



REPORT OF:	LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
TO:	POLICY COUNCIL
ON:	THURSDAY 6 th DECEMBER 2018

CORPORATE PLAN AND PRIORITIES BEYOND 2020

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To outline key national and local policy challenges and proposals regarding the Council's positioning on future policy areas for the benefit of residents in Blackburn with Darwen.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy Council is invited to:

- Note the content of the report
- Consider the national policy direction and the Council's response to current and future policy changes
- Note the next steps to developing a new Corporate Plan and Corporate Priorities to 2023
- Note the overall performance against the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives

3. CURRENT POSITION

Policy Council 2015 adopted the current Corporate Plan which sets out the council's aims and ambitions up to 2019. As part of this, Policy Council 2017 agreed the continuation of the six corporate priorities to 2020, which are:

1. Creating more **jobs** and supporting business growth.
2. Improving **housing** quality and building more houses.
3. Improving **health and well-being**.
4. Improving outcomes for our **young people**.
5. Safeguarding the most **vulnerable people**.
6. **Making your money go further**.

Further to this, Policy Council continued the implementation of four development themes that underpin all the work the local authority undertakes and these were:

- Image and marketing of the borough.
- Fairness, equality, cohesion.
- Partnership working with residents, businesses and other key stakeholders.
- Digital first.

Progress in 2018

Portfolio	Key activity and achievements in 2018
Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MJ Local Authority of the year award • 20 year anniversary as a Unitary Authority • National Festival of Making 2018 attended by 40,000 + visitors and winning Lancashire Tourism Award • Launch of LSP annual summit with Rt Hon Alan Milburn as guest speaker • Good Neighbour awards • Selected as one of five pilot areas for the government's Integration Area Programme
Children, Young People and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Services retained an overall 'good' judgement following the Ofsted Safeguarding Inspection Framework inspection • Primary schools pupils performed better than the national and Lancashire average in Reading, Writing and Maths • Secondary Schools performed in line with the national average in terms of overall attainment, with English GCSE a particular strength • 3 year Local Area Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) Strategy co-produced with stakeholders • % 16-17 year olds participating in education, employment or training is higher than the regional and England average • 1900 young people attended the 'Blackburn is Hiring' careers fair - the largest in the region • Successful International Women's Day centenary campaign • 10,600 (62%) young people aged 11-18 in BWD voted on the top issues important to them as part of the national Make your Mark campaign
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed additional car parking provision in Blackburn Town centre and at Royal Blackburn hospital • Supported 80 Your Call clean up events which attracted over 1300 volunteers • Engaged with and supported Keep Blackburn Tidy and Keep Darwen Tidy groups. These groups have 450+ volunteers who have arranged their own litter picking activities and have collected over 8,000 bags of rubbish to date, which the Council has removed.
Health & Adult Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackburn with Darwen Local Integrated Care Partnership established and working collaboratively to bring about transformative change in delivering better health and care for our communities • Development of a network to support our neighbourhoods to improve access to asset based and volunteer supported prevention activities • CQC 'good' judgements for St Aidan's Short Term Breaks, Shared Lives and Reablement teams - and no care home in the borough is rated inadequate by the Care Quality Commission • Joint declaration on Healthy Weight signed by the Council and CCG • Mental Health First Aid prioritised as a key skill with designated 'Time to Change' champions • Publication of new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy setting out our shared priorities for improvement of health and wellbeing for the period 2018-2021
Leisure & Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful bid to Sport England for a share of £100m to increase levels of activity across Pennine Lancashire • Wellbeing Service – 50% increase in contacts into the Wellbeing Service compared to first 6 months of 2017 (4,270 vs 2,847)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public access IT upgrade rolled out in all libraries; 97 devices are available in 5 libraries to increase digital access and support learning • Cycling festival to launch the Weavers Wheel, a new 26km cycling route around Blackburn town centre
Neighbourhood & Prevention Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory and Selective Private Sector Landlord licensing schemes –Mandatory Housing in Multiple Occupation registration and the embedding of the selective licensing scheme. The aim being to improve quality, condition and management of private sector rented properties. • Adult learning – ensuring that those furthest from employment are given the opportunities to engage in building personal capacity. This in turn will support lifestyle changes to promote improved health, social mobility and personal prosperity. • Community Safety Partnership – working smarter in collaboration to make our resources go further in being able to tackle those issues that impact on our communities feeling confident about their safety. Where possible to working upstream to engage with perpetrators through early intervention and prevention, trauma and Adverse Childhood Experience informed approaches. • Lancashire Volunteering Partnership numbers and profile has increased steadily which has developed community assets • 9591 volunteer hours recorded in the first half of 2018/19 from Your Call Clean Ups, Other Your Call activity, Healthy Community Partnership Volunteers and Transforming Lives volunteers. • 996 Adult Learners were supported through the National Careers Service contract into higher level skills or employment during 2017/18.
Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing development schemes underway – Roe Lee, Milking Lane, Griffin. • Growth Deal investment of £12m for Pennine Gateways project • National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) investment of £2m investment for Fabric Boarders project to improve public access routes to Blackburn town centre • Improved Blackburn town centre business confidence with new BID Voted in for 2019 – 2024 with around £1.5 million further investment • Strengthened evening economies in both town centres with eight new food and drink outlets in Blackburn and four in Darwen in the past 12 months
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A digital board has been established within the council, representing all major service areas and is now overseeing major digital change programmes including infrastructure refresh, modern user device rollout and a redesigned council website. • Recruitment of apprentices – currently 51 with the Council. • Universal Credit support for residents following launch in February 2018 with co-location of council staff with Shelter at the Job Centre.

