



<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>LEADER</b>
<b>TO:</b>	<b>POLICY COUNCIL</b>
<b>ON:</b>	<b>5<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2019</b>

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## **CORPORATE PLAN AND PRIORITIES**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To outline key national and local policy challenges and proposals in relation to Local Government; reflect on the Council's performance over the last 12 months; and look ahead to the next 12 months.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Policy Council is invited to:

- i. Note the content of the report
- ii. Note the overall performance of the Borough against its outcome measures
- iii. Note the overall performance of the Council against its own strategic objectives

### **3. NATIONAL REFLECTION**

A snap General Election is taking place on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2019 and the political party manifestos are emerging. These largely promise additional funding for the NHS, schools, and outline how Brexit will be taken forward. Clearly, the calling of the General Election has halted the proposals set out in September's Spending Round and the October Queen's Speech. When a new Government is formed we will lobby hard to ensure Local Government receives the significant investment needed and that funding is fairly distributed to areas such as Blackburn with Darwen that have been most affected by the disproportionate austerity measures.

**Spending Round 2019** - In September the Government announced its spending plans for 2020/21. £13.8bn was announced for public services, with a funding package of more than £3.5bn for vital council services. The government also wrote to Councils to advise that a decision was taken to delay the implementation of 75% business rate retention and the Fair Funding Review until April 2021. The Chancellor also announced an additional £1bn for adult and children's social care alongside plans to consult on a 2% adult social care precept and pupil funding for all schools to rise in line with inflation (1.8%).

**Queen's Speech 2019** - Her Majesty the Queen outlined the Government's legislative ambitions on 14<sup>th</sup> October. This included delivering Brexit, supporting the NHS, tackling violent crime and strengthening the criminal justice system, ensuring fairness and protection for individuals and families, 'levelling up', protecting the environment.

**Structural reform and devolution** - The Government clarified their position on local government reorganisation in July with a written statement confirming the process and criteria. Elected Members will be aware that informal discussions were with partners and political colleagues across Pennine Lancashire. In response to the clarification from Government, the Council Leader and Opposition Leader sent a letter to the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) requesting an invitation to develop a business case for a Pennine Lancashire Unitary with a view to submitting a proposal. We expect feedback from the new Government following the General Election.

#### **4. LOCAL DELIVERY**

We continue to experience challenging times, losing more than £140 million funding through the Government's austerity measures and budgets continue to be stretched as demand rises. However, we tackle challenges head on and continue to deliver excellent services with the resources we have available.

We know that the Borough has its socio-economic challenges compared to other areas across the country. This was confirmed recently through the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD) published in September. The IMD is a relative index, which means it presents our ranking compared to other local authorities rather than whether the Borough is actually more or less deprived than previous years. It has 39 indicators in seven domains, which focus on income, employment, health and disability, education and skills, crime, barriers to housing and services, and the environment.

On five summary measures, the Borough has become relatively more deprived on all, compared to the IMD 2015. The Borough has moved from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority when measuring the proportion of the Borough's lower super output areas (Isa) within the most 10% deprived in England.

This relative decline is mirrored across the wider county area. All Pennine Lancashire authorities have declined in the national deprivation table in the 2019 IMD indicators and 11 of the 16 local authorities across Lancashire and South Cumbria have also declined. This reflects a national trend whereby Northern and seaside towns have seen a systematic decline in economic wellbeing since 2015. This could be attributed to the national policy of austerity, welfare reform and cuts to public sector funding with the total public spending in the North having fallen by £6.3bn since 2009/10, more than any other region.

We have one of the lowest income per household in the country and are amongst the Local Authorities most affected by recent welfare reforms. The Borough is experiencing a significant challenge to working, but low-income families and as a result, has growing rates of child poverty and the worst electoral ward in England for child poverty. In addition, poor mental health is a key issue for the Borough. Blackburn with Darwen Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are treating more people for mental health than any other CCG in the country, however mental health outcome indicators are amongst the worst. Life expectancy for our residents is not improving and health inequalities linked to worsening social and economic inequalities continue to accentuate, with particular health risks for older people and those who live in the most deprived 20% of the Borough.

