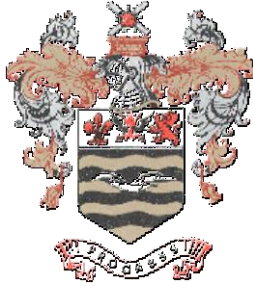


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BLACKPOOL COUNCIL

Tuesday, 17 January 2017

To: The Members of Blackpool Council

Madam Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of **Blackpool Council** to be held in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Blackpool on Wednesday, 25 January 2017 commencing at 6.00 pm for the transaction of the business specified below.



Director of Governance and Partnerships

Business

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any interests in the items under consideration and in doing so state:

- (1) the type of interest concerned; and
- (2) the nature of the interest concerned

If any member requires advice on declarations of interests, they are advised to contact the Head of Democratic Governance in advance of the meeting.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 23 NOVEMBER 2016 (Pages 1 - 6)

To agree the minutes of the last meeting held on 23 November 2016 as a true and correct record.

3 ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive official announcements from the Mayor.

4 DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE/ DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Mrs Delyth Curtis, the Director of People/ Deputy Chief Executive is due to leave the Council at the end of the month to take up a Deputy Chief Executive position with Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Councillor Cain will be invited to speak on behalf of the Labour Group and Councillor Clapham on behalf of the Conservative Group, to show their appreciation to Mrs Curtis for her service to the Authority.

5 EXECUTIVE REPORTS (Pages 7 - 32)

To consider the attached reports to Council from the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader of the Council (Tourism, Economic Growth and Jobs) and the Cabinet Secretary (Resilient Communities).

Members are reminded that:

- Each Senior Executive Member has up to three minutes to present their report, after which there will be a period of no longer than 15 minutes per report for questions/comments (a green card will give a one minute warning, red for the end of the debate).
- There will be three minutes per question/ comment from any Councillor on anything within the portfolio and no limit to the number of times a Councillor can ask a question.
- There will be a period of up to ten minutes for a response from the Senior Executive Member (or relevant Cabinet Member) at the end of the questions/ comments for each report.

6 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME (Pages 33 - 46)

To consider the recommendation of the Executive from its meeting on 15 December 2016 relating to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

7 APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL EXTERNAL AUDITOR (Pages 47 - 52)

To consider the appointment of a local external auditor in line with Section 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, which states that a “relevant authority must appoint a local auditor to audit its accounts for a financial year not later than 31 December in the preceding financial year”.

8 CONSTITUTIONAL AND PROPER OFFICER CHANGES (Pages 53 - 58)

To consider changes to the Council’s constitution and interim arrangements for the statutory director of children’s services position.

9 MOTIONS AT COUNCIL

(Pages 59 - 60)

To consider the motion at agenda Item 9, which has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 12.1.

10 MAYOR ELECT 2017/ 2018

To determine who should be invited to offer themselves for election as Mayor at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 15 May 2017 and agree that the meeting commence at 2.00pm, as it has in previous years.

Venue information:

First floor meeting room (lift available), accessible toilets (ground floor), no-smoking building.

Other information:

For queries regarding this agenda please contact Yvonne Burnett, Democratic Governance Senior Adviser, Tel: (01253) 477034, e-mail yvonne.burnett@blackpool.gov.uk

Copies of agendas and minutes of Council and committee meetings are available on the Council's website at www.blackpool.gov.uk.

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Present:

Councillor Rowson (in the Chair)

Councillors

Benson	Collett	Hutton	Scott
Blackburn	Cox	Jackson	Singleton
Cain	Critchley	Kirkland	Smith
Callow	Cross	Matthews	Stansfield
Mrs Callow JP	Elmes	Mitchell	I Taylor
Campbell	Galley	O'Hara	L Taylor
Clapham	Mrs Henderson MBE	Owen	L Williams
D Coleman	Hobson	Robertson BEM	T Williams
G Coleman	Humphreys	Roberts	Mrs Wright
I Coleman	Hunter	Ryan	

In Attendance:

Neil Jack, Chief Executive

Delyth Curtis, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of People

John Blackledge, Director of Community and Environmental Services

Karen Smith, Deputy Director of People (Adult Services)

Steve Thompson, Director of Resources

Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships / Monitoring Officer

Lorraine Hurst, Head of Democratic Governance

Yvonne Burnett, Democratic Governance Senior Adviser

Sally Shaw, Head of Corporate Delivery Unit

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Galley, Elmes and Mrs Wright declared personal interests in agenda item 6 'Blackpool Tramway Extension to Blackpool North Station (Second Report)' as non-Executive Directors of Blackpool Transport Services Ltd.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2016

Resolved: That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 21 September 2016, be signed by the Mayor as a correct record

3 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor welcomed Councillor David Collett to his first meeting of the Council.

Councillor Blackburn expressed his condolences, on behalf of the Council, to the Mayor following the recent sad loss of her husband. The Mayor expressed her appreciation for the support she had received from the Council and others.

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2016

4 RESOLUTION OF CONDOLENCE - COUNCILLOR TONY BROWN

Members observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect, following the sad loss of Councillor Tony Brown on 16 October 2016. The Council was invited to pay tribute to his life and work and consider a resolution of condolence.

Motion: Councillor Williams proposed (and Councillor Clapham seconded):

'This Council and the people of Blackpool were deeply saddened to learn of the death on 16 October 2016 of Councillor Tony Brown, former Deputy Mayor of the Borough in 2015/ 2016 and member for Warbreck Ward.

Councillor Tony Brown was born in a mining town in Nottinghamshire before moving to Blackpool in 1948. After leaving Tyldesley Secondary school he eventually joined the Royal Artillery serving in Germany and Hong Kong.

Tony worked for the Atomic Energy Authority at Salwick and was self-employed for many years. His last business venture before retiring was to buy a bankrupt hotel with his wife Angela which they quickly turned into a successful business.

Tony was elected to represent Greenlands and Warbreck wards on Lancashire County Council in 1989 and was on the Lancashire Valuations Tribunal for several years. Tony has represented Warbreck ward on Blackpool Council since 2000 and during this time held the position of Chairman of the Employment and Appeals Committee and was a long standing member of both the Licensing and Planning Committees.

He was greatly honoured to have been asked to deputise for Councillor Peter Callow during his mayoral year.

Our deepest sympathy goes out to Angela and family in their great loss'.

Councillor Peter Callow and Councillor Blackburn also paid tribute to Councillor Brown.

Motion carried: The motion on being submitted to the Council was carried unanimously.

5 EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Secretary presented reports to the Council on work undertaken in their own portfolio area and those portfolios under their responsibility. The reports covered corporate, strategic and policy issues, together with work being undertaken in transforming services and with partners.

Notes:

- (1) The Leader of the Council agreed to provide for Councillor Clapham the monetary value of the increase (70.64% to 88%) in sundry debt collection.

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2016

- (2) The Deputy Leader agreed to provide a written response in relation to the following:
 - the total number of offence reports for litter enforcement that had been issued by 3GS and had referred to Legal Services, as requested by Councillor T Williams
 - clarification as to whether there was a fixed weighting for local companies as part of the procurement scoring model and if so what that was and how it was applied, as requested by Councillor Clapham
 - details of how the £400,000 contribution from United Utilities towards the surface water drainage arrangements for the Foxhall site would be used and what course of action would be taken if the contribution had not been received by end of the financial year, as requested by Councillor Galley
 - the revenue generated to date from the Illuminations, as requested by Councillor T Williams.
- (3) During discussion on the report from the Deputy Leader, Councillor I Taylor declared a personal interest in relation to the question raised on the Palm Beach Hotel, as Chairman and non-executive director of Blackpool Housing Company Ltd.
- (4) During debate on the report from the Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council agreed to extend the time limit for speeches by an additional five minutes.
- (5) Following consideration of the report from the Deputy Leader, Councillor Jackson left the Council meeting.
- (6) Following consideration of the report from the Cabinet Secretary, Councillor D Coleman left the Council meeting.

6 BLACKPOOL TRAMWAY EXTENSION TO BLACKPOOL NORTH STATION (SECOND REPORT)

The Council received the report from the Executive in relation to the application of the necessary order to authorise an extension of the Blackpool Tramway to Blackpool North Station.

Members were advised that since the decision at the Council meeting on 29 June 2016 to make an application for a Transport and Works Act Order, the required public notices had been published and there had been a statutory period where representations, supportive comments or objections could be submitted to the Secretary of State. The Director of Place, in his report, outlined the representations that had been received and advised the Council of proposals to make some minor changes to the draft Order as a result.

Debate then took place on the item.

Motion: Councillor Campbell proposed (and Councillor O'Hara seconded):

'To confirm the resolution made at the Council meeting on 29 June 2016 to promote a Transport and Works Act Order under the Transport and Works Act 1992 to authorise an extension of the Blackpool Tramway to Blackpool North Station; and to authorise:

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2016

- (1) The Director of Place, after consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council (Tourism, Economic Growth and Jobs), to take all such steps as required for the Council to promote the Order, including dealing with any objections to the application, entering into agreements or commitments in relation to the Order.
- (2) The corporate seal of the Council being affixed to any documents required to be sealed in connection with the promotion of the Order.'

Motion carried: The motion was submitted to the Council and carried.

7 CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

The Council received the report from the Executive in relation to a number of changes to documents within the Council's constitution that would add clarity and consistency to the Council's working procedures. The proposals also contained a recommendation to amend the financial threshold for the key decision criteria in order to allow speedy acquisition of property and land and easier support intervention for small to medium sized businesses.

Members went on to consider proposed changes to appointed persons on committees following a change in Executive membership.

Motion: Councillor Blackburn proposed (and Councillor Campbell seconded):

- '1. To agree the revised Petitions Scheme at Appendix 2(a) to the Executive report.
2. To approve the revised definition for a key decision, as set out in paragraph 5.2.3 in the Executive report.
3. To agree the amendment to the Executive Procedure Rules set out at paragraph 5.2.5 in the Executive report.
4. To approve the revised Contracts Procedure Rules at Appendix 2(b) to the Executive report.
5. To approve the amendment to the Protocol on Member/ Officer Relations as set out at paragraph 5.5.2 in the Executive report and the revised Protocol at Appendix 2(d) to the Executive report.
6. To agree the appointment of the following Committee Chairmen and Vice Chairmen:

Chairman – Resilient Communities Scrutiny Committee – Councillor Debbie Coleman
Vice Chairman - Planning Committee – Councillor Alistair Humphreys
Vice Chairman – Audit Committee – Councillor Jim Elmes
Vice Chairman – Licensing Committee – Councillor David Collett

Motion carried: The motion was submitted to the Council and carried.

8 PROPER OFFICER DESIGNATIONS

The Council was informed that following the creation of Public Health England North West and the recent changes in Health Protection team staff it was necessary to update arrangements for proper officer designations and appointments to certain positions in the health sector relating to the North West.

Motion: Councillor Blackburn proposed (and Councillor Collett seconded):

- '1. To confirm the Proper Officers as outlined at paragraph 5.3 of the report, with immediate effect.
2. That the Director of Governance and Partnerships be authorised to update the Constitution accordingly'.