Highlights over the last 12 months

The council has had an interesting and exciting 12 months, with many successes which are built on our strong civic leadership role. We have implemented the recommendations of the Electoral Review seamlessly reducing our councillors from 64 to 51 and our wards from 21 to 17, which reflects our positive attitude and culture at the Council amongst members and officers.

In June, the whole Council was able to celebrate winning the prestigious MJ Local Authority of the Year Award. The panel of independent judges said *“the breadth of the council’s achievements for its communities is outstanding regardless of socio-economic and fiscal challenges. They added this is underpinned by strong, consistent and humble*

leadership and an unwavering mission to put the customer first."

This year the Council celebrated 20 years as a Unitary Authority and all staff were invited to a celebration breakfast at King George's Hall. Over 500 employees attended the event and feedback from staff was positive with the event providing opportunities for staff to meet colleagues from other departments and also to reminisce on achievements of the past 20 years with a special anniversary video.

Over the last 12 months there has been increased resident participation in local activities which has helped us to meet our budget and capacity challenges. The Your Call campaign has been particularly successful in encouraging local people to volunteer some of their time and join community volunteers who are already working with the Council. In 2017/18, 783 events took place, attended by 6,332 residents. Of these, 104 were clean ups with other activity including dog fouling initiatives, community safety and road safety. In addition, we are also part of the Lancashire Volunteer Partnership which provides a central resource to recruit, promote and manage public sector volunteers. The Council has 569 active volunteers on the scheme.

The first ever LSP Annual Summit took place in October 2018 and was attended by over 100 delegates. The Summit was designed to update partners and stakeholders on activity across four key themes over the last 12 months and consider key priorities to take forward. The four themes were health and wellbeing; social integration; growth and business; employment and skills. Consideration was also given to emerging policy initiatives from the Government and more locally to agree key actions and also gather early thoughts for the next iteration of the LSP Strategic Partnership Plan 2020 to 2030. We were delighted that the Rt Hon Alan Milburn, Chancellor of Lancaster University attended as our guest speaker.

