

Scrutiny Review Scope	
Proposed Title	Scoping Date
Review of Blackpool Council's Council Tax income (to help support future strategies including Housing and Investment).	06/01/2023
Criteria and reasons for selecting topic	
<p>Council Tax generated in the 2022/2023 Budget provided 40.9% of Blackpool Councils income. Not only is it a significant contributor to Blackpool Council's income, it reflects the very nature of Blackpool's housing supply and subsequent issues in other services including but not limited to Revenues, Housing, Children's and Adult Services.</p> <p>Understanding the nature of the Council Tax landscape in Blackpool for both Elected Members and Officers will support long term strategic development of policy areas around the services affected by the Housing supply in Blackpool as well as a clearer understanding of Blackpool's income generation (including potential) from it.</p> <p>The review is not to determine what those strategies should be, rather provide the information to support elected members and officers in their decision making.</p>	
Which priority within the Council Plan does this topic address?	
<p>Priority 1 - The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool</p>	
What are the main objectives of the scrutiny?	
<p>Profile Blackpool Council Tax base and current collection rates Understand how Future Housing schemes will impact on Council Tax Impact of Fraud on Council Tax returns</p>	
What specific issues will be addressed as part of the scrutiny?	
<p>1) Current Collections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Which bands pay what and which locations are paying what b) Review Discounts including Single Person discount and Council Tax Reduction schemes to include the optimum amount of Council Tax return based on the number of houses in the scheme if they contributed 100% c) Impact of Empty Properties and Short Term Lets d) Collection Rates <p>Establish trends on all of the above by reviewing figures from 2010 and 2015 alongside 2023</p> <p>2) Fraud:</p> <p>How much Council Tax income is lost to fraud</p> <p>3) New Housing Schemes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Impact of new housing schemes on Council Tax bases and impact of futures schemes b) Impact of properties refurbished by MyBlackpool Homes 	
What possible outcomes are envisaged in terms of service improvements / benefits to the community?	
<p>Support Future Medium and longer range Financial Strategies Housing and Investment strategies consider this review when undertaking development work</p>	

Better communications with public on Council income Support Team with Council Tax Fraud Improved Council Tax collection
How will the public be involved? (consider invitations / press releases for meetings, consultation with community groups / clubs, etc)
The public will not be specifically included within this review.
How will the scrutiny achieve value for money for the Council / Council Tax payers?
It will support the development of strategies that will in the long run reduce costs and improve income.
What primary / new evidence is needed for the scrutiny?
Geographical General Returns Data from Capita CT System Housing Data Fraud Data
What secondary / existing information will be needed? (include background information / existing reports (consider Internal Audit) / legislation / central government information and reports, etc.
To be determined.
Which Council officers / departments will provide information, advice and assistance for the scrutiny?
Louise Jones, Head of Revenues and Benefits Antony Lockley / Vikki Piper, Director of Strategy and/or Head of Housing Tracy Greenhalgh, Head of Audit and Risk Steve Thompson, Director of Resources/ Mark Golden, Head of Accountancy
What expert witnesses will the panel request input from outside of the Council?
None
What type of meetings (e.g. fact finding, evidence gathering, consultations, questioning, site visits), and how many in number are envisaged for the scrutiny?
Two fact finding meetings by the Scrutiny Leadership Board with a clear terms of reference to support a better level of discussion and information gathering.
Timescales / likely duration of enquiry
April to July 2024
Lead Scrutiny Officer
Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager
Scrutiny Panel Members
Cllrs Cartmell, Ellison, Smith, B. Mitchell, Flanagan, C. Mitchell, Critchley, Scott, Roberts and Galley