Motion carried: The motion was submitted to the Council and carried.

9 REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

Members were asked to consider the reports and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel and the joint Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to a 12-month review of allowances for Independent Persons (in relation to Standards matters) and Non-Executive Directors of wholly-owned companies.

Motion: Councillor Blackburn proposed (and Councillor Kirkland seconded):

- '1. To agree the recommendations from the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel, that in relation to Independent Persons:
 - (a) the remuneration be set at £700 per annum with effect from 1 May 2016 (subject also to the agreement of Fylde Borough Council)
 - (b) the remuneration be included in the Members Allowances Scheme, without the annual uprate, but reviewed after a period of three years (alongside a review of other allowances within the Scheme), unless circumstances require a review in the meantime.
2. To agree the recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel, that in relation to non-executive directors of Council wholly-owned companies:
 - (a) the remuneration for non-executive chairmen be set at £3,500 per annum and £1,750 for other non-executive directors, with effect from 1 April 2017
 - (b) the payments be reviewed in 18 months' time and that the annual uprate (the National Joint Council for Local Government Pay award) would therefore not apply.

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2016

3. That the Director of Governance and Partnerships be authorised to update the Members' Allowances Scheme accordingly.'

Motion carried: The motion was submitted to the Council and carried.

Mayor

(The meeting ended at 7.40 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
Lorraine Hurst, Head of Democratic Governance
Tel: 01253 477127
E-mail: lorraine.hurst@blackpool.gov.uk

Executive Member Report to the Council
25 January 2017

AGENDA ITEM 5(a)

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL –‘CORPORATE’ PORTFOLIO AREA COUNCILLOR SIMON BLACKBURN

The Corporate area covers my portfolio and those of:

- Councillor Ivan Taylor (Cabinet Member for Projects and Partnerships),

The full details of the portfolio areas can be found on the Council’s website at <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Your-Council/Your-councillors/Executive-members.aspx>

Corporate Issues

Benefit Claims, Council Tax, Business Rates and Sundry Debt Collections

The average number of days to process Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Scheme new claims and changes in circumstances remains static at 20 days whilst work is ongoing to clear old items of changes in circumstance work.

The call answer rate for Customer First for November was 49%, a slight improvement on the same time last year.

At the end of November 2016 Council Tax in-year collection performance was 68.1%, a reduction of 0.7% compared to the previous year, this equates to £338,000 based upon the Council Tax Net Requirement excluding Police and Fire. Business Rate collection was 66.2%, a reduction of 1.9% compared to a like for like comparison with the previous year. This equates to £508,000 for the Blackpool element. Payment of a large Business Rates debt is anticipated soon following a recent sale of the property. Sundry debt collection was 87.1%, which was higher than the previous year when it was 82.0%. The additional notional amount collected compared to last year is £2.1m.

Budget

Council wide briefings were held on the 6 and 7 December 2016 to advise employees of the budget position for 2017/ 2018 and how it may impact upon them.

To ensure consistency of message Managers delivered an agreed briefing note to employees and managed any immediate queries and concerns.

Those employees placed ‘at risk of redundancy’ from their service due to a cessation of service or a diminution of the number of employees required, will continue to be supported through provision of a wide range of information being available e.g. career and money advice,

Employee Assistance Programme and one to one support from an in house Employment Advisor. Formal consultation on the proposals is now underway.

Director of Children's Services

As members will be aware Delyth Curtis has been successful in being appointed as Deputy Chief Executive (People) at Cheshire West and Chester Council and consequently, a recruitment process has been underway to appoint a Director of Children's Services. The meeting of the Chief Officers Employment Committee was held earlier today (25th January) and I will provide an update at the meeting.

Apprenticeship Levy

On 6 April 2017 the way the Government funds apprenticeships in England will change resulting in the introduction of an Apprenticeship levy for employers who have an annual pay bill of over £3 million.

The levy equates to 0.5% of the pay bill and the funds will be available to the employer to invest in apprenticeships training. The funds cannot be used for apprenticeship salaries or any administrative costs of implementing and running an apprenticeship programme. Work is in progress to consider how the Council implements this levy and ensures maximum benefit from it.

Corporate Delivery Unit (CDU)

The CDU continue to work on priority areas aligned to the Council Plan. Stocktake reports are being compiled with action plans for delivery with a particular focus on Children Social Care. There is a corporate review of performance management arrangements underway currently, which will see a new and refreshed basket of indicators reported through Scrutiny on the progress towards the Council Plan priorities. The next Board meetings will be held in late February. The Business Planning Framework has been refreshed in order to strengthen links between the Council's Workforce Strategy 2016/ 2020, the Medium Term Financial Sustainability Strategy 2016/ 2017 – 2021/ 2022 and the Council Plan 2015/ 2020. The Transformation Board met for the first time in December 2016 and will work closely alongside the Resources Team to deliver the transformational actions required to deliver savings against targets set in the budget over the next three years.

Electoral Services

The Electoral Registration Officer undertook the annual publication of the Electoral Register on 1 December 2016. The relevant statistics are as follows:

Electorate	101,899	(99,265 in December 2015)
Household Enquiry Response Rate	83%	(76% in December 2015)
Postal Voters	25,727	(26,029 in December 2015)

Actions undertaken during the 2016 electoral canvass include:

- Each property and potential new elector has received a maximum of three forms and at least two personal visits by the Council's electoral canvassers.
- The Electoral Services team has data matched with Council Tax data on a regular basis.
- The Outreach Worker has been the designated point of contact for all care home and nursing home responses. He has also visited relevant hard to reach groups, charities and community groups to reinforce the importance of registering to vote and the benefits.

Future plans to improve registration include holding a week long campaign for Voting Registration Drive.

Strategic Issues

Lancashire Combined Authority and Devolution

In November 2016, I along with Mr Edwin Booth, Chairman of the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership, met with the Northern Powerhouse Minister, Mr Andrew Percy, in Westminster. This meeting focused on the progress partners had made in Lancashire over the previous year, our formation as a shadow Combined Authority and our collective ambitions for the future. The Minister welcomed the progress we had made and urged us to continue to enhance joint working, both between the various Local Authorities and between Local Authorities and the LEP. The Minister committed to doing what he could to ensure that the Parliamentary Order, necessary for the formal creation of the Lancashire Combined Authority, was put to Parliament as soon as possible in the New Year.

Health and Wellbeing Board

The Executive at its meeting on 15 December 2016 agreed the shadow arrangements for a PAN Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Board. A further report, to confirm the terms of reference and the formal creation of the joint Health and Wellbeing Board, will be provided at the Annual Council meeting.

Financial Monitoring

The latest financial performance monitoring report for 2016/ 2017 was reported to the Executive on 23 January 2017. As at month 8 in-year pressures prevail in Children's Services and Strategic Leisure Assets, with estimated working balances forecast to fall by £3,135,000 against the budgeted position over the year. This fall is in the context of audited working balances at the start of the year of £5,636,000 an erosion of 55.6%.

In the context of £35m of Earmarked Revenue Reserves and with four months of the financial year remaining, there should still be sufficient time to improve the position such that Working Balances of at least £3.0m are reached. Revised service and financial plans are underway to do so, including the freezing of non-essential spend and delays to filling non-front line vacancies.

The Budget for 2016/ 2017 required total savings to be found of £25.1 m. As at 30 November 2016 (month 8) 83% of the 2016/ 2017 savings target had already been delivered and the full-year effect of the 2016/ 2017 savings in 2017/ 2018 amounts to 92% of the £25.1 m target. The Chancellor of the Exchequer published the Government's Autumn Statement on 23 November 2016, setting out public expenditure plans for 2017/ 2018 to 2019/ 2020. The Chancellor stated that the Government is committed to the overall plans for departmental resource spending until 2019/ 2020, which was set out at Spending Review 2015. Departmental resource spending will grow with inflation in 2020/ 2021 and 2021/ 2022.

The Council's Provisional Settlement for 2017/ 2018 was published on 15 December 2016. The specific details and implications of these announcements will be contained within the Council's Revenue Budget 2017/ 2018 report and subsequent refresh of the Medium-Term Financial Sustainability Strategy.

Policy Issues

Benefit Cap

The numbers of households affected by the lower Benefit Cap was significantly less than originally expected. In total, 197 new cases were affected whilst 49 existing capped cases were reassessed.

The new maximum amount of benefit allowable is:

- couples or lone parents of working age will no longer be entitled to receive more than £384.62 per week (previously £500).
- single adults of working age with no children will no longer be entitled to receive more than £257.69 per week (previously £350).

The Benefits Service is now giving appropriate support and considering application for Discretionary Housing Payments where appropriate.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has released details of the planned roll-out of the Universal Credit Full Service to more jobcentres and for Blackpool this is scheduled to take place in September 2018. From this date a much wider variety of people will be affected by Universal Credit than the mostly young, single jobseekers affected so far.

**DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL (TOURISM, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOBS) –
COUNCILLOR GILLIAN CAMPBELL**

The Places area covers my portfolio and those of:

- Councillor Fred Jackson (Environmental Services and Highways),
- Councillor Mark Smith (Regeneration, Enterprise and Economic Development) and
- Councillor Mrs Christine Wright (Housing).

The full details of the portfolio areas can be found on the Council's website at
<https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Your-Council/Your-councillors/Executive-members.aspx>

Corporate Issues

Purple Flag

Blackpool's Night Time Economy Group (a group consisting of Council, Police, NHS, Ambulance and Business representatives) has adopted the 'Purple Flag' nighttime economy management framework, which is administered by the Association of Town Centre Management.

Purple Flag is striving to create town and city centres that offer a clean, safe vibrant and diverse evening and night time economy. The programme aims to help drive up standards, celebrate achievement and replace negative perceptions with positive visions of success.

The core agenda provides five broad themes that are key to developing and managing a successful town centre at night. Together they provide a framework for assessing the quality and appeal of the area:

- Wellbeing
- Movement
- Broad Appeal
- Place
- Policy Envelope.

The Night Time Economy Working Group has identified leads for each area and a management framework for moving forward.

Keep Blackpool Tidy

Keep Blackpool Tidy Blackpool Litter Strategy 2016/ 2020 is being overseen by a multi-agency group, which is being chaired by the national Operations Director of Keep Britain Tidy. The group will be launching the 2017 Keep Blackpool Tidy campaign, which includes and relates to a

number of key themes Community Participation and Involvement, Business Engagement, Education and Signage and Information.

Highways and Traffic Management Division

The 'Local Highway Roads Investment Group' Blackpool established has 11 Local Authority members including Lancashire County Council and the latest Authorities to join at the latter end of 2016, Durham and York City Councils.

This is establishing Blackpool as a best practice in Highway Maintenance, with the Head of Highways at the Department for Transport stating Blackpool as an exemplar of good practice. More and more Authorities are taking an interest in the group and enquiring as to membership, in order to access the 'Blackpool Council Methods' approach to highways data management, which has recently been procured and is a Road Asset Management Framework.