Borough and also community events provide a real opportunity to encourage natural cohesion between our residents bringing together different age groups, nationalities and backgrounds. Our success and desire to try new things and our evidence-based approach to addressing cohesion challenges have resulted in the Council being selected as one of five pilot areas for the government's Integration Area Programme. The programme focuses local and national resource on a common goal to deliver integrated communities, to better understand and tackle challenges specific to a place, building on existing best practice and local strengths. In preparation to be a part of the programme we have undertaken consultations and workshops with a range of partners and community leaders to consider three themes – social mixing; local economy; and access pathways. The Borough's vision is for a strong, cohesive and prosperous community, where everyone is treated fairly, where people's faith and culture are understood and respected, where diversity is valued and embraced because of how it enriches our community, and a place where people connect and form relationships and friendships that span every characteristic of society. Our local strategy for achieving this is being developed.

The National Festival of Making (NFoM) held in Blackburn town centre is a prime example of natural cohesion. This year's attendees exceeded last year's record of 30,000 with more than 160 attractions for people to enjoy. As recognition of their hard work, over 80 people of all ages and backgrounds, who had signed up to help throughout the Festival weekend, attended a special reception in the Council Chamber. The volunteers did a fantastic job and were rightly recognised for their contribution.

Next year's date has been confirmed and will take place on the weekend of 15th and 16th June. We are working to ensure that this now becomes an annual event in the Borough which all of our residents and businesses can enjoy. The NFoM has rightly been recognised and has won two awards. At the Hive Awards it was the winner for The Buzz Award and at the Lancashire Tourism Awards it won in the Large Event Award category. The NFoM 2018 has also been shortlisted in 2 categories for the UK festival awards - Best Family Festival and Best Non-Music Festival.

Improving health and well-being and promoting prevention remains a priority for the council to benefits citizens. Blackburn with Darwen led the successful bid to Sport England for Pennine Lancashire to be one of twelve, place-based Local Delivery Pilot areas. Local Delivery Pilots represent a major investment by Sport England, committing £100m across the 12 areas through to March 31st 2021. It is therefore an exciting opportunity to make a significant difference to levels of activity and improve health and wellbeing across Pennine Lancashire including those living in Blackburn with Darwen.

Our trailblazing approach will focus on those people who currently do little or no physical activity with poor mental wellbeing challenges. Over 100 organisations and physical activity providers have come together today (6th Dec) to

share their learning, experiences and ideas to help develop and test different ways of increasing levels of activity; increasing the awareness and benefits of physical activity; improving how partners work together in sharing ideas and resources; ensuring the public have a voice and are involved in creating and leading a 'Physical Activity Movement' in more places and to better understand and reflect how life events impact on mental wellbeing and physical activity to inform investment early next year.

Over the last 12 months we have continued to see significant investment into the Borough. Both of our Town Centres are undergoing improvements, Darwen market square public realm work is on site; redevelopment works in Blackburn bringing in Reel cinema is underway with the cinema due to open in 2020; significant investment at Whitebirk with Eurogarages, Hippo Cars, Pets Choice; housing development in Roe Lee, Griffin and other sites is underway along with infrastructure investment around the town centres, Barbara Castle Way and also North Blackburn.

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

Members will know that the MTFS was approved by Finance Council earlier this year and incorporates the four-year financial settlement agreed with central government in October 2016 but, unlike the longer-term strategies previously produced, the current MTFS only extends to 2020/21 given the lack of clarity on future changes to the funding framework and mechanisms such as development of the Business Rates Retention Scheme, new Fair Funding Formula and the short term impact of Brexit.

The MTFS has therefore been developed within this financial context, ensuring that the Council's objectives remain to help support those in hardship whilst encouraging the growth of jobs and businesses. The Finance Council report identified a budget gap of up to £4.9m million in 2019/20, rising to £13.3m in 2020/21. Over the course of the year we have been developing and implementing strategies to contain spending and demand within the available resource and the main elements of this work are contained within the current savings programme which includes savings from digital change, procurement, income generation, commercialisation and development of alternative service models. From the work undertaken we have reduced the projected budget gap for 2019/20 to less than £3.0m and we will refine this further on receipt of the Local Government finance settlement, which is expected on Thursday 6th December 2018. Members will be aware that additional announcements were made at Autumn Budget and these can be found under section 4 of this report.

Progress against the Corporate Plan KPIs 2018/2019

As per previous years, robust performance management arrangements continue to be in place to monitor and ensure the delivery of the Corporate Plan.