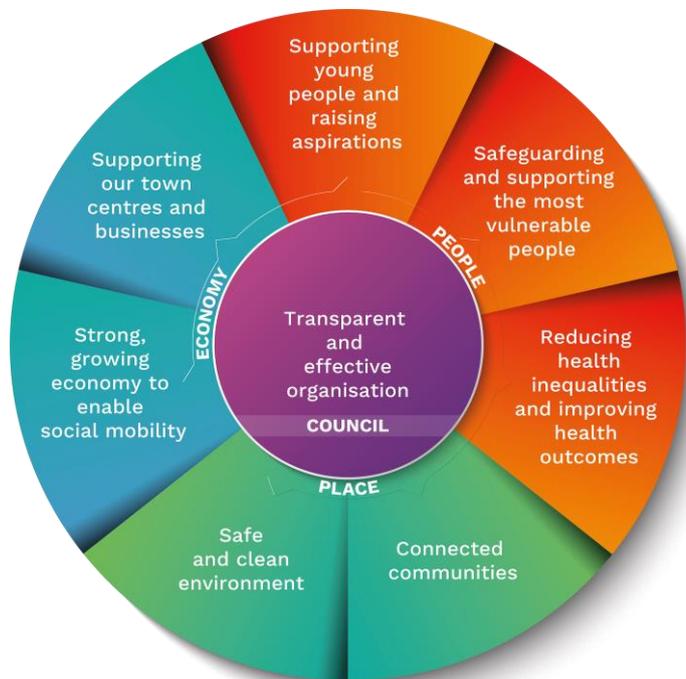
However, we tackle challenges head on and prioritise our available resources where needed. We are working with health partners, voluntary and private sectors to lessen the unavoidable negative impact of austerity. We continue to attract capital investment into the area to strengthen our infrastructure and advance our growth programme and in the last year, 4000 new jobs were created in the Borough

and over 200 businesses received support with their growth plans, with a number of new business investors attracted to the Borough. We have lots to be proud of over the past 12 months - national recognition for our services, successful funding bids, positive inspections and fantastic local exhibitions. This report further highlights the key activity we are undertaking to improve outcomes.

In March this year, we endorsed the [Corporate Plan 2019-2023](#), which outlines our eight new corporate priorities and ambitions, reflected in four strategic themes and provides focus for our activity over the coming years.

It sets out the Council's future direction to ensure we continue to provide the best possible services to residents and businesses.

We have a number of council strategies and plans in place or being developed which underpin the Corporate Plan plans, building on our strong track record of delivery.



Complimentary to the appended corporate KPIs, below outlines some of the key highlights for the Council over the last 12 months.

## REFLECTION : THE LAST 12 MONTHS

### PEOPLE:

#### A good quality of life for all of our residents

1. Supporting young people and raising aspirations
2. Safeguarding and supporting the most vulnerable people
3. Reducing health inequalities and improving health outcomes

BBC's Children in Need DIY SOS Big Build came to Blackburn in September. Staff and volunteers from across the Council and community pledged their time and support to transform St Silas' church hall into accommodation for Blackburn with Darwen's vulnerable young people managed by local charity Nightsafe.

Inspectors from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Ofsted spent five days with us in June to assess the SEND provision for our children and young people. Inspectors highlighted a positive outlook for users and recognised the 'can do attitude' of our employees and partners to ensure children and young people get the best possible support.

A Children's Advice & Duty Service (CADS) has been developed and implemented to safely and appropriately manage the volume of work flowing into children's social care and ensure that children receive the correct level of intervention. The new arrangement will strengthen professional oversight and social work decision making at the Children's Services 'front door'. Early signs are positive that this will contribute to demand management strategy.

A new Corporate Parenting Executive Board has been established to provide strategic leadership across the borough to ensure that all local authority departments and key partner agencies promote and champion their responsibilities