Charity Fraud

Ongoing enforcement campaigns regarding breaches of the Public Space Protection Order and Fraud Act has yielded tangible results with a marked reduction of incidents and problems reported by businesses during the Illuminations and thereafter. Mr Marvin Trussell trading as Army of Heroes was convicted at Preston Crown Court and sentenced to three years in jail (the highest penalty obtained by the Authority) backed by being given a Disqualification Order from Company directorship for seven years. Other cases are currently going through the court system.

Traveller Incursions

The Authority had previously obtained High Court injunctions preventing certain named individuals and prohibiting certain areas from unauthorised incursions. This enables officers to expedite the removal of encampments and this has been utilised a number of times this year already, including most recently the issuing of 14 Directions to Leave following an encampment on West Park Drive. The sites are regularly being checked to ensure that they are free of encampments and that all relevant prohibition notices are on display. Officers were on call over the festive period if an immediate response was required to effect removal.

Built Heritage and Conservation

Options for including the Spanish Hall Roof repairs (granted aided by £500,000 from Historic England) with repair to the Coronation Street façade of the Olympia Building are currently being explored. This should help reduce disruption on this busy access street as well as reducing the impact of works on the operation of the Winter Gardens. It will also help reduce cost to the Olympia Façade element of the project.

Contracts

Details of the contracts awarded since the last meeting are as follows:

CONTRACT	PROVIDER (Locations)	TERM (years - including extensions)	CONTRACT VALUE	NO. OF BIDS
Hot Drinks Vending in Blackpool Leisure Centres	Snacktime PLC (Berkshire)	2 + (1+1)	n/a – income from products sold	4
Provision of Prepared Sandwiches	Tasties of Chester (Chester)	2	Call-off as and when required	3
Building Materials (Council and BCH)	Jewson Ltd (Coventry)	2 + (1+1)	£165,000	2
Public Health Funerals	D Hollowell and Sons Ltd (Blackpool)	2 + (1+1)	£69,000	2
Security Services	Northern Security National (Blackpool)	2 + (1+1)	£860,000	4
Flexible and Temporary Workforce Contract – Highways Operatives	Lot 1 – George Cox and Sons Ltd (Blackpool) Lot 2 – Bethell Construction Ltd (Kearsley)	Short term – 7 months	Circa. £250,000	2
Advertisement Services for Statutory Public Notices	TMP Worldwide (London)	1 + (1)	£42,000	3
Statutory Financial Audit Services for Blackpool Transport Services Ltd	Smith Craven Chartered Accountants (Doncaster)	1 + (1)	£28,000	5

Strategic Issues

Winter Gardens Conference and Exhibition Centre

The conference and exhibition centre continues to progress. More detailed scheme plans have been completed and a full planning application was submitted at the end of November 2016.

Architects have been engaged to develop technical designs and a tender process has begun in order to appoint a main contractor. State Aid compliance work continues to progress. Grant funding bids have been submitted for Growth Deal (GD3) monies £15m and Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) £2.9m. The second round of CCF funding bid has been issued. Further updates on GD3 progression are expected later this year.

Planning - General

At the November 2016 Planning Committee, full planning and listed building consent was granted (with some additional conditions) for the redevelopment of the Grade II listed Post Office site on Abingdon Street. Outline consent was granted for the erection of part five/ part six-storey 156-bedroom hotel on the site currently used as car parking on land bounded by Leopold Grove, Adelaide Street and Alfred Street.

There have been 20 decisions on planning appeals this year (where the Council has refused planning permission) and 17 of those appeals have been dismissed. This demonstrates that in those 17 cases the Council was right to resist inappropriate development/ uses. Of the 17 dismissed cases, five were Planning Committee decisions to refuse and 12 were officer delegated decisions to refuse. Of the three appeals allowed one was a Planning Committee decision and two were officer delegated decisions.

Planning - Winter Gardens Conference Centre

The reserved matters application for the Conference Centre has been submitted and validated and is now in its consultation phase.

Libraries

In December 2016, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published 'Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016/ 2021'. The backbone of the report is the Universal Offers for Public Libraries, which were launched in 2013 and to which Blackpool signed up to as a member of the Society of Chief Librarians. The library service welcomes the objectives outlined in 'Ambition' and looks forward to further developing the Universal Offers to ensure they help individuals and our community to flourish.

The "Think Libraries First" approach cited in the report is very positive. Libraries have proven to be strong partners in delivering agendas across Local Government, including health and wellbeing, digital inclusion, literacy, life chances and skills and social cohesion and integration.

Policy Issues

Changes to Government Housing Policy

The Housing and Planning Act enacted earlier in 2016 contained a number of provisions aimed at reducing social housing stock and promoting home ownership. The new Government has recently announced a number of changes that will help to protect the role of social housing in Blackpool and help us meet local needs. These include dropping provisions that would have forced the Council to charge market rents to any households living in Council housing and

earning more than £30,000 and send additional receipts to the Treasury. The Government has also delayed the introduction of provisions in the Act for Councils to sell their best housing stock when it becomes empty to fund discounted sales of social housing by housing associations and this may be dropped altogether.

The Autumn Statement announced that grant funding for new affordable rented homes would again be available, grant funding has, over the last 12 months, been limited only to new affordable homes for sale, which are financially unviable in many areas of Blackpool. We will now review the opportunities to bring forward new affordable housing in the town to meet local needs.

All political parties are supporting a Homelessness Reduction Bill that will give new statutory duties to Local Authorities to prevent homelessness, current statutory duties focus on how Councils assess and respond to homelessness. It is expected that some additional funding will be provided to meet the new responsibilities, although in Blackpool we are already well prepared, with around half of the work of the Housing Options team assisting people at risk of homelessness before they reach crisis point.

Improving Lives Green Paper

In October 2016, the Government issued a green paper called 'Improving Lives' to consider the relationship between health, work and disability. The Government's ambition is to halve the disability employment gap whether or not people have a long-term health condition or disability. Almost one in three working-age people in the UK have a long-term health condition, which puts their participation in work at risk. Around one in five of the working-age population has a mental health condition. The paper acknowledges that health and welfare systems are struggling to provide a meaningful support, with too many people falling into a downward spiral of declining health and being out of work, denying them the benefits that employment can bring, creating pressures on the NHS as well as a major injustice in society.

The challenges are complex and a number of areas for action are outlined such as ensuring that disabled people and people with long term health conditions have equal access to labour market opportunities and are given the support to prevent them from falling out of work and to progress in workplaces which embed health and wellbeing practices. One example of innovation listed includes the mental health and employment trailblazers now active in Blackpool, West London and the North East, providing specialist employment advice alongside clinical talking therapies.

Built Heritage and Conservation

The Built Heritage Strategy has now been approved for publication. This will allow a number of Community/ Council projects to progress including further excavation of training trenches at Watson Road Park in the lead up to the centenary of the end of WW1 and continuing efforts to secure the future of the 18 Century farm buildings at Midgeland Farm. Some projects have already commenced with Blackpool Civic Trust leading on a survey of Blackpool's Grade II listed buildings as part of the national programme launched last year by Historic England. The Council

has already provided training and support for this project, which is likely to span the next 12 months.

Proposal for an article 4 direction

The Executive has approved a proposal for an article 4 direction for the Raikes Parade Conservation Area. The direction will limit permitted development rights in the conservation area in response to significant concerns from local residents around loss of character to poor maintenance and alterations to properties in the area. The direction is non-immediate, but once fully in force will allow the Council more discretionary control over certain types of development in this attractive residential area.

Transforming Services

Quality Economic Development Services

In the last six months, Blackpool Council's Economic Development has secured three national quality marks. This includes ISO 9001:2015 for its quality management system, the Matrix standard for the quality of self-employment and employment advice and guidance and the Fair Train Gold Award for the quality of its work placement programme. These independently assessed awards provide confidence to partners and funders alike over the consistent quality of services, as well as a boost to front-line staff aspiring to improve continuously services for local businesses and residents.

Effective Collections Bid Successful

Cultural Services has been successful in its bid for £97,000 from the Esmee Fairbairn Effectives. The award will fund a three-year project focusing on the internationally significant Blackpool Tower Circus collection and enabling more public engagement with the collection. The project includes working with the Health and Social Care Sector such as family support, children's mental health, learning disabilities, residential care youth services, homelessness, mental health services and children and family services to train practitioners and volunteers in the therapeutic use of the historic collections as part of their daily work.

The Heritage Service will also work with Save Our Stories to engage with children and young people by using the Circus collections as inspiration, helping them acquire the literacy skills they need to take them on their magical storytelling journeys. The project will also work with the Circus community to enable their experiences and expertise to be added to the collections and inform wider understanding of Circus and its history.

Planning

A pre-peer review position statement on Planning in Blackpool has now been completed and has been sent to the LGA for consideration by the review panel. The Peer review itself commenced on Monday 16 January 2017 and the review panel will attend the January Planning Committee. In advance of this, an action plan based on the 2015 Planning Advisory Service Review has been issued and the department is about half way through implementation of the recommended actions.

Working with Partners

HealthWorks

The Council's new adult employment and health facility is now live, with a number of services now relocated to refurbished Council offices on Clifton Street (former Tourist Information Centre). The building now houses the Council's lead adult employment services team, which includes Positive Steps into Work and a number of integrated employment and health services including Health Futures, Healthy Lifestyles and the mental health and employment trailblazer. The trailblazer focusses on supporting unemployed residents who currently access talking therapies via the Blackpool Clinical Commissioning Group's Supporting Minds service. From January 2017, the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's) Local Specialist Obesity Service (LSOS) will also start to operate from HealthWorks. Effective partnership working both within and without the new facility will be crucial to its success. Several Council services are already active and contributing including Economic Development, Public Health, Adult Community Learning, as well as co-delivery and strategic partners in Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Blackpool CCG and the Jobcentre Plus.

Lancashire Not Forgotten

Following the success of a £49,000 Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant for Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and Lancashire County Council, the "Lancashire Not Forgotten" project has been officially launched and a Project Officer has started work. Digital and visual artists will start work in 2017 to support the work to capture and preserve the memories of those living with dementia, remembering how they lived, worked and played through shared heritage. The library service is represented on the Dementia Action Alliance and this partnership is an important part of ensuring the success of the project.

Nibbles 2 Café at Anchorsholme Library

A second Nibbles café will open at Anchorsholme Library in early 2017. This arm's length venture will not only be based in an ideal community venue, but will enable clients of the service to move on in their careers and progress into work. This is covered in more detail in the report of the Cabinet Secretary.

Great Exhibition of the North

We are still awaiting the announcement about the £15m legacy fund linked to the Great Exhibition of the North. However, the Head of Heritage and the Artistic Director of LeftCoast will travel to Newcastle in the New Year to discuss how Blackpool may still be part of the delivery of the Exhibition, thus maintaining the profile of Blackpool and continuing to position ourselves as potential beneficiaries of the legacy fund.

British Gas Boilers

Following on from the Cosy Homes in Lancashire project, Blackpool Council was approached by British Gas seeking permission to target benefit clients to ascertain their eligibility to have a brand new boiler installed in their home either free or at a minimal cost. Over 9,000 residents

in receipt of relevant benefits were identified and received a letter from the Council notifying them of the qualifying criteria. British Gas reimbursed the Council for the administration costs in full and have confirmed the following results:

Leads generated = 120

Installations complete = 13

Installations pending = 6

Applications not progressing = 101

CABINET SECRETARY (RESILIENT COMMUNITIES) – COUNCILLOR GRAHAM CAIN

The Resilient Communities area covers my portfolio and those of:

- Councillor Kathryn Benson (Schools and Learning)
- Councillor Amy Cross (Adult Services and Health), and
- Councillor Maria Kirkland (Third Sector Engagement and Leisure Services).