The performance framework continues to see performance discussed and challenged with directors and also includes a direct challenge from the Leader of the Council to the Executive Members on a six monthly basis. Appendix One tracks the progress of performance against the Council's strategic objectives for the period April 2018 to September 2018. Appendix Two provides exception reports for priorities which are considered to be off track.

Internal quality assurance checks, through the established Council challenge process, aim to ensure the robustness of the data and information included in all performance monitoring reports. Policy Council are asked to note that some figures may change in future reports, as a result of these quality assurance checks.

There are 106 measures within the Corporate Plan linked to the Council's priority objectives.

Of the 106 measures information for the period is as follows:

- 6% (6 actual) have been forecast as "red" where performance is, or is likely to be off track
- 26% (28 actual) have been forecast "amber" where delivery is on track and currently being managed
- 61% (65 actual) have been forecast "green" or on track
- 7% (7 actual) of the measures a RAG rating is not available

Further detail is provided in Appendix three.

4. NATIONAL POLICY DIRECTION

Autumn Budget

The Autumn budget announced on 29th October, outlined extra funding for adult social care (£240 million in 2018/19 and 2019/2020) alongside additional monies (£410 million) in 2019/2020 to improve social care services. Local authorities have been invited to bid for a share of £84m over five years to improve Children's Social Care. Within education, £10,000 for every primary school and £50,000 for every secondary school in England has been committed whilst a number of changes were also announced for Universal Credit. These include an increase in the work allowance which will impact positively on local families as they will now be able to earn over £1000 extra before the benefit is withdrawn. This change takes effect from April 2019. A £675 million Future High Streets Fund was announced to improve access to high streets and town centres and the fund includes a £55million pot for heritage-based regeneration. A £420 million fund has been announced for local authorities (in year) to tackle potholes, repair damage and ensure the safety of local bridges.

Universal Credit

£1billion was announced for the scheme in the Autumn Budget along with a package of measures which are designed to support the scheme over the next five years. The money will cut the waiting time for the first payment from five to three weeks. Work allowances are also increasing by £1,000 a year which is estimated to help 2.4m working families with children and people with disabilities by £630 per year nationally.

Since the introduction of Universal Credit full service in Blackburn and Darwen in February 2018, the number of residents receiving the benefit has steadily increased, with the caseload in the borough currently at 5,425. The council continues to co-locate with Shelter at the Job Centre to provide digital and budgeting support to benefit recipients. This approach has worked well since February, however, the council has been informed that the DWP funding of this work will cease in March 2019, with the Citizen's Advice Bureau being asked to replace both organisations.

Social Mobility

The Government is placing a stronger emphasis on Social Mobility having appointed a new Chair of the Social Mobility Commission and 12 Commissioners ahead of a relaunch in December. Raising ambitions for every child whatever their background is at the heart of the new Chair and the commission aims to build a fairer society in which everyone can thrive. This resonates the messages at our recent LSP Annual Summit where there was a very clear desire for a greater emphasis and prioritisation of social mobility at a local level. The borough's achievements at GCSE level are higher than average, however, the longer term positive outcomes for our young people are not being realised and the impact of wider social mobility determinants have been put forward as a reason for this.

Business plays an important role in Social Mobility and through the Hive Business School we are ensuring that all state secondary schools in the Borough are linked directly with a local employer and through the Employment and Skills Board we are starting to develop a programme to bring this into KS2. Our aim is to raise aspirations of our young people and future workforce and outline the local employer/entrepreneurial opportunities for them.

Health and Care integration

Earlier this year the NHS published its policy consultation paper 'Developing the long term plan for the NHS' which aims to set out ambitions for improvement over the next decade and plan to meet them over the next five years of the NHS funding settlement. This 10 year plan is based on three key themes – life stage, clinical priorities and enablers of improvement. The call for views on the 10 year plan ended in September and publication of the long term plan is expected by the end of the year.