	<p>as corporate parents to improve outcomes for our cared for children and care leavers. This Board supports and progresses the work of the Corporate Parenting Special Advisory Group, which is an established cross party meeting for elected members to scrutinise the effectiveness of our services. We are proud that the Vice-Chair of the Advisory Group is a current care leaver.</p> <p>Our demand management strategies have been strengthened by the introduction of the Complex Case Team that provides dedicated resource to ensuring our most complex funding pathways are managed as effectively as possible. Our in house Provider services continue to perform very well, as evidenced by the outcomes of recent CQC inspections. Our developing integrated neighbourhood offer leads the way across Lancashire. A number of innovative projects are progressing with excellent relationships across all Partner agencies, including Primary Care. Safeguarding outcomes, as measured by Making Safeguarding Personal, are strong.</p>
<p><b>PLACE:</b> <b>Community pride in a vibrant place to live and visit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Connected communities</li> <li>5. Safe and clean environment</li> </ul>	<p>In June, we welcomed the UK's only large-scale festival of making for the third year. The event attracted more than more than 31,000 visitors over the weekend and a £1.3m economic boost. Working with our partners Blackburn saw over 50 workshops, street performances, demonstrations, exhibits and markets across the town centre.</p> <p>In October we welcomed the first ever British Textile Biennial festival into the Borough and as part of this we were proud to host the Adidas trainer exhibition as the Spezial brand launched its new Blackburn trainer. The display was twice as big as that held in Manchester a few years ago and the first time the global brand has ever done anything of this scale in a smaller town. A fantastic boost for the town attracting thousands of visitors both local and international.</p> <p>Your Call volunteering continues to grow year on year with over 1300 registered volunteers regularly giving up their time to support crucial council services across all departments. Pride in our neighbourhoods flourishes through the Red Bag Revolution, where litter pickers have recorded over 7000 volunteer hours so far this year. Volunteers report that the reason they give up their time is to "make a difference/give something back" and "helping others helps my wellbeing."</p>
<p><b>ECONOMY:</b> <b>A strong and inclusive economy with continued growth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Strong, growing economy to enable social mobility</li> <li>7. Supporting our town centres and businesses</li> </ul>	<p>Housing development initiatives in the last year have included the successful Compulsory Purchase Order of Laneside with a sale agreed to Great Places for new housing. We have also secured £4.5m from a major proposed development at Brokenstone Road to deliver new infrastructure and there has been 155 new dwellings at Roe Lee following the sale of council owned land. The first major modular residential scheme in Lancashire is planned for the Alaska Street site and earlier this year we launched Riverside Heights Extra Care scheme, which has gained national recognition as the 2019 Best Social Housing Development in England.</p> <p>The long-term stalled development site at Milking Lane is now progressing with £1.4m Growth Deal funding secured for a new link road to open up the development.</p> <p>The Darwen Energy from Waste Development Scheme secured planning permission earlier this year.</p>

Good progress continues to be made with the construction of the new Blackburn Reel Cinema that will open in 2020.

In March, we opened the new £3.5m East Darwen link road, Ellison Fold Way. Funded by the Council and the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership, the new road will open up sites for over 1000 new homes in South East Darwen, easing congestion in the area and enabling better access to the M65 for local businesses and commuters.

We are committed to investing in infrastructure to facilitate growth. In June, we invited Carl Fogarty to open a new road named after him, which will open up 17,500 square metres of commercial floor space and create over 400 jobs. This £3.9m Growth Deal 3 scheme is the final element of the Furthergate Link Road development with the new road linking the M65 junction 6 and Blackburn town centre via Bottomgate and Copy Nook.

In summer, Darwen's new Market Square was finished. The £1.5m project has completed transformed the area to the front of the Town Hall and market, including the installation of the iconic Weaver Bird. We are particularly proud that local companies across Darwen were involved in creating the finished look providing seating, street furniture and bollards.

Works are advancing in relation to the Department for Transport (DfT) National Transport National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) project that "opened-up" Sudell Cross and Northgate on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019, to allow better accessibility between areas of Blackburn Town Centre and improve parking to bolster businesses on Sudell Cross. Construction is also well under way on the Richmond Hill Link Road, which will improve access and links between the Town Centre and Whalley Range areas for pedestrians and motorists. The £2.9m project is set to complete in Spring 2020.

**COUNCIL:  
Delivered by a  
strong and  
resilient council**

8. Transparent and  
effective  
organisation

In September this year, we were pleased to welcome 31 new apprentices at the Council, joining the existing 29 apprentices. Plans are in place to continue this investment in future years. The roles of our apprentices are varied and include office-based functions such as finance, HR, digital and business support, and craft skilled roles including joinery, plumbing, bricklaying and electricians.

In July 2019, we went live with a new Council website, making it easier for residents and stakeholders to find information, transact and interact with the council. The Council has also widened the availability of online chat to support residents.

In the summer we started work on a digital health hub in Blackburn Library, using external grant funding, which has since seen over 150 residents receive support for getting online to use NHS and public services.

The Council is certified for Cyber Essentials Plus, an international standard for Cyber security, after improvement work and independent review. A record % number of staff completed Information Governance training in the last year, increasing confidence around the way public data is handled.

All Elected Members have access to on-line training and development with courses designed for their roles. Following recommendations from the Standards Committee the Council has introduced DBS clearance processes for all Elected

Members irrespective of their role in the Council.

