

# Blackpool Council

6 April 2021

To: Councillors Burdess, G Coleman, Galley, Hugo, Jackson, Mitchell, Owen, Walsh and Wilshaw

The above members are requested to attend the:

## **TOURISM, ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, 14 April 2021 at 6.00 pm  
Via Zoom Meeting

### **A G E N D A**

#### **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 3 FEBRUARY 2021** (Pages 1 - 8)

To agree the minutes of the last meeting held on 3 February 2021 as a true and correct record.

#### **3 PUBLIC SPEAKING**

To consider any applications from members of the public to speak at the meeting.

- 4 EXECUTIVE AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS** (Pages 9 - 24)
- To consider the Executive and Cabinet Member Decisions within the remit of the Committee, taken since the last meeting.
- 5 FORWARD PLAN** (Pages 25 - 32)
- To consider the content of the Council's Forward Plan, April 2021 – August 2021, within the remit of the Committee.
- 6 TOURISM PERFORMANCE AND RECOVERY UPDATE** (Pages 33 - 38)
- To consider an update on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Blackpool's tourism industry over the past year and to set out plans for recovery.
- 7 ARTS AND CULTURE - IMPACT OF COVID-19** (Pages 39 - 48)
- To gain understanding of the impact of Covid-19 on arts and culture in Blackpool in order to inform the recovery planning process.
- 8 TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION UPDATE** (Pages 49 - 62)
- To provide an overview of progress on the various projects being undertaken to secure the regeneration of Blackpool Town Centre following the last update in September 2020, and to inform the Committee of planned future work.
- 9 PARKS AND GREEN ENVIRONMENT ANNUAL REPORT** (Pages 63 - 80)
- To consider an update on work undertaken, future plans and performance of the Park Development Service.
- 10 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY UPDATE REPORT** (Pages 81 - 90)
- To review the difficulties in maintaining the 47 public rights of way in Blackpool and consider any additional scrutiny work to be undertaken.
- 11 SCRUTINY WORKPLAN** (Pages 91 - 110)
- To consider the Workplan and to monitor the implementation of Committee recommendations, together with any suggestions that Members may wish to make for scrutiny review topics.
- 12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
- To note the provisional date and time of the next meeting as Wednesday, 16 June 2021, commencing at 6pm.

**Other information:**

For queries regarding this agenda please contact John Greenbank, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser, [Tel: 01253 477229](tel:01253477229), e-mail [john.greenbank@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:john.greenbank@blackpool.gov.uk)

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# Agenda Item 2

## MINUTES OF TOURISM, ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 3 FEBRUARY 2021

### **Present:**

Councillor Mitchell (in the Chair)

Councillors

Burdess

Galley

Jackson

Walsh

G Coleman

Hugo

Owen

Wilshaw

### **In Attendance:**

Councillor Neal Brookes, Cabinet Member of Housing and Welfare Reform

Councillor Jim Hobson, Cabinet Member of Climate Change and Environment

Councillor Maria Kirkland, Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Leisure

Councillor Mark Smith, Business, Enterprise and Job Creation

Councillor Mrs Maxine Callow JP, Chair of the Scrutiny Leadership Board

Steve Thompson, Director of Resources

Alan Cavill, Director of Communications and Regeneration

Scott Butterfield, Strategy, Projects and Research Manager

Andrew Duckett, Service Manager - Energy and Sustainability, Procurement and Project

John-Paul Lovie, Waste and Partnerships Manager

Claire Hazelgrove, Organising and Political Engagement Director, Futuregov (Item 6 only)

Thomas Kohut, Principle Consultant, Futuregov (Item 6 only)

John Greenbank, Democratic Governance Senior Adviser (Scrutiny)

### **1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest were made on this occasion.

### **2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2020**

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2020 be signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

### **3 PUBLIC SPEAKING**

The Committee heard from Mr Ken Cridland on the subject of Public Rights of Way.

Mr Cridland informed the Committee that he had observed that some of the rights of way in Blackpool were blocked or in poor condition. He stated that in his opinion that this appeared to conflict with the Council's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and its legal responsibility to maintain public rights of way in Blackpool.

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In order to address these issues Mr Cridland suggested that the Committee adopt a five-point plan which included the following; to seek to ensure that the Council could take on its full legal responsibilities for Rights of Way, to survey all the town's Public Rights of Way, to organise the maintenance of the paths that were already accessible, where they were inaccessible to find temporary diversions for six months and that during this period to carry out the work needed to re-open them.

He also suggested that the TEC Scrutiny Committee could seek regular reports on how the work on inaccessible pathways was progressing, and that annual reports regarding the accessibility and maintenance of Public Rights of Way be received.

The Committee thanked Mr Cridland for his attendance and the presentation that he had made and agreed to add the issue of Public Rights of Way to the Tourism Economy and Communities Work Programme. The Chairman also added that he hoped that Mr Cridland's attendance at the meeting would encourage other members of the public to speak at future meetings.

#### **4 EXECUTIVE AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS**

The Committee considered the Executive and Cabinet Member decisions taken within its remit since the last meeting of the Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee on 18 November 2020.

In respect of Cabinet Member Decision PH51/2020 "Blackpool Business Recovery Fund" Members asked if the fund would be used to support the coach industry in Blackpool. In response, Councillor Mark Smith, Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Job Creation explained that the first round of funding allocation had been agreed and that the coach industry had not been included. However there would be a further round of funding where the inclusion of the coach industry could be looked into. He added that the terms of the fund had been agreed with the Government who had provided the grant to establish the fund and that under these terms there was a possibility that the money could not be used in this way. Mr Alan Cavill, Director of Communication and Regeneration added that it could be difficult to provide support to some businesses due to the terms for eligibility for funding being determined by the Government, but added that support for the coach industry could be looked into.

A query was also raised regarding PH2/2021 "Sundry Debt, Council Tax, Housing Benefit Overpayments and Business Rates Write Offs". The Committee asked if a comparison of the proportionality of debts written off was available. Mr Steve Thompson, Director of Resources, replied that the schedule of write offs for the past five years could be provided to the Committee in writing following the meeting.

Regarding Executive Decision EX1/2020 "Proposed Rent Review 2021/2022" Members asked how much the proposed rent increase of 1.5% would generate in income and how much this would cost tenants. In response, Mr Thompson explained that there had been a 1% reduction year-on-year to 2019/2020, and that details on the impact of the rent increase in 2021/22 could be provided to Members following the meeting.

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Councillor Neal Brookes, Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform added that the decision had been made as the Council had agreed to base rents on the Consumer Price Index and the increase would support the Council's Housing Revenue Account. The lower earning tenants would receive financial support via Housing Benefit.

The Committee agreed to receive the schedule of write offs for the past five years following the meeting.

## **5 FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee considered the contents of the Council's Forward Plan February 2021 to June 2021, relating to the portfolios of the Cabinet Members whose responsibilities fell within its remit.

The Committee asked how many applications had been approved from the Business Loans Fund to date in 2020/2021. Mr Steve Thompson, Director of Resources, replied that from recollection there had been three such applications in 2020 of which one had so far been approved but he would confirm this following the meeting. Members asked if the low number received was the result of poor communications of the fund. In response, Mr Thompson explained that details of the fund and how to apply were available online.

In respect of the Layton Conservation Area, Members asked if any other areas in Blackpool were under consideration to be designated as Conservation Areas. Mr Alan Cavill, Director of Communication and Regeneration, responded that a number of areas around Stanley Park were under consideration and that a breakdown of the areas could be provided to Members.

The Committee agreed:

1. To receive confirmation of the number of Business Loans Fund applications in 2020/2021 following the meeting.
2. To receive a breakdown of the areas under consideration for potential Conservation Areas.

## **6 CLIMATE EMERGENCY PROGRESS AND NEXT STEPS**

The Committee considered an update on the key activities and steps for 2021 in taking the climate emergency forward as a Council and town to make Blackpool net-carbon neutral by 2030.

Ms Claire Hazelgrove, Organising and Political Engagement Director, Futuregov, and Mr Thomas Kohut, Principle Consultant, Futuregov, were welcomed to the meeting and provided an overview of the Climate Assembly and its planned next steps.

In order to determine the membership of the assembly, 8,000 residents had been contacted, from whom 300 had put themselves forward as potential representatives. Of those 40 had been selected to attend.

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These individuals had then been given assistance and training to ensure they could fully take part in the assembly process.

In parallel to the Climate Assembly a Youth Climate Assembly had been held to assist in capturing the views of young people in addressing the climate emergency in Blackpool. The youth assembly had focussed on energy, food, transport, green spaces and blue spaces.

