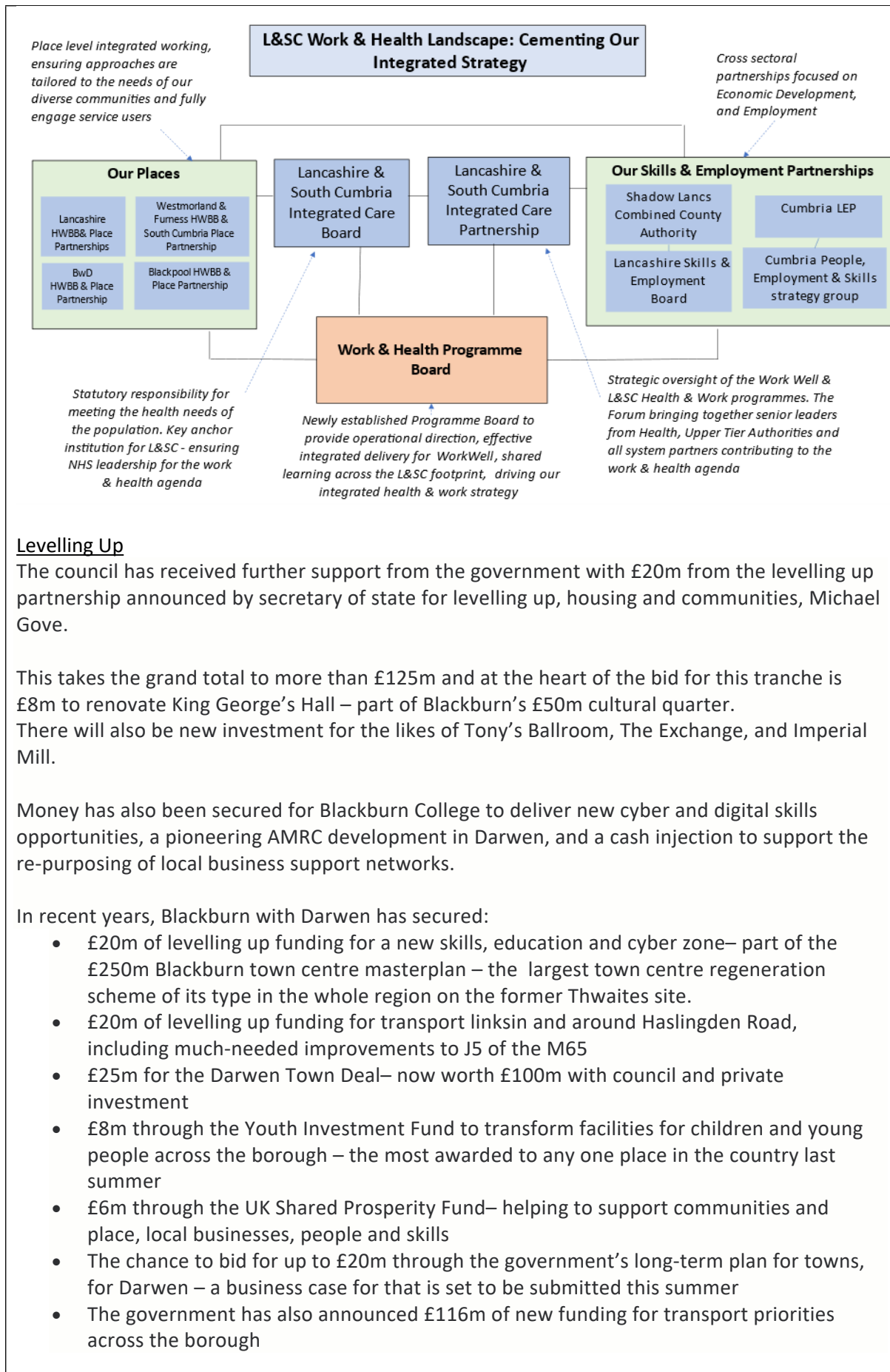
#### **5. Build a better, more integrated system response.**

*Across key stakeholders in the county, leveraging the Lancashire 2050 framework.*

A WorkWell vanguard submission has been submitted by the Lancashire & South Cumbria ICB:

- Research: Stemming the Flow
- 5,000 people across 7 place-based projects (evidence-based approach to identification) within an overarching framework
  - Barrow
  - Blackburn with Darwen
  - Blackpool
  - Burnley
  - Lancaster & Morecambe
  - Preston
  - West Lancashire

The announcement on successful areas is expected in May 2024 after the May local elections. The governance for the WorkWell programme is illustrated below.



