

# Public Document Pack



**BLACKPOOL COUNCIL**

Tuesday, 11 September 2018

To: The Members of Blackpool Council

Mr 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, 19 September 2018 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 either a

- (a) personal interest
- (b) prejudicial interest
- (c) disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI)

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 27 JUNE 2018** (Pages 1 - 8)

To agree the minutes of the last meeting held on 27 June 2018 as a true and correct record.

**3 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

To receive official announcements from the Mayor.

**4 PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS** (Pages 9 - 10)

To receive representations from members of the public in accordance with Procedure Rule 9.

**5 EXECUTIVE REPORTS AND COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY REPORTS** (Pages 11 - 36)

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) and the Combined Fire Authority report.

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 25 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 25 Minutes for a response from the Senior Executive Member \* (or relevant Cabinet Member) at the end of the questions/ comments for each report.

\* or Combined Fire Authority representative.

**6 REVISED MEMBER AND OFFICER PROTOCOL AND REVISIONS TO THE PUBLIC SPEAKING PROCEDURE FOR PLANNING** (Pages 37 - 50)

To consider a revised draft Member and Officer Protocol for Planning and amendments to the Public Speaking arrangements as recommended by the Planning Committee at its meeting on the 14 August 2018.

**7 REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL** (Pages 51 - 58)

To consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to consideration of an allowance for the Second Opposition Group Leader.

## 8 MOTIONS AT COUNCIL

(Pages 59 - 60)

To consider the following motions which have been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 12.1.

**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](mailto: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](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk).

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### Present:

Councillor Rowson (in the Chair)

### Councillors

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

### In Attendance:

Neil Jack, Chief Executive

Antony Lockley, Director of Strategy and Assistant Chief Executive

Steve Thompson, Director of Resources

Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships/Monitoring Officer

Lorraine Hurst, Head of Democratic Governance

Philip Welsh, Head of Visitor Economy

Jenny Bollington, Media Manager

Yvonne Burnett, Democratic Governance Senior Adviser

### 1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Blackburn, Jackson and T Williams declared personal interests in Agenda Item 9a 'Notices of Motion – Lancashire Combined Fire and Rescue Authority'.

### 2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 14 MAY 2018

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 May 2018, be signed by the Deputy Mayor as a correct record.

### 3 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Deputy Mayor reminded members that it was Armed Forces week and asked councillors for their support for the Service and Parade.

The Deputy Mayor announced that Terrie Carmody had been awarded the Blackpool and the Fylde College Higher Education Student of the Year award (Computing) and congratulated Terrie, on behalf of the Council.

#### 4 PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS - PUBLIC SPEAKER

Members noted that Mr Stuart Clayton had been unable to attend the Council meeting as expected and agreed that the item be deferred to the next meeting of the Council.

#### 5 PUBLIC REPRESENTATION - PETITION SCHEME - RE-OPENING OF THE BLACKPOOL FOYER TO HELP THE HOMELESS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER LOCAL GROUPS

It was reported that the Council's Petitions Officer had received a petition containing over 1,500 signatures relating to the re-opening of the Blackpool Foyer to help the homeless in partnership with other local groups and that in line with the approved Council's Petition Scheme, qualified for report to and debate at Council.

The petition organiser, Mr Bennison, addressed Council members with regards to the petition statements and representations from residents and asked the Council to consider opening the Foyer for young homeless people aged, particularly over the winter period.

**Motion:** Councillor Mrs Wright proposed (and Councillor Cross seconded):

'That the Council does not reopen the Blackpool Foyer for use as accommodation for young homeless people.'

Debate took place on the motion and while it was accepted that homelessness was a significant issue across the country, members expressed the view that other homelessness services were in place aimed at tackling the root of the issue.

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

#### 6 EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader of the Council and 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.

Questions, comments and debate were invited from all councillors on each of the report areas.

Notes:

- (1) Councillor Blackburn agreed to provide a response to Councillor Mrs Callow on the total staffing budget for the Blackpool Museum and sources of funding, as well as the figure for commuted sums.
- (2) In response to Councillor T Williams, Councillor Campbell agreed to provide details of when the Airport Enterprise Zone Business Plan and Market Assessment, which was being prepared by York Aviation, would be published and whether it would be

## MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 27 JUNE 2018

publically available or subject to commercial confidentiality. Councillor Campbell also agreed to confirm for Councillor Mrs Callow when the toilets at Little Bispham (junction of Princes Way) would be reopened.

- (3) During the discussion on the report from the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Clapham declared a personal interest as a Director of Blackpool Sixth Form College.
- (4) Councillor Stansfield left the meeting following consideration of the item.

### 7 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2018 TO 2021)

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive from its meeting on 16 April 2018 relating to the approval of the three-year Local Transport Plan, which had been structured around the six Local Transport Plan strategic objectives including: highway maintenance, road safety, congestion, economy, parking and accessibility.

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

- ‘1. To approve the indicative three-year Local Transport Plan works programme 2018/ 2019 to 2020/ 2021 attached at Appendix 2a to the Executive report.
2. To approve the programme incorporated with the objectives and vision from the 2011 Local Transport Plan Strategy forming Blackpool’s Local Transport Plan (Implementation Plan 2018 to 2021) attached at Appendix 2b to the Executive report.
3. To grant authority to the Director of Communication and Regeneration following consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council (Tourism, Economic Growth and Jobs) subject to a published officer decision, to vary the programme as required to deliver overall objectives and ensure spend of the indicative grant allocations.’

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

### 8 POLITICAL BALANCE CALCULATIONS

The Council was asked to consider the political balance and re-appointment of its committees, in accordance with the Council's Constitution and the Local Government Act 1972, due to the creation of an Independent Group. The Deputy Mayor informed the Council that the group would be known as the ‘Independent Blackpool Residents Group’.

**Motion:** Councillor Blackburn proposed (and Councillor T Williams seconded):

- ‘1. To appoint the following Council committees, in line with the political balance calculations and adjustments at Appendix 8(a) and to agree that the powers and duties remain as set out in the Council’s Constitution:
  - Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee (membership of ten with a composition of six Labour, three Conservative and one Independent)

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- Resilient Communities and Children’s Scrutiny Committee (membership of ten with a composition of six Labour, three Conservative and one Independent)
  - Tourism, Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee (membership of ten with a composition of six Labour, three Conservative and one Independent)
  - Audit Committee (membership of nine with a composition of six Labour and three Conservative)
  - Appeals Committee (membership of seven and with a composition of five Labour and two Conservative)
  - Planning Committee (membership of eight and with a composition of five Labour, two Conservative and one Independent)
  - Standards Committee (membership of six and with a composition of four Labour and two Conservative)
  - Chief Officers Employment Committee (membership of six and with a composition of four Labour and two Conservative)
  - Shareholder’s Advisory Board (membership of four and with a composition of three Labour and one Conservative)
2. That in relation to scrutiny, to agree to continue with two diocesan co-opted representatives and the two governor co-opted representatives to the Resilient Communities and Children’s Scrutiny Committee and for that committee to confirm the necessary appointments.
  3. That the Licensing Committee also be re-appointed with the powers and duties as set out in the Constitution (membership of fourteen and a composition of nine Labour, four Conservative and one Independent).
  4. That the Licensing Committee be requested to re-appoint the Public Protection Sub-Committee, with the powers and duties, as set out in the Constitution (membership of seven and with a composition of five Labour and two Conservative).
  5. To note the appointment of members to committees as set out in Appendix 8(b) and thereafter any nominations or changes to nominations reported to the Director of Governance and Partnerships by the relevant Group Leader.
  6. To agree to the appointment of the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen for those committees as identified at Appendix 8(b) based on the above recommendations.
  7. To note that the Health and Well Being Board is not affected by the creation of an Independent Group and remains constituted as agreed at Annual Council.
  8. To agree that as a new Independent Group has been constituted, as per normal practice when positions are created which are not already in the Council’s Members Allowances Scheme (ie Group Leader of a third group) that a referral to the Independent Remuneration Panel be made and a report from that Panel be considered at the next meeting of the Council.



9. To agree that the Director of Governance and Partnerships be authorised to amend the Constitution accordingly.'

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

## **9 LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**Motion:** Having submitted notice, Councillor T Williams proposed (and Councillor Jackson seconded):

'Lancashire Combined Fire and Rescue Authority remains committed to delivering the best possible service to its communities, with the resources it has available. It continues to work productively and effectively with a range of stakeholders. The new statutory duty to collaborate with other emergency services is also acknowledged, while recognising many initiatives were already in place or in development irrespective of this mandate.

The Fire and Rescue Authority remains confident that current governance arrangements present the best way to deliver a fire and rescue service for its communities. It will though provide the information required for the work proposed by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), which it believes will evidence that it is already effectively progressing collaborative opportunities within existing structures.

Consequently, this Council places on record its opposition to any proposals that transfer any current responsibilities of the Fire and Rescue Authority in Lancashire to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Blackpool Council therefore asks the Chief Executive to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Home Secretary explaining this view, sending copies to all Lancashire Members of Parliament.'

Members went on to debate the motion.

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

## **10 LEARNING DISABILITIES**

**Motion:** Having submitted notice, Councillor Collett proposed (and Councillor Ryan seconded):

'Blackpool is home to a number of exceptional schools, services and groups dedicated to the inclusion and support of residents with a learning disability, who are a treasured part of our town and our communities.

This Council notes that due to health inequalities, gaps in care and poor specialist health provision, people with learning disabilities are at significantly higher risk of dying avoidable deaths, both in hospital and at home. Both the LeDer and Mencap's "Treat Me Well"

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reports have set out what ought to be done about this national scandal, yet little progress has been made in the past decade.

This Council therefore instructs the Chief Executive to write to both the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to outline the Council's position and to urge meaningful action on the following points:

- The introduction of basic mandatory training for all hospital staff and social workers, regarding the care for people with learning disabilities.
- An urgent and comprehensive review of NHS resources, training and recruitment, and provision of specialist nurses, doctors and associated health professionals with a detailed knowledge of the needs of patients with learning disabilities.
- A detailed review of NHS policy and process in relation to the identification and tracking of people with learning disabilities and the systems used to make reasonable adjustments for them, such as access to in-patient specialist services, accessible verbal and written communication and longer appointment times.
- The creation of a ministerial role for learning disabilities in Health and Social Care.'

Members went on to debate the motion.

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

### 11 REINSTATEMENT OF THROUGH TRAINS

**Motion:** Having submitted notice, Councillor O'Hara proposed (and Councillor Mitchell seconded):

'This Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Chairman of Transport for the North, Sir John Cridland and the Secretary Of State for Transport, insisting that "THROUGH" trains to and from Blackpool, connecting the resort with East Lancashire and West Yorkshire, are reinstated as soon as possible.

Visitors from these areas have for over a century, been the mainstay of inbound tourism. Many people who use the train to come to Blackpool have no alternative means of transport, many are elderly or suffer from disabilities - requiring them to change trains, often at stations which may be legally compliant, but hardly disabled friendly, is an intolerable situation.'

Members went on to debate the motion.

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

### 12 SINGLE USE PLASTICS

**Motion:** Having submitted notice, Councillor Humphreys proposed (and Councillor Critchley seconded):

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'This Council supports Surfers Against Sewage "Plastics Free Coastlines" movement, committing to plastic free alternatives and supporting plastic free initiatives within Lancashire.

The Council commits to lead by example to remove single-use plastic items from its premises. It must also encourage plastic free initiatives, promoting the campaign and supporting its events.

A representative of this Council, appointed by the Leader, will volunteer to become a member of the Surfers Against Sewage "Plastic Free Coastlines" Steering group, in order to support them in developing a local action plan.

Blackpool Council therefore commits to eliminating, wherever practically possible, its use of single use plastics by May 2020 and to work with our wholly owned companies to the same end.'

Members went on to debate the motion.

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

### 13 SAVE CREATIVE ARTS GCSE SUBJECTS IN BLACKPOOL

**Motion:** Having submitted notice, Councillor L Taylor proposed (and Councillor Ryan seconded):

'Since the announcement of the English Baccalaureate, Blackpool secondary schools are having to prioritise subjects within the EBacc as the Government has said that schools' performance will be measured on the success rate of pupils studying these qualifications. The Government expects 90% of all secondary school pupils to be choosing this combination by 2025.