The full details of the portfolio areas can be found on the Council's website at <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Your-Council/Your-councillors/Executive-members.aspx>

Strategic Issues

New Volunteering Strategy

We are currently consulting with the Trade Unions and other key stakeholders over proposals to establish a new corporate approach to the coordination of volunteering across the Council. This work builds on the concept of "Active Citizenship" as a way in which we could work collaboratively with partners in the third sector and other local public agencies to encourage people to play a more active role in their communities.

The Resilient Communities Scrutiny Committee, following a report in November 2015, identified the task of producing a more corporate approach to voluntary work across the Council's services as a priority.

Progressing this area is also central to the theme within the Council Plan 2015/ 2020 of developing Priority 2 'community resilience', as well as providing more structured volunteering opportunities linked to improving people's skills and work readiness and all of this also links to the Priority 1 economy.

A report is due to go back to the Resilient Communities Scrutiny Committee in April 2017.

Fylde Coast Self-Care Strategy

As part of the Vanguard Communication and Engagement work-stream, we are in the early stages of developing a Self-Care Strategy across the Fylde Coast. The strategy will include three key elements of work:

1. Encouraging and supporting self-care for individuals (and their carers) with exiting long-term conditions, particularly as part of the Extensivist and Enhanced Primary Care programmes of the Vanguard New Models of Care programme.

2. Building community centered approaches to health and wellbeing to ensure individuals and communities have the knowledge, skills and support needed to self-care.
3. Promote and develop prevention opportunities in order that people and communities can make informed choices on lifestyle and behaviour to maintain their health and build resilience to ensure that they know when and how to access help should they need it.

The aim of the strategy is to connect local organisations and communities through effective partnership working. This will require both a system and cultural change in order to ensure a consistent approach and must be incorporated across care pathways, from first contact and throughout.

The aim of the Self-Care Strategy is to activate and empower people to become more confident to manage their own health and this strategy is being developed on a Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre footprint in order to maximise opportunities to embed this work within the Vanguard New Models of Care programme.

Policy Issues

The Children and Social Work Bill

This Bill has now had its second reading and is moving on to the committee stage in the House of Commons. The Bill if approved in its current form will:

“ensure that children can be adopted by new families without delay; improve the standard of social work and opportunities for young people in care in England.”

The core provisions of the Bill are the creation of:

- A new 'Care Leavers' Covenant' underpinned by a statutory duty requiring Local Authorities to publish the services and standards of treatment care leavers are entitled to.
- A new context for the social work profession, by introducing more demanding professional standards and setting up a specialist regulator for the profession.

The main elements of the Bill are:

Looked-after children and care leavers

- Standards for how Local Authorities should act as a 'corporate parent' to support children in care and as they move into adult life.
- A requirement on Local Authorities to consult on and publish a 'local offer' to care leavers, setting out the services they are entitled to.
- An extension to the right to a Personal Adviser, someone who will make sure care leavers receive the support they need as they transition into adulthood, to all who want one up to the age of 25.

Adoption

- Ensuring courts and Local Authorities take better account of a child's need for stability up to the age of 18 when making decisions about their future.
- A duty on Local Authorities and schools to promote educational achievement for adopted children and those in the long-term care of family members or guardians.

Regulation of social workers

- A specialist regulator for social work, to enable a clear focus on standards and effective training and development.

Children's safeguarding

- Better protection of children by ensuring that lessons are learned from serious child safeguarding cases.
- Support for innovation in children's social care by allowing Local Authorities to pilot new, innovative approaches.

The provisions concerning adoption decisions apply to both England and Wales. The remainder of the Bill covers devolved matters and applies to England only.

Transforming Services

Schools, Standards and Effectiveness

Following the restructure of School Improvement over the summer, the Local Authority is working closely with all stakeholders in education to establish a School Led System, which is led by both the Executive Board and the Blackpool School Improvement Board (BSIB).

The BSIB includes a wide representation of all stakeholders in education across schools in Blackpool. The second meeting of the Board took place on 9 December 2016 and the agenda included a data overview, which prompted members to agree on focused priorities, which are based around measurable outcomes. The five priorities are:

- Aspiration and Achievement
- Developing Leadership
- Teaching and Learning
- Inclusion and Welfare
- Effective Transition

All members will sign up to one of the above priorities and will steer key questions and actions that can be used to address the issues. These will be revisited at each BSIB meeting to monitor progress and outcomes. This structure will fit into the regional reporting mechanism of BBCL (Blackburn, Blackpool, Cumbria and Lancashire).

Transforming Care

Transforming Care aims:

- To improve services for people with learning disabilities and/ or autism, who display behaviour that challenges, including those with a mental health condition; and
- To drive system-wide change and enable more people to live in the community, with the right support, and close to home.

The Transforming Care agenda has evolved from the Winterbourne View Concordat, published by the Department of Health in 2012 in response to the Winterbourne View scandal. The Concordat, with support from national partners and health and social care commissioners across the country was designed to transform services for people with learning disabilities and/ or autism and other challenging behaviour by developing and implementing plans to resettle people from secure and other specialist out of area hospitals to appropriate community settings within a specified timeframe.

Following a series of reviews by NHS England to determine progress in delivering the Concordat it became clear that the ambition to move people to community-based support would not be achieved within agreed timescales and is a more complex process than first anticipated. Recognising this, NHS England commissioned Sir Stephen Bubb in 2014 to produce a report 'Winterbourne View – Time for Change' on how to accelerate transformation and to make recommendations about what needed to be done to achieve systemic change. This report has informed the Transforming Care agenda, building on the work of the last few years and accelerating progress where it has been slow, whilst maintaining a commitment to seeing a substantial shift away from reliance on inpatient care.

Following the Bubb Report, NHS England launched the Fast Track programme in June 2015 providing extra support to areas with high numbers of people with a learning disability in specialist out of area hospitals with a focus on closing inpatient beds and strengthening services in the community. Six fast-track sites were identified, each receiving technical support to draw up transformational plans for their area. Lancashire, including Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen, were selected as a fast-track site and the Commissioners Network for Learning Disabilities covering the three local authorities and eight Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) within the County produced the five year transformational plan for Lancashire "The Right Track".

Building on the Fast-Track programme, in October 2015 NHS England, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and the Local Government Association (LGA) published the national plan "Building the right support" to provide a clear commissioning framework for health and social care commissioners to develop local services and close some inpatient facilities by 2019. To achieve these ambitions, 48 Transforming Care Partnerships (commissioning collaborations of CCGs, NHS England specialised commissioners and local authorities) have been set up across the country which include the six Fast Tracks sites originally selected to lead service change.

Across Lancashire 93 patients placed in secure or other specialist hospitals fall under the Transforming Care programme, nine of which are Blackpool patients. Ten discharges have so far been achieved across the footprint and work is currently focussed on resettling a further 35 patients into community placements in 2016/ 2017. A significant amount of work is underway locally to meet the requirements of Transforming Care. However, to take account of the differing levels of maturity in existing Learning Disability provision and our relative size, Blackpool's health and social commissioners have developed a local version of Lancashire's transformational plan. The priority areas are outlined below:

- Enhanced Advocacy Services
- Care and Discharge Planning
- Development of specialist accommodation and the specialist learning disability provider market
- Development of enhanced respite and crisis provision
- Workforce development
- Funding arrangements (pooled budgets)
- Transitions including alignment with Blackpool's Transformational Plan for Children's Emotional Health and Wellbeing

A steering group has been established to oversee all activity and to ensure continued alignment with the Lancashire plan. The group is chaired by the Director of Adult Services with senior representation from commissioning, health, adult social care, education and housing. Members of this group are represented on the pan-Lancashire's Learning Disability Commissioners Network and Lancashire's Transforming Care Partnership. The governance framework for Learning Disability Transformation is through Blackpool Health and Wellbeing Board and the Learning Disability Partnership Board.

Adult Care and Support Service

New Langdale 'Nibbles 2 Café' development at Anchorsholme Library.

In April 2016, local Ward Councillors approached The New Langdale Service to enquire if they would be interested in working with them to develop a Dementia friendly café within the Anchorsholme library. The aim would be to increase the footfall within the library and to create a community hub that will attract a wider range of people whom may not commonly use the library, including parents of pupils from Anchorsholme School who may meet up for coffee as they drop off and collect their children during the 'school run.

This fits well with the Strategic Plan for the libraries being able to pick up more potential customers and it also makes the café accessible to both customers of the library and those using the outside space around the library.

As The New Langdale has had, a great deal of experience in developing cafes with the success of 'Nibbles at BCIL' (Blackpool Centre for Independent Living) and previously to that 'The Sandwich

Shop on Deansgate' (both are and have been an enormous success over the years). It was felt by all parties that The New Langdale would make an obvious choice as partner for this project be well placed to deliver the desired outcomes including:

- Establishing a learning disability daytime service offer in the North of Blackpool to ensure the New Langdale service has a presence in all the geographical areas of Blackpool. This will attract potential learning disabled people to consider accessing the Library and/ or using the Langdale Service for their daytime activity support.
- Support the employment pathway for learning disabled adults by offering a 'move on' placement from the 'Nibbles Café @ BCIL' where learning disabled adults can develop their catering and hospitality skills further in a less supportive and more commercial environment.
- Create an opportunity for greater integration and community presence for learning disabled adults within the local area, engaging with the local school, pupils and residents.
- Enhance the library experience for people using the library services and promoting social interaction through making available a space where people can come together and make friends thus potentially reducing social isolation.
- Create an extended offer to people using the local park and green spaces whereby they can access the café from outside for refreshments including a comfortable outside seating area.

Compliments

Quite often when discussing feedback from customers, we focus our attention on complaints. It is important to note, however, that in Adult Services, many more compliments are received than complaints. In the 2015/ 2016 financial year, there were 556 instances of positive feedback recorded where people had gone above and beyond the call of duty, compared to only 80 formal complaints received throughout the year.

Below is a selection of compliments that have been received in recent months that demonstrate the high regard in which many of our staff are held.

- We wish to write and say how pleased we are with the care we have received from all members of your Home Care Team. We are sorry to say goodbye to them all. What a pity we cannot pay for their services. All carers were jolly and pleasant and helped both B and myself to look after B's personal hygiene and general care. We thoroughly appreciate all you have done for us, both at the ARC and this marvelous aftercare and enablement service. We shall miss them all very much. Thank you all.