In July, the Council declared a Climate emergency and committed to being net carbon zero by 2030. We are working hard to reduce our carbon footprint replacing streetlights and lights at our council buildings with LEDs. We have also installed charge points for electric vehicles on five of our public car parks and so far, these have 'fuelled' over 5000 miles of emission-free travel.

Sickness absence improvement is a long-standing target for the council and performance continues to improve towards the target of 8 days per annum. Overall direction is positive in 2012/13 the number of annual days lost per FTE was 11.35 days compared to 8.81 days in 2018/19. The support and proactive work continues under the monitoring of the policy and corporate resources overview and scrutiny committee.

## 5. DELIVERING WITH OUR PARTNERS

We know that we cannot improve outcomes for citizens and businesses on our own and we continue to work with our partners to provide a cohesive public service. We take our role as civic leaders seriously and are proud to be leading a number of projects in the Borough and across Pennine Lancashire. These are highlighted below:

**Local Integrated Care Partnership (LICP) and Primary Care Neighbourhoods (PCN)** – The Council has worked closely with NHS Health Partners to deliver a successful first year of the LICP and has now implemented integrated working between health and social care teams in each of its four PCNs. As we move forward, we are now looking to further enhance and improve outcomes. This will include integration of IT and DATA systems to be able to have a single patient/customer view of records and system partner interactions. We are working on delivering Prevention and Social Prescribing at scale and this will allow partners to create further integration of functions such as Health Trainer, Community Connectors, Work Coaches, Transforming Lives and third sector commissioned partners to take referrals with view to triaging and supporting personalised solutions for our communities. This will help reduce demand on GP front door, reduce medicalisation, promote self-care and improve use of community-based assets.

**Intermediate Care** – The Council has been working closely with the CCG and Integrated Care Partnership for Pennine Lancashire to develop a pathway for intermediate care, which will help support our efforts to improve discharges from hospital and allow people who are struggling with their health to be able to be stepped up rather than being admitted to hospital. The council is working closely with Verum Victum Health Care and Inclusion Housing on the Albion Mill Extra Care and Intermediate Care supported housing project at Ewood. This builds on the success of Riverside Heights at Darwen developed with Together Housing Group. Albion Mill offers an opportunity for a significant innovative step change and very much part of the integrated health and social care system thinking around what will make a difference to the quality of care, rapid re-ablement and support back to independence for older people who become infirm or unwell.

**Our Community, Our Future** – Elected Members will know that the Council is one of five national Integration Areas invited by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to work with them on innovative plans to address social integration. December 2018 saw the formal

launch of the Our Community, Our future Strategy and through this year, work has started across all four of the strategy's priorities. We have been providing opportunities for young people and adults to talk about how the borough has changed and the impact this has had, more opportunities for schools to form links with others in different areas and most recently a study of transport links to help connect people to zones of employment and leisure beyond their immediate neighbourhood. The teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is now more co-ordinated across the Borough through our ESOL hub. The next 12 month swill see us build on our learning, targeting work with individuals, groups and communities where there is most need to strengthen relationships between people from different backgrounds.

**Together an Active Future** – As part of Sport England's innovative programme in Pennine Lancashire, Together an Active BwD has welcomed fantastic engagement from over 1,300 people and 40+ organisations that have shaped strong work themes to support encourage and connect people into activities in their communities. The Council will receive a share of an initial £3M (across Pennine) to test collaborative and inventive ways of working for sustainable change.

**Childhood Obesity Trailblazer** – Earlier this year the council led a successful bid on behalf of Pennine Lancashire to be part of a national programme to tackle childhood obesity. We are one of five areas to receive £100k per year for the next three years as part of this programme to find innovative ways to tackle childhood obesity. This compliments the additional resource sourced, on the same footprint as the Sport England Local Delivery Pilot area – Together an Active Future. Already a number of our local restaurants and businesses have received 'Recipe 4 Health' accreditation for offering healthy food options, a strong of the Trailblazer work.

**Youth Endowment Fund** - On behalf of Pennine Lancashire the Council has led a successful bid for £343k from the Youth Endowment Fund to work with young people who may be at risk of becoming involved in criminal behaviour. The 'Pause 4 thought' initiative aims to address early stage criminality by teaching young people to recognise warning signs that could lead to harm and how to respond effectively to stay out of trouble. We are working alongside public sector partners to deliver this important programme.