Although the final recommendations of the Climate Assembly had yet to be confirmed the Committee was informed that the emerging issues included; making public transport and cycling the primary modes of transport in the town centre, exploring the potential of using Blackpool's natural resources to generate energy, making housing more energy efficient, network building to ensure a unified approach to achieving carbon neutrality and supporting people to develop local climate emergency related projects.

Mr Scott Butterfield, Strategy, Projects and Research Manager informed the Committee that the emerging recommendations were considered to be helpful and that a further report on the outcomes of the assembly would be provided to a future meeting.

The Committee asked how the membership of the assembly had been determined from the 300 individuals who had put themselves forward. Ms Hazelgrove replied that the aim of the selection had been to ensure that the assembly reflected Blackpool's population and demographics. Mr Butterfield added that they had also looked to include a wide selection of views on the Climate Emergency. He added that all those who had not been selected had been offered the opportunity to participate in a survey so that their views could be captured.

Members also noted that the assembly had used small "break-out" groups to discuss issues and asked if more details on these could be provided. Ms Hazelgrove answered that the use of smaller groups had been undertaken to allow everyone involved a chance to speak in a setting that was less intimidating than the full assembly and would facilitate discussion.

The Committee also asked how the representatives on the assembly had been supported, noting that some would not have had the same IT skills as others. In response, Ms Hazelgrove explained that where necessary devices had been provided and everyone involved had had the necessary training and support to ensure that they were comfortable with the technology being used.

Members welcomed the update and the information on the work of the Climate Assembly. It was considered however that more on the benefits to businesses and on how people were being engaged could be included. It was also stressed that ongoing work was needed to ensure that the Council was held to account for the commitment it had made in the climate emergency declaration and actions going forward should be bold and ambitious.

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The Committee also asked if any consideration had been given to ensuring air quality around schools and other education establishments. Mr Butterfield replied that air quality was a key issue and a pilot project was being developed in response to this, but Covid-19 had slowed progress. In addition, an Air Quality Strategy was being developed in relation to this issue. Ms Hazelgrove added that education was an important part of the assembly's work and consideration was being given to how schools could be helped to understand and reduce their carbon footprints.

An action in the report stated that the Council would "explore" the use of LEDs for street lighting, the Committee queried this inclusion noting that Blackpool's illuminations had used LEDs for a number of years and therefore the necessary knowledge should be available. Councillor Jim Hobson, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment replied that a meeting would be taking place to discuss this issue but that a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) was in place for street lighting in Blackpool. Mr Andrew Duckett, Service Manager - Energy and Sustainability, Procurement and Projects added that the PFI issue was complex but that a business case for using LEDs was being looked into and that an update on progress could be provided to a future meeting.

The commitment in the Blackpool Tree Strategy to plant 2,000 trees in the town was queried, with Members asking where they would be planted. Councillor Hobson responded that consideration was being given to the where this would take place.

The Committee agreed:

1. To receive a further report on the outcomes of the Climate Assembly to a future meeting.
2. That an update on progress regarding the PFI for street lighting in Blackpool and use of LEDs be provided to a future meeting.

## **7 WASTE SERVICES AND STREET CLEANSING PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Mr John-Paul Lovie, Waste and Partnerships Manager presented the Waste Service and Street Cleansing Annual Report 2020. He informed the Committee that 2020 had been a difficult year for the service as a result of the impact of Covid-19. Issues experienced had included the temporary closure of the Household Waste Recycling Centre, although it was reported this had since been re-opened in a Covid-safe way.

Over the course of the year the service had sought to assist residents during lockdown and had supported the Council's CoronaKindness campaign. The service was also reported as delivering a transformation programme, including the transfer of services to the Council's new Wholly-Owned Company Envenco such as street cleansing. Work was also being undertaken with partner authorities across Lancashire to develop the Lancashire Waste Strategy, a draft of which was planned to be available for Spring 2021.

The Committee queried the in full (APSE) data that had been provided and asked if more explanation could be provided in the future regarding what the figures demonstrated.

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Mr Lovie replied that the APSE data represented benchmarking and comparisons with other authorities regarding Blackpool's performance, this information showed that the Council was performing well in all areas measured. However he recognised that more narrative information could be included in future reports as well as information on competitors.

Members also raised the issue of weed clearance and if greater engagement with community groups such as flood forums could be undertaken to help highlight problem areas. Mr Lovie recognised that more could be done in this regard but also noted that the service was utilising new technology to identify areas of weeds causing issues, such as blocking drainage, to allow them to be addressed.

Whether the service was ensuring it linked with the Climate Emergency work being undertaken across the Council was also queried. In response, Mr Lovie informed Members that the service was working to include Climate Emergency in its' work, including how to make waste collection more sustainable. He stated that a Strategic Environmental Risk Assessment Plan had been drafted and had included an assessment of how the service could make a difference, he also confirmed that he would share a copy of this document with the Committee for information.

Members also raised the issues of graffiti in the town centre and if a strategy was in place to address the problem and inquired if local businesses had been engaged to assist. In response, Mr Lovie explained that graffiti was an Environmental Enforcement issue and that the Council did its best to respond to any reports of graffiti as quickly as possible, although priority would be given to any that was considered obscene or offensive. He added that discussion would also be taking place with Envenco on how to address the problem.

The Committee agreed:

1. That future reporting contain additional narrative to explain the data presented.
2. To receive a copy of the Strategic Environmental Risk Assessment Plan following the meeting.

## **8 BATHING WATER QUALITY ANNUAL REPORT 2021**

The Committee received the Bathing Water Quality Annual Report 2020 from Mr John-Paul Lovie, Waste and Partnerships Manager. The report outlined the work undertaken in the past year to deliver the Council's statutory duties in respect of bathing water management.

Mr Lovie informed the Committee that due to the restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Environment Agency had been unable to undertake sampling of bathing water during 2020, therefore it had been decided to roll-over the classifications from 2019. It was hoped that as restrictions eased that sampling could resume and an up-to-date classification could be awarded.

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It was also reported that a new algorithm had been implemented to allow for more accurate Pollution Risk Forecasting. Members asked if the new algorithm allowed for excess rain which could cause pollution from outside of Blackpool to wash into the town's water courses. Mr Lovie replied that this would be taken into account by the new algorithm, and that it had been designed to better measure such factors.

**9 HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS REVIEW PANEL FINAL REPORT**

The Committee considered the Housing and Homelessness Scrutiny Review Final Report.

In response to the recommendations outlined in the report Councillor Neal Brookes, Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform, asked that the following comments be noted;

Councillor Brookes noted that Recommendation 1 was connected to Recommendation 9 and stated that with respect of performance Key Performance Indicators were produced on a quarterly basis and suggested going forward that the proposed annual report be received after 31 March each year to allow the collection a full year's performance data.

With regards to Recommendation 2, Councillor Brookes agreed on the importance of the Blackpool Homeless Partnership. He also informed the Committee that the Partnership had met recently and had commissioned a plan of all the related homelessness meetings and whether these could be rationalised going forward.

Recommendation 5 was also highlighted, with Councillor Brookes informing the Committee that the Council was working with Blackpool Fulfilling Lives to look at how the Alternative Giving Scheme could be better promoted and that funding had been identified to support this.

Councillor Brookes noted that in respect of Recommendation 6 that the Council was in effect operating its Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) full-time due to the need to house people sleeping rough during the Covid-19 lockdown. It was also noted that government funding had been received up until March 2021 to support this, and that provision of the SWEP beyond this would be taken into consideration.

Regarding Recommendation 9, Councillor Brookes stated that he was not aware of a specific mystery shopper scheme that existed and he was therefore unsure how this could be implemented if approved.

Councillor Brookes also asked that Members noted in respect of Recommendation 10 that although the Council would look to secure additional funding to support homeless work, many government funding opportunities concerned the building of extra hostel accommodation. This was stated as not being in line with the approach the Council wished to take to address homelessness and therefore it should be recognised that not all offers of funding would be taken up.

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The Committee thanked Councillor Brookes for his comments and agreed to approve the Housing and Homelessness Scrutiny Review's Final Report for submission to the Executive in March 2021.

**10 SCRUTINY WORKPLAN**

The Committee considered the Scrutiny Workplan report and update on work undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership Review Panel.

Members also received draft scoping documents for the planned reviews of the Blackpool Illuminations and Arts and Culture. In respect of the Arts and Culture Scoping document the Committee asked that the opportunity for wider public engagement be included in the scope.

The Committee also considered a referral from the Council's Audit Committee to consider undertaking a scrutiny review of CCTV infrastructure in Blackpool. Members recognised the importance of this work and agreed to accept the referral and add this item to the Committee's Workplan.

The Committee agreed to note its Workplan, the review scoping documents and the outcomes of the Community Safety Partnership Review Panel.