Subjects within the new qualification are English language and literature, maths, the sciences, geography or history and a language. This does not leave much room for creative subjects such as art, dance, drama and music.

With the increased emphasis on core academic subjects, together with funding pressures, resources for creative subjects are being cut back.

The Council is therefore asked:

- To support teachers and parents who want young people to study arts in Blackpool secondary schools.
- To support that further work be carried out with Blackpool secondary schools and the Council looking at ways to work together to ensure Blackpool's creative talent is not lost at secondary school, providing a dedicated resource looking at funding opportunities and ways to support creative subjects at GCSE level.
- To assess the feasibility of an arts-based secondary school in Blackpool.

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- That the Chief Executive writes to the Secretary of state for Education on the Council's behalf to ask if Blackpool secondary school students can choose a creative arts subject as part of their EBacc.'

Members went on to debate the motion.

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

### 14 THE RAIL NETWORK AND ITS IMPACT ON BLACKPOOL'S ECONOMY

**Motion:** Having submitted notice, Councillor Collett proposed (and Councillor Hutton seconded):

'This Council deplores the current chaotic state and catastrophic decline in performance of our rail network and its impact on Blackpool's economy, as well as the human and financial costs to our residents and local business.

This Council therefore requests its Chief Executive to write the Secretary of State for Transport to outline this situation and to support the Leader of the Council's call (made in his role as a Director of Transport for the North) for a compensation scheme for Blackpool businesses to be rapidly developed, alongside a "disaster recovery" marketing scheme for the Fylde Coast, both to be funded jointly by Northern and Network Rail.'

Members went on to debate the motion.

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

### Mayor

(The meeting ended at 9.06 pm)

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

Council:  
19 September 2018

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## PUBLIC REPRESENTATION - SPEAKER

NAME	SUBJECT
1. Mr Stuart Clayton Representing the Fylde Family Support Group	Mr Clayton wishes to speak on the following issue:  “I represent a growing number of Blackpool residents who are looking to raise the profile of the ‘positive’ mental health experience. We have all suffered and continue to do so, but through peer support, we are building community networks and getting our lives back on track. We feel this should be acknowledged more in local media. Groups such as Time to Change, Art of Recovery, Blackpool Inspirations and Rethink Mental Illness are plugging gaps amongst statutory services and helping to keep people alive. They deserve more credit. We belong to a new Mental Health Community Forum under the guidance of Empowerment Advocacy, where we identify the big issues and work on positive solutions in partnership with local agencies and Health and Wellbeing Services. Mental Health is a massive issue in Blackpool and we are tackling it in most productive ways”.

Response to be given by the Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Health, Councillor Amy Cross

**NOTE:** The representative will be able to speak for up to a maximum of five minutes.

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Executive Member Report to the Council  
19 September 2018

AGENDA ITEM 5(a)

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

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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

#### Financial Monitoring

Like most other upper tier local authorities, ongoing pressures in social care dominate our financial monitoring forecasts for this year. It is apparent even at this early stage of the financial year that the demand pressures being met by Children’s Services are once again the primary challenge facing the Council in its attempt to balance its Budget in-year. However, I am pleased to report that all other services are showing an aggregated net underspend of £136,000, meaning that the in-year position, whilst of concern, is understood and controlled.

The profound challenges we face in Blackpool surrounding the funding of Children’s Services are not a local problem. It is a national contagion, attracting widespread coverage in the media in recent months. ‘Children and Young People Now’ identified in June that based upon Revenue Account data for 2018/ 2019 e.g. local authorities’ submitted annual budgets rather than forecast outturns, local authority spending on children’s services is rising at a faster rate than any other council service area. Expenditure is expected to rise by £542m (6.8%) of which expenditure on Looked after Children is rising by £350m (9.1%). However, whilst spend on children’s social care nationally represents 18% of total local authority spend (excluding Education and Police), in Blackpool the proportion is much greater.

A recent Newton Europe Report ‘Making Sense Understanding the Drivers of Variation in Spend on Children’s Services’ (June, 2018), commissioned by the Local Government Association, appraised the drivers of variation in spend on children’s services. It concluded that approximately half of the variation in spend seen nationally was due to factors largely outside the control of councils, namely deprivation, 0 – 25 population, amount of disposable household income, levels of unemployment and crime. The All Party Parliamentary Group for Children published a report, July 2018, titled ‘Storing Up Trouble: A postcode lottery of children’s social care’, in which several recommendations were made that sought both interim and sustainable funding arrangements based upon level of need “to stabilise the crisis in early intervention services” and “to invest in early help and preventative services”. This follows months of

Government lobbying by the Local Government Association, Barnardo's, Action for Children, National Children's Bureau, The Children's Society, NSPCC and our own North West Portfolio Holders for Children's Services Network.

I am proud of Blackpool Council's financial record during the recent years of austerity and acute financial challenge – a challenge created first and foremost by this Government's continued assault on local authorities and their ability to provide quality local services. I am proud that Blackpool Council can demonstrate that it has maintained working balances of circa £6m across the last decade, that its level of earmarked reserves has remained relatively stable for the last three years and that its income collection is actually improving during very difficult times. However, as it stands, in-year pressures in Children's social care mean that we estimate overall Council working balances to fall by £4,051,000 against the budgeted position over the year. This fall is in the context of unaudited working balances at the start of the year of £6,034,000 representing a potential erosion of 67%.

The most up to date in-year financial position was reported to the Executive on 10 September. Whilst the position of Children's Services remains our number one corporate concern, I remain reassured that in the context of £32m Earmarked Reserves and with the majority of the financial year remaining, we will weather the storm so that the position improves before year-end.

As Members are aware, on top of the continued demand pressures in social care, the overall budget for 2018/ 2019 required a further total savings of £5.5million to be found. As at 30 June 2018 (month 3), 35% of the 2018/ 2019 savings target had already been delivered.

I find it hard to understate to Members the extent of financial challenge now facing local councils up and down the country – be they Labour, Conservative, or all combination of colours in between. Every passing week would appear to carry news of another County Council somewhere in the country freezing spending and warning that they are at serious risk of following the fate of Northampton. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-45435368>. The Government cannot surely continue on its current course. It must determine how social care in particular is to be placed on a sustainable financial footing, so that we can all plan for the longer term and extinguish the growing crises of the present. I continue to work with colleagues across the political spectrum through the Local Government Association to urge the Government to commit to the proper funding of essential local public services.

### **Continued Improvements to the Collection of Council Tax, Business Rates and Administration of Housing Benefit**

At the end of month 3, the amount collected for Council Tax (excluding Police and Fire precepts) was £14.3m and the collection rate was 26.2%. This compares to £13.1m and 25.8% at the same point in 2017/ 2018. The amount collected has actually risen by £1.2m, which is mainly due to increases in both the Council Tax rate and base. I am pleased to advise that early indications show the improved collection rate has continued at month 4.



In respect of Business Rates, at the end of month 3, the amount collected was £12.7m and the collection rate was 25.4%. This compares to £12.9m and 24.9% at the same point in 2017/2018. The increase of 0.5% compared to the previous year equates to £0.4m, though changes in both the Business Rate multiplier and base (due to the Revaluation in April 2017 and other movements) have made negative contributions of £0.6m, offset by a compensating increase to the Non-Domestic Rate (NDR) Top-up amount. Early indications show the improved collection for NDR has continued at month 4. A total of 320 business rate summonses were issued in the three months to the end of June 2018.

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Scheme new claims were processed in an average of 24 days in July whilst changes in circumstances were processed in 12 days. Following consultation regarding the future of funding for supported housing, the Government has announced their intention to keep the current scheme, which will mean customers in this type of accommodation will continue to claim Housing Benefit.

## **Strategic Issues**

### **The Changing Face of Retail and High Streets: Our Focus on the Regeneration and Transformation of Blackpool Town Centre**

The fate of the British high street continues to occupy significant media attention and comment. Clearly, the face of retailing is changing more extensively and rapidly than most anticipated and recent research has demonstrated that the contraction in traditional forms of retailing is resulting in increased levels of high street retail vacancy in town and city centres right across the county. I am acutely aware of how these challenges are playing out in Blackpool, where the context of our retailing environment is already somewhat volatile because of the seasonal nature of footfall through the town centre. I am also conscious that a number of well-documented, reputable reports have shown that those town centres that are most dependent on retail premises have suffered most badly and those town centres with less retail, more offices and other forms of leisure activities have fared the best.

I would like to highlight to Members that this evidence acts as direct support and validation for our strategy for the regeneration of Blackpool town centre. We need to both support retail and promote positive shifts in the use and purpose of parts of the town centre to other things that will drive footfall and spend, reflecting what people now want. In this context, I am convinced that the investments we have made, continue to make and hope to make in the town centre are the right ones, as they are going to drive year round footfall, spend and not rely exclusively on retail. Solid examples of this strategy already in delivery include:

- Our £26m investment in a new Conference Centre, bringing in new people year round, in particular for business conferencing out of season;
- Our support for the extension of Hounds Hill to include relocated Wilkos, IMAX cinema and restaurant offering;

- A new £23.4m tram extension linking by underpass into Blackpool North Station and the newly electrified rail line;
- A new 144-bedroom 4-star Holiday Inn and restaurant; and
- A £7m Quality Corridors programme, which will see the refurbishment of King Street, Deansgate, Edward Street, Topping Street and Cookson Street/ Dickson Road, which are already on the way to completion.

In addition to this, we continue to develop plans to increase the level of quality office floor space and associated jobs in the town centre. To this end, I am delighted to welcome the hundreds of new private sector staff that are locating to our building at Bickerstaffe Square this autumn. I am also determined that we make the strongest possible case to Government for the relocation of existing public sector employment from peripheral locations in Blackpool directly into the town centre in the years ahead.

All of these investments and proposals will bring new footfall, spend and life into our town centre. Put together, they will deliver transformational change.

### **Central Leisure Quarter**

Proposals for the Central Leisure Quarter are of course central to our regeneration ambitions – for the town centre and the visitor economy more widely. I can confirm that discussions with the developer for the Central Leisure Quarter site have continued over recent months, with significant progress being made on the specific nature of the proposals. There have been some exciting recent revisions to the proposed scheme, with the Developer now working towards firming up the detail for the scheme before presenting a comprehensive masterplan for the whole site this autumn. Negotiations commenced in early August with the Developer’s solicitors and the Council’s advisors around proposals for ‘Heads of Terms’ for the site and to discuss the basis for a potential Land Agreement. Subject to these negotiations, the Council and the Developer are looking to finalise legal agreements as soon as practicable and present them to the Executive for approval later this year.

The current proposals would see a phased redevelopment of the site, with a potential commencement in early 2020. At present the detail of the proposals, remain confidential under the current terms of the agreement with the Developer whilst it is the subject of negotiation and amendment. The Council, however, is hoping to be in a position to make a formal announcement regarding the proposals before the end of the year.

With regard to the Bonny Street Police Station and Blackpool Courts, the Council will soon be taking back possession of the Police Station buildings following their acquisition by the Council back in 2016 and Lancashire Constabulary’s imminent decanting of the premises this autumn. In relation to Blackpool Courts, the Council commissioned a feasibility study earlier this summer (funded by money won from central government), which identified a number of suitable sites for their potential relocation. Additional work is now being undertaken to assess the viability of these sites and the opportunities they may present in the long term.

## **Policy Issues**

### **Lords Select Committee: Visit to Blackpool, 5 and 6 September 2018**

I am very pleased to inform Members that a special House of Lords Select Committee has chosen to focus on the regeneration of seaside towns as one of its inquiries this year. I would like to thank Baroness Valentine in particular for working to ensure that the profile of seaside towns has been raised in this way. I am delighted that the Lords Committee chose to make a special visit to Blackpool in early September as part of their evidence gathering. Members of the Committee spent time looking at our particular housing challenges, especially our troubled private rented sector, alongside our regeneration successes such as the tramway, promenade, Tower and the early delivery of our new Conference Centre. The Committee also visited the Airport Enterprise Zone and Fleetwood dock to learn more about efforts to diversify the economic base of Blackpool and the Fylde Coast.