**Children safeguarding** – We have worked with our statutory partners in the Police and Health to establish a Pan Lancashire Children Safeguarding Assurance Partnership with Lancashire County Council and Blackpool Council. This replaces the Local Safeguarding Children Board arrangements with each area having equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding.

## 6. PERFORMANCE

A new performance framework is in place to underpin the new Corporate Plan. Performance is measured on three levels as outlined below.

- I. Borough Outcome measures – These are key data sets which tell us generally how the Borough is performing. We recognise that improving outcomes for citizens and businesses cannot be done in isolation and we must work with our partners to have a positive impact. The latest measures will be published on the Council's website shortly.
- II. Council Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – Following a review these have reduced from 106 to 69 and outline the key strategic performance measures, which will outline how we well we are doing to deliver our Corporate Plan priorities and ambitions. We will continue to report on our

KPIs every six months through Executive Board in June and Policy Council in December. The latest performance report and summary is appended.

- III. Service level performance - The departmental business planning process is being refreshed and will further strengthen how services measure their performance and report any risks to delivery.

Elected Members will recall that we invited the LGA Peer Review team to the Council in December 2018 to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge. Their findings and our response was reported to Council Forum in March this year. 12 months on, we have made further progress on their 11 key recommendations and these are outlined below.

LGA RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSE/ACTION
1. Engage members, staff, partners and residents in developing a compelling vision for the Borough's future.	We have focused on finding new ways of connecting and engaging with our audiences – residents, staff, partners and peers. Using tools like video, high quality presentations, e-newsletters, a printed magazine and social media to share our vision, key messages and plans in a powerful and compelling way. A corporate narrative has been developed to help us to bring to life our corporate priorities and it will be used repeatedly across all our communications and to help guide strategic decision making. This is the Council's story and balances realism with hope for the future. The Council's communication activity is firmly focused on the agreed strategic objectives of the Council, prioritising promoting community pride and sharing achievements alongside supporting campaigns on key social issues such as recycling and integration as well as economic growth and cultural activity.
2. Develop an agreed set of outcomes for people, place and the Council and reflect these in the refreshed Corporate Plan and with partners in the LSP 2030 vision.	The Council's new Corporate Plan 2019-2023 was launched in June 2019 following a number of key pieces of activity engaging partners, residents and employees alongside independent research and analysis. The LSPs existing Plan for Prosperity 2014-2020 will be reviewed over the next six months.
3. Establish a dashboard of a limited number of key performance indicators (KPIs) to demonstrate progress towards outcomes and more effectively communicate performance to members, partners and residents.	The Council's performance management framework has been refreshed to underpin the new Corporate Plan. The KPIs have reduced by 37 and will enable us to measure performance on delivering our eight corporate priorities. The KPIs will be reviewed over the next 12 months to ensure they remain fit for purpose.
4. Strengthen the marketing and promotion of Blackburn with Darwen to potential visitors and investors, emphasising the opportunities presented by the Borough's young and diverse communities.	Work is underway to establish new arrangements in early 2020 to lead and guide the development and marketing of new strategic investment opportunities in the Borough.  The Council has secured funding from Arts Council England to develop a new Cultural Investment Strategy to position the Borough's cluster of cultural and creative assets and

LGA RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSE/ACTION
	opportunities. In addition, the Council has contributed to the development of a new Cultural Strategy for Lancashire, launched in November, which features Blackburn with Darwen as a key visitor gateway and destination.
5. Take a whole council approach to the budget process across different service and portfolio areas to ensure resources align to key priorities and desired outcomes.	We are now in the process of developing our budget for 2020/21 and our Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period beyond this. During this process, we will seek to identify how the budgets of the individual portfolios contribute to each of the four strategic themes and the eight key priorities that sit beneath these. This will be presented to Finance Council in February 2020.
6. Consider how to create more strategic capacity at an appropriate level and place in the organisation through the proposed senior management review.	On 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2019, Denise Park became the new Chief Executive, providing a smooth transition and stability following the departure of her predecessor. Since summer 2018, three new Directors have joined the Chief Officer team, blending their skills and fresh ideas with the existing experience, knowledge and expertise to deliver Council priorities. There have also been a number of external appointments to Head of Service roles.
7. Ensure a whole council approach to transformation and public service reform, integrated with the digital agenda, with a clear road map for delivery and pursue this at pace.	<p>The council's Senior Management Team are overseeing activity, outlined elsewhere in this response that will bring transformational change at the Council.</p> <p>The Digital Board has evolved into a more holistic 'Modern Working Design Authority', which leads on a number of areas including Organisational Development (OD) and Customer Insight, as well as Digital. This group will report into a redesigned Council Management Board. The new Management Board will have a meeting cycle focussed around Efficiency &amp; Transformation, Business Planning and Strategy from November 2019. In addition, a single Council Digital Roadmap and set of priorities will be developed and is informed by workshops with departments to establish 2-4 year requirements across the Council.</p> <p>The digital agenda and culture change are clearly crucial to underpinning transformation and in spring, this year the digital team was restructured and a new Business Plan launched with a focus on transformational change. As part of the Local Gov Digital Declaration, we received Government Digital Service 'Agile for Teams' training for 15 of our managers. We have since developed an in-house Agile course, which we are rolling out across the Council.</p>
8. Develop an OD and workforce development strategy to ensure that	The first draft of the OD Plan has been produced and consultation is underway with a range of employees. Whilst