**Live Well Update: Good Quality Work and Maximising Income**  
 Highlight Reports from Key Groups

<b>Name of Group:</b>	Adult Learning and Employment Support Services
<b>Name and role of Contact:</b>	Karen Wignall Service Lead – Adult Learning and Employment Support

<b>Objective(s) aligned to group activity</b>	
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<b>Brief overview of group purpose</b>
<p>The overall purpose of the Adult Learning service is “to improve the work prospects and wellbeing of people and their communities”. The National Careers Service provides impartial information, advice and guidance to help residents them make decisions on learning, training and work. The Employment Support Team works specifically with those people who are the furthest away from the job market, developing further the work started by National Careers Service.</p>

## Highlight Report

Please provide a brief summary of key activity of your group over the past 12 months and planned activity/key milestones for the next year. **(300 words max)**

### Adult Learning and Employment Support Services

#### Adult Learning Service

Working with approximately 2,600 people each year, the adult learning service provides a variety of courses and programmes of learning which support people to develop the confidence, skills, attributes and qualifications to progress into work. There are general courses which relate to all jobseekers, as well as sector specific programmes which provide suitable qualifications and input from the relevant sector so that individuals can better understand the area before applying.

The majority of courses are targeted at the most disadvantaged and hard-to-reach adults in the borough to help them re-engage in learning, build confidence, enhance their wellbeing and improve their skills and work prospects. There is also an extremely varied publicly advertised programme which is open to everybody aged 19 or over. The curriculum includes:

- Employability – building skills on a pathway to employment
- English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)
- Family Learning - Family English, Maths and Language (FEML) – parents and children learning together
- Health and Wellbeing – including Positive Minds (for people with mild to moderate mental health difficulties) and health awareness
- ICT & Digital
- Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities

#### National Careers Service

Provides impartial information, advice and guidance to approximately 3,000 people each year to help them make decisions on learning, training and work. The team works with people who have never worked, have taken time out from work, have been made redundant, or are looking to progress in work and further develop their career. They support people to identify their transferable skills and how these match suitable jobs. They can also signpost people to relevant training and further education opportunities and help with job search, job applications and CV development. They develop action plans for each customer on how to reach their goals.

#### Employment Support Team

This team works specifically with those people who are the furthest away from the job market, developing further the work started by National Careers Service. The team work closely with individuals who face a number of barriers to employment and support them to remove the barriers. They provide regular, ongoing support, often to people who have never worked and are looking for a way to start. This includes developing individual action plans to identify the steps they will need to take and the barriers they need to address in order to develop their confidence, skills and knowledge to be able to work.

The three teams work together to provide a holistic package of support, coming together under the banner of the Employment, Skills and Support Hub.

#### Employment, Skills and Support Hub

The Employment, Skills and Support Hub is currently in development but will take a lead in bringing together organisations and providers across the borough which provide employability and employment support services. The aim being to reduce duplication and ensure there are no

gaps in addressing needs of local employers and jobseekers alike. The ambitions for the Hub overall are to develop a central point that people within the Borough can contact for their employment, education and skills support needs and be appropriately signposted. The Hub is building on the work and remit of an existing Employability Network within the Borough which already has a range of organisations working with different target groups of potential employees. Further aims include the development of an Employer arm, bringing employers together to discuss and identify barriers to recruitment to specific roles. The Hub will support the continuation of 'SWAP'-style programmes, currently delivered as a collaboration by DWP, Blackburn College, National Careers Service, and the Adult Learning and Employment Support services. These programmes help to ensure potential applicants have the relevant skills, behaviours and qualifications to apply for sector specific job roles.

## **Multiply programme**

### **Background**

Multiply is a national Government initiative to support the development of numeracy skills across the Borough using a variety of innovative approaches.

There are significant areas of Blackburn with Darwen which have very low levels of qualifications amongst adults of working-age, including 13% who have no qualifications at all. The target group for Multiply is adults aged 19+ who have not previously achieved a GCSE Grade 4/C or higher maths qualification.

### **Funding**

The funding allocation over the 3 years of the project was £851,021, allocated as follows:

Local Authority	Total Funding Allocation (£)	Funding Allocation 22-23 (£)	Funding Allocation 23-24 (£)	Funding Allocation 24-25 (£)
<b>Blackburn with Darwen</b>	851,021.36	257,285.53	296,867.92	296,867.92

### **Intended Outcomes**

- Increased number of adults participating, acquiring and evidencing skills through non-qualification provision
- Increased adult numeracy (by supporting learners to improve their understanding and use of maths in their daily lives, at home and at work)
- Increased number of adults achieving maths qualifications up to, and including, Level 2
- Increased number of adults participating in maths qualifications and courses up to, and including, Level 2
- Improved labour market outcomes

### **Delivery Model**

Working with a range of delivery partners, Blackburn with Darwen delivers against the following interventions:

- a) Courses designed to increase confidence with numbers for those needing the first steps towards formal numeracy qualifications.
- b) Courses designed to help people use numeracy to manage their money.
- c) Innovative numeracy programmes delivered together with employers – including courses designed to cover specific numeracy skills required in the workplace



- d) Courses aimed at people who can't apply for certain jobs because of lack of numeracy skills and/or to encourage people to upskill in numeracy order to access a certain job/career.
- e) New intensive and flexible numeracy courses targeted at people without Level 2 maths, leading to a Functional Skills Qualification.
- f) Courses for parents wanting to increase their numeracy skills in order to help their children, and help with their own progression.