The Department of Health and Social Care have recently published a policy paper setting out the new Secretary of State's vision for putting prevention at the heart of our nation's health - 'Prevention is better than cure'. The vision sets out that the greater focus, and spending, is needed on prevention with recognition of the important role local government plays in community health and wellbeing. A Green Paper will follow. This renewed focus mirrors our own approach in Blackburn with Darwen working with our health and care partners and influencing the NHS Sustainability and Transformation Plan and new Integrated Care Services (ICS) model. The Healthier Lancashire and

South Cumbria partnership formed with support from the Council and is underpinned by the Pennine Lancashire Integrated Health and Care partnership.

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) / Local Industrial Strategy / Combined Authorities

The Government remain committed to LEPs and for those areas without a Combined Authority, future growth investment is likely to continue to be distributed via LEPs. The Government have also asked LEPs to prepare a Local Industrial Strategy which should set out clearly defined priorities for how cities, towns and rural areas will maximise their contribution to UK productivity allowing places to make the most of their distinctive strengths. The Industrial Strategy will provide the evidence base and priorities to attract funding from the Government. The Lancashire LEP is working on the Lancashire Industrial Strategy which we will help to shape and influence through Cllr Phil Riley, our LEP Director. The Government have also indicated that a Devolution Framework will be published by the end of this year and should outline the opportunities available to local areas which collaborate on a wider footprint.

Exit from the EU

The UK is set to leave the European Union on 29th March 2019. The draft Withdrawal Agreement was published on 14th November and sets out the terms for the Exit. It reflects agreement in principle between the UK and EU negotiating teams. Negotiations continue and the final Agreement will be subject to a vote in Parliament.

Discussions around a deal for the UK continue with concern growing over the possibility of a no-deal Brexit and the impact this will have on the UK. Border issues with Northern Ireland continue to hinder talks whilst demands for a second referendum have been dismissed by the Prime Minister. Local Government have recently been invited to impact talks by the Department for Exiting the European Union and the Local Government Association are also supporting local authorities with briefing papers and impact analyses.

In addition, we await the publication of further details around a UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to replace EU funding in the 2019 spending review. The Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government has responded to questions in Parliament around the fund by releasing details of a proposed consultation before the finalisation of the scheme. However, no dates have been released for this. An additional concern for the region is a skills shortage especially as house-building programmes demand skilled labour. We will continue to work with the Lancashire LEP and partners to monitor the impact of Brexit and identify implications for the Borough.

We will continue to monitor the situation and noting that MHCLG have also engaged with the Lancashire Resilience Forum, we will work with them on planning assumptions and risks relating to Brexit scenarios, ensuring Blackburn with Darwen is represented in those discussions.

Consultations

The Council has been actively responding to national consultations which will have a local impact or are of national significance and to highlight with Government Departments the impact of their policy on our residents. In 2018 to date we have responded to consultations on Civil Society, the Fair Funding Review, Social Care (LGA green paper), Social Housing, Non-Hydraulic Fracking. The Leader has also corresponded directly with Ministers and senior figures at the LGA around the issues we are facing within Adult Social Care. We are looking forward to the publication of the Adult Social Care green paper and will submit a corporate response to the consultation upon publication.

5. NEXT 12 MONTHS

Outlined below are the key activities for each portfolio that will be delivered by March 2020.