- Dad and I would like to pass on a huge thanks to T. T helped us to understand the various care services available to enable dad to continue to live independently in his home. We were daunted with the volume of data available, but T helped us make sense of it and ensured the suitable support was in place in short order. A huge thanks.
- To Keats Day Care Centre, Thank you, God Bless You. Our Thanks especially to N, T, A, D, S, M, K, E and C. A big thank you to all at Keats for the care and attention given to M throughout the time she has been with you. Words are not enough to describe how well she was cared for and her needs attended to in your centre. You will always be in our thoughts and prayers, Take care from M and G
- Good that I had an initial phone call from L the week before the review meeting to arrange a time and date that was convenient for all three of us. This was very much appreciated. Throughout the whole experience L was professional and balanced and showed much experience. She was very supportive to Mum, but realised that Mum was limited in what she could do herself to be independent. In summary L was encouraging where necessary but realistic in the limitations that mum has. Thank you.
- I would just like to thank you for all the support you have and are giving me under the social inclusion team. Your help means more than you know. You have helped me feel less lonely, hopeful and more confident and I am starting to make new friends. I am having fun and I am also learning a lot. You are always on time when you pick me up and the one time you were late you let me know what was happening in plenty of time so I did not start to panic. You helped me when I was feeling really overwhelmed and did not judge me. You took me home when I got upset in the ladies group with no problem whatsoever. You keep in contact with me on a regular basis and I trust you and I feel I can talk to you, which I really appreciate. I have always had problems with my social skills and anxiety in social situations and you are helping me improve each time you take me out to a group/course etc. I think the work you do is fantastic and although you have a lot of patients to look after, I feel you care about me and my mental health problems which makes me feel cared about and supported. Thank you again for everything you have and are doing for me. I honestly do not know what I would do if I didn't have your social support.
- N and M on the DOLS team are a credit to Blackpool Council; they are extremely supportive to all care homes and offer a lot of support and guidance. If I ever have an issue, they are willing to help and advise. They offer feedback, which is fantastic in helping services improve.

Working with Partners

Special Educational Needs and Disability

Work continues with partners and parent groups to prepare for a possible inspection of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disability. This inspection will be carried out by Ofsted/ CQC (Care Quality Commission) and will cover all services for 0-25 year olds with SEN and/or a disability and their families in the Blackpool area. We will have seven days notice and the team will be in the area for five days. They will visit settings, meet young people, families and services. The self-evaluation framework and strategic groups are being revised in light of lessons learnt, in preparation for the inspection.

14-19

The Corporate Parent Pledges from businesses continues to have an impact on “Our Children”. A number of Departments and external businesses are offering work experience placements and/ or a priority offer of employment to “Our Children”. The Connexions Service works closely with the Over 12s team to support “Our Children” to take advantage of the pledges. For example, Blackpool Council’s Head of Visitor Economy has supported one of Our Children with her research into marketing for her University assignment and offered a work experience placement in the New Year.

Connexions and Virtual Schools continue to work together to provide our children between the ages of 16-24 year old who are in education with specialised Careers Guidance, financial advice and early intervention for those at risk of disengaging. This project has also allowed us to know what the current destinations of our Children are including the qualifications they are undertaking and progress against them. Currently 11 of ‘Our Children’ are undertaking degree level qualifications.

Youth Employment

Throughout the academic year (2015/2016) Blackpool has seen an increase in participation of education, employment or training against previous year. The Department of Education has released its annual “scorecard” <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/young-people-neet-comparative-data-scorecard>.

In 2015/2016 participation in education or training for 16 and 17 year olds has increased from 86.7% to 87.9%. Blackpool Council Connexions service is also in the top quintile nationally for successfully re-engaging the NEET group. The service has continued delivery of its pre-traineeship programme, Advance, for long term NEET 19-24 year olds with the support of the Adult, Community and Family learning team. The 2016/2017 academic year has started well with nine young people completing the first programme and the second programme now delivering to 10 young adults.

Adult, Community and Family Learning

A review has been undertaken of the 2015/ 2016 Skills For Employment Programmes to assist development in 2017. A pathway is provided, which particularly targets individuals furthest

away from the labour market. Courses are provided at a variety of venues across Blackpool delivered by Blackpool Council Adult Learning Tutors and through sub-contracting arrangements with Blackpool and the Fylde College and UR Potential. In 2015/2016, 796 learners participated in short courses with 82% progressing into further training, volunteering or employment. Developments planned include aligning new courses as part of the new Health Works offer and refining courses to meet the needs of Jobcentre Plus service users following meetings with Jobcentre Plus managers.

The Family Learning Team has successfully piloted a new course 'Amazing Animals', an introduction to Family Learning with ten groups of parents and children in seven schools. Safeguarding for Parents courses remain popular, 13 parents completed this course in term one and a further course is planned in Claremont Children's Centre in January 2017. Creative Christmas workshops were delivered in six schools to lead onto Learn Together courses for families in reception in the New Year. The Learn Together family learning course is linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum and covers early reading and writing skills, phonics and maths development.

The Wellbeing team of Adult Learning has delivered a variety of courses from craft through to stress at work and mindfulness with the vast number of courses having a positive impact on the lives of the learners. Some learners have been inspired to undertake further learning and volunteering. A Facebook page has been set up for learners who have attended courses to build up a community of self-help and give mutual support to build resilience.

Commissioning

In 2015 Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) were required to develop and submit a Children and Young Peoples Mental Health Transformation Plan to NHS England demonstrating how local areas would transform mental health services for children and young people over the next five years. The eight pan Lancashire CCGs, along with the three Local Authorities and voluntary sector partners, developed a pan Lancashire plan and submitted it in October 2015. The plan was formally signed off by NHS England in January 2016.

The Pan Lancashire Children and Young Peoples Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Transformation and five year plan forms part of the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) and is one of the five pan Lancashire work stream areas for the Lancashire and South Cumbria Transformation Programme. This is led by Fylde and Wyre CCG's Chief Commissioning Officer as the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and a Partnership Board is in place to lead and govern delivery.

Five work stream areas have been established to deliver the plan and a Project Information Document (PID) and action plan is place for each area, with progress reported on a monthly basis to the Board. These are in line with the objectives in the plan and are as follows:

- Resilience, prevention and early intervention.
- Improved Access to services.

- Care of the Vulnerable, including those in crisis.
- Increased Workforce.
- Accountability and Transparency.

A local Partnership Board has been established in Blackpool in line with developments in all other CCG areas. This purpose of this group is to facilitate local engagement with schools, voluntary sector providers, Councils and locally commissioned health services both to ensure local delivery of the transformation plan, but also to enable the local community to influence the pan Lancashire developments. A robust action plan, co-produced with Better Start, Head Start and Emotional Health and Wellbeing services (CASHER (Child and Adolescent Self Harm Emergency Response), Connect and CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services)- is in place to support the work of the Board.

Key achievements to date include:

- Funding secured for Child and Adolescent Self Harm Emergency Response (CASHER) for the lifetime of the Transformation Programme.
- Health based place of safety bid submitted – including a place of calm for CASHER.
- Duty hours in CAMHS (for emergency paediatric psychosocial assessments) extended until 4:00pm – CASHER on duty at 5:00pm.
- CAMHS extended opening until 7pm twice a week
- Our Children psychologist recruited.
- CAMHS Transformation Champion(s) identified.
- Primary Mental Health Workers in post (September 2016) to provide a named contact in CAMHS for all schools.
- CAMHS patient experience survey completed and, as a result of the feedback received, CAMHS will start to offer appointments in community venues in the New Year.
- Robust plans in place to reduce waiting times for CAMHS/ Child Psychology by 10% by end of quarter four.
- Children and young people’s access to mental health services trajectories (NHS England) – set at 28%; Blackpool currently achieving 33.6% (Quarters one and two).

Police Innovation Fund - Blackpool Bid for Family Hub Pilot

In Blackpool we are extending our Children’s Centres to create a new local infrastructure of Family Hubs by working with partners to use resources more efficiently. We are building on the Local Authority Children’s Centre offer to support children and young people as they grow up as well as their parents. We are looking to extend the Family Hub to the whole community, families, young people, vulnerable adults and elders, by enhancing the current offer to include further evening and weekend access.

The aim is to build community resilience, improve social mobility and increase family stability by creating and maintaining partnerships which improve the physical and emotional health of the community. We intend to pilot this approach with one of the Local Authority Children’s

Centres, which service two highly deprived wards and is co-located with a GP surgery and has a sports barn and a hostel in close proximity.

The Centre already offers Antenatal and Family Health Support, Targeted Family Support, Parenting Support, a Community Cafe and Early Years activities. However, there is a need for increased services in the community for young people, vulnerable adults and elders. The Centre has the strength and reputation of the brand that staff has built up in their community, the physical space for further activities and services and the ability to expand their offer locally to do exactly what the local needs of families and communities require.

To ensure the Family Hub meets the needs of the wider community the aim is to dovetail its development with the Vulnerable Adolescent Hub being developed Blackpool wide. The Vulnerable Adolescent Hub will see young people's service come together to provide holistic and timely support to enable young people to be happy, healthy and safe in order to realise their aspirations. As part of this development Camerados, a national movement designed to combat loneliness, will be supporting young people to develop and deliver an evening and weekend café at the Family Hub. The Family Hub will also act as a base for the Youth Attendance Centre that will be returning to Blackpool in April 2017.

The Team will be working closely with Blackpool Clinical Commissioning Group to link the Family Hub with the Integrated Neighbourhood team, in the Central West Vanguard, which combines GP's, practice staff, community and specialist health staff working together to enable individuals to receive a high level of clinical support whilst remaining in a community setting. In Blackpool the aim is to apply a Whole Family Approach to Vanguard to build community resilience.

The Big Lottery Fund has invested in five local Better Start areas of which Blackpool is one. A Better Start aims to improve the life chances of young children by delivering a significant increase in the use of preventative approaches in pregnancy and first three years of life. Blackpool Better Start, partnership led by the NSPCC, has given us the opportunity to enhance the Children's Centre services over the next nine years as the Centres are the key delivery arm for all of the Better Start initiatives. Blackpool Better Start is committed to supporting the pilot of the Family Hub, particularly for families with children under four years old, as it serves two of the seven Better Start target wards. Through Better Start, the Family Hub will be enhanced via volunteer support to meet and greet community members and peer support with child care, targets support for fathers such as Mellow dads and the development of a 'dads shed', increased Baby Steps perinatal education classes in the evenings for families and parent delivered parenting programme Empowering Parents Empowering Communities.

The Centre is already the base for Blackpool's NSPCC Service Centre and hosts the teams delivering evidence based programmes to young families such as Parents Under Pressure, Safe Care and Video Interaction Guidance. The current health neighbourhood approach is also developing through the CCG and has an intention to extend access to general practice services

in Blackpool and extending opening times using Whitegate drive as a Hub, but by using this approach in the pilot, we will be supporting this model in a community venue.

In addition, we are proposing to introduce the IRIS (Identification and Referral to Improve Service) model for early identification of Domestic Abuse cases from within the GP practice that is sited in the proposed pilot. A dedicated Keyworker from the families in need team with domestic abuse skills will be provided to support any identified needs using a whole family approach whilst at the same time being the 'go to' person for advice for the GP practice staff.