The Council has been invited to submit written evidence to the inquiry and senior officers are currently preparing our submission. I am hopeful that we will be called to give oral evidence to the Committee at Westminster in due course. If invited, I look forward to taking the opportunity to outline publically the specific challenges and opportunities facing seaside towns, and Blackpool in particular and what we need from Government to continue to regenerate our economy and town.

## **Working with Partners**

### **Continued Rail Disruption: Some Positives for Blackpool out of the Recent Chaos**

As Members, our residents and visitors well know, this year has witnessed an unprecedented and totally unacceptable level of rail disruption. We always expected some pain owing to the electrification of the line from Preston to Blackpool North. Indeed, some pain was worth the gain of this terrific and overdue investment. However, I do not think any of us could have anticipated the extent of chaos that was unleashed on the Northern rail network after the abject failure of the new timetable that Northern Rail attempted to introduce in May. It was an unmitigated disaster. Services are only now beginning to recover – even the recent emergency timetable was unreliable in respect of certain routes. I believe it is fair to say that we have all lost some confidence in our railways and this is especially bad for a place like Blackpool that depends on visitor traffic. The situation in respect of our railways must be reversed.

Throughout the summer, I have made every effort to impress upon rail bosses the need for immediate improvement in the reliability of services into Blackpool – on behalf of residents, businesses and visitors. Councillors Campbell and Jackson have joined me in this effort in particular, alongside senior officers and both of our local MP's. I must say that this effort has frequently been a frustrating exercise. All too often, we have had inadequate answers to our questions. Furthermore, the city regional mayors to our south, in particular the Mayor of Greater Manchester, have too frequently dominated the debate about rail in the media and

elsewhere. This exercise alone has further convinced me of the urgent need for Lancashire to assemble a stronger collective voice.

Regardless of these difficulties, I am pleased to inform Members that over the summer I personally negotiated special support for Blackpool via our membership of Transport for the North. I can confirm that I secured over £80,000 towards additional resort marketing, paid for by the rail industry out of recognition of the impact the disruption has had on Blackpool. This new money has paid for a number of additional TV and radio campaigns over the summer, above and beyond what we had been planning. It is our view that the entire visitor economy benefits from additional footfall into the town and this is the reason why we opted to allocate this new cash to additional, targeted marketing.

In the negotiations over the summer, I attempted to broker an agreement with rail bosses to establish a compensation scheme for local businesses, but despite our best efforts, this was not agreed. The issue does not end here, however and I continue to make the strongest representations I can about the impact the rail disruption have had on small business that depend on visitors in particular. This message continues to get through and I can confirm that we are in discussion about potential further 'one off' monies for marketing and events designed to bring additional people into our wonderful town.

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

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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**

#### **Bridge Replacement Programme: Strong Performance Continues**

I am pleased to inform Members that our £11.36m bridge replacement and improvement programme continues to be a success, with Devonshire Road Bridge running to programme and budget. In fact, I was delighted that the carriageway could be reopened earlier than programmed, in time for the August bank holiday and the Illuminations switch on. Thanks to all responsible for this good work.

Devonshire Road Bridge is the last major scheme as part of the programme and has seen investment in the abatement walls in terms of cladding to improve the appearance of the structure and to improve the drainage system in the footpaths. The street lighting levels have been increased underneath the bridge, repainting of the structure and general footway and carriageway improvements. The only remaining works are minor works to Watson Road highway, which will be undertaken with minimum disruption before the end of 2018 and involve altering the kerb line strategy to reduce risk of damage to the edge beams of the bridge. Minor works to Rigby Road and Chapel Street bridges will be progressed at an appropriate time as part of the proposed Central Leisure Quarter development.

## Treasury Management

Contracts awarded since the last meeting are as follows:

CONTRACT	PROVIDER (Locations)	TERM (including extensions)	CONTRACT VALUE	NO. OF INITIAL BIDS	NO. OF BIDDERS WITH FY POSTCODE
Lucozade Vending Machines	Lucozade Ribena Suntory ( <b>Stockley Park</b> )	2 + (1+1)	Income contract	1	0
Empress Ballroom Ceiling Works	Hayles & Howe ( <b>Bristol</b> )	Ad-hoc 4 months	£700,000	2	0
Occupational Health Physician	Dr Philip Atkinson ( <b>Poulton-le-Fylde</b> )	2 + (1+1)	£86,400	Direct Award via Exception	n/a
Consultant Support for Planning Application for Carleton Cemetery Expansion	Cemetery Development Services (CDS) ( <b>Bedfordshire</b> )	Ad-hoc 4 months	£41,350	9	0
Carleton Crematorium – Chapel Extension	F Parkinson ( <b>Blackpool</b> )	Ad-hoc 7 months	£122,000	2	1
Design and Print of Your Blackpool Newspaper	Portfolio ( <b>Bolton</b> )	1 + (1+1)	£24,000	9	1
Delivery of Your Blackpool Newspaper	Smart Distribution Solutions ( <b>Liverpool</b> )	1 + (1+1)	£68,000	3	0
iPool e-Learning Software	Learning Pool ( <b>Derry, Northern Ireland</b> )	2 + (1+1)	£112,000	Direct Award via CCS Framework	n/a
Voluntary Services Counselling	YMCA ( <b>St Annes</b> )	1 + (1+1)	£30,000	Direct Award via Exception	n/a

CONTRACT	PROVIDER (Locations)	TERM (including extensions)	CONTRACT VALUE	NO. OF INITIAL BIDS	NO. OF BIDDERS WITH FY POSTCODE
Yeadon Way – Geotechnical and Site Investigation	Coffey Geotechnical (Manchester)	Ad-hoc 1 month	£17,100	Direct Award via Exception	n/a
BAEZ – Transport Assessment, Traffic Modelling and Concept Design	BWB Consulting (Nottingham)	Ad-hoc 6 months	£20,500	14	0
Repairs and Maintenance of Property and Assets	Ellis & York (Blackpool) Bambers RC (Blackpool) DLP Services (Salford)	1 + (1+1)	£1,500,000	9	4
Car Parks Back Office Software and Handhelds	WSP UK (Liverpool)	3 + (1+1)	£100,000	2	0
Provision of School Milk Cartons	Dales Dairies/Town Head Farm (Skipton)	1 year	£300,000	Direct Award via Exception	n/a
Workstation Assessments and Recommended Ergonomic Products	Back Care Solutions (Preston)	2 + (1+1)	£20,000	3	0
Provision of Bereavement Related Goods	JC Atkinson (Tyne & Wear)	1 + (1)	£10,000	Direct Award via STAR Framework	n/a

## Strategic Issues

### Our New Conference Centre: The Steel Has Come Out of the Ground!

I am delighted that the last month has witnessed visible progress in the construction of our new conference and exhibition offer at the Winter Gardens. Everyone can see that the new building is now taking shape, with phases 1 and 2 of the structural steelwork now in place. At the end of August, the Winter Gardens switched over to brand new electricity and gas supplies increasing the capacity and future proofing the centre.

I am pleased to report that we now have over 30 live enquiries for new conferences and events in the new facility with five new bookings already taken. We anticipate that the visible erection of the new facility will assist with our marketing efforts, with tours available for new customers before April next year. The build is on track to be complete and ready for the first event in August 2019.

### **Delivering Positive Change: Tower Street, Wilko's, Sands, Tramway and Museum**

Our new Conference and Exhibition Centre, whilst strategically important, is only one of several fantastic new developments coming to our town centre for the benefit of both residents and visitors. I have previously advised Members of the complex set of deals that affect several crucial developments for Blackpool and its town centre. These developments include an IMAX cinema, new Wilko's, a new branded restaurant, the new tramway extension, Blackpool's museum and Blackpool's first five-star hotel.

I am very excited and pleased to report that the legal agreements required to enable the simultaneous delivery of these schemes, of which there are 21 in total, will be signed off in October. This progress enables me to give you a bit more detail about how and when these fantastic projects will start to happen. Blackpool's IMAX style cinema is scheduled to open its doors in autumn 2020, employing 40 people and being part of a £20m investment in the town centre. The new Wilko's that will have its main entrance in Hounds Hill will be completed in late autumn 2019 and open shortly thereafter. This development will safeguard 60+ jobs in the town and secure the future of a major retailer.

A new branded restaurant employing 30+ people will also be part of the Tower Street development. The new five-star Sands Hotel and associated restaurant will employ over 100 people in another year-round business. An investment of £20m will see Blackpool's first ever five-star full service hotel opening circa Christmas 2019.

The tramway development will see all road closures completed before the end of February 2019 and then the new station will be built once the existing Wilko's is demolished. The first passengers will be able to ride up to Talbot Gateway before the end of 2020 and we will need around 20 new staff to operate this extension. The Holiday Inn and Restaurant will also be built once Wilko's is demolished and will be open before Christmas 2021 employing over 100 people.

These developments will change the face of our town centre for the better and will bring 400 new year-round jobs primarily for local people. I am proud and excited to be responsible for the delivery of these significant new drivers for our economy.

In addition to all of this, the new Blackpool Museum will be open early in 2020 employing 40 people. This museum will provide a focal point for local people to understand and enjoy Blackpool's seminal, pioneering and above all, entertaining role in national and international popular culture.



### **Quality Corridors Shopfront Grant Improvement Programme**

I am delighted that we now have some 40 premises in the target area with designed schemes for improved shopfronts in the town centre. The next stage is to tender all this work in the coming months to enable much of the improvement work to commence over the winter. As ever, there will be a focus on local contractor benefit in the award of works.

### **Our Fantastic Summer/ Autumn Events Programme**

It is my pleasure to report that the VisitBlackpool summer events programme has attracted huge volumes of visitors to the resort as well as generating a significant volume of very positive national and international publicity.

**Blackpool Air Show** took place over the weekend of 11 and 12 August with the Red Arrows bringing the event to a spectacular finale on the second day. It also included performances by the Typhoon, the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and the Aerosuperbatics team. The event, sponsored by Arriva Northern, attracted large crowds to the Promenade on both days. In order to alleviate some of the traffic congestion, Blackpool Transport successfully trialed a park-and-ride facility at Blackpool Airport.

The annual **Ride the Lights** event took place on 25 August, attracting a record number of participants, all taking the unique opportunity to cycle under the Illuminations prior to the official Switch-On. This year, the event was re-titled Let's Ride the Lights, marking a new partnership with British Cycling who deliver a range of "Let's Ride" events in major cities across the UK. British Cycling added a new dimension to the evening event, bringing a variety of cycle-themed entertainment on to the Tower Festival Headland.

International music star Alfie Boe pulled the switch to trigger 66 nights of Illuminations at the annual **Switch-On** celebration on 31 August. The concert, staged in association with MTV, featured performances by Blackpool-born Rae Morris, as well as Ella Eyre, Diversity, HRVY and Jonas Blue. The ballot to win the 20,000 free wristbands attracted a record 130,000 applications! Half of the ticket allocation was reserved for Blackpool residents. For the first time, Switch-On also included a "Golden Circle" enclosure at the front of the arena, which gave up to 2,000 additional spectators an opportunity to guarantee their place at the concert at a nominal price of £10.

The following day, the Switch-On arena was used to host global pop icon **Britney Spears** on the final date of her UK "Piece of Me" tour. The concert has attracted worldwide publicity and following the appearance by Will Smith in 2017, has confirmed the Tower Festival Headland's status as a major outdoor concert venue.

**Blackpool Illuminations** has a circus theme for 2018, marking the resort's designation as one of six UK cities of circus. The designation is intended to mark 250 years since the first circus performance was played out on London's Embankment. The Illuminations display includes a circus-themed "big top" on Gynn Square Roundabout, new festoons and a specially made 3D projection show that will be projected on to the front of the Blackpool Tower building to

celebrate Blackpool's rich circus history throughout the Illuminations season. A second new show, marking the 70 birthday of Sooty, will be launched in early October.