**11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting of the Committee was confirmed as Wednesday, 14 April 2021 at 6.00pm

**Chairman**

(The meeting ended at 7.57 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:  
John Greenbank, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser  
Tel: 01253 477229  
E-mail: [john.greenbank@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:john.greenbank@blackpool.gov.uk)

**Report to:** **TOURISM, ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Relevant Officer:** Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager

**Date of Meeting:** 14 April 2021

## EXECUTIVE AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 The Committee to consider the Executive and Cabinet Member decisions within the portfolios of the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members taken since the last meeting of the Committee.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 Members will have the opportunity to question the Leader of the Council or the relevant Cabinet Member in relation to the decisions taken.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure that the opportunity is given for all Executive and Cabinet Member decisions to be scrutinised and held to account.

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? N/A

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

### 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 Attached at the appendix to this report is a summary of the decisions taken, which

have been circulated to Members previously.

5.2 This report is presented to ensure Members are provided with a timely update on the decisions taken by the Executive and Cabinet Members. It provides a process where the Committee can raise questions and a response be provided.

5.3 Members are encouraged to seek updates on decisions and will have the opportunity to raise any issues.

**5.4 Witnesses/representatives**

5.4.1 The following Cabinet Members are responsible for the decisions taken in this report and have been invited to attend the meeting:

- Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council
- Councillor Neal Brookes, Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform
- Councillor Gillian Campbell, Cabinet Member for Tourism and Culture
- Councillor Jim Hobson, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment
- Councillor Mark Smith, Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Job Creation

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

**List of Appendices:**

Appendix 4(a) Summary of Executive and Cabinet Member decisions taken.

**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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**APPENDIX 4(a)**

<b>DECISION / OUTCOME</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>CABINET MEMBER</b>
<p><b>PROPOSED LAYTON CONSERVATION AREA</b></p> <p>The Executive agreed:</p> <p>To approve the carrying out of a public consultation on proposals to designate a Layton Conservation Area.</p>	<p>To seek approval to undertake a public consultation on proposals to designate a Layton Conservation Area.</p>	<p>EX13/2021</p>	<p>8 February 2021</p>	<p>Councillor Gillian Campbell, Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism</p>
<p><b>CAPITAL STRATEGY 2021/2022 TO 2023/2024</b></p> <p>The Executive agreed:</p> <p>To recommend to the Council to approve the Capital Strategy 2021/22 to 2023/24 incorporating the Property Investment Strategy 2021/22.</p>	<p>To consider the Capital Strategy for 2021/22 to 2023/24, attached at Appendix 3a of the Executive report, incorporating the Property Investment Strategy for 2021/22, attached at Appendix 3b of the Executive report.</p>	<p>EX8/2021</p>	<p>8 February 2021</p>	<p>Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council</p>

<p><b>TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY REPORT 2021/2022</b></p> <p>The Executive agreed:</p> <p>To recommend to the Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To approve the Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22 including both the Borrowing and Investment Strategies which are set out in Annex C and Annex D to the Executive report.</li> <li>2. To adopt the Treasury Management Policy Statement, the three key principles and four clauses taken from CIPFA’s Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes (2017 Edition) and set out in Annex B to the Executive report.</li> <li>3. To approve the revised Prudential Indicators and limits for 2020/21 and the new Prudential Indicators and limits for 2021/22 – 2023/24 which are set out in Annex E to the Executive report.</li> <li>4. To approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement for 2021/22, which will ensure a prudent Minimum Revenue Provision charge in the annual statement of accounts. The policy is set out in Annex F to the Executive report.</li> </ol>	<p>To consider The Treasury Management Strategy Report 2021/22 and its annexes A, B, C, D, E and F of the Executive report.</p>	<p>EX11/2021</p>	<p>8 February 2021</p>	<p>Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council</p>
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<p><b>CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/2022 TO 2023/2024</b></p> <p>The Executive agreed:</p> <p>To recommend to Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To approve the Capital Programme for 2021/22 as set out at Appendices A and B.</li> <li>2. To agree the Single Capital Pot approach as outlined in Section 4 with a top slice of 12.5% to allow for investment in key priority areas and overspends that are not otherwise fundable (reference paragraph 4.2).</li> <li>3. To approve the Capital Prudential Indicators as identified in Appendix C.</li> </ol> <p>To agree that Executive approvals will continue to be required for all Prudential Borrowing schemes (reference paragraph 3.1).</p>	<p>To consider the 2021/21, 2022/23 and 2023/24 Capital Programme.</p>	<p>EX9/2021</p>	<p>8 February 2021</p>	<p>Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council</p>
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<p><b>MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY REVIEW</b></p> <p>The Executive agreed that:</p> <p>To recommend that the Council approves the revised Minimum Revenue Provision Policy 2020/21 set out within Appendix 5b, to the Executive report.</p> <p>To recommend to the Council that in approving the revised Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Council endorses the following amendments which had been included in the document:</p> <p>i. <b>Page 16</b> The Council has accepted the principle that any capital receipts which it determines in future should be set aside in order to reduce the outstanding amount of capital debt liability may, if desired, be taken to represent a debt liability reduction that has been made in lieu of a corresponding amount of prudent provision that would otherwise have been made in a particular financial year. Any such setting aside of capital receipts will not, however, apply to those capital receipts which represent the repayment of loan principal amounts in respect of loans made in earlier financial years which have been treated as capital expenditure, but not subjected to an Minimum Revenue Provision charge.</p> <p>ii. The policy changes reflected above will in future be represented as a new local Option for the ongoing determination of an amount of Minimum Revenue Provision which is considered each year to be prudent.</p>	<p>In 2020 the Council commissioned Link Asset Services to review the Council’s existing Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy. The resulting review identified matters pertinent to the Council’s Minimum Revenue Provision, which may appropriately be taken into account when formulating a revised Minimum Revenue Provision policy. The report has been produced in order to provide the necessary information to enable the Council to consider varying its Minimum Revenue Provision Policy</p>	<p>EX10/2021</p>	<p>8 February 2021</p>	<p>Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council</p>
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- iii. In respect of new capital debt liability incurred after 1st April 2008, the Authority’s Policy continues to adopt the principles outlined in Option 3 (asset life method) that are exemplified in the Minimum Revenue Provision Guidance, whereby the liability will be charged over a period that is reasonably commensurate with that over which the new capital expenditure is estimated to provide a benefit to the Authority.
- iv. Any credit arrangements or expenditure treated as capital expenditure under Direction or Regulation will either have Minimum Revenue Provision determined under Option 3, or otherwise related to the estimated life of the underlying asset. For example, a loan granted to a third party towards “capital expenditure” will, where Minimum Revenue Provision is considered to be necessary, be related to the life of the asset towards which the financial assistance is being provided.
- v. Whether any charges are appropriate for this type of activity after taking account of the different powers available to it.
- vi. Minimum Revenue Provision will not be charged (voluntarily) on any Part II (Housing Revenue Account related) housing debt.

<p>vii. Minimum Revenue Provision will not be charged on loans made to wholly owned subsidiaries or other third parties where such loans are treated as capital expenditure in cases where there are satisfactory and supportable repayment obligations attached to those loans. Unlike other types of capital receipt, the capital receipts that will arise from these repayments will be set aside generally or specifically to reduce the outstanding amount of capital debt liability in respect of these loans. The anticipated receipts will be kept under review on an annual basis in order to ensure that the deferment of Minimum Revenue Provision remains prudent.</p> <p>viii. Following the identification of savings in respect of financial years 2004/05 – 2018/19, totalling £23.808m, (in respect of an increase of £34.743m to Adjustment A, and earlier year revenue contributions to capital of £13.054m, (adjusted for alternate Minimum Revenue Provision liability)), the Council will determine for any subsequent financial year the extent to which they propose to reduce the amount of Minimum Revenue Provision liability that would have arisen, but for these savings. Additionally, the Council will continue to apply the higher amount of Adjustment A indicated above to have been identified.</p>				
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<p><b>GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2021/2022</b></p> <p>The Executive agreed:</p> <p>To recommend to Council the level of net expenditure for the draft General Fund Revenue Budget 2021/22 of £149,062,000 (ref. paragraph 6.2).</p> <p>To recommend to Council a level of budget savings of £20.3m (ref. paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2 and Appendix 2 of the Executive report).</p> <p>To recommend to Council that the Chief Executive be authorised to take any necessary steps to ensure all staffing savings are achieved (ref. paragraph 8.1).</p> <p>To recommend to Council that the target level of working balances remains at £6m (ref. paragraph 10.4).</p> <p>To consider any further facts, information and stakeholder feedback which may emerge and report the details to the meeting of the Executive on 25th February 2021.</p>	<p>To consider the proposal for Blackpool Council’s draft General Fund Revenue Budget 2021/22 as outlined in the report circulated to Members under separate cover.</p>	<p>EX12/2021</p>	<p>8 February 2021</p>	<p>Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council</p>
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<p><b>FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING AS AT MONTH 9 2020/21</b></p> <p>The Executive agreed that:</p> <p>To note the report.</p> <p>To continue to lobby central government (HM Treasury, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Department for Transport, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for Education in particular) along with local authority peers and networks and the Local Government Association for the funding necessary to cope with the demands and new burdens presenting as a result of both Covid and within Children’s Services.</p> <p>To require the respective directors and Director of Resources to continue to closely monitor and manage service financial and operational performances, specifically Growth and Prosperity, Children’s Services and Strategic Leisure Assets and also the 3 Wholly Owned Companies that are facing the biggest impact from the Covid pandemic these being Blackpool Transport Services (BTS), Blackpool Entertainment Company Limited (BECL) and Blackpool Operating Company Limited (BOCL).</p> <p>To agree that the 2020/21 pressure of £8,832k relating to Growth and Prosperity will be funded from Earmarked Reserves in 2020/21 and the schemes slipped to 2021/22 plans which will be reflected in month 10 financial monitoring and is consistent with the General Fund Budget Report 2021/22 to be reported to the Executive on 8 February 2021</p>	<p>To report the level of spending and exposure against the Council’s Revenue budgets and reserves and balances for the first 9 months to 31 December 2020.</p>	<p>EX7/2021</p>	<p>8 February 2021</p>	<p>Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council</p>
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**APPENDIX 4(a)**