To complete the offer of a Public Service Integrated Team at the Family Hub it is hoped that the Police Place Based Model to be at the heart of the pilot. The Family Hub will provide the right environment for services to work together and not in isolation using a time team approach, under shared supervision, working within the most troubled and disadvantaged communities. The Place Based Model will afford the Police the opportunity for Police to have their ear to the ground, allow them to build up trust and community confidence and delivering to the community requirements at the point of need. It is agreed that the pilot should start with one of our Local Authority Children's Centres which service two highly deprived wards. The aim is to offer closer integration and collaboration in delivering across the partnership and developing a multi-faceted and appropriate response to diverse complex issues beyond the more traditional and usual offers- based on what the community want and if successful the pilot will provide the blueprint for other similar sites across Blackpool. By building this partnership around neighbourhood policing collectively we will be in a position to reduce vulnerability, reduce future demand and reduce spending on high cost services within the two wards.

As part of the pilot we will operate an Early Help duty system for the two wards by jointly providing holistic support at the earliest opportunity to prevent children and young people escalating to a higher threshold and requiring statutory intervention. We aim to model our pilot on the Bromley by Bow Centre in London, which has transformed its community over the last 30 years. The centre has a focus on supporting vulnerable young people, adults and families who can be hard to reach through conventional statutory service support and has successfully empowered thousands of people to live healthy fulfilled lives. The Centre:

- Supports people to overcome chronic illness and unhealthy lifestyles.
- Enables people to learn new skills.
- Supports people to become less grant dependent and to find work.
- Provides the tools to create an enterprising community

Third sector Engagement

During the autumn, a new series of community workshops and focus groups were held in order to share the Council's overall financial position, seek a consultative dialogue with key community, equality, voluntary and Faith sector representatives over the way forward in the years ahead and begin to develop a shared understanding and mutual trust. A shared mutuality in Blackpool was a common theme as was the move from the Council being expected to deliver everything to a potential cusp of residents and community groups/ Third Sector/ Social

Enterprise to be seen to leading on elements and working to access opportunities the Council could not or was unable to.

The Council is committed to building more collaborative working with the highly diverse groups that make up the Third sector and between the sector and the Council/ other agencies. We will be feeding back in detail to the particular organisations and groups that took part in this exercise and aim to plan jointly a conference this year to build deeper structure of dialogue with the sector as a whole.

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Report to:	COUNCIL
Relevant Officer:	Steve Thompson, Director of Resources
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Blackburn, Leader of the Council
Date of Meeting:	25 January 2017

COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2017/ 2018

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the recommendation of the Executive from its meeting on 15 December 2016 relating to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To agree that the Council continue to operate a Discretionary Discount Policy to be awarded in cases of exceptional hardship.

2.2 To agree that the reduction applied to reduction applied to Working Age claimants remains at 27.11% for the 2017/18 scheme and that the main elements and method of calculating awards previously agreed by Council on 20 January 2016 will be the same with the exception of:

- Minor amendments to continue to align the scheme to Housing Benefit.
- The provision of additional support for vulnerable groups of claimants by amending the percentage applied to their award from 27.11% to 13.56%.

2.3 To agree the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/ 2018.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme is approved by 31 January 2017 and in place by 1 April 2017 avoiding the financial risks associated with the Government imposed default scheme.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None, a Council Tax Reduction scheme must be approved by the Council every year.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is: "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience"

5.0 Background Information

5.1 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 abolished Council Tax Benefits (CTB); billing authorities were required to adopt a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) to take effect from 1 April 2013. The Government grant for Council Tax Reduction Scheme was less than 90% of the Government forecast funding levels had Council Tax Benefits continued. The ongoing level of Government support meant the Council adopted a self-funding Scheme under which all working age claimants had to pay at least 27.11% of their Council Tax in 2013/ 2014. This has remained the case in subsequent years.

5.2 The Blackpool Scheme incorporates the national pensioner scheme decided by Government. This ensures that support continues at existing levels for pensioners. In Blackpool, pensioners currently account for 37% of the caseload.

5.3 For working-age claims there is a means-tested assessment, predominantly based upon the former Council Tax Benefit rules, to establish entitlement. A percentage reduction of 27.11% is then applied to the award at the end of the assessment.

5.4 Although the 2017/ 2018 scheme will, as far as is possible, have the same design principles as that currently in operation a small number of changes are proposed to align the scheme with Housing Benefit amendments in order that eligibility criteria are consistent for both schemes. The Housing Benefit changes are:

- Reducing the time period a person can be absent from their home and continue to claim Housing Benefit from 13 weeks (or 52 weeks in certain cases) to four weeks.
- Applicants to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) who fall within the Work Related Activity Group will no longer receive the work related activity component in the calculation of their Housing Benefit on or after 1 April 2017.
- Limiting the number of dependent allowances within the Housing Benefit calculation to a maximum of two children, which will affect new households who have a third or subsequent child on or after 1 April 2017.
- Treating people who have someone in receipt of Universal Credit (Carer's Element) for them in the same way as those in receipt of Carer's Allowance.

- 5.5 These changes will only apply to working age claimants and the impact will mean a nil award of Council Tax Reduction after four weeks for the first change listed above and a lower award than under the current scheme for the other changes listed above.
- 5.6 In addition, the Council is proposing to give additional support to certain vulnerable groups:
- Where someone in the household receives Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments.
 - Where the applicant is a lone parent and who is responsible and resides with a child under five years old.
 - Where the applicant or their partner receives Carer's Allowance.
 - Where the applicant or their partner is in receipt of a war pension, war widows pension, war disablement pension or equivalent.
- 5.7 It is proposed that the percentage reduction applied to vulnerable households is reduced from 27.11% to 13.56%. The estimated cost of providing additional support to these vulnerable groups is £0.8m per annum. In order to meet this cost there will be a review of bad debt provision and a review of the Council Tax base for 2017/2018.
- 5.8 The value of the percentage reduction must be established each year. The percentage is determined by reference to available funding, caseload, growth/ reduction in caseload. It is proposed that for 2017/ 2018 the value of the percentage reduction for working age customers, who do not fall into the categories shown at 5.6, should remain at 27.11%.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

List of Appendices

Appendix 6(a) – Executive Decision Notice EX/55

6.0 Legal considerations:

- 6.1 A resolution by the full Council to adopt a Council Tax Reduction Scheme is required by 31 January 2017. The Scheme will take effect from 1 April 2017. The Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount Policy has been updated and was included in the Executive agenda (Appendix 5(a))
<http://democracy.blackpool.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=135&Mid=4380&Ver=4>

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

- 7.1 Existing staffing resources within the Benefits service are used to administer the Council Tax Reduction Scheme; however, it is apparent that there has been a considerable increase in face-to-face and telephone contact, particularly when Council Tax bills are issued. The administrative and legal processes required to collect and recover substantial numbers of small amounts place an additional burden on available resources.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

- 8.1 The Equality Analysis that has previously been carried out for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme has been revisited and updated. This aims to mitigate the impact on protected groups and includes the continued availability of a discretionary hardship fund which has been made available through the adoption of a Discretionary Discount Policy. As part of their consideration of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/ 2018 Members should read the updated Equality Analysis, in the Executive agenda (Appendix 5(b)) <http://democracy.blackpool.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=135&Mid=4380&Ver=4>

9.0 Financial considerations:

- 9.1 For 2017/ 2018 it is proposed that the percentage reduction made at the end of the assessment for working age claimants shall be 27.11%. A review of the Scheme must be carried out annually to ensure it remains fit for purpose taking account of ongoing changes in legislation, caseload and financial requirements. The Council will be required to approve the Scheme each year. The Welfare Reform Act 2012 provides for a major overhaul of the benefits system. The Council Tax Reduction Scheme was implemented ahead of the commencement of Universal Credit. The new scheme of Council Tax Reduction will run alongside Housing Benefit during the transition to Universal Credit. Housing Benefit administration will then gradually diminish. Wider changes to existing benefits during the next few years will mean customers on benefits will have less money available to pay their Council Tax liability. Whilst there is still an ambition to achieve full collection, this is likely to take longer.
- 9.2 Providing additional support to the vulnerable groups listed in Section 5.6 will increase the cost of the scheme by £0.8m per year. In order to meet this cost there will be a review of bad debt provision and a review of the Council Tax base for 2017/ 2018. Removing vulnerable households from the requirement to pay 27.11% would allow existing resources to be used for collection from the remaining Council Tax payers.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 As part of the overall project management leading to the 2013/ 2014 Scheme, a risk workshop identified a number of risks. Actions required to mitigate those risks have been identified and implemented where possible.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 Extensive public consultation was undertaken during 2012 to develop the 2013/ 2014 Blackpool Scheme. The overall response concluded that, whilst most people did not agree with the changes, the options proposed by the Council were, in the main, supported.

12.2 Although the main elements and method of calculating awards will remain the same for 2017/ 2018, further public consultation has taken place in respect of the proposed changes to Housing Benefit and to provide additional support to certain vulnerable groups. A summary of the public consultation and the full consultation response attached at Appendix 5(c) to the Executive agenda. The Council's response to each comment has been considered and is included within the Equality Impact Analysis, which is attached at Appendix 5(b), to the Executive report.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 There are no additional background papers to this report.

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Notice of :	EXECUTIVE
Decision Number:	EX55/2016
Relevant Officer:	Steve Thompson, Director of Resources
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Simon Blackburn, Leader of the Council
Date of Meeting:	15 December 2016

COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2017/2018

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To seek approval for the proposals for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18.

2.0 Recommendations:

2.1 To recommend Council to agree the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 as set out in Appendix 5d, to the Executive report.

2.2 That the Executive recommends to Council that the reduction applied to Working Age claimants remains at 27.11% for the 2017/18 scheme and that the main elements and method of calculating awards previously agreed by Council on 20 January 2016 will be the same with the exception of:

- Minor amendments to continue to align the scheme to Housing Benefit.
- The provision of additional support for vulnerable groups of claimants by amending the percentage applied to their award from 27.11% to 13.56%.

2.3 To recommend that the Council agrees to continue to operate a Discretionary Discount Policy to be awarded in cases of exceptional hardship as set out at Appendix 5a.

2.4 To note at this point in time the Department for Communities and Local Government may still issue changes to the known position for the Pensioner National Scheme. Required changes would be incorporated into the final scheme presented for adoption at Council on 25 January 2017.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme is approved by 31 January 2016 and in place by 1 April 2017 avoiding the financial risks associated with the Government imposed default scheme.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None, a Council Tax Reduction scheme must be approved by the Council every year.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is: "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience"

5.0 Background Information

5.1 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 abolished Council Tax Benefits (CTB); billing authorities were required to adopt a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) to take effect from 1st April 2013.

5.2 The Government grant for Council Tax Reduction Scheme was less than 90% of the Government forecast funding levels had Council Tax Benefits continued. The ongoing level of Government support meant the Council adopted a self-funding Scheme under which all working age claimants had to pay at least 27.11% of their Council Tax in 2013/14. This has remained the case in subsequent years.

5.3 The Blackpool Scheme incorporates the national pensioner scheme decided by Government. This ensures that support continues at the same level of support as existed under Council Tax Benefit. In Blackpool pensioners currently account for 37% of the caseload.

5.4 For working-age claims there is a means-tested assessment, predominantly based upon the former Council Tax Benefit rules, to establish entitlement. A percentage reduction of 27.11% is then applied to the award at the end of the assessment.