Although the summer events programme has now ended, there is much more to look forward to between now and the end of the Illuminations on 4 November. The annual **World Fireworks Championships** will take place on four consecutive Fridays, 7, 14, 21 and 28 September. This year's competing countries are France, Romania and Canada, with the winner announced on the showcase night on the final night. The event will once again be based around the Tower Festival Headland and North Pier.

In association with VisitBlackpool, Nickelodeon will bring its hugely popular **Slimefest** concerts back to the Pleasure Beach Arena on 20, 21 and 22 October. Talent already lined up includes Diversity, HRVY, Jonas Blue and America's You Tube phenomenon, Jo Jo Siwa. All six concerts sold out within weeks of going on sale.

October half term will also see the return of **Lightpool Festival** thanks to the securing of Arts Council funding. It will launch on 18 October with Light Odyssey, a unique sound and light collaboration with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. The ticketed concert will be staged in the Empress Ballroom in the Winter Gardens. The following week will see three nights of free entertainment (25 – 28 October) in the town centre and Promenade, incorporating a mixture of live performance, art installations, community engagement and a repeat of last year's hugely successful Illuminated tram parade.

### **Destination Marketing**

The 'Blackpool Has It All' destination marketing campaign has been running throughout the summer, with a mixture of TV advertising in Scotland and the North of England and extensive digital and PR activity. By the end of July, the number of positive travel articles about Blackpool that had featured in British media had totalled more than 100. A radio campaign ran in Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Yorkshire during August to mitigate against some of the potential damage caused to the resort's visitor economy by continuing disruption to inbound rail services.

### **A Special Note of Thanks**

Switch on weekend this year presented particular burdens on our staff and the staff of our supporting partners. It was wonderful to have such unprecedented demands for tickets. As ever, numerous unexpected problems and challenges emerged in the run up to the weekend, but visitors would not have known as things went so well. I am hugely grateful to the people who worked so hard to make the weekend a great success for Blackpool and both safe and fun for all those that attended. The people and teams responsible for this great success know who they are. I would like to register publically the thanks of both Council and town for what they do, frequently above and beyond what can be reasonably expected of any employee.

## **Transforming Services**

### **The Challenge of Implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act**

It is now nearly six months since local authorities' duties to assist people threatened with homelessness were extended through the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Blackpool Council is ready to respond, with its new Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018 and new systems to work with people using personal housing plans. Everyone who needs help with their housing situation now works through a plan with a Housing Options officer, agreeing what further support is needed. Most people are coming for help even before the new duty to prevent homelessness kicks in and the Council is able to help by mediating with landlords or families to prevent moves or ensure that moves are planned and appropriate. My Blackpool Home is helping to source more properties with private landlords and the My Home Choice Fylde Coast system for accessing social housing is about to be upgraded and re-launched.

The demands of the new Act have led to a significant increase in service demand and I am proud of how our hard working officers are rising to the challenge. The number of people helped by Housing Options has increased by 25% since this time last year, in the three months of April to June 2018, the Housing Options team closed 746 cases, most of which were advice, early intervention and prevention. This reflects the commitment and excellent service provided by the team, but also shows the increasing demand for help. The support given to young people leaving care has also improved significantly over the last year or so, with better planning for independence and new dedicated flats with support provided by Blackpool Coastal Housing. The greatest challenge now is to help people with chaotic lifestyles that are at risk of rough sleeping to turn their lives around and so the Housing First project is being expanded from this month. Funded by Fulfilling Lives, it provides a home and intensive support to local people with the most entrenched problems, with early evidence showing that it can achieve really positive results.

## **Working with Partners**

### **Righting the Wrongs: Anchorsholme Sea Defences**

I wish to make it absolutely clear to Council that the necessary repairs to the northern section of the sea defences at Anchorsholme, where some movement and water egress has affected a number of revetment slabs, is the sole responsibility of Balfour Beatty as the main contractor. Indeed, the relationship with Balfour Beatty is structured through a clear design and build contract, which explicitly places responsibility for any defects on the contractor. In relation to this Balfour Beatty has accepted responsibility and to ensure absolute clarity in relation to this, has publicly stated that the cost of repairs will not be coming from local council taxpayers. Balfour Beatty is now starting the repair process. Part of this will involve grinding out slabs that have moved to enable the appropriate intervention repair.

I appreciate that this issue is a matter of significant concern and I have taken a very close personal interest in arrangements to ensure Balfour Beatty deliver on their contractual

obligations. Despite the need for these repairs, I wish to remind Members that Balfour Beatty is a very experienced civil engineering contractor, who previously constructed the £76m Central Blackpool Coast Defences project and also the Cleveleys coast defence project for Wyre that about the Anchorsholme project. With all this in view, I am confident that they have the necessary experience, knowledge and expertise to deliver the required solution. I will be watching.

**Premier Inn: Contractors Now on Site!**

At long last, I am very pleased to confirm to Members that the contractor for the 170 room Premier Inn on the former Yates' building is now on site. The contractor is Barnfield Construction, a reputable Lancashire firm. Completion is planned for early 2020. Premier Inn has already communicated that they will work with the Council to ensure local people have every chance of securing the jobs created by this development. Redevelopment of this site, along with completion of the tramway extension, will make a terrific improvement to the appearance of both Talbot Square and Talbot Road, encouraging further investment in the area and surrounding buildings.

## CABINET SECRETARY (RESILIENT COMMUNITIES) – COUNCILLOR GRAHAM CAIN

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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>

### Corporate Issues

#### **The Health of the People of Blackpool 2017**

As Members are aware, our Director of Public Health has a statutory duty to write an annual report on the health of the local population. The report presents the Director of Public Health's independent assessment of local health needs, determinants and concerns. This latest report is Dr Rajpura's tenth report and presents a review and commentary around health taking in the previous decade. Three key components of the report concern:

##### 1. A summary of health trends over the past decade

Overall, the health of our resident population has improved over the past decade. Of particular note are the improvements in early deaths from major killers such as heart disease, stroke and cancer. There is good progress too in reducing rates of smoking, one of the major lifestyle factors influencing health. New arrangements for stop smoking support are being developed to ensure that this progress continues. Early signs of progress in reducing rates of overweight and obesity amongst children are emerging also. There have also been significant reductions too in teenage pregnancy. However, increases in self-harm and drug and alcohol-misuse, especially amongst young people highlight the importance of the forthcoming Drug Prevention Strategy and of the HeadStart programme. We recognise issues around mental health and substance misuse, which is why Blackpool Fulfilling Lives exists in Blackpool to help us develop services. We must continue to focus on improving the lives of people with these challenges and we are committed to doing so.

##### 2. A discussion on the topic of housing and health

This year's theme focuses on the impact of migration on population health, which concludes that Blackpool has a net outflow of working people in managerial and intermediate occupations, while central areas of the town see high levels of inward migration of people of less means and poorer health, which appears to be driven by an abundance of low-cost accommodation.

Members will know that the Council has long recognised the key role that poor quality housing, especially in inner Blackpool, plays in driving health and social outcomes. This is why housing intervention is so high on our agenda and why we continue to put so much emphasis into lobbying the Government to raise statutory minimum housing standards and to change the way housing benefit operates so that it actually incentivises investment in housing.

### 3. Child Oral Health

Oral health is a key marker of the general health of a community and contributes to general well-being. Tooth decay is still the most common dental disease that affects children. In the Public Health Outcomes Framework, one of the indicators is the proportion of five-year-old children free from dental decay. As I reported last time, oral health survey figures published in May 2018 showed an increase in the proportion of five-year-old children free from dental decay in Blackpool, up from 57.5% (2014/15) to 75.1%. This is now similar to the national average of 76.7%. Whilst this improvement is pleasing, we are not complacent and already have programmes in place to take things further.

### **Improvements in Educational Attainment**

I am pleased to report that our young adults across Blackpool who have taken 'A' levels this year have exceeded expectations with a 99% pass rate across all courses and results have been excellent. There has been considerable success at A\* and A grades and distinctions at BTEC. I am absolutely delighted to inform Members that this year double the numbers of our children in care have also achieved outstanding results.

It is pleasing that Key Stage 4 results have shown promising increases in some parts of the town, particularly at Highfield Leadership Academy, St Mary's Catholic Academy, St George's School and Blackpool Aspire Academy. At South Shore and Unity Academy, results were disappointing. However, overall results mean that there is a very reasonable chance that the number of schools in Blackpool rated as Good by Ofsted at Secondary level will increase over the next twelve months. Whilst there is clear evidence of improvement, Blackpool results are still below national average in terms of attainment and the numbers of pupils achieving a pass at grade 4 and 5. This is despite a narrowing of the gap in many areas between Blackpool's level of attainment and pass rates in relation to North West England figures and National figures. Due to the small number of Secondary schools in Blackpool, the performance of the weakest schools reduces the cumulative level of the gains that have been made by Blackpool schools overall, with the picture being one of further increases across the majority of the town, showing a three year increase in performance since 2015.

### **Strategic Issues**

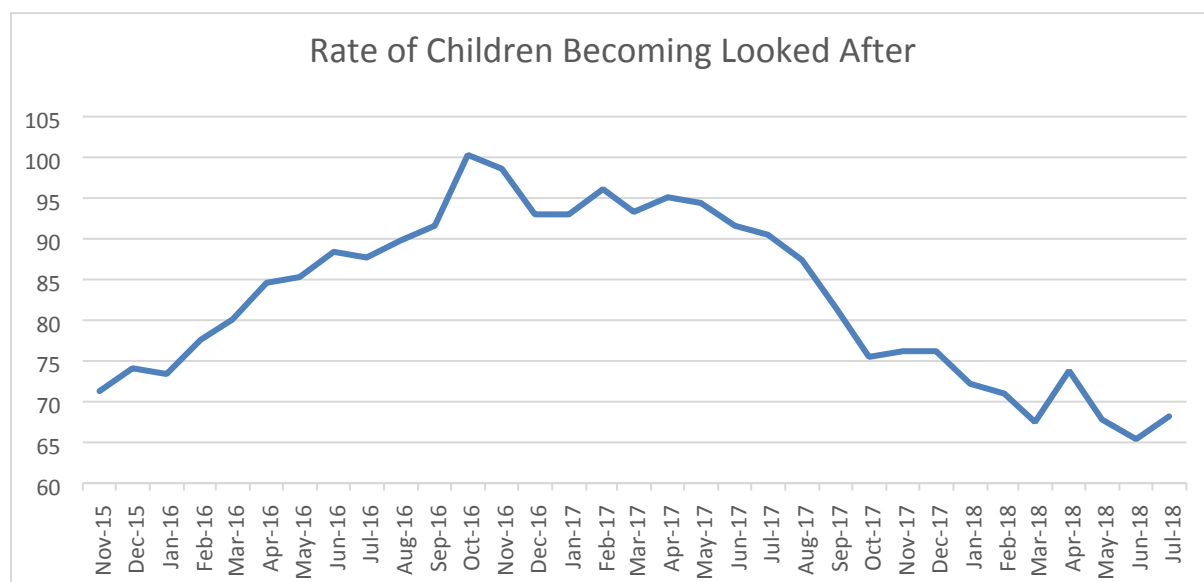
#### **Demand management**

I am pleased to report that we continue to see a decrease in the number of referrals being made to Children's Social Care (CSC) in comparison to the same quarter last year. The first quarter in 2018/ 2019 saw a total of 694 referrals compared to 717 in 2017/ 2018. However, this is higher than the last quarter. The percentage of these referrals that are repeat referrals

was also lower at 18% compared to 24% in 2017/ 2018. It is pleasing that we are seeing the conversion of referrals to assessment increase, with this quarter seeing 83% of referrals progressing to a Children’s Social Care assessment. This indicates that we can see increasing evidence of the right work being referred for statutory assessment. The number of children and young people subject to a Child Protection Plan has reduced to 267 in June 2018. This is 118 children less subject to a Plan from the highest number in August 2017.

Despite real evidence of progress it is undoubtedly the case that the numbers of looked after children continues to be high in Blackpool. At the same time, I wish to emphasis to Members that numbers were significantly lower than that forecast when our journey of service change began. Indeed, based on the data from November 2015 to June 2017, the expected forecast number for August 2018 is 620. The actual figure in August was 560. Therefore, our programme of change is having a clear, positive impact.

