

Blackburn with Darwen Corporate Plan 2019 - 2023

OUR VISION

Section under development

Our vision is to enable all of our residents to achieve a good quality of life in a vibrant and thriving place, with strong community values and an inclusive society.

People: A good quality of life for all of our residents
Place: Community pride in a vibrant place to live and visit
Economy: A strong and inclusive economy with continued growth
Council: Delivered by a strong and resilient council

“Working together for our Borough”

OUR PLACE, OUR PLAN

We have lots to be proud of as a Council and as a Borough. Government inspections, our own performance reporting, external peer challenge and feedback from residents tell us that we are delivering good council services and our activities continue to receive national recognition from industry leaders.

National austerity has meant that we have had to make some difficult financial decisions as a council over recent years, which has impacted on services and activities at a time when the public sector is increasingly relied on for support by residents and businesses. Despite this, our strong track record of delivery and partnership working alongside dedicated employees and members enables us to continue to be an ambitious council and strive to deliver better outcomes for everyone.

The world is changing at a rapid pace environmentally, socially, economically with digital technology having a significant impact across society and how we interact with each other locally, nationally and internationally. As a Council we must be flexible and adaptable transforming the way we do things in the most appropriate way, responding to government policy direction and meeting the needs of local people and businesses.

We cannot do this on our own. We need our public and private sector partners to work with us to create jobs; build and improve homes; increase skills and qualifications; support communities; improve health and wellbeing etc. That’s why our Corporate Plan is for everyone - councillors, staff, partners, residents, businesses – all who can support the Council and the Borough in being the best it can possibly be.

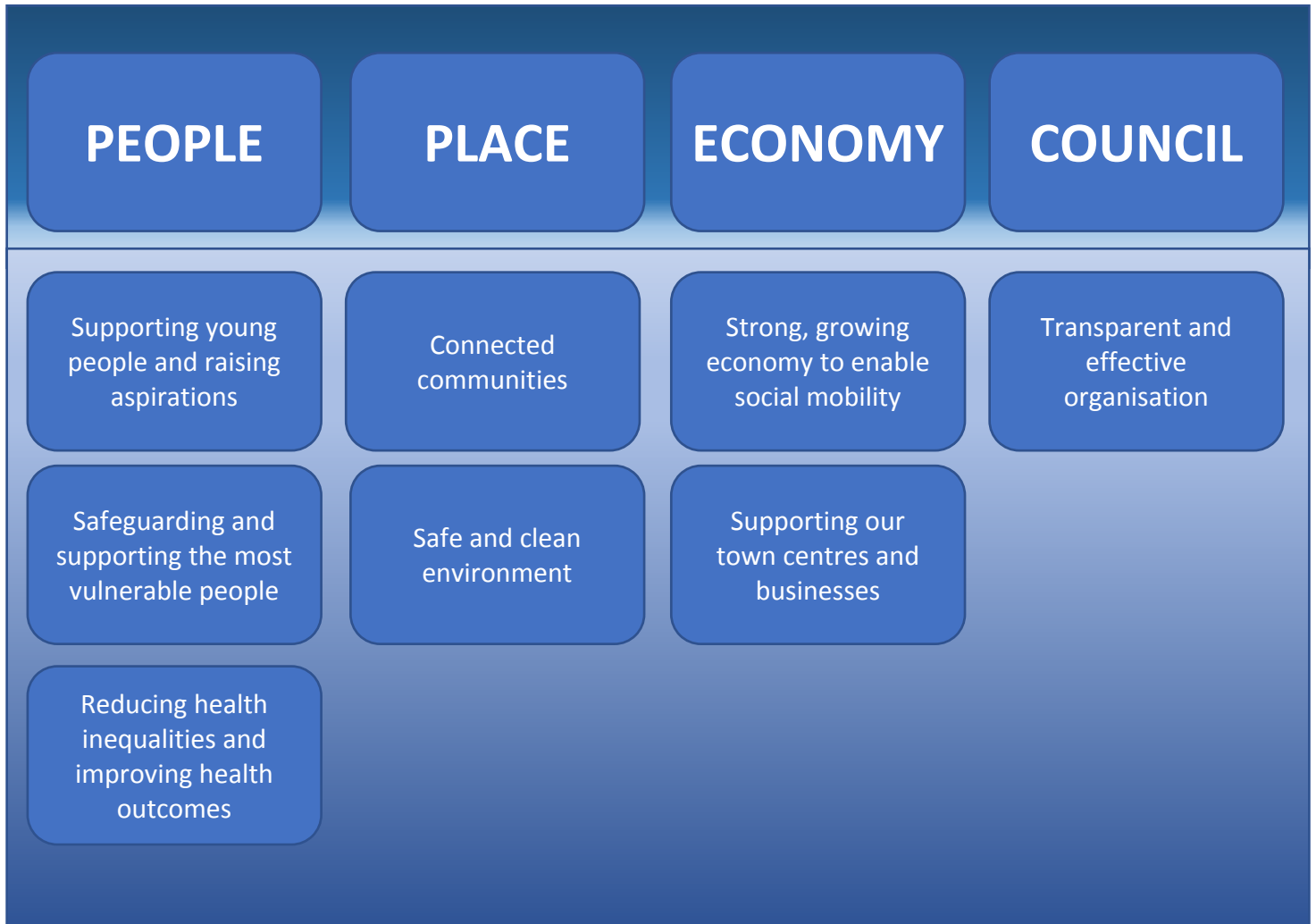
Our Corporate Plan outlines the Council’s core priorities and ambitions over the next four years. It brings together all of our council strategies and plans including the [Social Integration Strategy](#), Digital Strategy, Workforce Strategy. Our Department Business Plans will set out the activities and priority actions to support our Corporate Plan ambitions. The Plan is complimentary to the Local Strategic Partnership’s emerging Plan for Prosperity 2030 which will articulate the strategic vision for the Borough across partners.