5.5 Although the 2017/18 scheme will, as far as is possible, have the same design principles as that currently in operation a small number of changes are proposed to align the scheme with Housing Benefit amendments in order that eligibility criteria are consistent for both schemes. The Housing Benefit changes are:

- Reducing the time period a person can be absent from their home and continue to claim Housing Benefit from 13 weeks (or 52 weeks in certain cases) to 4 weeks.
- Applicants to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) who fall within the Work Related Activity Group will no longer receive the work related activity component

in the calculation of their Housing Benefit on or after 1 April 2017.

- Limiting the number of dependent allowances within the Housing Benefit calculation to a maximum of two children, which will affect new households who have a third or subsequent child on or after 1st April 2017.
- Treating people who have someone in receipt of Universal Credit (Carer's Element) for them in the same way as those in receipt of Carer's Allowance.

These changes will only apply to working age claimants and the impact will mean a nil award of Council Tax Reduction after 4 weeks for the first change listed above and a lower award than under the current scheme for the other changes listed above.

5.6 In addition, the Council is proposing to give additional support to certain vulnerable groups:

- Where someone in the household receives Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments.
- Where the applicant is a lone parent and who is responsible and resides with a child under 5 years old.
- Where the applicant or their partner receives Carer's Allowance.
- Where the applicant or their partner is in receipt of a war pension, war widows pension, war disablement pension or equivalent.

5.7 It is proposed that the percentage reduction applied to vulnerable households is reduced from 27.11% to 13.56%. The estimated cost of providing additional support to these vulnerable groups is £0.8m per annum. In order to meet this cost there will be a review of bad debt provision and a review of the Council Tax base for 2017/18.

5.8 The value of the percentage reduction must be established each year. The percentage is determined by reference to available funding, caseload, growth / reduction in caseload. It is proposed that for 2017/18 the value of the percentage reduction for working age customers, who do not fall into the categories shown at 5.6, should remain at 27.11%.

5.9 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.10 **List of Appendices:**

Appendix 5a: Discretionary Discount Policy

Appendix 5b: Equality Impact Analysis

Appendix 5c: Consultation Report

Appendix 5d: Draft Council Tax Reduction Scheme Scheme 2017/18

6.0 Legal considerations:

- 6.1 A resolution by the full Council to adopt a Council Tax Reduction Scheme is required by 31 January 2017. The Scheme will take effect from 1 April 2017.
- 6.2 The Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount Policy has been updated and is attached at Appendix 5a, to the Executive report.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

- 7.1 Existing staffing resources within the Benefits service are used to administer the Council Tax Reduction Scheme; however, it is apparent that there has been a considerable increase in face-to-face and telephone contact, particularly when Council Tax bills are issued. The administrative and legal processes required to collect and recover substantial numbers of small amounts place an additional burden on available resources.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

- 8.1 The Equality Analysis that has previously been carried out for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme has been revisited and updated. This aims to mitigate the impact on protected groups and includes the continued availability of a discretionary hardship fund which has been made available through the adoption of a Discretionary Discount Policy. As part of their consideration of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18 Members should read the updated Equality Analysis, which is attached at Appendix 5b, to the Executive report.

9.0 Financial considerations:

- 9.1 For 2017/18 it is proposed that the percentage reduction made at the end of the assessment for working age claimants shall be 27.11%.
- 9.2 A review of the Scheme must be carried out annually to ensure it remains fit for purpose taking account of ongoing changes in legislation, caseload and financial requirements. The Council will be required to approve the Scheme each year.
- 9.3 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 provides for a major overhaul of the benefits system. The Council Tax Reduction Scheme was implemented ahead of the commencement of Universal Credit. The new scheme of Council Tax Reduction will run alongside Housing Benefit during the transition to Universal Credit. Housing Benefit administration will then gradually diminish. Wider changes to existing benefits during the next few years will mean customers on benefits will have less money available to pay their Council Tax liability. Whilst there is still an ambition to achieve full collection, this is likely to take longer.

9.4 Providing additional support to the vulnerable groups listed in Section 5.6 will increase the cost of the scheme by £0.8m per year. In order to meet this cost there will be a review of bad debt provision and a review of the Council Tax base for 2017/18. Removing vulnerable households from the requirement to pay 27.11% would allow existing resources to be used for collection from the remaining Council Tax payers.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 As part of the overall project management leading to the 2013/14 Scheme, a risk workshop identified a number of risks. Actions required to mitigate those risks have been identified and implemented where possible.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 None

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 Extensive public consultation was undertaken during 2012 to develop the 2013/14 Blackpool Scheme. The overall response concluded that, whilst most people did not agree with the changes, the options proposed by the Council were, in the main, supported.

12.2 Although the main elements and method of calculating awards will remain the same for 2017/18, further public consultation has taken place in respect of the proposed changes to Housing Benefit and to provide additional support to certain vulnerable groups. A summary of the public consultation response is below with the full consultation response attached at Appendix 5c. The Council’s response to each comment has been considered and is included within the Equality Impact Analysis, which is attached at Appendix 5b, to the Executive report.

12.3 A consultation exercise was undertaken for the proposed changes to the Blackpool scheme from 22 August 2016 to 16 October 2016. The overall response concluded that the majority of the respondents agreed with the proposed changes.

	Strongly agree or agree	Strongly disagree or disagree	Don't know
To reduce the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive Council Tax Reduction to four weeks	56	17	3

Appendix 6(a)

To give additional support to vulnerable groups in the Council Tax Reduction Scheme	54	14	6
Overall agreement with proposed approach to align with Housing Benefit	45	16	12
To limit the number of dependent children within the calculation for Council Tax Reduction to a maximum of two	45	24	7
To reduce the element of a Work Related Activity Component in the calculation of the current scheme for new ESA applicants	41	21	14
To remove entitlement to the Severe Disability Premium where another person is paid Universal Credit (Carers Element) to look after them	40	25	9

12.4 Consultation has also taken place with the major preceptors as required by Department for Communities and Local Government guidelines. The Lancashire Fire and Rescue service did not support the additional support to vulnerable groups due to the increased cost to them should all Lancashire authorities choose to do a similar scheme.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None

14.0 Key decision information:

14.1 Is this a key decision? Yes

14.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number: 26/2016

14.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No

14.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

15.0 Call-in information:

15.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No

15.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

16.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed: 7 December 2016 Date approved:

17.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

17.1 None

18.0 Executive decision:

18.1 The Executive resolved as follows:

1. To recommend Council to agree the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18 as set out in Appendix 5d, to the Executive report.
2. That the Executive recommends to Council that the reduction applied to Working Age claimants remains at 27.11% for the 2017/18 scheme and that the main elements and method of calculating awards previously agreed by Council on 20th January 2016 will be the same with the exception of:
 - Minor amendments to continue to align the scheme to Housing Benefit.
 - The provision of additional support for vulnerable groups of claimants by amending the percentage applied to their award from 27.11% to 13.56%.
3. To recommend that the Council agrees to continue to operate a Discretionary Discount Policy to be awarded in cases of exceptional hardship as set out at Appendix 5a, to the Executive report.
4. To note at this point in time the Department for Communities and Local Government may still issue changes to the known position for the Pensioner National Scheme. Required changes would be incorporated into the final scheme presented for adoption at Council on 25 January 2017.

18.2 Date of Decision:

15 December 2016

19.0 Reason(s) for decision:

To ensure a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme is approved by 31 January 2016 and in place by 1 April 2017 avoiding the financial risks associated with the Government imposed default scheme.

19.1 Date Decision published:

16 December 2016

Executive Members in attendance:

20.1 Councillor Blackburn, in the Chair

Councillors Benson, Cross, Jackson, Kirkland, Smith and Mrs Wright

21.0 Call-in:

21.1

22.0 Notes:

22.1 The following non-Executive member was in attendance: Councillor Singleton.

Report to:	Council
Relevant Officer:	Mr Steve Thompson, Director of Resources
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Leader of the Council, Councillor Simon Blackburn
Date of Meeting :	25 January 2017

APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL EXTERNAL AUDITOR

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 Section 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 states that a “relevant authority must appoint a local auditor to audit its accounts for a financial year not later than 31 December in the preceding financial year”. Current auditor contracts have been extended for 12 months, therefore for Blackpool Council the appointment of an auditor must be completed by 31 December 2017 for the audit year 2018/2019. The purpose of this report is to outline the options, one of which has a deadline to opt-in of 9 March 2017 and requires a decision of “the members of the authority meeting as a whole”.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To opt-in to the Local Government Association (LGA)-endorsed sector-led body appointed by the Secretary of State, namely Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA), by the due deadline of 9 March 2017 for them to undertake the Council’s local auditor appointment process.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

PSAA will negotiate with external audit firms nationally, maximising the opportunities for the most economic and efficient approach to procurement of external audit on behalf of the whole Local Government sector and ensuring independence of provision.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council’s approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

1. Make a stand-alone appointment.

2. Collaborate on a local joint procurement arrangement.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priorities are “The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool” and “Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience”.

5.0 Background Information

5.1 The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act) disestablished the Audit Commission and established transitional arrangements for the appointment of external auditors and the setting of audit fees for all Local Government and NHS bodies in England. On 5 October 2015, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government determined that the transitional arrangements for Local Government bodies would be extended by one year to also include the audit of accounts for 2017/ 2018. The current external auditor for Blackpool Council is KPMG, this appointment having been made under a contract, which was originally let by the Audit Commission.

5.2 Following closure of the Audit Commission, the contract is currently managed by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA), the transitional body set up by the LGA with delegated authority from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. When the current transitional arrangements come to an end on 31 March 2018, the Council will be able to move to a local appointment of its auditor. There are a number of routes by which this can be achieved, each with varying risks and opportunities.

5.3 Current audit fees are based on discounted rates offered by the firms in return for a substantial market share. When the contracts were last negotiated nationally by the Audit Commission they covered NHS and Local Government bodies and offered maximum economies of scale. The scope of the audit will still be specified nationally by the National Audit Office (NAO), which is responsible for writing the Code of Audit Practice. All firms appointed to carry out the Council’s audit must follow these requirements.

5.4 Not all accounting firms will be eligible to compete for the work. They will need to demonstrate that they have the required skills and experience and be registered with a Registered Supervising Body approved by the Financial Reporting Council. The registration process is in progress and so the number of eligible and interested firms is not known at this stage, but it is reasonable to expect that the list will include the top ten firms in the country, including the Council’s current external auditor. It is unlikely that small independent firms will be able to meet the required eligibility criteria.

- 5.5 There are three broad options open to the Council under the Act for the appointment of a new external auditor, which has to be made by December 2017 regardless of which option is chosen:

Option 1 – Make a stand-alone appointment

To make a stand-alone appointment the Council would need to establish an independent Auditor Panel, comprising of at least three members, the majority of whom (including the Chairman) are required to be independent members as defined under the Act. Independent members for this purpose are independent appointees and for the Council this would exclude all current and former elected members or officers and their close families and friends. This means that elected members would not have a majority input into the process for the assessment and appointment of the firm of accountants to provide the Council's external audit.