LGA RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSE/ACTION
<p>the Council can meet the challenges of the future.</p>	<p>feedback is ongoing work is already progressing on the development of next iteration of the strategy and associated plan with prioritised action planning to focus on the areas most in need of early action.</p>
<p>9. Consider area-based budgeting with partners to deepen community engagement and influence wider spending.</p>	<p>The Council successfully leads on a number of funded strategic programmes within communities alongside its partners, eg Our Community, Our Future social integration programme; Together an Active Future Sport England programme. The Council is committed to working as close to its communities as possible and recognise the opportunities that can help support and influence the best use of assets. A number of community centres and sports/greenspace assets have been transferred to community groups and the Council actively support community activity through events, learning and volunteering.</p> <p>The council is working with the Blackburn with Darwen Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and wider NHS in Pennine to create Primary care Neighbourhoods (PCNs) where NHS, children, adults and public health priorities, programmes and workforces can be more effectively integrated and directed to deliver strong localised services with communities, voluntary sector support and engagement.</p>
<p>10. Consider ways of empowering ward members, including through allocation of funding for local initiatives.</p>	<p>The Standards Committee have reviewed the training and development strategy for elected members and agreed the programme of training for 2019/20. There is a strong focus on e-learning solutions with a smaller number of face-to-face training activities on key subjects, such as Corporate Parenting, Adult Safeguarding, local Authority Finance &amp; Equality and Inclusion.</p> <p>Due to budget constraints, it has not been possible to allocate resources to fund local initiatives at this time. This would require a corresponding reduction in other existing budget allocations. There is insufficient scope to fund such initiatives from within reserves at this time given the pressures on both earmarked and general reserves to meet increasing demands on services and resources.</p>
<p>11. Identify gaps in community volunteer arrangements and develop a plan to address these and continue to support community volunteers.</p>	<p>The Council has a strong approach to recruiting and developing volunteers led by the Neighbourhood Managers and Community Connectors. We keep in contact with volunteers via newsletters and Facebook groups for Keep Blackburn Tidy and Keep Darwen Tidy. Volunteer capacity continues to increase with a total of 1187 volunteers having signed up to the Lancashire Volunteer portal, including 653 people who have signed up in 2019.</p>

LGA RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSE/ACTION
	<p>Models of Council commissioned service delivery for Drugs and Alcohol Services and mental health have been re-designed to include more volunteer engagement and voluntary sector alignment behind shared priorities for action. This year for instance the council prioritised Suicide Prevention and worked closely with volunteers and the voluntary sector to spread key prevention messages.</p>
<p>In addition, the LGA highlighted a number of other suggestions that the Council has taken forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment in staff and leadership development/cross service working - this is a key priority of the new Organisational Development Action Plan and a review of the options available has started. We are considering how these can be focussed and targeted towards those employees requiring the most support and development.</li> <li>• Regular financial reporting to Elected Members – the corporate monitoring reports for both Revenue and Capital are published each quarter as part of the Executive Board papers and appropriate briefings are provided. Senior managers and budget holders are expected to identify savings and to develop budget proposals within their teams to feed into the budget setting process.</li> <li>• Regular meetings with a selection of volunteers to discuss their suggestions – officers meet regularly with Keep Darwen Tidy and Keep Blackburn Tidy administrators to seek their ideas and suggestions. We also meet monthly with Corporation Park Supporters group and intermittently with other friends of parks groups in response to particular issues. We also seek volunteer suggestions through our volunteer online portal, the recent request for recycling ambassadors being a good example. We have also held celebration events annually at King George’s Hall at which we receive feedback from volunteers.</li> <li>• Challenge and support for Scrutiny – This year we are taking forward a new approach to the operation of scrutiny focussing on the key performance indicators, this work is evolving through the programme of meetings.</li> <li>• Rewards and recognition scheme – The Council launched a new ABCD awards scheme for employees in September. The awards honour employees for their enthusiasm, commitment and the excellent work they do. We have also re-launched the ‘BwD Rewards’, a benefit and saving scheme where employees are able to save money on everyday spending.</li> <li>• IT strategy and roadmap – a number of digital roadmap workshops have been held over recent months to inform a new digital roadmap. The main objective of the Roadmap is to introduce an overarching Design Authority to steer digital change and ensure that resources are focussed on the biggest improvement and benefits to the Council.</li> </ul>	