<p><b>SUNDRY DEBT, COUNCIL TAX, HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENTS AND BUSINESS RATES WRITE OFFS</b></p> <p>To write off the Sundry Debt for Social Care totaling £14,575.73 outlined in paragraph 6.1.</p> <p>To write off the Sundry Debt for Social Care totaling £5,562.30 outlined in paragraph 6.2.</p> <p>To write off the Council Tax debt totalling £5,291.83 outlined in paragraph 6.3.</p>	<p>This report lists applications to write off outstanding balances of Sundry Debts and Council Tax where there is no prospect of recovery or recovery of the debt is inappropriate.</p> <p>The Corporate Write Off Policy states that all Sundry Debts over £5,000 and Council Tax over £5,000 must be authorised by Executive decision.</p>	<p>PH33/2021</p>	<p>12 March 2021</p>	<p>Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council</p>
<p><b>BLACKPOOL TOWN DEAL – UPDATE</b></p> <p>The Executive agreed that:</p> <p>The update be noted.</p>	<p>To provide the Executive with an update on the delivery of the Town Deal Programme.</p>	<p>EX22/2021</p>	<p>22 March 2021</p>	<p>Councillor Mark Smith, Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Job Creation</p>

**APPENDIX 4(a)**

<p><b>BLACKPOOL WASTE SERVICES – PHASE 2 DEVELOPMENT</b></p> <p>The Executive agreed that:</p> <p>To authorise and approve the integration of the depot-delivered Waste and Street Cleansing services (see scope of services below) in to the Council’s wholly owned waste company, Blackpool Waste Services Limited, in delivering additional related services currently managed by the Council. This will provide the opportunity for a more integrated, joined up and coordinated delivery, with improved levels of services and better environmental outcomes for the residents of Blackpool, in addition allowing the opportunity to create efficiencies with a target saving of £350,000 to contribute to the Council’s ongoing financial position. (See the Strategic Environmental Assessment Plan (SEAP) attached at Appendix 4a, to the Executive report).</p> <p>To authorise and delegate to the Director of Community and Environmental Services responsibility for the smooth transfer of the services identified in this report by 1 September 2021 to Blackpool Waste Services Ltd. He will work with the existing Project Board and the Blackpool Waste Services Board in facilitating the transfer. Council department specialists will provide support to ensure all appropriate legal and financial due diligence is undertaken prior to the transfer of services. Particular regard will be given to ensuring staff terms and conditions are protected.</p>	<p>To consider the future development of the Council’s wholly owned waste company, Blackpool Waste Services Limited, which trades as ENVECO, through the potential to expand its operational base by further incorporating additional frontline waste and other associated operational services delivered from Layton Depot.</p>	<p>Ex17/2021</p>	<p>22 March 2021</p>	<p>Councillor Jim Hobson, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change</p>
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<p><b>FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING AS AT MONTH 10 2020/21</b></p> <p>The Executive agreed:</p> <p>To note the report.</p> <p>To continue to lobby central government (HM Treasury, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Department for Transport, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for Education in particular) along with local authority peers and networks and the Local Government Association for the funding necessary to cope with the demands and new burdens presenting as a result of both Covid and within Children’s Services.</p> <p>To require the respective directors and Director of Resources to continue to closely monitor and manage service financial and operational performances, specifically Growth and Prosperity, Strategic Leisure Assets and Children’s Services and also the 3 Wholly Owned Companies that are facing the biggest impact from the Covid pandemic these being Blackpool Transport Services (BTS), Blackpool Entertainment Company Limited (BECL) and Blackpool Operating Company Limited (BOCL).</p>	<p>To report the level of spending and exposure against the Council’s Revenue budgets and reserves and balances for the first 10 months to 31 January 2021.</p>	<p>EX19/2021</p>	<p>22 March 2021</p>	<p>Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council</p>
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**APPENDIX 4(a)**

<p><b>TRAMWAY WORKS PRUDENTIAL BORROWING</b></p> <p>The Executive agreed:</p> <p>To approve Prudential Borrowing up to £900,000 to fund the capital works to the tramway, as outlined in paragraph 6.6, to be repayable up to five years.</p>	<p>To consider whether to fund essential tramway works through Prudential Borrowing.</p>	<p>EX18/2021</p>	<p>22 March 2021</p>	<p>Councillor Jim Hobson, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change</p>
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**Report to:** **TOURISM, ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Relevant Officer:** Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager

**Date of Meeting:** 14 April 2021

## FORWARD PLAN

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 The Committee to consider the content of the Council's Forward Plan April 2021 to August 2021, relating to the portfolios of the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 Members will have the opportunity to question the Leader of the Council and / or the relevant Cabinet Member in relation to items contained within the Forward Plan within the portfolios of the Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader of the Council.

2.2 Members will have the opportunity to consider whether any of the items should be subjected to pre-decision scrutiny. In so doing, account should be taken of any requests or observations made by the relevant Cabinet Member.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To enable the opportunity for pre-decision scrutiny of the Forward Plan items.

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? N/A

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

### 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 The Forward Plan is prepared by the Leader of the Council to cover a period of four months and has effect from the first working day of any month. It is updated on a monthly basis and subsequent plans cover a period beginning with the first working day of the second month covered in the preceding plan.

5.2 The Forward Plan contains matters which the Leader has reason to believe will be subject of a key decision to be taken either by the Executive, a Committee of the Executive, individual Cabinet Members, or Officers.

5.3 Attached at Appendix 5(a) is a list of items contained in the current Forward Plan. Further details appertaining to each item is contained in the Forward Plan, which has been forwarded to all members separately.

## **5.4 Witnesses/representatives**

5.4.1 The following Cabinet Members are responsible for the Forward Plan items in this report and have been invited to attend the meeting:

- Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council
- Councillor Neal Brookes, Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform
- Councillor Gillian Campbell, Cabinet Member for Tourism and Culture
- Councillor Jim Hobson, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment
- Councillor Mark Smith, Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Job Creation

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

### **List of Appendices:**

Appendix 5(a) Summary of items contained within Forward Plan April 2021 to August 2021.