The Auditor Panel role is different to that of the Audit Committee. Its functions are to advise the authority on the selection and appointment of the auditor; the resignation or proposals to remove the auditor; adoption of a policy on non-audit services; maintenance of independent relationship with the auditor; and any proposals to enter into limited liability agreements. There is no specific reference in the Act of the Auditor Panel carrying out a contract oversight role, but guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) does indicate that this is a possible additional function that might be helpful.

This option would allow the Council to take maximum advantage of the new local appointment regime and have local input to the decision. However, recruitment and servicing of the Auditor Panel, running the bidding exercise and negotiating the contract are estimated by the LGA to cost in the order of £15,000 plus ongoing expenses and allowances. In addition, the Council would not benefit from reduced fees that may be available through joint or national procurement contracts.

Option 2 - Collaborate on a local joint procurement arrangement

The Act enables the Council to join with other Local Authorities to establish a joint independent Auditor Panel, which again would need to be made up of a majority of independent members. Further advice would be required on the exact constitution of such a Panel having regard to the obligations of each body under the Act and as such the Council would need to liaise with other Authorities to assess the appetite for this arrangement. For example, across the county footprint the current arrangements for the 15 Lancashire local authorities are that 11 are served by Grant Thornton and four by KPMG. In addition to these, an option could be extended to include Lancashire Police, Lancashire PCC, Lancashire Fire and Rescue, the Combined Authority and health bodies at a later date, although it should be noted that the latter are currently working to a different timetable for appointments.

Advantages of this approach are that the costs of setting up the panel, running the bidding process and negotiating the contract are shared across a number of Authorities and there is greater opportunity for negotiating economies of scale by being able to offer a larger combined contract value to firms across an area that is also more attractive logistically to manage.

However, this option is not without risk. The decision-making body is further removed from local input, it is unlikely that elected members from every Authority could be represented on an independent auditor panel. There is a risk that the larger accountancy and audit firms may decline to bid for a package of external audit work due to independence issues (a successful firm would be unable to undertake substantial advisory work as to do so would be in contravention of professional standards, independence safeguards and terms of appointment established by the PSAA).

Option 3 - Opt-in to a sector-led body

In response to the consultation on the new arrangement the LGA successfully lobbied for Councils to be able to 'opt-in' to a sector-led body appointed by the Secretary of State under the Act. This body has been confirmed as PSAA, which will negotiate with external audit firms nationally, maximising the opportunities for the most economic and efficient approach to procurement of external audit on behalf of the whole Local Government sector and ensuring independence of provision. Social value will be expected to feature as a criterion within the contract tender specification.

Under this approach the costs of setting up the appointment arrangements and negotiating fees would be shared across all opt-in Authorities (numbering 166 as at 4 January) and by offering large contract values the firms would be able to offer better rates and lower fees than are likely to result from local negotiation. Any conflicts at individual Authority level would be managed by PSAA who would have a number of contracted firms to call upon. The appointment process would not be ceded to locally-appointed independent members, but to a separate body set up to act in the collective interests of the 'opt-in' authorities.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

List of Appendices

None.

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 PSAA will oversee a legally-compliant procurement process.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 There are potential TUPE issues between any existing and prospective local external audit providers, but these will be facilitated by PSAA.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 As with any tendering process costs may increase as a consequence, but the scale upon which this procurement process is based should mitigate this outcome and indeed maximise economies and efficiencies. Provisional fees should be available for consultation in autumn 2017.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 The NAO's Code of Audit Practice provides the framework for external audit governance and delivery. The PSAA's procurement process will ensure that escalation procedures are incorporated should performance be deemed unsatisfactory.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 The recommended option should give the Council greater confidence and assurance in the independence of external audit opinion offered. Successful firms will also have to demonstrate that they meet the Financial Reporting Council's Auditor's Ethical Standard.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 A draft of this report has been shared for comment with the Leader of the Council, Chairman of Audit Committee, Corporate Leadership Team, Chief Internal Auditor, Head of Procurement, Chief Accountant and current external auditor, KPMG.

13.0 Background Papers

13.1 None.

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Report to:	COUNCIL
Relevant Officer:	Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Simon Blackburn, Leader of the Council
Date of Meeting:	25 January 2017

CONSTITUTIONAL AND PROPER OFFICER CHANGES

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To consider changes to the Council's constitution and interim arrangements for the statutory director of children's services position.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To confirm that the Chief Executive be authorised make an appointment for an interim statutory Director of Children's Services in accordance with Section 18 of the Children's Act 2004 and also then re-assign that responsibility to the successful candidate for the permanent position should they commence employment with the Council before the next ordinary Council meeting.
- 2.2 To confirm that the duties in the Constitution currently assigned to the Chief Corporate Solicitor be reassigned to the Head of Legal, with the exception of those listed in paragraph 5.6 and to reinstate that the Deputy Head of Legal be the formal officer for the purposes of those duties, to act on behalf of or in the absence of the Head of Legal.
- 2.3 To agree that the duties listed in paragraph 5.6 be assigned to the Director of Governance and Partnerships.
- 2.4 To confirm the Proper Officer designations and appointments to certain positions in the health sector relating to Lancashire and Cumbria as set out in paragraphs 5.8 and 5.9.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 The Council has to consider changes to the constitution in relation to the designated officer for certain legal matters and also to consider interim arrangements for the statutory Director of Children's Services. The Council has also been asked to agree proper officer arrangements for certain public health related positions.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

To not make any changes or make different appointments.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The proposals help the Council achieve both its priorities. 'The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool' and 'creating stronger communities and increasing resilience'.

5.0 Background Information

5.1 As members will be aware Mrs Delyth Curtis, the Council's statutory Director of Children's Services has obtained a Deputy Chief Executive position at Cheshire West and Chester Council and leaves the Council at the end of the month. The selection process has taken place over the past two days to consider a replacement. However, should an offer of appointment be made there will be a period of notice to serve. The statutory guidance for the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services, published by the Department of Education indicates that the Chief Executive can make an interim designation in such circumstances, where the Council is actively taking steps to fill a vacant post.

5.2 The Council is therefore asked to confirm that the Chief Executive be authorised to appoint an interim statutory Director and should the successful candidate for the permanent position commence work prior to the next ordinary Council meeting then he also be authorised to designate that individual as an interim statutory Director of Children's Services in accordance with Section 18 of the Children's Act 2004. Should a successful appointment to the vacant position be made then a report will be brought to the next ordinary Council meeting to confirm a permanent assignment of the statutory role.

5.3 The Council's Chief Solicitor took voluntary redundancy and left the Council on 31 December 2016. As part of the ongoing close working between the Council and the Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, their Head of Legal has been seconded to the Council on a 50:50 basis between both organisations and a post of Legal Practice Manager has also been created to work across both organisations also on a 50:50 basis. This increases resilience and knowledge across both services.

5.4 There are number of references to the role of Chief Corporate Solicitor in the Constitution. Under article 16, the Monitoring Officer may amend the Constitution to reflect changes in legislation or decisions made from time to time by or on behalf of the authority. However, it is opportune to consider a tailored approach with this being a shared post. Up until the last review of the Constitution, there used to be a Deputy for responsibilities assigned to the Chief Corporate Solicitor designated in the constitution. It is recommended to reinstate this responsibility.

5.5 Council is therefore asked to confirm that the responsibilities in the Constitution assigned to the Chief Corporate Solicitor be assigned to the new Head of Legal (with the exception of those listed at 5.6 below) and to reinstate that the Deputy Head of Legal be the formal officer for the purposes of those duties, to act on behalf of or in the Head of Legal's absence.

5.6 The list of duties below it is considered appropriate to reassign to the Director of Governance and Partnerships from the Chief Corporate Solicitor.

S.229(5) The Officer who shall certify photographic copy of a document in the custody of the Council, or of a document which has been destroyed while in the custody of the Council, or of any part of any such document.

S.234 The Officer who may authenticate documents on behalf of the Council.

S.238 The Officer who shall certify a printed copy of a byelaw of the Council.

Schedule 14, Part II, para. 25(7) The Officer who shall certify a resolution of the Council under this paragraph (this is already a joint responsibility with the Director of Governance and Partnerships Services. Under the proposals this will become the sole responsibility of the Director of Governance and Partnerships).

5.7 Recent personnel changes in the Cumbria and Lancashire Public Health England Centre health protection team have made it necessary to update arrangements for proper officer functions for Local Authorities in Cumbria and Lancashire.

5.8 The consultant level staff in Public Health England North West listed below at paragraph 5.9 should be appointed as Proper Officers in relation to health protection powers set out in the table below:

Legislation	Section	Power
Public Health Act 1936	84	The cleansing or destruction of filthy or verminous articles
	85	To report to the local authority that a person is verminous and to authorise cleansing
Public Health Act 1961	37	To disinfest, destroy or remove verminous articles for sale from any premises
Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984	48	Preparation of certificate to Justice of Peace for removal of body to mortuary and for burial within a prescribed time or immediately.
	59	Authorising documents under this act on behalf of the authority
	61-62	Power to enter premises
Health Protection (Notification) Regulations 2010	2, 3 and 6	Receipt and disclosure of notification of suspected notifiable disease, infection or contamination in patients and dead persons.

5.9 Proper Officer nominations:

- John Astbury (reappointment)
- Nicola Schinaia (reappointment)
- Grainne Nixon (reappointment)
- Mark McGivern (new appointment)

5.10 Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

List of Appendices:

None.

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 The Children's Act 2004, states that the Council must have a Statutory Director of Children's Services designated. The Council's constitution identifies certain Proper Officer positions relating to legal and public health roles.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 None.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 Equality considerations would be considered as part of the appointment and designation process.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 There are no other financial considerations relating to the proposals in this report.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 An interim appointment of Statutory Director of Children's Services means that there is an officer with the relevant knowledge, experience and skills to be accountable for the Council's duties in relation to the Children's Act 2004. Appointing a deputy to the Head of Legal for Proper Officer purposes means that there is adequate cover should decisions need to be taken in the Head of Legal's absence. Failure to update the Proper Officers records for public health purposes would put the Council at risk of not fulfilling its statutory duties.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 Notification has been received from Public Health England of the changes to proper officer designations for the public health purposes.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 Letter from Public Health England to Chief Executive dated 29 November 2016.

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Item 9 - Notice of Motion

To consider the following motion, which has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 12.1:

a) NHS SERVICES. Councillor Owen to propose.

National and local media have been reporting on the increasing pressure NHS services are facing.

In the Autumn Statement, the Chancellor failed to significantly intervene in directly relieving the pressure on NHS services, nor did he provide any new financial assistance to deal with the social care crisis, which considerably contributes to bed-blocking, contributing to the state of our A and E departments which are now on the brink of collapse.

Notwithstanding the decision of the Health Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 14 December to receive a detailed progress report on health and social care integration, principally focusing on the Sustainability and Transformation Plan in early 2017, Council expresses its serious misgivings on the implications for health and social care for Blackpool by the acceptance and implementation of the Lancashire and South Cumbria plan, in its current form. A plan to reorganise services and make them more efficient is only likely to be able to contribute to a solution and the kinds of savings being demanded by Government are very likely to be unrealistic.

This Council therefore requests the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to call upon the Government to invest urgently in social care and NHS services.

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