## 7. NEXT 12 MONTHS FOR THE COUNCIL

We hope the General Election on 12<sup>th</sup> December enables a more settled and clearer direction from Parliament and a Queen’s Speech which will benefit the Public Sector and bring a fairer share of national

resources. On a local level, we will continue to do what we have always done, tackle challenges head on and ensure that we make the best use of our available resources and provide our residents and businesses with the best services possible. We cannot do this on our own and we will continue to work with our public and private sector partners.

To deliver our Corporate Plan priorities and ambitions the activity below will take place over the next 12 months.

## LOOKING FORWARD : THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

### PEOPLE:

#### A good quality of life for all of our residents

Last month we committed extra funding to provide emergency accommodation and services every night over the winter period, to March 2020. This funding will support the borough's most vulnerable people who have no home and sleep rough.

The development and strengthening of integrated NHS/Council/Vol Sector neighbourhood based delivery of prevention, treatment and care will be a key priority across Peoples Directorates.

Innovation in service delivery models to include greater use of digital technologies and more rapid technical innovation (including social media strategies for behaviour change) will be an increasing focus to deliver reduced costs and improved outcomes in key areas of work.

We will be transforming our adolescent services with a new Adolescent Strategy clearly setting out the services and support available to young people aged 8 – 19 years with a new multi-agency hub to align teams a new Adolescent Panel with partners to create a bespoke resources focussing on the support needs of young people. The process will enable the right professionals to collectively agree the right multi-agency package of support for a young person and their family and lead to a faster response and more effective step down to universal provision through partnership working and effective signposting. The Strategic Youth Alliance will deliver the universal offer of provision for young people, which is a collaboration of Blackburn with Darwen Youth Sector Organisations.

We have been further developing our Early Help offer to children and families working closely with schools and early years settings. The Early Help Family Support Team have been piloting a scheme working closely with five schools and four Early Years settings resulting in reduced referrals into children's social care due to quality support for families, support over the school holiday period and partnership working with schools and settings. We will develop plans to expand this pilot and grow the offer to support more schools and settings.

The council will be embarking upon a partnership with the GP Federation and PCNs to promote social prescribing. This will support GP's in delivering their contract with the NHS to reduce waiting times but also to reduce medicine prescriptions for people may benefit from alternative support. The Council's People Services Programme area of Portfolio will be working closely to support this way of working. Social prescribing will also support the work we have been doing to develop a strength based approach to enable more people to access support within their communities to help them remain independent for as long as possible.

We anticipate Albion Mill Extra Care and Intermediate Care project will be complete in the summer of 2020. This will enable the council to work with NHS Partners to