## **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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## **EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN - SUMMARY OF KEY DECISIONS**

**(APRIL 2021 TO AUGUST 2021)**

**\* Denotes New Item**

<b>Anticipated Date of Decision</b>	<b>Matter for Decision</b>	<b>Decision Reference</b>	<b>Decision Taker</b>	<b>Relevant Cabinet Member</b>
April 2021	Town Centre Investment including necessary acquisitions to facilitate Talbot Gateway Phase Three (this item to be considered in private by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	1/2021	Executive	Cllr Smith
April 2021	Applications for Business Loans above £500,000. (this item to be considered in private by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	2/2021	Executive	Cllr Williams
April 2021	To agree strategic acquisitions and investments in or adjoining the Enterprise Zone (this item to be considered in private by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	3/2021	Executive	Cllr Smith
May 2021	Lancashire and Blackpool Flood Risk Management Strategy	11/2018	Executive	Cllr Hobson

<b>Anticipated Date of Decision</b>	<b>Matter for Decision</b>	<b>Decision Reference</b>	<b>Decision Taker</b>	<b>Relevant Cabinet Member</b>
May 2021	To agree the Community Safety Plan and the priorities within the plan to be addressed by the Community Safety Partnership as identified by the Strategic Assessment (Crime and Disorder Audit)	21/2019	Council on recommendation of Executive	Cllr Brookes
April 2021	The Blackpool Tree Strategy	11/2020	Executive	Cllr Kirkland
April 2021	New Council housing development at Grange Park, seeking approval to the mix, design, and financial appraisal of the new homes.	7/2021	Executive	Cllr Brookes
April 2021	To approve the 2021/2022 'Local Transport Plan Programme', which includes Integrated Transport Block and Highways Maintenance Block elements (both capital spend) and the complementary 'Potholes' highways maintenance allocation	9/2021	Executive	Cllr Hobson
*April 2021	To consider and approve the updated Social Value Policy and Suppliers Charter leading to further improvement to maximise Social Value delivery from our supply chain within the procurement and contracting process.	10/2021	Executive	Cllr Taylor

Anticipated Date of Decision	Matter for Decision	Decision Reference	Decision Taker	Relevant Cabinet Member
*April 2021	To seek approval to appoint a Preferred Bidder / award a contract for a Finance Management and eProcurement System and all associated implementation, support and maintenance services. (this item to be considered in private by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information))	11/2021	Executive	Cllr Williams

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<b>Report to:</b>	<b>TOURISM, ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Alan Cavill, Director of Communications and Regeneration
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	14 April 2021

## TOURISM PERFORMANCE AND RECOVERY

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To provide an update on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Blackpool's tourism industry over the past year and to set out plans for recovery.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To consider the report and identify any further areas for scrutiny as appropriate.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure constructive and robust scrutiny of the report, which has been requested by the Committee.

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

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

### 4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 Not applicable

### 5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is

- "The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool"

### 6.0 Background information

#### 6.1 COVID-19: Impact On Tourism

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on tourism and hospitality across the UK, exposing the fragility and hand-to-mouth nature of the industry.

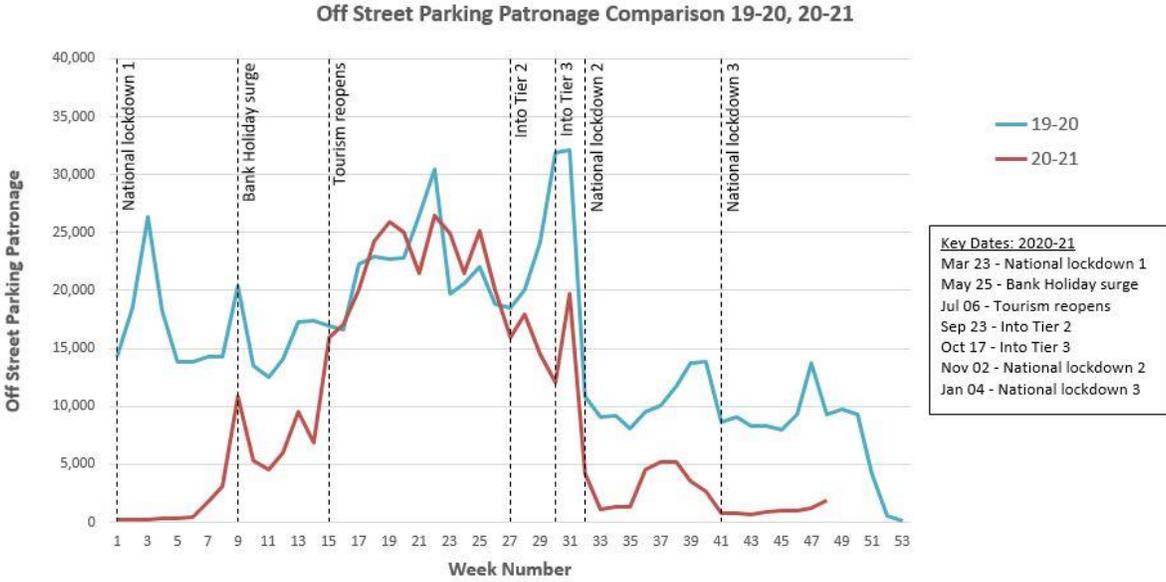
In Blackpool, the loss of key trading periods during 2020 including Easter, both May bank holidays and October half-term as a result of lockdowns and tier restrictions meant that many local businesses were left struggling to stay afloat.

In that regard, the introduction (and subsequent extension) of business support including the furlough scheme, reduction in VAT, business rates holiday, and grant schemes proved critical.

With national bodies suggesting that it could be three years or more before parts of the industry return to pre-COVID levels of turnover and profitability, it is crucial that targeted support for tourism businesses continues.

While we have been unable to accurately measure the true impact on visitor numbers over the past 12 months because research activity has been suspended, we know from indicators such as parking usage that normal levels of activity have reduced by almost half.

The chart below shows how the stop-start nature of 2020 impacted on visitor numbers, with a surge in visitor numbers when tourism was finally allowed to reopen in July last year, followed by a sharp decline as confusing tier restrictions began to undermine consumer confidence from late September onwards.



**6.2 Tourism Recovery Plans**

It is widely anticipated that 2021 will see a staycation boom due to ongoing uncertainty over international travel and a pent-up demand from people wanting to go on holiday after a year of restrictions.

Given the range of indoor and outdoor attractions, choice of accommodation and wide open

spaces, along with the measures that businesses have put in place to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience, Blackpool should be well-positioned to take advantage of that demand.

Subject to the Prime Minister's roadmap milestones being delivered on schedule, we anticipate that we will have a strong tourism offer from mid-May onwards, although some businesses are anticipating that they will still be operating with reduced capacity and with some social distancing measures staying in place for the foreseeable future.

If that is the case, it will be challenging to stage some large-scale events. The annual Pride Festival, due to take place in June, has already moved to a virtual format and other planned events remain under review while we await further guidance.

It is our intention to once again extend the Illuminations season by two months to give businesses an opportunity to recoup some of the income they have already lost this year due to enforced closure over February half-term and the Easter school holidays.

Given the possibility of some restrictions remaining in place, it will be 2022 onwards before Blackpool has a fully-rounded tourism product incorporating a complete programme of shows and events.

For that reason, it is crucial that recovery planning is not limited to a short-term marketing campaign and that we seek to develop a longer-term marketing strategy that is financially sustainable and capable of maintaining the resort's status as the UK's most popular seaside destination.

In June last year, VisitBlackpool established a Tourism Recovery Group comprising attractions, venues, accommodation businesses and transport providers. That group has met on a weekly basis and will continue to do so over the coming months as it provides an invaluable platform for sharing customer insights and best practice, collaborative marketing and lobbying for business support.

Although tourism has suffered serious disruption over the past 12 months, the physical regeneration of the resort continues apace with the construction of new hotels, the much-anticipated opening of the new Conference and Exhibition Centre adjoining the Winter Gardens, and the major leisure development at Blackpool Central. This investment will be a key factor in helping to secure new audiences in the years ahead.

### 6.3 Destination Marketing

VisitBlackpool is working closely with partners on a multi-channel tactical marketing campaign for 2021. This will focus on a number of phased elements that reflect the milestones in the Prime Minister's roadmap. This is an outline of the plan for the year ahead:

#### Initial phase (March to mid-April) – *Ready and waiting, start planning*

Focusing on the need to get people to respect restrictions prior to the opening up of some outdoor attractions (including Blackpool Pleasure Beach and Zoo) and self-catering accommodation on April 12, but also encouraging them to plan ahead and book attractions and accommodation as the tourism industry recovers. This initial phase seeks to build consumer confidence by using the Visit Blackpool website ([Tourist Information and Things To Do In Blackpool | Visit Blackpool](#)) to give people as much information as possible about the COVID-safe measures that are in place before they book. This part of the campaign will utilise PR and outdoor advertising, but will be primarily social media-based to give us maximum flexibility if there is any slippage in roadmap dates.

#### Second phase (mid-April onwards) – *Find your freedom*

Recognising that we will have a much more comprehensive tourism offer with the opening of indoor attractions, hotels and hospitality from May 17. Again, this campaign will be a mixture of PR, outdoor and social, showcasing the breadth of Blackpool's family attractions and accommodation. The messaging will become increasingly upbeat as we move towards the end of the roadmap and will major on the myriad of things that people can do during the summer as the resort returns to something more akin to business as usual. This element of the marketing campaign will also incorporate promotion of any events over the summer months (subject to them being allowed to go ahead).

#### Third phase (June onwards) – *You're Welcome*

As we move into the summer months, we will start to roll out an autumn/winter campaign that will see a two-month extension to the Illuminations season; high-profile events over October half-term including Nickelodeon SLIMEFEST and the Lightpool Festival; and a new, much more compelling Christmas offer. This phase will be the mainstay of the 2021 destination marketing activity with a multi-channel campaign incorporating TV, radio, outdoor, PR and social. The key objective here is to drive volumes of visitors to the resort over the traditional Illuminations season, but also generate additional visitation and spend in the final two months of the year to enable businesses to recoup some of their losses from the first few months of this year.