Our citizens are critical to the success of the Borough and our Corporate Priorities focus on creating a good quality of life for all of our residents from birth to older age.

Signed by:

Leader *Chief Executive*

Visual outline of strategic themes and priorities to be developed here...



OUR CORPORATE PRIORITIES

PEOPLE: A GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL OUR RESIDENTS

Our Borough has the largest population across Lancashire with almost 150,000 people. We have a younger than average age profile with 28.5% of our population aged under 20, offering great potential for the future. By 2041, population projections show that the 65+ age group will have risen by almost 40% demonstrating the broad age profile of the Borough.

We know that some areas of our Borough have social and economic challenges including high levels of economic inactivity, poor health and wellbeing indicators, lower than average skill levels and relatively low earnings.

However, our key stage 4 outcomes are improving and generally good across the Borough along with a higher than average apprenticeship take up. We have two of the country's top performing secondary schools in our Borough and our primary schools are performing better than the regional and national average. Employer and education collaboration within the Borough is high with all secondary schools linked directly with a large private sector employer. This is being strengthened further with links developing into primary schools. We are proud to have retained our 'good' OFSTED rating in Children's Services.

To increase and improve life chances for all our residents we are investing in health and care provision by delivering increased levels of activity through Sport England funding, investing in extra care housing provision and working with partners to develop a health care system based on prevention.

Priority 1. Supporting young people and raising aspirations

Our young people are the future of our Borough and we are committed to support them from birth and through their journey to becoming adults.

We will:

- work with parents and carers to enable them to access good quality early years education and learning so that our children are ready for a strong start at school.
- work with our schools, communities and partners to continue to nurture well rounded independent young people.
- work with all of the schools, colleges and partners to support young people in achieving their full potential.
- work with partners and Hive Business School to ensure young people have access to clear careers advice and guidance and are equipped with the skills and qualities to access jobs.

Priority 2. Safeguarding and supporting the most vulnerable people

We have a duty to safeguard people of all ages to be safe from harm and live a life free from abuse, neglect and unfair treatment, and support those who choose to live independently.

We will:

- provide support locally and at the earliest opportunity to ensure people are safeguarded and protected.
- work with partners to guarantee that people in need of support and protection continue to receive it from the right agencies at the right time for as long as they need it.
- support our safeguarding partnerships arrangements to ensure that local agencies co-ordinate their work to safeguard vulnerable people of all ages and are effective.

Priority 3. Reducing health inequalities and improving health outcomes

We are committed to increasing life chances for our residents by improving health and wellbeing; creating healthy places and giving all people the opportunity to Start Well, Live Well and Age Well.

We will:

- work with people earlier to prevent ill health and poor wellbeing, promoting self-care and supporting independence to enable people to live well at home.
- work with our partners to make sure that our residents have access to good quality sporting and leisure facilities across the Borough and can access wellbeing activity in their local neighbourhoods.
- work with the NHS, third sector, public sector partners and business to improve people's mental health and wellbeing through advice, support and activities.
- consider the impact on health and wellbeing in all of our services.
- work with local NHS services to reform, integrate and improve the health and social care system and to extend the investment in prevention for all of our residents.

PLACE: COMMUNITY PRIDE IN A VIBRANT PLACE TO LIVE AND VISIT

As a multi-cultural Borough, the area is home to many people with diverse ethnicities and identities. In 2018 the Council was selected as one of five pilot areas for the Government's Integration Area Programme. Underpinning this programme is our vision for a strong, cohesive and prosperous community, where everyone is treated fairly, where people's faith and culture are understood and respected, and a place where people connect and form friendships that span every characteristic of society.