Portfolio	Executive Member to deliver by 2020
Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthening our relationship with citizens, businesses and partners to instil fairness, respect and opportunity for all.• Taking Your Call further and recognising the crucial role of our volunteers.• To deliver a successful Social Integration Programme for the Borough.
Children, Young People and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building on our effective partnerships to implement strength based approaches to improving the education, care, health and wellbeing for all our children and young people.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focusing our resources so that children and young people receive the right help at the right time so that they can stay safely at home with their family and in their community.
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building on the development of volunteering for organised clean up events and litter picking activities within the borough. Positively engaging with citizens, organisations and businesses to improve awareness of recycling to reduce contamination and increase recycling rates across the Borough Manage the tendering of significant waste and recycling contracts for the borough. Managing council car parking provision, ensuring safe traffic flow and maximising income.
Health & Adult Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex needs and transition services to support vulnerable Adults – working in collaboration with partners to develop effective solutions to complex problems that impact on the most vulnerable in society. To ensure a systems approach to tackling homelessness, drugs, alcohol and mental wellbeing whilst promoting a sustainable recovery that leads to security of housing, self-esteem, re-engagement in training, employment and personal health and wellbeing. Ensuring that we work upstream at the youngest age possible and support into sustainable adulthood. Promote a Whole System Approach to Addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences. Promote Emotional Wellbeing, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, through the Public Mental Wellbeing programme, aligned with the Suicide Prevention strategy, and the Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Transformation plan. Deliver a range of early intervention and self-help solutions to help adults live independently, with a good quality of life. To further integrate health and care services both locally and across Pennine Lancashire
Leisure & Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewed Wellbeing Offer – holistic and person centred which has leisure and culture at its heart. Sport England Local Delivery Pilot: Together an Active Future - focussing on those people who currently do little or no physical activity with or at risk of poor mental wellbeing.
Neighbourhood & Prevention Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve the safety, work prospects and wellbeing of our people and their communities. To Progress a targeted, prevention and wider neighbourhood offer which supports, enables and facilitates communities to be stronger, more resilient and sustainable. Improve housing access and quality – To ensure that the council maximises opportunities to reduce homelessness and to use its regulatory powers to maintain standards in the private rented sector
Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to closely work proactively with housebuilders and partners to deliver the housing growth agenda. To deliver successful town centres in Blackburn with Darwen together with creating more jobs and supporting business growth. To enhance the Visitor economy and develop further cultural attractions
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering a consolidated and modernised Council office estate to reduce costs, improve facilities for customers and staff as well as increasing the efficiency of services. Digital strategy: Delivering increased digital services for the public including a redesigned website, freeing up valuable face to face resources for those who need them most. Enabling the workforce with modern devices and systems to

6. DEVELOPING THE CORPORATE PLAN – 2019 to 2023

It is vital that we understand our residents, communities, businesses, employees and that their needs are reflected in our priorities and objectives. It's timely therefore that we start to refresh our Corporate Plan to reflect the changes in Council structure and the range of initiatives, new partnerships and interventions we have put in place in recent years alongside the changing landscape in local government and the wider public sector.

Over the past few months we have undertaken activity that will help the Council make an informed decision on future priorities and objectives and these are being analysed. These include:

State of the Borough

To support our Corporate Plan update we have commissioned an independent assessment of the 'State of the Borough' covering three main topics – economy; people; and place. The commission examined our strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats.

In summary, the assessment outlines that we have a large and varied manufacturing base which has the potential for greater growth as the LEP and Government outline advanced manufacturing as a priority. In addition we have experienced relatively high growth in GVA and productivity. The assessment acknowledges that we have higher than average levels of economic inactivity and unemployment along with relatively low qualification levels and in particular a below average education system for 16-18 years olds. However, we have a good education and skills system up to Key Stage 4 with good apprenticeship take up which offers the opportunity to move the future workforce away from a legacy of generational benefit dependence and deprivation.

The assessment identified digital connectivity in the Borough as a key strength which makes us well placed to benefit from growth in the digital sector, another priority area for the Government and LEP. East-West physical connectivity provided by the M65 is highlighted as a strength and opportunity for the Borough.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2018

The Council's JSNA Summary Review for 2018 provides an analysis of the key economic, social and environmental determinants of the life chances of our residents. It also provides an in depth analysis of our population and its health and considers current and future health and social care needs.

The Borough has a much younger age profile than average with 28.5% of our population aged under 20, which is the 6th highest proportion in England. Population projections also show that the 65+ age group is expected to rise almost 40% by 2041. Life expectancy in the Borough continues to lag behind the England average with inequalities also present within the Borough, a difference of approx. 11.6 years for males and 8.4 years for females between the most deprived and least deprived LSOAs within the Borough. Broad health classifications show that cancer and tumours; Cardiovascular Disease (CVD); and respiratory were the biggest causes of death according to latest figures. The Child poverty continues to be an issue with latest data showing that an estimated 16,034 children (39.5%) are living in poverty, the average across the UK being 27%.