#### Fourth phase – preparing for 2022.

The destination marketing partnership has already started looking at a new campaign for 2022, when we envisage that the resort will be able to reintroduce a comprehensive package of shows, entertainment, large-scale events, and conferences and exhibitions across the entire year. The preparation work will likely include a new TV creative for roll-out in the early part of 2022.

#### 6.4 Other Support Measures

In anticipation of a surge in visitor numbers over the coming months, it is essential that we have appropriate measures in place to support the tourism offer.

Last autumn, we successfully introduced an army of COVID marshals who were deployed at

key points on the promenade to help with social distancing, queue management and wayfinding. That scheme will continue this year and be complemented by the recruitment of a number of trained ambassadors.

There will also be a renewed focus on anti-littering to prevent some of the issues that arose last year when large numbers of visitors left significant amounts of rubbish on the promenade and sea shore. We are working closely with Keep Britain Tidy and the SEALIFE Centre on key messages to encourage people to dispose of their rubbish responsibly.

The Government has recently awarded Blackpool a total of £222,000 from the newly-established “Welcome Back” fund, which is aimed at improving the look and feel of tourist areas including the introduction of additional outdoor seating areas and pop-up food stalls. We are exploring with partners how this can be best used to support the reopening of the resort.

6.5 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

**7.0 List of Appendices:**

7.1 None

**8.0 Financial considerations:**

8.1 Details of financial considerations are contained within the body of the report.

**9.0 Legal considerations:**

9.1 None

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

10.1 Details of potential risk are contained within the body of the report.

**11.0 Equalities considerations:**

11.1 None

**12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:**

12.1 None

**13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:**

13.1 Weekly meetings with key partners who form the Tourism Recovery Group are helping to

inform marketing strategy and future funding opportunities.

**14.0 Background papers:**

14.1 None

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>TOURISM, ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Alan Cavill, Director of Communications and Regeneration
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	14 April 2021

## ARTS AND CULTURE – IMPACT OF COVID-19

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To gain understanding of the impact of Covid-19 on arts and culture in Blackpool in order to inform the recovery planning process.
- 1.2 To agree a plan for gathering evidence to understand the impact of Covid-19 on the cultural sector (and venues) in Blackpool and to gain insight into challenges remaining and plans for sustainable recovery. To use the evidence gathered to inform the Council's future plans for supporting the local cultural sector and to advocate additional targeted support.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 The Cultural Services Team undertake an exercise in gathering information from a cross section of cultural organisations and self-employed creatives (such as visual artists, dancers etc) on the impact of Covid-19 on their ability to deliver their offer to audiences, customers and participants and impact on short term viability and longer term sustainability.
- 2.2 To provide a more detailed report to the Scrutiny Committee in September 2021 with analysis of the intelligence gathered and outline recommendations on actions the Council could take to support the recovery and future development of the cultural sector in the town.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 National research<sup>1</sup> has estimated that up to 55,000 jobs were lost in creative industries and the cultural sector in the first six months after the first lockdown. Live performance venues and museums and galleries have been forced to close their doors for long or indefinite periods, films and television programmes have had to put a halt on production, and self-employed creatives have experienced immense job instability. Given the pace of change, and limited data availability, it has been difficult for policymakers and industry to understand the exact scale of the pandemic's impact on employment within the sector.
- 3.2 In Blackpool, a variety of cultural venues have been required to close and could be at risk due to reduced trading revenues during enforced closure and continuing restrictions when

allowed to open. Maintaining and supporting the cultural sector in Blackpool is of key importance to the town's economic and social wellbeing.

3.3 The full impact of COVID-related restrictions on the cultural sector in Blackpool is unknown as the country cautiously emerges out of lockdown in line with the government's roadmap to recovery. Government financial support has been welcomed especially targeted sectoral support such as the Cultural Recovery Fund (CRF). The results of the latest round of CRF awards will not be known until early April 2021 and it is likely there will be a third funding round.

3.4 Further, the Council via its discretionary grant scheme, the Blackpool Business Recovery Fund (round 2), has encouraged applications from creative businesses who have thus far received little or no support, including freelancers. We will have evidence on the level of need and impact on creative businesses once these have been appraised during. This application round is live at the time of writing with a closing date of the 7<sup>th</sup> April. Over 110 applications have been received as of 31 March 2021.

3.5 The Council will be better informed on the needs and support required by local artists, craftspeople and creative businesses when the feedback received from a recent Heritage Action Zone funded survey undertaken during March 2021 has been analysed.

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

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

#### **4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:**

4.1 The Council could decide not to investigate the impact of Covid-19 on the local cultural sector but this would be severely detrimental to the economic, social and environmental recovery of the town and to the health and wellbeing of local communities. Gathering evidence on the cultural sector will allow the Council as a strategic body to take informed action, decisions on investment, or use the information for bidding for strategic funding that may come available to support cultural recovery and regeneration of the town.

#### **5.0 Council priority:**

5.1 The relevant Council priority is

- "The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool"
- "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience"

## **6.0 Background information**

- 6.1 The Covid-19 crisis presents the biggest threat to the UK's cultural infrastructure, institutions and workforce in a generation. Emerging from the pandemic decisions are still to be made on national cultural recovery funds for those organisations that have been eligible to apply including Blackpool based organisations.
- 6.2 It is suggested that the meeting of the TEC Scrutiny Committee be used to agree the scope of evidence gathering about the impact of Covid-19 on the cultural sector in Blackpool; identify the key issues the Committee wish to explore more fully, to agree how the evidence should be obtained and presented at a future meeting. For instance, members may wish to invite representatives from cultural organisations and a cross section of self-employed creatives to present their experience in person.
- 6.3 Appendix 7(a) to the report presents a brief report on the present situation on the impact of Covid-19 on the cultural sector nationally and in Blackpool informed by 'intelligence' gathered through national reports and some sample case studies from local cultural organisations.
- 6.4 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

## **7.0 List of Appendices:**

- 7.1 Appendix 7(a) – Impact of Covid-19 on Arts and Culture

## **8.0 Financial considerations:**

- 8.1 Depending on the outcome and or recommendations of the evidence gathering and review by officers there may be some financial implications going forward i.e. funding the production of a Cultural Recovery Strategy and Plan for the town.

## **9.0 Legal considerations:**

- 9.1 None.

## **10.0 Risk management considerations:**

- 10.1 Blackpool Council is recognised regionally and nationally by strategic partners such as the Arts Council for its commitment to a thriving cultural sector in the town and the importance of local communities, in particular young people, accessing quality cultural experiences. The Council can play a strategic role in supporting the recovery of the cultural sector in the town and influence other strategic bodies. The Council has a leadership role within the town to understand the impact of Covid-19 on the cultural sector and to follow this up with action where appropriate otherwise Blackpool could miss out on recovery funds that become available in the future.

**11.0 Equalities considerations:**

11.1 Equalities will be considered in the summary of findings arising out of the research identified and any other relevant national research.

**12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:**

12.1 This report is about taking action to understand and have an influence on the future sustainability of the cultural sector in Blackpool. It does not have any immediate or obvious environmental considerations at this stage.

**13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:**

13.1 Limited internal consultation has taken place within Cultural Services and with local cultural organisations. One of the key recommendations is to undertake more detailed consultation to report back in the autumn 2021.

**14.0 Background papers:**

<sup>1</sup> The Centre for Cultural Value is undertaking research on the impact of Covid-19 on the arts and culture, more details of which can be found at:

[Impact of Covid-19 - CultureHive](#)

The Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee enquiry:

[Impact of Covid-19 on DCMS sectors \(parliament.uk\)](#)

The Local Government Association has information on the available support and guidance on arts and culture at: [COVID-19: culture, tourism, leisure and sports | Local Government Association](#)

TEC Scrutiny Meeting, 14 April 2014

## APPENDIX 7(a): REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE CULTURAL SECTOR IN BLACKPOOL

### 1. National Context

The Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee set up an enquiry and asked for evidence to be submitted in early summer 2020 into the impact of Covid-19 on culture, media and sporting life in this country and published their report in July 2020.

A link to the full report is here: [Impact of Covid-19 on DCMS sectors \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/culture-digital-media-sport-committee/committees-reports-and-evidence/2020-21/impact-of-covid-19-on-dcms-sectors/)

The report stated that the Covid-19 crisis presents the biggest threat to the UK's cultural infrastructure, institutions and workforce in a generation.

In July 2020 the Government announced a £1.57 billion support package for the arts but for many in the sector it has been too little too late.