The most significant change is in the rate of children becoming looked after in a rolling 12-month period. The rate has reduced from a peak of 100.3 in November 2016 (per 10,000 populations) to the level we previously achieved in 2015, and is now 68.5.



Our longer-term ambition is to increase the rate at which children are supported safely out of the care system, through a robust care leaver offer for those reaching independence or, for younger children either returning home or settling in to a new family support network. We have recently secured additional funding to deliver safely this ambition. As this work takes shape and care orders are discharged at court, we expect to begin to see not just a decline in the rate that looked after children numbers rise, but a slow and steady reduction in the overall cohort count overall.

I am confident we have the right approach to safely managing demand in Children’s Services. However, I fully recognise the financial strain that existing demand has on the Council’s overall

budget. As the Leader has made clear in his report, demand pressures in social care are causing havoc to local authority budgets up and down the country, sending a brace of largely Conservative upper tier authorities close to the financial cliff edge. We are not in this position. Our situation, whilst of concern, is understood and under control. The only long-term solution to social care is for the Government to stop savaging local authority budgets and commit to the proper funding of local services.

## **Transforming Services**

### **Apprentice Social Worker Scheme**

I am delighted to inform Members that we have successfully developed and commenced our first apprentice social worker scheme. Employers with the aim of developing standards and increasing higher-level technical and professional skilled workers have driven the scheme. Our recruitment process included interviews with the University of Central Lancashire, a service user representative and two senior staff members from Blackpool Council. Four applicants were eventually chosen and will now commence social work degree training in September 2018. The course will run for three years and involve one full day at the University of Central Lancashire during term time and the rest of the week is on the job learning. All candidates chosen come from an Adult Social care background undertaking roles such as case assessor or support worker.

This is a first for Blackpool Council and represents a life-changing event for the successful candidates. It is a fantastic chance to reward unqualified staff for their hard work for the Council by investing in their professional development.

### **Accreditation of the Advocacy Service**

I am pleased to report the Blackpool Advocacy Hub service delivered by Empowerment have been awarded the Advocacy Quality Performance Mark (QPM) from the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi). The QPM is the UK's only independent quality performance mark for organisations offering independent advocacy, an essential service for people who need support to express their needs and have increased choice and control in their lives.

To gain the QPM, independent advocacy providers have to undergo a rigorous self-assessment process and policy review. This is followed by a structured site visit for NDTi assessors to meet advocates and the people they support. The Advocacy QPM provides us with a robust benchmark to measure independent advocacy services, ensuring they select the very best providers. Gail Petty, QPM Manager and Lead for Advocacy and Rights at NDTi said, "The Advocacy Quality Performance Mark is only awarded to advocacy organisations who can demonstrate that they are providing excellent services to people often experiencing challenging situations in their lives. It indicates that they have the training and policies in place to ensure people's rights are upheld and their preferences are heard and responded to."

We are very pleased that the service commissioned 12 months ago is making good progress and able to provide a high quality service provision to the residents of Blackpool.



### **The New Langdale and Nibbles Café**

In late summer of 2016, the New Langdale Service (which provides Nibbles and The Green Team) became aware of the development opportunity for a café within the grounds of Carleton Cemetery. There had previously been a tearoom on site, but it had been empty for some time and was very much missed by members of the public, bereaved people and funeral directors. Team members from Nibbles were included in all preliminary meetings to gather their ideas, queries and iron out any possible problems. Parent/ carers were asked for their thoughts and comments during parent/ carer forums and these were all taken into consideration in plans and designs. As the building work got underway, there were many positive comments from members of the public and funeral directors eager to see the café open and enquires regarding the possibility of holding wakes following services.

I am pleased to confirm that Nibbles @ Carleton opened for business on Monday 6 August 2018.

### **Coopers Way Respite Service: Care Quality Commission (CQC) Inspection**

On 4 June 2018, Coopers Way had an announced CQC Inspection. I am pleased to inform Members that the outcome from this inspection is that the Service has been rated as Good in all Key Lines of Enquiry areas: caring, responsive, safe, well led and effective.

The inspector spoke with family members of 12 people who used the service that have difficulty in communication and received very positive feedback on the service. The inspector observed the care and support provided for two people staying at Coopers Way. He also observed staff communicating with people by their preferred method and commented that they displayed a warm and caring attitude. The inspector felt the people appeared comfortable in their surroundings and enjoyed interacting with our staff members.

The inspector saw for himself the emphasis we place on promoting dignity, respect and independence for people supported by the service and that the staffing team understood the importance of high standards of care to give people meaningful lives. The people accessing the service told the inspector that we treated them as individuals and received person centred care and also told him that they enjoyed a variety of activities, which were organised for their entertainment.

The inspector made it clear that in his view the service had robust systems in place to record safeguarding concerns, accidents and incidents and that appropriate risk assessments were in place. The inspector saw that Coopers Way use a variety of methods to assess and monitor the quality of the service and to ensure that the many systems of work in place are effective in maintaining health, safety and wellbeing of all persons accessing the service. These included regular audits and satisfaction surveys to seek the views of people who use and have stayed at Cooper's way and their relatives about the service provided.

## **Working with Partners**

### **Health and Social Care Education to Commence in the Town Centre at Bickerstaffe House**

It is my great pleasure to inform Members that the first students are scheduled to attend teaching sessions on the ground floor of Bickerstaffe House in early September. I reported last time that the Council, Blackpool and the Fylde College and Lancaster University has signed an agreement to form an Alliance that would include basing a new Health and Social Care Academy in the town centre. Conversion work took place over the summer and parts of the ground floor at Bickerstaffe House have been fitted out to the College's requirements. It looks fantastic and will make for an excellent teaching space.

I am sure all Members will join me in welcoming a Further and Higher education presence right in the centre of town. I certainly hope this is the beginning of bigger things to come.

## **COUNCIL APPOINTED COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVE - REPORT TO THE COUNCIL – COUNCILLORS JACKSON, BLACKBURN AND T WILLIAMS**

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This report updates the Council on the work of the Combined Fire Authority. The Fire Authority is made up of 25 Councillors (19 representatives from Lancashire County Council three from Blackburn and Darwen Council and three from Blackpool Council).

Since the last report to Council, the Combined Fire Authority has met on two occasions 23 April and 18 June 2018. The Combined Fire Authority has produced a summary of those meetings and the appointed representatives will update the Council on any issues.

### **REPORT OF THE LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY (CFA) 23 APRIL 2018**

#### **1. REVISED COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority presented a report advising that the Committee Terms of Reference had been reviewed and updated. It was noted that the updated drafts were consistent with those previously agreed, with the only significant changes being:

- the transfer of responsibility for approving and signing the annual accounts moving from the Resources Committee to the Audit Committee. This was to reflect the revised year-end accounting timescales and requirements. (Monitoring of the financial position would continue to be undertaken by the Resources Committee).
- reducing the frequency with which the Strategy group met from three times per year to twice a year (which reflected current practice) and amending the wording so that only significant changes to Committee Structure, terms of reference, schemes of delegation etc. were considered by the Group (minor changes, such as this, were reported direct to the Authority.)

#### **2. THE KERSLAKE REPORT AND OPERATIONAL LEARNING**

Following the publication of The Kerslake Report Members were provided with details of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's operational assurance.

The Authority had a legal duty to ensure the provision of a safe and effective Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS). To contribute to meeting this duty, LFRS undertook a continual process of Operational Assurance, within which operational readiness and operational performance was routinely assured. This process comprised the Service's 'Operational Assurance Framework' within which a range of assurance activities were undertaken by a dedicated Operational Assurance Team, Area based Officers and the Training and Operational Review Department. The Framework was based upon requirements detailed in the Fire and Rescue Authorities: Health Safety and Welfare Framework Document. The methodology used within the Framework was built around two key elements i) operational assurance at incidents and ii) post incident/ event learning and support. Thus in practical terms the

Framework aimed to provide a process of continuous improvement through a formalised system of audit and review. These measures contributed towards making Lancashire safer and the overall attainment of corporate priorities, specifically: 'Responding' to fires and other emergencies quickly and competently.

An active and open learning environment had to be something that was embedded and must therefore be an ongoing feature of the operating environment. Embedding assurance meant that LFRS truly did learn from its findings and there was confidence that the lessons identified became the lessons learnt and that this approach was underpinned by robust evidence. The Chief Fire Officer and wider leadership of LFRS had for many years stressed the need for risk awareness as opposed to risk aversion. This had led to an operational culture that supported staff that assessed risk, after taking into account experience and core knowledge and interpreting and adapting policies in the context of the situation in front of them.

The publishing of the Kerslake Report was a reminder to everyone in the emergency services that we must review and learn from every incident to ensure public safety. LFRS response to the Kerslake Report was outlined in the report. Lord Kerslake had identified a number of areas that went well and a number of major areas for learning including recommendations. LFRS would continue to review its service in light of all recommendations arising from the above, and would make further improvements in the service delivered if required.

### **3. COLLABORATION WITH POLICE**

Since the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners in 2012, there had been increasing pressure from central government for their greater involvement with Fire. This gained greater traction with the long awaited move of Fire to the Home Office on 5 January 2016. Throughout the development of the collaboration agenda, the Authority's consistent position had been how to deliver the best outcomes for the communities it served. The Authority's view was that these benefits for its communities could be realised without the need for change to corporate governance.

On 31 January 2017, the Policing and Crime Act received Royal Assent and embedded into law the main provisions regarding collaboration between emergency services and options that enabled PCC's to take on responsibility for the governance of Fire thereby becoming Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners. Where the PCC did not take responsibility for Fire, the legislation enabled them to be represented on the Fire Authority.

LFRS continued to work with the Police to explore new collaborative opportunities. Workshops capturing initiatives within a structured framework provided auditable evidence of the work that was being undertaken. The outcomes anticipated were a number of work streams to be assessed and prioritised and then presented to the Authority; with ongoing work presented to Planning Committee on 19 March 2018.

At a meeting between the Chair, PCC and two CFA Members on 21 February 2018, the PCC stated there was increased pressure from central government to review governance arrangements regarding Fire. Subsequently he sent an email to the Chief Fire Officer, which said he was commissioning some work "which will produce an Options Report for further discussion with you and other stakeholders. I see the Options Report as being complementary to the work you are already undertaking through your collaborative

arrangements as described already. The Options Report will review a range of options to further Police and Fire collaboration in Lancashire, including the status quo, representation on the Fire and Rescue Authority, the governance model (having a Police Fire Crime Commissioner) and finally the single employer model. Through this report I am also keen to develop a further understanding of the scale and impact of collaborative efficiencies and how these can be best harnessed for the people of Lancashire.”

On hearing this development, the Authority confirmed it remained confident that current governance arrangements presented the best way to deliver a fire and rescue service for its communities. The Authority would provide the information required for the work proposed by the PCC, which it believed would evidence that LFRS was already effectively progressing collaborative opportunities within existing structures. Following the Planning Committee meeting on 19 March 2018, that position was unanimously endorsed and a Task and Finish Group has been established to consider this and other matters in more detail.

The Authority reaffirmed its commitment to collaboration, but remained strongly of the view that current governance arrangements best served LFRS and the communities of Lancashire. This position would inform a motion going before LCC on 24 May 2018.

## **REPORT OF THE LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY (CFA) 18 JUNE 2018**

### **1. COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY ANNUAL MEETING**

The meeting held 18 June was the Authority's Annual Meeting and Members appointed County Councillors F De Molfetta and M Parkinson as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Authority respectively for 2018/ 2019.

### **2. COMPOSITION OF THE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY**

The Composition of the Combined Fire Authority for 2018/2019 included one new Member from Blackpool Council, Councillor Simon Blackburn who had replaced Councillor Debbie Coleman.