	<p>implement the intermediate care pathway. The objective being that it will support hospital discharge and will allow more demand management by people being referred from a community setting to be stepped up as an early intervention to prevent them needing to be admitted to hospital. This is a new and innovative programme and the Council is leading the way as no similar project exists in the Integrated Care Partnership area of Lancashire and South Cumbria at this time. Once developed and implemented it has the potential to be transformational.</p> <p>This year we will be part of a national research and development project focussing on pre-birth assessment and removal at birth. We are working with Lancaster University through the research stage from which protocols will be developed to support social work practice in these areas. These will inform national policy with the protocols rolled out across the country.</p>
<p><b>PLACE:</b> <b>Community pride in a vibrant place to live and visit</b></p>	<p>We will be running a campaign to increase recycling within the Borough and minimise waste, particularly food waste, adding to our drive to divert more waste from landfill. A new contract is starting in April next year that will see a minimum of 70% of the Borough's residual waste diverted from landfill, instead being sent to a specialist plant which turns waste into heat and energy. We are continuing to push for enforcement action for those who deposit and manage their waste unlawfully.</p> <p>The National Festival of Making will come to Blackburn again 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> June 2020 offering a fantastic opportunity again for local and national visitors to get involved in the wide range of activities.</p>
<p><b>ECONOMY:</b> <b>A strong and inclusive economy with continued growth</b></p>	<p>The Council's new Local Development Scheme will be coming forward for approval at Executive Board in January. This sets out the timetable for producing our new Local Plan, including the intention to complete a borough-wide consultation on the strategy and new development site allocations in Summer 2020.</p> <p>The Council is working with the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership to produce a Lancashire Industrial Strategy (LIS) by April 2020. The Council is also working with neighbouring authorities to develop an East Lancashire economic analysis to input to the LIS.</p> <p>A Cultural Investment Strategy will be developed, with support from Arts Council England, to position the cluster of key cultural and creative assets and opportunities in Blackburn Town Centre. This work will enable the Council to influence the emerging Lancashire-wide "City of Culture 2025" bid expected in late 2020.</p> <p>By Summer 2020, the Council will be developing with local partners a Darwen Investment Plan to secure funding support from the Town Deal Fund, announced by the Government earlier this year.</p> <p>A number of Transport and Highways programmes will complete in 2020, including the £2.9m DfT funded programme of infrastructure improvements around Blackburn Town Centre, the £2.6m Growth Deal 3 North Blackburn project that directly underpins future housing investment and over 400 homes. Our £11.6m Growth Deal 3 South East Blackburn project will commence in March 2020, following the final business case submission to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership. The project will directly support further economic and housing development on the Haslingden Road corridor and Blackamoor Road / Roman Road</p>

	<p>areas.</p> <p>In early 2020, the Council will look to bid into the DfT's next round of the National Productivity Investment Fund to secure funding to enable sustainable development and tackle congestion.</p> <p>The Council will work with Lancashire County Council and Blackpool Council to develop the sub-region's fourth Local Transport Plan. The new framework will continue to recognise the enabling role of transport in unlocking new developments in the Borough and in ensuring the Council's objectives regarding climate change, local air quality and local accessibility are addressed via upgraded infrastructure.</p> <p>The Council will continue to influence the scope of Transport for the North strategies and workstreams in relation to major scheme investment across the North of England including rail and major roads, especially East / West connectivity across and between Lancashire / West Yorkshire.</p>
<p><b>COUNCIL: Delivered by a strong and resilient council</b></p>	<p>Financial planning in the current political climate is extremely difficult as we only have surety of our funding until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. In the absence of information from central government about the future funding regime and on future funding levels, we can only plan using the high-level information that was announced by the Chancellor in the Spending Review on 4<sup>th</sup> September.</p> <p>We recognised at Finance Council in February this year, that we would have a budget gap of £5.2m in 2020/21. The information received and service level of activity since that date regarding demand and cost pressures, funding streams and the Spending Review announcements have been unable to close this. However, we will continue to develop and implement a savings programme to ensure we can deliver a balanced budget for the coming financial year, as is our statutory responsibility to do so.</p> <p>Work is underway to prepare an Action Plan that sets out how the Council will achieve its Climate Emergency Declaration target of a net carbon zero Borough by 2030. This Plan will be presented to Council for consideration and approval in early 2020.</p> <p>Over the coming months charge points will be installed at each of the Borough's business centres and there are plans to upgrade the charging facilities at Davyfield Depot as the number of electric vehicles in the fleet begins to grow.</p> <p>Earlier this year Council approved plans for the Old Town Hall refurbishment. This invest to save programme consolidates our working floor space, makes savings on building running costs and will further reduce our carbon footprint. Phase one of the work has commenced which involves refurbishment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors and is expected to be complete by the end of June 2020. Work will then commence on phase 2 refurbishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors.</p>

## **7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no additional policy implications. The proposed activity over the next 12 months will strengthen existing policies.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no additional financial implications. Activity will be managed within department existing budgets.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications.

## **10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

There are no additional resource implications. Activity will be managed within existing resources.

## **11. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

An equality impact assessment is not required.

## **12. CONSULTATIONS**

There are no consultations.

### **Chief Officer**

Contact Officer: Denise Park, Chief Executive

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Background Papers: Corporate Plan 2019-2023