The following facts and observations come from this report:

- Each year, more people in the UK attend the theatre than go to a league football match. There are just under 1,100 theatres in the UK. In the first 12 weeks of lockdown, more than 15,000 theatrical performances were cancelled with a loss of more than £303 million in box office revenue.
- The Music Venue Trust estimate that 93% of the grassroots venue network faces permanent closure, with 86% of venues reporting that their core threat stems from an inability to meet commercial rent demands.
- The Association of Independent Festivals says that 92% of its members face permanent collapse and 98.5% are not covered by cancellation insurance, despite having already incurred an average sunk cost of £375,000 per event.
- The crisis has also impacted the important work that arts organisations do in communities. In 2018/19, 77% of adults and 96% of children engaged with the arts, and cultural activity has proven benefits for health and wellbeing.
- Orchestras Live estimates that more than 5,000 public engagement opportunities have been lost, and there is a risk that cuts that arts organisations make due to Covid-19 will hit talent development and/or education and participation programmes in the long run.
- Many arts organisation have responded to this period of enforced closure by making productions available for streaming online or through partnerships with broadcasters. This requires access to digital infrastructure, and the National Theatre said the current period has "laid bare the disparity in digital capability between larger and smaller organisations".
- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme have been a lifeline for all those in the creative industries who have been eligible for them.
- Lessons must be learnt from Arts Council England's emergency funding when it comes to distributing the additional Government support. Support cannot be limited to organisations with a track record of public funding. Although recipients must be able to demonstrate they will use public monies appropriately, such a restrictive criterion risks excluding vital parts of

the cultural ecology, including whole sectors that have historically had less engagement with funding bodies such as contemporary music, circus and amateur theatre.

- Throughout the Covid-19 crisis, vulnerable people across the country have suffered as a result of being excluded from digital services and communication. Yet initiatives to tackle the issue, such as the DevicesDotNow campaign, have been limited by a lack of both direct and charitable funding.

## 2. Funding support accessed by Blackpool Cultural Organisations

This is an indicative table demonstrating the range of cultural and creative businesses that have accessed national and locally administered funding support. This is not a comprehensive table but demonstrates a snap shot of the situation.

Both the Arts Council and National Heritage Lottery set up Emergency Funding grant schemes before the DCMS Cultural Recovery Fund package was put in place.

The Arts Council made £20 million available to artists, creative practitioners and freelancers who could apply for up to £2,500. We know some artists across Blackpool benefitted from these grants and artists and organisations when support was requested were helped by LeftCoast and the Arts Service i.e. writing letters of support.

The Arts Council also made £50 million available to organisations outside their National Portfolio. Organisations could bid for up to £35k. Some organisations such as Abingdon Studios were successful with their application. ACE also made £90 million available for National Portfolio Organisations and Creative People and Places lead organisations.

The Cultural Recovery Fund has had 2 rounds so far with decisions on bids for round 2 due at the beginning of April 2021 and it has been intimated by the DCMS that there will be a third Cultural Recovery fund round in the summer. Local authorities have not been consulted on any decisions made.

VENUE /ASSET	WHO IS LEAD APPLICANT	HERITAGE CULTURAL RECOVERY FUND ROUND 1	ARTS CRF FUND ROUND 1 (£3M is max bid)	ARTS CRF LOANS	GOVERNMENT AND BLACKPOOL COUNCIL FINANCIAL SUPPORT
Winter Gardens	BECL	£700K Awarded end of Sept 2020 for Round 1  Round 2 bid also made.	No	No	100% business rates relief or 2020-21 for Retail Hospitality Leisure Sectors. Covid discretionary grant: £40k. LRSg grants: ongoing.
Grand Theatre	Arts and Entertainment Co	Not applied to this fund	A grant of £483,666k awarded for Round 1.	No	100% business rates relief for 2020-21. Covid Discretionary Grants - £35k.

			Bid submitted for Round 2.		Released 90% of BC's SLA funding for 2020/21 immediately (£57,600) ACE Emergency Fund grant of £193k LRSg grants: ongoing.
<b>Tower</b>	Tom and Laci Productions Ltd/Tower Circus	Not applied to this fund	A grant of £362,980 awarded for Round 1.	No	100% business rates relief for 2020-21.
<b>Pleasure Beach</b>	Blackpool Leisure and Amusement Consultancy Ltd/StageWorks Worldwide	Not applied to this fund	A grant of £187k awarded in Round 1	No	100% business rates relief for 2020-21.
<b>Bootleg Social</b>	Eat & Sleep Entertainment Ltd	Not applied to this fund	A grant of £81,309 awarded in Round 1	No	100% business rates relief. LRSg grants: ongoing.
<b>Funny Girls</b>	Ellis Noble	Not eligible	Applied in Round 1 – not successful.	No	100% business rates relief for 2020-21 for Retail Hospitality Leisure Sectors. LRSg grants: ongoing.
<b>Art B&amp;B</b>	Art B&B CIC	Not eligible	£73,000k awarded in Round 1	No	100% business rates relief for 2020-21. Covid RHL Grant - £25k. ACE Emergency Fund grant of approx. £30k LRSg grants: ongoing.
<b>Abingdon Studios</b>	Abingdon Studios Limited Co.	Not eligible	No	No	COVID grant £10k. Successfully applied for ACE Emergency Fund grant for arts organisations - £15k

### 3. Case Studies

The following case studies are to give members an understanding of the range of impacts Covid-19 has had on our communities and the operation and delivery of various cultural organisations in Blackpool.

#### 3.1 Blackpool Libraries

Aside from the initial lockdown period in Spring 2020, the majority of the library network (6 out of 8 libraries) has been open and operating throughout the last year. Defined by the government as an essential, statutory frontline service, sites were allowed to remain open for ICT access and either open browsing provision or a 'click and collect' option (i.e. during subsequent lockdown periods). The At Home Library Service has continued to deliver to vulnerable housebound residents; and the digital offer, both in terms of content (including eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines and newspapers) and activities (including online book clubs, author talks, Facebook live story times for adults and children, and Early Years rhyme time sessions) saw a massive uplift in usage in the last year, as the following headline statistics illustrate:

April 2020 to February 2021 - Digital Resources and Engagement Performance Headlines

Digital resources:

- eBook /eAudio: 22,042 loans (69% increase)
- eMagazines/comics: 18,334 loans (102% increase)
- e Newspapers: 15,847 loans (new service)
- Total digital borrowing: 56,223 loans (154% increase)
- Total new 'digital' registrations (i.e. new customers signing up to e-resources) 953 new users (531% increase)

Digital engagement activity

- No. of Adult Facebook events: 62; number of participants: 847; number of views: 14,884
- No. of Children's Facebook events: 101; number of participants: 1,540; number of views: 29,868
- Total no. of digital events: 204
- Total no. of participants: 51,176

#### 3.2 Grand Theatre [www.blackpoolgrand.co.uk](http://www.blackpoolgrand.co.uk)

Prior to the pandemic, the Grand Theatre regularly turned over £3m, earned 91% through ticket sales, had healthy reserves and numerous commissions to provide creative learning services both locally and nationally. The organisation is not sustainable in the medium to long term if it cannot trade without additional support to transition to business viability and sustainability from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021. They were successful in securing Cultural Recovery round one funding and are awaiting a decision on their round 2 bid.

Covid-19 has triggered a year of intense learning, creativity and innovation, coupled with devastating cuts to protect the theatre and prepare it to return to viable trading as soon as possible. The board has supported the management team to take both artistic and financial risks: finding new and different ways of fulfilling their mission to 'inspire a life-long love of theatre' by moving into production; online and blended education; creative engagement; and streaming services, reaching

far beyond their normal regional catchment. The organisation has benefitted from JRS, LA grants and Rate reduction. They have not borrowed money because there are no tangible assets for security. They received ACE emergency funding and raised £65,419 additional income through donations, secured £177k in future project funding and £44,135 commercial sales of online streaming. Despite the imagination and energy invested to achieve this, it comes nowhere near to replacing the millions they normally earn and has forced them to fundamentally re-think their business: diversifying income streams; building new collaborations; and researching new business partners.

As the pandemic progressed, their vulnerability to the whims of commercial producers has become clear. They have now moved shows 4 times, a huge administrative task, the cost of which has fallen on the Grand. They have drastically cut the things within their control: jobs, artistic spend, capital investment, marketing and running costs.

As the health context has changed, they have adapted the venue and prepared for socially distanced, covid-secure re-opening for Xmas but then were not allowed. They negotiated new, flexible working contracts and pay cuts for the remaining team, and invested in cross-skilling to create a one-team approach, where we all turn their hands to anything the business requires. Initially, they imagined they would be able to earn income by hiring out the building as an event venue, for conferences and celebrations. They are licenced to hold weddings, but as gatherings became more restricted, it was clear this would not earn them the income they had anticipated. It can still provide fall-back income when things return to 'normal'. In partnership with Edge Hill University and the ClearThinking Consultancy they have been researching and developing their Story-led Resilience™ with a view to monetising the product to new sectors. They are working with a consultant to reshape their governing structure to fit the new business model and believe it is vital to continue to invest in the ongoing welfare of their remaining employees.