### **3. COLLABORATION UPDATE**

The Authority noted that on 4 May or 8 May 2018 the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and his office approved the development of a business case to bring Police and Fire governance together. A clear response was sent by the Chairman on 16 May 2018 pointing out that the detail presented in the options report fell well short and there were flaws in the report, which made it difficult to comment. The PCC’s response confirmed he would proceed with the formation of a draft business case. On 24 May 2018, the Chairman confirmed a willingness to inform the development of the business case. However, he expressed concerns regarding the capacity of officers as the Service prepared itself for a visit by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) particularly given it would be the same people required to contribute to the business case as were preparing for inspection. On 11 June 2018, the Chairman had written a further letter to the PCC expressing concerns in relation to the proposed timetable for officer involvement, confirming that the

HMICFRS inspection took precedence. It was also made clear that a data sharing agreement and disclosure agreement would need to be in place before the sharing of any information.

The Authority's position throughout was that it remained confident that the current arrangements delivered the best for Lancashire and it believed that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) was already effectively progressing collaborative opportunities within existing structures. The Service was also being proactive and a Statement of Intent for enhanced collaboration had been signed with 32 opportunities under consideration. Any new areas of collaboration were considered on a case-by-case basis before the commitment of any resources with any significant capacity requirements being referred to the Authority.

#### **4. STRENGTHENING AND IMPROVING OUR RETAINED SERVICE: RETAINED SUPPORT OFFICERS – ONE YEAR ON**

The Authority received a report on how the Authority's additional investment of £600,000 in 2016/ 2017 had been used to support the ambition to improve pump availability, fire fighter safety and incentivise staff. £300,000 was for the Retained Duty Salary Review and the remaining £300,000 enabled the introduction of seven Retained Support Officer (RSO) posts to support the current challenges associated with running an effective and sustainable RDS Unit and thereby improving recruitment, retention, appliance availability, training, gathering of operational risk information, liaison with administrative support and enhanced staff engagement. With the Authority's support, Lancashire had one of the finest retained services across the country with the RSO role recognised as best practice.

#### **5. SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT ANNUAL REVIEW 2016/ 2017**

The Authority noted that the Service had again seen a very positive year in terms of overall safety, health and environment performance. During 2011/2012, the Service was successful in gaining certification to International Health and Safety (OHSAS 18001:2007) and Environmental (ISO 14001:2004) standards and the Service had been re-certified without any non-conformance. During 2017/ 2018, there had been 79 accidents, 98 near misses and 14 RIDDOR events. A comparison against previous performance showed the continued reduction of accidents and positive increase in near miss reporting. The Carbon Management Plan agreed by the Resources Committee in March 2009 included a visionary target of 40% carbon emission reduction by March 2020. The Service had achieved an overall reduction of 20% by March 2018, which equated to 878 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, this delivered savings to date of £644,000. Work would continue to improve this area. The report also detailed key safety, health and environmental priorities for 2018/ 2019, which included the implementation of revised National Guidance, the maintenance of certification standards, reducing energy and waste and the continued review of Health and Wellbeing arrangements.

#### **6. HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY, FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS) - PROGRESS TOWARDS INSPECTION - UPDATE BRIEFING 2**

Mr Dave Dryburgh, Service Liaison Lead (Cumbria, Lancashire and Merseyside) from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) was introduced by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and welcomed by the Authority.

Mr Dryburgh advised that the inspection would be a week of fieldwork commencing on 9 July 2018. A strategic briefing would take place on 25 June 2018, which involved Executive Board members presenting to the HMICFRS followed by a meeting with the CFA Chairman. Leading up to that was a data analysis exercise that looked at strategic documents from the Service to get an understanding of how LFRS operated, delivered services and looked after staff, cross checking the Service was doing what it said it was.

The inspection was under the three pillars of: i) Effectiveness: how effective is the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks? ii) Efficiency: how efficient is the FRS at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks? iii) People: how well does the FRS look after its people? The first two days would be spent with staff on every duty system. Then the inspection team would speak to Senior Managers in the Service. Taken all together the Service was then graded as, Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement or Inadequate. A final report could be expected in the winter along with the other 14 Fire Services being inspected in the first tranche.

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<b>Report to:</b>	<b>COUNCIL</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	19 September 2018

## REVISED MEMBER AND OFFICER PROTOCOL AND REVISIONS TO THE PUBLIC SPEAKING PROCEDURE FOR PLANNING

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To consider a revised draft Member and Officer Protocol for Planning and amendments to the Public Speaking arrangements as recommended by the Planning Committee at its meeting on the 14 August 2018.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To approve as part of the Council's constitution the revised Member and Officer Protocol for Planning as attached at Appendix 6(a).
- 2.2 To adopt the revised public speaking arrangements outlined in the report namely that the period for objectors and applicants be increased to seven minutes and the period for ward councillors be similarly limited to seven minutes.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 The revisions of the member and officer protocol for planning have resulted from the previous peer review of planning and are intended to provide clarity for members.
- 3.2 Members of the Planning Committee have requested the amendments to the public speaking.
- 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, the previous protocol is out of date so the approval of a revised version is necessary.

#### **4.0 Council Priority:**

4.1 The relevant Council priority is 'The Economy: maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool'.

#### **5.0 Background Information**

5.1 For a number of years the Council has had as part of its constitution a protocol on member and officer relationship in respect of planning matters. The aim of the document is to provide an easy to read document that defined the different roles and responsibilities of both Councillors and Officers. The document has not been updated for a number of years and it had been noted that the current practice differed from the protocol. Equally, the planning peer review identified a number of areas of best practice.

5.2 Following on from the planning peer review, a discussion session was held on the 8 March 2018, arising from that a draft protocol has been produced based on the broad principles agreed at that meeting and as attached at Appendix 6(a). For ease of use, the previous protocol has been included in red.

5.3 Also at the training session, members expressed concern as to the times allocated for public speaking and expressed a wish to increase the time limit for members of the public, but also to introduce an element of consistency by also adding this limit to apply to Ward Councillors. The aim being to allow sufficient time for representations, but avoid significant levels of repetition. Currently the Council allows one speaker for and one against with a limit of five minutes and an unlimited period for Ward Councillors. Following research it is clear that while the Council is in line with other Councils in terms of time limits some Councils do allow multiple speakers both for and against and some do not differentiate Ward Councillors in their schemes. It is therefore proposed to amend the public speaking rules for planning to extend the limit for members of the public to seven minutes for both those speaking for and against and additionally for this limit to also apply for Ward Councillors.

5.4 The Planning Committee at its meeting on 14 August 2018 agreed to recommend to Council both to approve the new Member and Officer Protocol and the revisions to the public speaking protocol.

5.5 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

#### **5.6 List of Appendices:**

Appendix 6(a) - Revised Member and Officer Protocol for Planning

**6.0 Legal considerations:**

6.1 None.

**7.0 Human Resources considerations:**

7.1 None.

**8.0 Equalities considerations:**

8.1 None.

**9.0 Financial considerations:**

9.1 None.

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

10.1 None.

**11.0 Ethical considerations:**

11.1 None.

**12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:**

12.1 None.

**13.0 Background papers:**

13.1 None.

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## **Part 5d**

# **Member and Officer Protocol for Planning**

<b>Member and Officer Protocol for Planning Matters</b>	
<b>Effective from</b>	<b>Approved by Council</b>

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The role of the planning system is to regulate the use and development of land in the best interests of Blackpool both immediately and in the future. It can affect the private lives of individuals, the interests of landowners and developers but also the future of the town. It is essential that the Council should make such decisions openly, impartially with sound judgement and for justifiable reasons.
- 1.2 Councillors and Officers are both involved in operating the planning system although they have different yet complementary roles. The successful operation of the planning process relies on mutual trust and understanding of each other's roles. It also relies on both groups ensuring that they act in such a way which is not only fair and impartial but is also clearly seen to be.
- 1.3 The protocol outlines the requirements of all parties. It should be read in conjunction with the Council's Constitution, in particular the relevant Codes of Conduct for both officers and members as well as the Royal Town Planning Institute Code of Conduct which sets out the professional conduct for officers.

**1. INTRODUCTION****2.**

- ~~1.1 This Protocol forms part of the Council's Constitution and should be read in conjunction with the Constitution, in particular the Members' Code of Conduct including the section on the declaration of interests and so both should be borne in mind when considering planning applications.~~
- ~~1.2 This Protocol particularly applies to members of the Planning Committee but it also applies to other members when involved in the planning process for example as applicants, objectors or interested parties.~~
- ~~1.3 This Protocol also applies to officers and where it does, officers are also bound by the Council's Code of Conduct for Employees and if they are members of the Royal Town Planning Institute, that organisation's code of professional conduct.~~
- ~~1.4 It should be noted that the role of the planning system is to regulate the use and development of land in the public interest. Accordingly, planning decisions must be seen to be impartial and properly justified. The planning system can only operate effectively if there is trust among the various stakeholders: the public, applicants, developers, elected members and officers.~~

## 2. Role and conduct of Members and Officers

### Role of Members

2.1 When Councillors come to make a decision on a planning matter they must:

- Act fairly and openly
- Approach each case with an open mind
- Read the reports and any additional information such as viewing photographs, video footage in advance of the meeting and prepare for the Committee meeting
- Pay attention to representations received
- Use the Council's planning policy and guidance as their basis for making a decision
- Consider national planning policy and guidance
- Consider whether the application could contribute to a solution to a social, economic or environmental challenge within Blackpool
- Carefully weigh up all relevant issues before reaching a view on a particular case
- Determine each case on its merits
- Ensure that there are clear and substantial reasons for their decisions and that those reasons are clearly stated.

2.2 Councillors should remember that while acting as a member of the Planning Committee that they have a responsibility to ensure planning policies are equitably and evenly applied. Councillors will find that decision making can be difficult as it may often be forced to balance competing demands (for example the prosperity of the wider town with the objections of residents neighbouring the proposed development or equally the benefits that might accrue in the future).

### Role of Officers

2.3 The function of officers is to advise and assist Councillors in matters of planning policy and in their determination of planning applications and enforcement issues by:

- Providing impartial professional advice
- Use adopted Council policies as the basis for decision making
- Ensure that all available information relevant for the decision to be made is given including details of representations and rationale for the recommendation to the Committee
- Outline the material considerations and highlight where representations include matters relevant to a planning decision.
- Providing a clear, logical and accurate analysis of the issues
- Implement the decisions of the Planning Committee.
- Determine which applications under the Council's scheme of delegation are to be considered by Committee or by the Head of Development Management under delegated powers.

### ~~Role and conduct of members and officers~~

~~2.4 Elected members and officers have different but complementary roles. Both serve the public but members are accountable to their electorate and officers accountable to the Council as a whole, as their employer.~~

~~2.5 The main duty of elected members is to represent their constituents as a whole, including those who did not vote for them. This is especially relevant to planning matters where~~

~~often those decisions are taken against the interests of individuals, but for the benefit of the wider community.~~

- ~~2.6 Officers who are chartered town planners must act in accordance with the Royal Town Planning Institute's (RTPI) Code of Professional Conduct and breaches of that code will be subject to separate disciplinary action by the Institute. All officers are expected to follow the Council's Code of Conduct for Employees, or any other relevant code.~~
- ~~2.7 Elected members are free not to follow the advice of the professional officers. Professional officers may also have a change of opinion but this must be based on a professional judgement and they must not be allowed to be influenced by elected members or other officers to change their opinion where this does not genuinely represent their professional view.~~
- ~~2.8 The Council has a designated Head of Development Management who has direct access to elected members as their professional adviser on planning matters.~~

### **3. Training on planning matters**

- 3.1 All members of Planning Committee are required to receive training on planning and conduct matters prior to being involved in the work of the Committee. This will help members undertake their role in as a professional manner as possible.
- 3.2 The Head of Democratic Governance will set a training plan for all members after consultation with the Chairman and the Head of Development Management and in accordance with the priorities in the Member Development Plan.
- 3.3 Members of the Committee should raise topics that they wish to covered by such training and their feedback on training will requested regularly.
- 3.4 The names of members who do not attend such training will be reported to the relevant Group Leaders with a clear recommendation that such members who have not attended training regularly be removed by their party from the Planning Committee.
- 3.5 Councillors who are not members of the Planning Committee are also able to attend such training if they wish to develop their knowledge of the process.