As a Council we are immensely proud of our towns and heritage and our 2018 residents' survey confirms that our residents are generally satisfied with their local area and proud of their town centres and sense of community. We want to develop this further through a strengthened relationship with residents based on civic pride, active participation and social responsibility within natural neighbourhoods and the wider environment.

To celebrate the towns, boost the local economy and bring our communities together, we welcome and support a range of festivals and events across the Borough and in both of our town centres, which also puts us on the national stage. In 2017 we hosted the first National Festival of Making which is now held each year bringing over 30,000 people into the Borough, gaining national recognition at the UK Festival Awards.

Priority 4. Connected communities

Communities bring a sense of belonging for many people, breaking through social isolation and building personal resilience. We remain committed to strengthening resilient communities and groups.

We will:

- ensure that residents have access to a broad range of good quality festivals and events across the Borough to bring neighbourhoods and communities together.
- make volunteering easier and work with partners and residents to direct volunteer support where it's needed the most.
- support communities and community groups to access funding and other resources.
- work with communities to become digitally enabled.
- recognise the achievements of our communities and the valuable contribution of residents.
- support activity to enable people from different backgrounds or beliefs to integrate.

Priority 5. Safe and clean environment

We want the Borough to be a safe and clean place to live and visit, promoting pride in the area and environment.

We will:

- work with our residents, schools and businesses to raise awareness of the positive environmental and financial impacts of recycling
- work with communities, environmental organisations and groups to help keep neighbourhoods clean and tidy.
- continue to invest in our roads and pavements to make sure they are safer.
- work with our citizens and businesses to promote behaviours, using enforcement action where necessary and in the best interest of public protection.

ECONOMY: A STRONG AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMY WITH CONTINUED GROWTH

Blackburn with Darwen is in a prime location. It is one of the largest and fastest growing urban centres in Lancashire and wider North West, with close proximity to Manchester with much improved access by rail and road, and surrounded by open countryside and desirable rural villages. The M65 creates an East-West growth corridor of strategic importance of regional importance, with further improvements in road and rail connectivity ensuring Pennine Lancashire is at the economic heart of the Northern Powerhouse. Access to superfast and ultrafast broadband and 4G connectivity out-perform national benchmarks and we are home to a number of high profile global businesses such as EuroGarages, Crown Paints, Graham and Brown, Herbert Parkinson, and Blackburn Rovers.

Health is our largest economic sector with the manufacturing industry the second largest. These sectors will be key to driving local productivity, growth and innovation. We are also near to other national manufacturing assets such as Samlesbury Aerospace Enterprise Zone. We will maximise these linkages and opportunities. Whilst resident economic activity rates have remained relatively low, productivity growth has been strong. Since 2010, the value of our local economy has grown more rapidly than the national average and faster than all Core Cities in the North of England.

A strong and sustainable economy is crucial and underpins the delivery of high quality public services. We have in place ambitious development, infrastructure and growth opportunities to secure strong and inclusive growth outcomes for our residents and communities and will continue to work with our partners to further strengthen our attractiveness, as a place to live, invest, visit and enjoy. Our complimentary business and investor engagement work will leverage local business and economic success, an emerging pipeline of strategic development opportunities whilst celebrating our youthful, dynamic and culturally rich population. Our town centres will continue to be developed with a strong cultural and economic offer and as destinations of choice for new residents, visitors and investors.

Priority 6. Strong, growing economy to enable social mobility

We are committed to making sure that everyone of working age is able to access jobs, career progression and make a positive contribution to the economy, irrespective of their social circumstances and background.

We will:

- work with our partners to improve productivity through skills, innovation, sector and trade programmes.
- develop and deliver a strategic pipeline of growth programmes attracting investment and generating new economic, housing and infrastructure growth opportunities.
- deliver sustained growth and higher value employment for all our residents as an enabler to social mobility.
- provide a broad and good quality house choice for all our residents, transforming old housing stock, building new homes and working with private and social landlords to improve the rental market.
- work with partners and investors to secure the Borough regionally and nationally as an investment priority.

Priority 7. Supporting our town centres and businesses

Thriving town centres and businesses are crucial to the success of the Borough and its residents. We are committed to creating the right environment and support to maximise growth and increase investment.

We will:

- work with partners to strengthen the economic and cultural offers of Blackburn and Darwen town centres.
- promote and encourage local procurement to support local businesses.
- work with Hive to establish a powerful business network to promote Blackburn with Darwen and support wider engagement with new investors to the Borough.
- encourage entrepreneurship and new business growth drawing on our young, culturally rich and dynamic population.