### **Careers fair events**

The Adult Learning and Employment Support services plan and deliver recruitment events in collaboration with DWP and these have included a wide range of partners and employers.

The larger, annual Jobs & Skills Fair takes place in February and has been very successful over the past two years, attended by approximately 900 people each year. The event helps them to find out more about local vacancies, apply for jobs or identify potential training or education opportunities. The National Careers Service are on hand to support people to develop an action plan to help them progress with their next steps. Mock interview support is provided by Ricoh to enable people to develop their interview techniques.

JCP staff attend the event to support claimants and the exhibitors, and the Adult Learning Team delivered workshops and supported participants to apply for live vacancies on the day. Approximately 40-45 employers have attended each time, with the majority of them returning the following year.

A smaller recruitment event – 'Get That Job' – took place over 3 days in October and is expected to be repeated this year. This was developed in collaboration between the council's Adult Learning and Employment Support services, DWP and the council's HR team.

#### *Day 1 – Get Job Ready*

This day was dedicated to equipping 150 job seekers with the tools they needed to stand out in the competitive job market. This included workshops, delivered by employability specialists in our Adult Learning and National Careers Service teams, mock interview sessions undertaken by staff from RICOH as part of their social responsibility challenge and an application station which supported Job seekers to apply for positions during the event.

#### *Day 2 – Retail & Hospitality Jobs Fair*

Employers were on hand to provide information about current vacancies and speak directly with potential candidates. Over 350 job seekers attended this event and were able to utilise the support and guidance from the Employment, Skills and Support team and apply for jobs advertised. Some of the employers attending included: Stanley House Hotel & Spa, The Waitering Co, The Firepit Blackburn, the EG Group, KFC, Specsavers, Checks and Grays, Sodexo, Rummage Rescuers, Blackburn College, FGFS, and Retail Asset Solution.

#### *Day 3 – BwD Council Vacancies*

Approximately 200 job seekers attended this session which saw BwD Council services share vacancies from across the council. Managers were able to talk about what the jobs involved as well as highlight the benefits of working for the council within the various sectors.

<b>Name of Group:</b>	Advice Service – Debt, Welfare and Housing
<b>Name and role of Contact:</b>	Andy Ormerod

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<b>Brief overview of group purpose</b>
<p>Advice Service – Debt, Welfare and Housing</p> <p>The provision of Debt, Welfare and Housing Advice to the residents of the borough via the central Library in Blackburn. This includes a full spectrum of activity from prevention to intervention. The advice ranges from accessible public information which can empower and enable people to make choices to enhance their wellbeing, capability, and prevent or avoid problems through to casework with trained advisers to resolve problems, and where necessary, through to more intensive interventions.</p>

## Highlight Report

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### Overarching Information

Since 01/01/2024:

We have had 1689 approach the service in person.

We have had 312 referrals in to our service and opened 271 actions.

We have achieved financial gains of £113,812.03 for our clients.

We have also opened an extra 41 cases for clients in BWD over this period through our HSBC contract.

HSF:

We have had 59 referrals in from HSF and opened 19 actions from these referrals

Legal cases:

Our legal team have also opened 21 cases for people within BWD, 19 of these cases were assisted in court.

### Localised Trends and Looking Forward

Benefits:

We are currently still seeing a lot of benefits checks coming through due to not having enough income for household bills. We are assisting with a lot of Council Tax Support applications.

We have had an increase in UC queries, people wanting to know if they are on the correct award and also an increase in managed migration letters.

Housing:

We are seeing a lot of homelessness in the borough and people wanting to move on from temporary accommodation.

We have also seen an increase in notices being served, S21 and S8.

We are advising a lot on rent arrears and have been applying for quite a few DHPs to cover arrears and also shortfall in rent.

Debt:

We are seeing a lot of Council Tax debt as usual also multiple debts which has increased applications for DRO and also Breathing Space for prevent evictions.

### Local & National Policy

We're continuing to push people to sign our open letter to party leaders asking them to pledge their support to our manifesto asks.

We also launched a campaign action for people in the North East, letting them easily contact their mayoral candidates.

The Steering group are currently preparing for an away day, where they will be doing some training as well as recording some videos for social media that they have been working on.

They have also been feeding into various aspects of the campaign and working on some blogs/vlogs.

### Our News

We currently have 2 other contracts.

HSBC which is focusing currently on Blackpool but the contract gives us the opportunity to cover the whole of Lancashire for financial resilience. This is more or less mobilised now and advisers are supporting local cases for debt, benefits and housing.

Offering workshops with clients and professionals and also 121 sessions with clients.

We have our Legal aid work and Court duty. We now have our trainee solicitor in post.

**Community activities:**

We have been involved in task groups around HSF and how this is going to work going forward.

We are currently in the process of having a presence in the JCP which will be set up in the next few weeks.