### **4. Declarations of Interest**

- 4.1 Councillors must consider all the material planning considerations before them with open minds (and appear as so) at the time of determination of the application.
- 4.2 While it is for the individual Councillors to decide whether there is an interest to declare, the potential consequences of a failure to declare an interest should always be borne in mind as should personal bias and a closed mind as these can have serious consequences for the elected member, the decision and the Council. Failure to observe this Planning Protocol could result in the Councillor being reported to the Council's Monitoring Officer.
- 4.3 Councillors must declare all interests in the matter for consideration and where appropriate withdraw from the meeting. The nature and the existence of the interest should be clearly declared. Further information is available on the code of conduct which applies to all Council meetings.
- 4.4 The Head of Democratic Governance can provide advice and guidance on potential interests. Where Councillors are unclear they should contact the Head of Democratic



Governance or another member of the Democratic Governance team as early as possible in advance of the meeting to assist the Councillor in making their decision whether they have an interest.

- 4.5 ~~Failure to declare an interest could result in the decision being judicially reviewed by the courts and revoked. The costs of defending a decision in a court can be significant. It can also lead to a successful appeal against refusal of planning permission and the failure of an elected member to correctly declare an interest could be used to support an appellant's case that the refusal was unreasonable. This could have consequences for the appeal against the Council and the chance of costs being awarded against the Council.~~
- 4.6 ~~Failure to declare an interest could also lead to a complaint being made to the Local Government Ombudsman which can recommend the making of a financial payment if a finding of maladministration is made.~~

## 5. Bias

- 5.1 It is important that Councillors who are making decisions approach any decisions with an open mind. This rule applies whether the Councillor does or does not have an interest in the matter. Decisions must be made strictly on planning grounds and have considered all relevant factors outlined in the officer's report. The appearance of bias is particularly likely where a member has expressed a settled view on a planning matter in advance of a meeting.
- 5.2 The Localism Act has clarified that there is a difference between '**predisposition**' and '**predetermination**'.
- 5.3 A Councillor is biased if they have or appear to have **predetermined** a planning application in so much that they have made up their minds before considering all the evidence or if they choose to ignore some evidence.
- 5.4 A Councillor can express a **predisposition** in favour or against a planning application without being biased, so long as the Councillor has not closed their mind and this is clear to those involved.
- 5.5 It should be noted that perception is equally important so Councillors should clearly avoid giving the appearance both by verbal and non-verbal communication that they have closed their minds to an issue.
- 5.6 Where it is agreed to defer a matter to a future meeting, issues raised in debate prior to the deferral do not indicate necessarily that a Councillor will be biased when the matter is reconsidered unless this is expressly stated.
- 5.7 Councillors cannot accept an instruction from anyone to determine an application in a particular way. It is not appropriate for any party or group of members to apply a whip or other formal or informal instruction to vote in a certain way.

## 6. Role as a ward councillor

- 6.1 Members have an important role as ward councillors in representing those living in their ward's views on planning applications.
- 6.2 There is a procedure in place so that members can request that an application is considered by the Planning Committee rather than dealt with under delegated powers and this is outlined at Appendix A to this protocol.
- 6.3 Ward Councillors can also make representations to the Planning Committee by applying in

writing or by email by 12 Noon the day before the meeting.

- 6.4 Where the Ward Councillor is also a member of the Planning Committee they can either choose to refer those interested in the application to their ward colleague or they can choose to remove themselves from the Committee to make representations to it. They can also submit any views in writing.

**7. Development proposed by the Council or a Council owned or controlled company**

- 7.1 Planning legislation allows Councils and bodies controlled by them to submit and determine development proposals which they intend to carry out themselves. These shall be considered in the same way as those put forward by private developers.
- 7.2 Members of the Planning Committee who are also Board members of Council-owned companies will have a prejudicial interest in planning applications submitted by or on behalf of which affect the Company and should not take part in the consideration of the application.
- 7.3 The Council should treat such applications on an equal basis with all other applications.

**8. Development proposed by individual members or officers or persons related to them**

- 8.1 Councillors or officers should never act as agents for another person in pursuing planning applications within the Borough or which materially affect the Borough. If members or officers submit their own proposal to the Council they should take no part in the processing and determination of that proposal and they should not be involved in the processing and determination of applications submitted by close family, personal friends or business associates. The Council's Head of Development Management should be informed of all such proposals as soon as they are submitted.
- 8.2 These applications will be determined in line with the processing of all other applications but with the relevant elected member or officer excluded from the process.
- 8.3 Officers must not deal with development proposals and planning applications in which they have any form of interest.

**9. Lobbying of and by members**

- 9.1 Lobbying is a necessary and legitimate part of the democratic and planning process. Those affected or who have strong views on a proposal for development will often try to canvass the Planning Committee to get members of the Committee to share those views. The time though for individual members of the Planning Committee to make a decision on a proposal is at the Committee meeting when all the relevant information is available and has been properly considered.
- 9.2 Councillors are free to listen to a point of view about a particular proposal and to provide basic advice on how the application will be processed (details of relevant contact officers, how to register to speak etc). They should be careful however to reserve their own final judgement until the Planning Committee meeting and to make it clear that this is the case.
- 9.3 Councillors should not circulate information to other members of the Planning Committee and instead refer such submissions to the Head of Development Management for assessment and/or inclusion in the report to the Committee or Update Note.

**10. Pre- and post- application discussions**

- 10.1 Councillors on the Planning Committee need to uphold their position as impartial decision makers and it would not be appropriate for them to take part in pre or post application discussions with applicants regarding a proposed development.
- 10.2 It is reasonable for Councillors to refer such discussions to the Head of Development Management who can arrange a factual discussion of whether the application as proposed appears to be in line with the Council's approved planning policies.
- 10.3 During any pre-application discussions or meetings with the applicant, it will be made clear at the outset the Council will not as a result of such discussion be bound to make a particular decision and such views are provisional and not the formal decision of the Committee.

Major applications submitted may make use of information sessions for members. The purpose of such sessions is to allow members to gain a broad understanding of the application and to request further information.

## **11. Officers' reports to Committee**

- 11.1 The officer's report to Committee will include the following information:
  - A professional appraisal and balanced presentation of the application.
  - A clear recommendation including justification for the recommendation.
  - Where an application is recommended for approval - reasons for the approval, relevant conditions and the reasons for those conditions.
  - Where an application is recommended for refusal - reasons for that refusal and why in the opinion of the officer conditions could not mitigate these issues.
  - A history of the site
  - The proposal
  - The substance of any representations received
  - The relevant policies applicable
  - Any other material considerations
  - A view as to why alternative options have not been considered suitable.
  - Any material considerations that would justify a departure from the development plan.
  - A plan of the site.
  - Suitable photographs and other visual material eg video footage.
  - A link to the online planning file where the full details of the representations and other relevant information referred to in the report can be found.
- 11.2 An update note is produced containing any new information submitted after the agenda is published and will be circulated in advance of the meeting. If additional information is submitted after the compilation of the update note that is relevant to the discussion, it may be necessary to defer consideration of the planning application to a future meeting or adjourn the Committee briefly to enable proper consideration of the additional information.
- 11.3 Councillors should read carefully the officer's report in advance of the Committee meeting and where necessary seek clarification at the meeting of the information contained within. If Councillors wish additional information or photographs/video footage to be added to the report they should contact the Case Officer to request that these be circulated with the update note. It is however perfectly proper for a member to ask the planning officer to ensure that a particular issue is dealt with in the presentation to Committee in advance of the meeting.

## **12. Decisions contrary to officer recommendation**

- 12.1 The decisions at Planning Committee (as outlined previously in paragraph 2.1) can only be made in reference to the Local Plan and other material planning considerations. Decisions can however be made against officer recommendation so long as a reason is given which is clear and convincing. Councillors should in making a decision outline their good and valid planning reasons for departing from the officer's recommendation.
- 12.2 However, it should be noted that the correct place to seek changes to the Local Plan is through a review of the plan at full Council - the Committee cannot seek to amend Council policy at Planning Committee meetings.
- 12.3 Where Councillors wish to make a decision to refuse a planning application against officer recommendation they should seek outline reasons for that decisions. The following courses of action can be undertaken to assist this process:
- A Councillor should approach the Head of Development Management in advance of the Committee meeting and ask to assist in translating the preliminary view of the member into sustainable reasons for refusal with reference to planning policy.
  - Councillors can seek a brief adjournment of the meeting to allow officers to assist in the formulation of such reasons.
- 12.4 Where Councillors wish to make a decision to grant planning permission against officer recommendation they should outline a reason for the decision and if applicable propose conditions. Members should remember that if no conditions are proposed then the application would be granted without restrictions and should consider carefully the implications for a planning permission granted in such a way. The following courses of action can be undertaken to assist this process:
- A Councillor should approach the Head of Development Management in advance of the Committee meeting and ask to assist in translating the preliminary view of the member into sustainable reasons for approval and identify suitable conditions with reference to planning policy.
  - Councillors can seek a brief adjournment of the meeting to allow officers to assist in the formulation of conditions

### **13. Viewing sites**

13.1 The report, the update note and presentation at Committee will contain suitable photographs, videos, images and plans to assist Councillors in making their decision. In line with paragraph 11.3, having viewed the agenda, if Councillors wish additional information or photographs to be added to the report they should contact the Case Officer to request that these be circulated with the update note.

13.2 It has been agreed site visits do not need to take place for planning applications apart from in exceptional circumstances. Councillors of course remain able to use their local knowledge to assist in the decision making and can visit the site independently so long as they do not engage with any other parties.

- 1 In light of this when a member of the Committee considers that there are exceptional circumstances to warrant a site visit, they should ~~it would require the member to~~ contact the Head of Development Management and explain in writing why such a visit was essential. This statement would include the exceptional circumstances of the application and why it was not possible to source the required photographs, images and videos. This would then be considered by the Head of Planning Quality Control after consultation with the Chairman. **SITE VISITS**
  - 1.1 ~~The council's code of conduct applies as much to site visits as to any other area of conduct.~~
  - 1.2 ~~Organised committee site visits to application sites will be held where the committee has, by a majority, requested such a visit or where requested by officers, in consultation with the chairman or vice chairman of the committee.~~
  - 1.3 Site visits should only be held:
    - 1.3.1 ~~Where the expected benefit is substantial; and/or~~
    - 1.3.2 ~~The impact of the proposed development is difficult to visualise from the plans and supporting material, including photographs/video footage taken by officers.~~
  - 1.4 ~~Site visits will be primarily to view the site and appreciate how the proposed development relates to the site and its surroundings. An officer(s) would be in attendance with the members. No discussion of the merits of the proposal will take place as the site visit is purely to assess the effect of the proposed development on the surroundings. However, members may ask factual questions to confirm their understanding of physical features of the site or its surroundings.~~
  - 1.5 ~~Planning applications will not be determined at site visits but will be reported back to the Development Management Committee (following the site visit) for determination in the normal way.~~
  - 1.6 ~~If an applicant/agent or objector is present at the time of the visit, members should explain the purpose is to see the site and surroundings, and not to hear representations, and should not offer any opinion whatsoever and in particular should not indicate that they have already made up their mind on the application/issue.~~
  - 1.7 ~~It is not expected that members will make personal site visits which would result in contact with an applicant, agent or objector. Exceptionally, members who wish to view sites prior to a meeting of a committee, other than authorised and arranged visits in accordance with 11.2 to 11.6 should bear in mind at all times that the sole purpose is to view the site and its surroundings.~~
  - 1.8 ~~A member should declare at the Development Management committee at which the application is considered that a personal site visit has been made by them which has resulted in contact with the applicant, agent or objector.~~

## 14. Complaints

- 14.1 Any complaints made about the planning process should be recorded and would normally be dealt with in the Council's Complaints Procedure. Where it is a complaint relating to standards or conduct it should be reported to the Council's Monitoring Officer.

<b>Schedule A – Ward Referral Procedure</b>	
<b>Effective from</b>	<b>Approved by Council on</b>

1.1 Where an application is proposed to be determined by the Head of Development Management under delegated powers, the relevant ward councillor can request that the application be referred to the Planning Committee for further consideration. This is subject to the following:

- The request must be submitted in writing to the Head of Development Management
- The request must be received no later than 10 clear working days from the validation of the application and its publication on the Council's website.
- The request should specify one or more reasons why he or she believes the application should be considered by the Planning Committee, this should normally highlight issues raised by their local residents. The ward councillor would normally be expected to make representations to this effect to the Committee
- The application itself should not be one submitted by the ward councillor nor should the councillor have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or an interest in the matter which in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Members, requires them to withdraw from the meeting.