COUNCIL: DELIVERED BY A STRONG AND RESILIENT COUNCIL

2018 was a significant year for the Council as a whole, celebrating 20 years as a unitary authority, implementing electoral changes reducing councillors from 64 to 51 and wards from 23 to 17 and importantly being nationally recognised by industry experts, the Municipal Journal, as Local Authority of the Year.

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. This is underpinned by strong, consistent and humble leadership and an unwavering mission to put the customer first”*.

The Council invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a [Corporate Peer Challenge](#) in December 2018 to provide some independent challenge and feedback on our performance as a council. It found that our political and managerial leadership is well respected; that we have a deep understanding of our local place; that partners have confidence in us; that we understand our financial challenges; and that our support to communities is strong. The public sector is rightly judged on the quality of services to people and businesses and we are immensely proud that our 2018 Residents Survey told us that 71% of people are satisfied with the Council.

We want to build on this further, harnessing the continued dedication and passion from employees and members by providing consistently reliable services with the right support at the right time, enabling greater independence whilst safeguarding and supporting those who need it most. We’ve already developed different ways of working, transforming services to become more efficient. We will continue to adapt and modify our practices to meet the demands of our citizens and businesses.

Priority 8. Transparent and effective organisation

Residents and businesses must have confidence in the Council and we remain committed to being the best we can possibly be.

We will:

- ensure that all our services are delivered in a cost effective and efficient way supported by technology and in collaboration with our partners and citizens.
- make best use of our available resources and assets providing value for money for residents and businesses.
- be open and transparent in our leadership and governance.
- maximise external funding and be commercially active bringing greater resilience to our finances.
- take active steps across all council departments to reduce our carbon footprint and be even more environmentally and ecologically aware.

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES THAT UNDERPIN EVERYTHING WE DO

Digital

The digital world is playing an increasing part in people's lives, we want to harness the opportunities digital brings and make sure we don't leave anyone behind.

We will work collaboratively with our partners to enable access to digital skills and the internet for all, helping to connect people, communities and places. Working with our partners in industry, education and the public sector we will aim to improve local opportunities in the digital sector, supporting new and existing business to take advantage of technology & innovation to improve productivity and growth and create new digital jobs for the future.

We will operate as a digitally enabled and intelligent council, continually improving quality and efficiency in all we do, making us sustainable, fit for the future. We will harness the opportunities provided by data technologies to drive a more personalised and improved service to the people of the borough. We will equip our workforce with the right devices, tools and skills to work in modern and agile ways.

We'll offer 24/7 digital services, automating tasks and transactions wherever possible so that our teams are freed up to deal with complex requests and support the residents who need 1-1 contact the most.

Partnership working

The LGA Peer Review in December 2018 highlighted that our partners have real confidence in the Council and that we are seen as an effective partner across the region. We are committed to continuing to work closely with our partners to deliver services and build capacity across the sectors. Our partners include other public sector organisations, businesses, education providers, government departments, third and faith organisations, community groups and citizens.

Fairness for all

Everyone has the right to an equal opportunity to make the most of their life and talents. Equality recognises that historically certain groups of people with protected characteristics such as race, religion, disability, sex and sexual orientation have experienced discrimination. We will continue to fulfil our duty in ensuring fairness for all of our employees and that decision making will meet our legal obligations.

Promoting and celebrating the Borough

We are proud of our borough and its heritage and through each of our corporate plan priorities we will continue to promote a positive image of the area so that our residents and businesses share our pride and regionally and nationally we are recognised as a fantastic place to live, work, visit and invest.

HOW WE WILL DELIVER OUR PRIORITIES

All of our employees and Councillors are key to delivering the priorities of our Corporate Plan together and we want them to be positive role models across all of our activities.

We have an in-depth training programme for our Councillors and will continue to refresh this regular, working with the LGA, so that our politicians are well equipped to understand their important roles within the Council and representing their communities.

Positive behaviours and practices are crucial from everyone and we are committed to recruiting and retaining the right people with the right skills and behaviours. We will continue to support our own employees to progress and grow within the organisation and provide continuous professional development and training opportunities both within the Council and through partnership working. We will ensure that all employees have an input into developing departmental business plans, co-design business processes and activities, identify digital solutions and highlight any opportunities to work more effectively.

The health and wellbeing of our employees and councillors is very important and we will continue to promote positive activities which everyone will have the opportunity to engage with to support and improve their wellbeing.

MEASURING OUR PERFORMANCE

The success of our Corporate Plan will be measured through a new performance management framework with Key Performance Indicators which are measurable and meaningful. We will also work collaboratively with partners to analyse information about our Borough to ensure we are delivering services in the right way to have the biggest impact.

Background information

Residents Survey 2018

LGA Peer Review 2018

Independent Economic Analysis – SQW 2018