Resident survey

To help understand residents views the council has undertaken a residents survey which has been mailed directly to randomly selected households seeking views on council services, their local areas and our current priorities. An open platform was also made available so that all residents, partners, businesses and communities could share their views. The survey closed on 21st November and feedback is currently being collated.

Corporate Peer Challenge

The Council has undergone major change over recent years and it was timely to invite the Local Government Association's (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge to the Council and explore how effectively we are delivering services to residents and business, our financial management and our organisational capacity. We have also invited the Peer Team to provide observation and feedback on our approach to community engagement and our digital direction.

The peer review is taking place Monday 3rd to Thursday 6th December. Their observations and comments will also be used to help shape our priorities.

LSP summit

The LSP is a multi-agency group that represents the diverse public, private, voluntary, community and faith sectors in Blackburn with Darwen. As outlined earlier in this report, we held our first annual summit in October.

Partners from across the public sector, businesses, voluntary and faith sectors along with education providers attended the event providing input identifying the top two or three key priorities for the Borough.

Key priorities for Employment and Skills emerged as improving employability skills by providing work and life experiences, particularly starting at primary school level and building skills development into the schools and education curriculum; being clear on career pathways at all skills levels with apprenticeships seen as a key strength and opportunity.

Addressing mental health barriers was outlined as a priority within the health, care and wellbeing theme along with increasing partnership working across the sectors reduce health inequalities and improve health outcomes. Encouraging people to support themselves through digital health was identified as an opportunity, in particular educating patients to help them make positive health choices.

Within the Social Integration, cohesion and volunteering theme, encouraging all ages and whole communities to integrate was highlighted as a priority with sport and volunteering identified as a real opportunity to do this. Succession planning for volunteers and upskilling volunteers also emerged as a key priority.

Those discussing growth identified local procurement and business engagement as priorities, recognising the role of Hive going forward. There was particular focus on bringing 'big name' employers into the Borough and creating professional roles to encourage graduate retention.

Positive Social Mobility was a cross cutting theme across all of the discussions with suggestions to develop a Social Mobility strategy and action plan seen as an opportunity which could underpin all of the themes.

Social integration strategy

Through a series of consultation events and workshops with a wide range of local groups and organisations from across the borough, four priorities for the work have been identified.

The strategy's four priorities are:

1. Increasing economic prosperity for all of the borough's communities
2. Strengthening relationships between communities;
3. Building connections between young people from diverse communities; and
4. Connecting people from disadvantaged areas to zones of employment and shared spaces.

A number of stakeholder workshops are currently taking place, ahead of an official launch of Blackburn with Darwen's Social Integration Strategy. We will be using this programme to shape our Corporate Plan.

7. NEXT STEPS

Over the next few weeks, officers will be developing five or six key corporate priorities for the Council to 2023 which will reflect the evidence base and emerging local and national policy issues whilst building on our existing six priorities.

Emerging themes based on the points set out in this report include inclusive growth and social mobility; supporting young people and raising aspirations; safeguarding and supporting the most vulnerable people; connected communities and integration; reducing health inequalities and improving health outcomes; strengthening partnership working; financial resilience.

The Corporate Priorities and Plan will be underpinned by an action plan with key corporate and portfolio performance measures so that we can monitor progress and ensure we achieve our priorities.

The final Plan will be available for consideration by members, stakeholders and communities in January 2019 with a final report to Council Forum on 28th March 2019 to approve the new Corporate Plan and Priorities.

8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Subject to Council approval, the Council's Corporate Plan and Priorities will be refreshed and presented to Council Forum on 28th March 2019. The Corporate Plan will strengthen existing policies.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications.

11. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no resource implications.

12. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment will be undertaken as the new Corporate Plan is developed.

13. CONSULTATIONS

There are no consultations at this stage.

Contact Officer: Denise Park

Date: 28th November 2018

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following papers are available via the Council's website:

- Corporate Plan
- JSNA