1.2 This scheme applies only to original planning applications and not to re-submitted applications where no substantial change has been made to the original application. It also does not apply to prior approval, certificates of lawfulness, advertisement consent, listed building consent and tree applications. This scheme also only applies where the Council is the body to determine the planning application and not where the Council merely must receive notification and does not determine the planning application.

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Council</b>
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	19 September 2018

## REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to consideration of an allowance for the Second Opposition Group Leader.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To consider the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, as set out at Appendix 7(a).
- 2.2 That subject to the decision of Council, the Monitoring Officer be authorised to update the Members' Allowances Scheme accordingly (if necessary).
- 2.3 That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to advertise for an additional member of the Independent Remuneration Panel following the vacancy indicated at paragraph 5.4 below and to liaise with the three Group Leaders after undertaking this recruitment and then to make a recommendation to Council. The criteria for appointment being the same as previously applied.
- 2.4 To agree that the Monitoring Officer on behalf of the Council write to Mr Whitehead to thank him for his dedicated years' of service and leadership as a member of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel was asked by Council at its last meeting to consider whether an allowance should be paid to the Second Opposition Group Leader. This report is the Panel's recommendations to Council. The Council has a duty to consider the recommendations of the Panel, but may make its own decisions.

### 4.0 Background Information

- 4.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel was formed by the Council in 2001 and has a duty to provide the Council with recommendations on its scheme of members' allowances and amounts to be paid.

4.2 The Panel's terms of reference are to consider and make recommendations to the Council on the following:

**basic allowance** – the amount to be paid to all members of the Council.

**special responsibility allowance** – the roles for which this allowance should be paid and the levels of the allowance in each case.

**travel and subsistence allowance** – the duties for which this allowance should be paid and the amount.

**co-optees allowance** – whether this allowance should be paid and at what level.

**childcare and dependent carer's allowance** – whether this allowance should be paid, at what level and how it should be calculated.

**backdating allowances** – whether any allowance should be backdated to the beginning of the financial year in the event of the scheme being amended.

**annual adjustment of allowances** – whether annual adjustments may be made by reference to an index, and, if so, how long such a measure should run.

4.3 The Panel met on 5 September to consider this issue and attached at Appendix 7(a) is the report of the Panel, including its recommendations.

4.4 Following the resignation of the former Chairman of the Panel, Mr Peter Whitehead the Council is asked to consider advertising for a replacement.

4.5 Mr Whitehead has been on the Independent Remuneration Panel since it was originally formed in November 2001 and has acted as Chairman in recent years. Mr Whitehead is the last remaining member from the original appointments. The Panel wished to place on record its thanks to Mr Whitehead. They noted that the Panel will lose a lot of knowledge and experience, but understood Mr Whitehead's work commitments and wished him well for the future.

4.6 The Regulations require that the Independent Remuneration Panel must consist of at least three members, in order to reduce the risk of being inquorate, the Council has at the last appointment increased the Panel membership to four. The Guidance states that in appointing the Panel, serious consideration should be given to both ensuring its independence and public perception of its independence. At the same time, to maintain the credibility of the Panel, consideration should be given to the extent to which some, if not all, Panel members are recognisable members of the local community. The Guidance adds that political appointments and appointments which are made through friendship or any other personal association of any member



of the Council, should always be avoided.

4.7 Authorities are advised to consider carefully the extent of any candidate's connections to a political party and whether these are such as to risk the effective discharge of the panel's functions were the candidate to be appointed. The guidance also states that, in appointing its panel, an authority should consider candidates' knowledge of local government although lack of familiarity with the functions of Councils should not be a bar to appointment.

4.8 At the time of the last vacancy in 2016, Council agreed for the Monitoring Officer (supported by the Deputy Monitoring Officer) to advertise and interview for interested applicants and to then consult with the Group Leaders on the selection and final recommendation. It is recommended that this process be repeated and consultation take place with the three Group Leaders on the final recommendation.

## **5.0 List of Appendices**

5.1 Appendix 7(a) – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

## **6.0 Legal considerations:**

6.1 The Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent regulations set out the process to establish and maintain a Members Allowances scheme. The Independent Remuneration Panel appointed under that legislation has a duty to provide the Council with recommendations on its scheme of members' allowances and amounts to be paid. The current Members Allowances Scheme is part of the Council's Constitution at this link. <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Your-Council/The-Council/Council-constitution-and-plans/Council-constitution.aspx>

## **7.0 Equalities Considerations**

7.1 One of the roles of the Independent Remuneration Panel under the Local Government Act 2000 and associated legislation is to recommend what it considers fair and appropriate allowances in relation to levels paid to members working in comparable authorities.

## **8.0 Financial considerations:**

8.1 If the proposals of the Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to the Members' Allowances Scheme were agreed then the additional amounts can be contained within the current year's revenue budget, due to slippages in the payment of other allowances previously allocated for.

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Report of: The Independent Remuneration Panel of Blackpool Council

To: Blackpool Council

## **Special Responsibility Allowance in respect of the Second Opposition Leader**

### **1.0 Introduction and background**

1.1 On 19 June 2018, a second opposition group was formed called the Independent Blackpool Residents Group. This prompted a review of the political balance arrangements for committees. The Council agreed at its meeting on 27 June 2018 agreed to those political balance changes and in doing so asked this Panel to consider whether a Special Responsibility Allowance should be paid for the Group Leader and if so, what that should be.

1.2 The meeting took place on 5 September and comprised:

Mr Tony Mozley (Chairman for the meeting)  
Mrs Helen Hockenhull  
Mr Greg Molyneux

1.3 Mr Peter Whitehead, member and Chairman of the Panel had submitted his resignation prior to the meeting due to work commitments. Panel members noted that Mr Whitehead had been on the Independent Remuneration Panel since it was originally formed in November 2001 and had acted as Chairman in recent years. The Panel wished to place on record its thanks to Mr Whitehead for his knowledge and experience over the years and wished him well for the future.

### **2.0 Considerations for Special Responsibility Allowance**

2.1 At the time of the decision of Council in June 2018, the Independent Blackpool Residents Group consisted of two individuals (Councillor Debbie Coleman and Councillor Gary Coleman). It was noted that Councillor Ian Coleman had also recently joined the Group.

2.2 During the last full review of the Members' Allowances scheme in 2015, consideration had been given to an allowance for a second Opposition Group Leader, but no decision had been made as there had been only two political parties represented on the Council at the time and a second opposition group had not been formed/ returned.

2.3 The Panel had recommended as part of that review however (which was subsequently agreed by Council) that a formulae should be in place for determining the Principal Opposition Group Leader based on the percentage of seats in that Group and a similar approach would have been used should a second opposition group have been returned. At that time, a minimum group size of 10% of the number of members on the Council had been considered for the second Opposition Group.

### **3.0 Benchmarking information**

3.1 The Panel was provided with information on comparative data from a range of authorities around the country on how they remunerate second opposition group leaders. There was a variety of ways in which allowances for second opposition groups were calculated and the research provided summarised a range of different alternatives. One comparative factor was that a number of councils had a minimum group size of 10% of the overall number of members on the Council.

3.2 Consideration was also given to how the second opposition group leader had been remunerated in Blackpool in the past, however it was noted that this had not been in place since prior to the election in 2011 and the criteria and formulae used had since been fully reviewed and changed when the full Members Allowances review had been undertaken in 2015 (our report to Council on 8 July 2015 refers).

### **4.0 Treatment of allowances**

4.1 The Panel considered that once Council had made its final decision, this decision should also be reviewed (and the formulae to be applied) as part of the regular four yearly full review of the Members Allowances Scheme (to commence later this year).

### **5.0 Conclusions**

5.1 In making recommendations the Panel took into account the percentage criteria applied in the 2015 review for opposition group leaders, in particular:

- that for the Principal Opposition Group Leader to qualify for an allowance similar to a Cabinet Member, then there would need to be a group the size of 25% of the Council membership (this criteria was met)
- that a minimum group size for the Second Opposition Group Leader to qualify for an allowance had been considered in 2015, but had not been determined, as no second group had been formed
- comparative information from other authorities, including examples of a minimum group size
- the opportunity to review the decision of Council, along with the full Members' Allowances Scheme in 2019.

### **6.0 Recommendations to Blackpool Council**

6.1 That a minimum group size of 10% of the overall number of members of the Council be recommended as criteria for a Special Responsibility allowance for a Second Opposition Group Leader and that an allowance of £6,197 (the same as the Deputy Leader of the Principal Opposition Group) is recommended for the Leader of that Group, should that criteria be met.

- 6.2 That the criteria for determining allowances for Opposition Group Leaders, across a range of options, be considered as part of the overall review of the Members Allowances scheme, starting later this year and due to be considered by the Council in 2019.
- 6.3 That the Council places on record its thanks to Mr Peter Whitehead for his contribution to the Panel over the years.

Mr Tony Mozley, (Chairman for the meeting)  
Mrs Helen Hockenhull  
Mr Greg Molyneux

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## Item 8 - Notice of Motions

To consider the following motions, which have been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 12.1:

a) **Land at Warren Drive.** Councillor Mrs Callow to propose.

Due to continuous flooding in the Warren Drive area and the fact that Blackpool Council is more than fulfilling the Government's requirement to build houses in Blackpool, the Council requests the Executive to support the residents' wish to leave this land as public open space, by looking at the possibility of either purchasing or leasing the land from the owners, Asda.

b) **815 Naval Air Squadron Affiliation.** Councillor Ryan to propose.

"In June this year, the Mayor received a letter from the Royal Navy seeking the formal civic affiliation of the 815 Naval Air Squadron Maritime Strike Force, once HMS TRIUMPH is decommissioned, to continue the strong connection between Blackpool and the Royal Navy. The affiliation would maintain existing local links and offer the opportunity to maintain the community ties, which have been well developed through the town's relationship with HMS TRIUMPH.

815 Naval Air Squadron is based in Somerset and is tasked with providing a versatile and adaptable Wildcat Squadron that can operate anywhere in the world and frequently embark on Royal Navy ships supporting operations both home and abroad. The squadron operates the new Wildcat helicopter, which has been in service with the Royal Navy since 2015 and is the latest generation of multi-role helicopter for the maritime environment.

For a number of years, there has been a strong and enduring link between Blackpool and the Nation's Maritime heritage, including close associations with the Royal Navy and the Submarine Service in particular. The Council is therefore requested to agree to a formal civic affiliation with 815 Naval Air Squadron".

c) **Fracking.** Councillor Mitchell to propose.

### Blackpool Council notes:

- That in May 2018 Ministers outlined a proposal in a Written Ministerial Statement to redefine non-hydraulic fracturing shale gas exploration applications as permitted development, and to redefine large-scale shale gas production sites as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, thus removing any local authority control and community involvement in decision-making.
- That the Government consultation on these proposals began in July 2018 and ends on 25 October 2018.
- That on 5 July 2018, a report by the cross-party Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee warned the Government against its proposal to bring fracking applications under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP)

regime, concluding that Mineral Planning Authorities, were best placed to understand the local area and how fracking could best take place.

- That the above report said the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime was unlikely to speed up the application process for fracking.

Blackpool Council is committed to the principles of localism and the involvement of local communities in decisions that affect their environment, their health and safety and their well-being.

**Blackpool Council believes:**

- That moving decisions about fracking, which have huge implications for local communities, to a national level would contradict the principles of localism.
- That 'Permitted Development' – the category of planning that the government wants to move shale gas exploration drilling into – which was designed for developments with low environmental impacts, is an inappropriate category for drilling with such wide-reaching implications for local communities and climate change.
- That bringing fracking applications under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime will be harmful to local communities.
- That local authorities are best placed to continue to make decisions throughout the planning process for shale gas exploration drilling, appraisal and production.

**Blackpool Council resolves:**

- To respond to the forthcoming government consultation with the above views.
- To share this response with local MPs and relevant government ministers.