Normally, they would recoup approx 80% of their marketing spend through contra charges, paying the up-front costs and then reclaiming them at settlement. With all the programme moves and no contra income, their marketing budget is ravaged. Going forward, they cannot take the financial burden of bankrolling producers who may or may not fulfil their part of the bargain. They are aware that contracts from producers have been changing to protect their interests. To meet this challenge, they need investment to review and refresh their own contracts to match the new business context.

Covid-19 has exposed a key weakness for the Grand as a presenting theatre and this will be the same issue for theatres across the country. They have no control over the product available to programme and, because they rely almost exclusively on its profits to deliver their cultural education programmes, some of their most impactful and valuable work is now under threat. Almost all programme has now moved into 2022. They plan to use CRF2 (if approved) to address these issues and ensure that they can return as a viable, value for money, fit-for-purpose business providing cultural opportunity both locally and nationally.

### **3.3 TramShed Theatre [www.tramshed.org.uk](http://www.tramshed.org.uk)**

TramShed Theatre is an inclusive theatre company and registered charity, offering inclusive performing arts to children, young people and adults across Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre. It delivers

inclusive music, dance and drama on a weekly basis and reach out to local and wider communities through a variety of outreach and theatre in education programmes.

TramShed postponed all projects and public facing activities with immediate effect as a direct result of COVID-19, including all workshops, training and performances. Work delivered to members was funded by a restricted, ring fenced grant, which was frozen until a time when we were able to recommence face to face workshops and engage with our membership base. TramShed members accessing their work are all extremely vulnerable and were already isolated through no fault of their own. Many of them only accessing TramShed as their weekly social activity and, as a result found themselves alone and without direction or support. It was essential for TramShed to continue accessing their members who were extremely vulnerable, to support them at a time where isolation was all consuming.

A large proportion of TramShed's income comes from a programme of fundraising activities managed by a dedicated team and held on a regular basis, ensuring our sustainability and to inject funds to continue our important work. All planned fundraising activities were postponed until further notice, meaning a huge loss financially, to what had been their predicted income within the most recent business plan.

Artistic staff delivering programmes at TramShed are all freelance, self-employed artists, who have built their careers over many years within the arts sector. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all staff found themselves without work as a result, unable to access employment opportunities or deliver any pre-commissioned work throughout 2020.

TramShed delivered an online project entitled 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' in direct response to COVID-19 with Arts Council Emergency Covid-19 funding. This truly innovative approach to their work has enabled them to develop the organisation, reduce isolation within their membership base and give full access to the arts as a direct result. At a time when they had to close their doors to their community, the project has given TramShed new skills, new methods of delivery, new inclusive approaches and created a pilot in which research and development for digital inclusive theatre has been at the heart.

#### **4.0 SUPPORT PROVIDED THROUGH BLACKPOOL COUNCIL FOR THE CULTURAL SECTOR**

- 4.1 Support and advice has been provided to cultural businesses preparing applications to the Cultural Recovery Fund Rounds 1 and 2.
- 4.2 A detailed survey has recently been promoted to creative businesses across the Fylde Coast as part of the Heritage Action Zone delivery plan and the data from this will provide information on the impact Covid-19 is having on people's creative practice and what they are looking for in terms of support and facilities to develop their businesses.
- 4.3 Discretionary Grants (Blackpool Business Recovery Fund) - Creative industries have been included as an eligible sector within the recently launched second round of Blackpool Business Recovery Fund. At the present time over 110 applications have been received from businesses that categorise themselves within this sector. Some organisations may have previously received property-based grants in 2020 and 2021 (Small Business Grant Fund, Retail Hospitality and Leisure Grant, Local Restrictions Support Grant etc), subject to status.

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>TOURISM, ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Alan Cavill, Director of Communications and Regeneration
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	14 April 2021

## BLACKPOOL TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION UPDATE

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To provide an overview of progress on the various projects being undertaken to secure the regeneration of Blackpool Town Centre following the last update in September 2020, and to inform the Committee of planned future work.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To note the progress being made and to identify any issues requiring additional attention.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure constructive and robust scrutiny of the strategic approach to regenerating Blackpool Town Centre following a request by the Committee.

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

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

### 4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None

### 5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is

- "The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool"
- "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience"

### 6.0 Background information

#### 6.1 Blackpool Town Centre Strategy

The Blackpool Town Centre Strategy, adopted in March 2013, provides a **15 year vision** supported by **six key objectives**:

- **Re-establish** the town centre as the first choice shopping destination for the Fylde Coast
- **Strengthen** the town centre as a vibrant leisure, entertainment, cultural and business tourism destination for residents and visitors

- **Grow** the town centre as a place to do business by creating a central business district and creative industries hub
- **Create** a choice of quality homes within and around the town centre
- **Improve** the quality of buildings, streets and spaces and their maintenance and management;
- **Provide** convenient access to the town centre by all modes of travel and enable easier pedestrian movement.

The Strategy identifies issues, strengths, opportunities and threats to the Town Centre:

- Catchment, Visitor Profile and Performance;
- Retail and Service Provision;
- Leisure Entertainment, Culture and Business Tourism
- Quality of the Environment;
- Access and Movement.

The Strategy contains an Action Plan and recognises the need for a co-ordinated comprehensive approach requiring strong town centre partnership working led by Blackpool Council supported by investment agencies working with private landlords, local businesses, service providers, developers, Business in the Community's Pride of Place Board and the Town Centre BID (which has recently had a renewed mandate for the next 5 years).

Resource has now been acquired via internal secondment that allows for a focus of attention on the refreshing of the Strategy and Action Plan to take into account of:

- the huge amount of progress since 2013
- the need to refocus on recovery as a result of the pandemic
- the need to repurpose some of the town centre uses,
- The need to integrate it with Parts 1 and 2 of the Local Plan, any relevant Supplementary Planning Documents and other non-planning documents including the Council Plan and Blackpool Town Prospectus
- the many new opportunities that are being pursued.

It is planned to complete a draft by the end of the year.

## 6.2 **Houndshill Shopping Centre Phase 2**

Following the Getting Building Fund grant approval all agreements have now been signed with Wilko and the cinema operators to enable the project to proceed. Utilities diversions and disconnections have been ordered and have to be completed before the appointed contractors, Grahams, are able to be on site to commence construction, anticipated to be no later than June 2021, completing in 2022.

## 6.3 **Abingdon Street Market**

Following the Getting Building Fund grant approval, CBRE and TP Bennett have been appointed to develop and implement this project. Detailed designs are being finalised with expert advice from an experienced market operator with the intention of works starting on-site in summer 2021 and completion in spring 2022. Arrangements for the decanting of market tenants during construction is also being finalised to enable them to start trading at the end of lockdown.

## 6.4 **Talbot Gateway**

Talbot Gateway Phase 2 - Hotel & Infrastructure

Robertson Construction Group Ltd have been appointed by Muse Development (the Council's

Development Partner) to carry out the following works:

- The demolition of the existing Wilkinson’s building is complete
- The contractor has now undertaken ground remediation and drainage work to prepare for the construction of the new Holiday Inn Hotel, underpass and tram terminus.
- The installation of the piled foundations is currently taking place

The area required to complete the tramway extension will be handed over to the Tram Contractor (Sisk) in April for them to complete their works.

#### Talbot Gateway Phase 3 - New Office Accommodation

Discussions are continuing with the interested party’s commercial advisors for a new office block that will accommodate in excess of 2,000 employees on King Street. All parties are aiming to sign the an agreement for lease in the next quarter to enable the development programme to commence with the necessary authorities to be sought from the Council’s Executive in May.

An outline planning application for the development was submitted by Muse and was approved by the Blackpool Council Planning Committee on 16 March 2021.

To facilitate the completion of the necessary site assembly the “Blackpool Borough Council (King Street No1) Compulsory Purchase Order 2020” was confirmed by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. The Council is now in the process of confirming the Order and resolving matters with the few outstanding interests on the site.

#### **6.5 Blackpool Central**

Nikal Ltd. and Media Invest Entertainment and their team has been busy refining their proposal and preparing the submission documents in readiness for the first planning application submission which will be submitted in the next quarter. It will be a ‘hybrid’ application, with outline proposals for the majority of the site and a detailed proposals for the new multi-storey car park and the heritage assets (King Edwards Pub and cinema, and King Edward apartments).

The first major component of the scheme is the delivery of a new multi-storey car park. The design for the car park is well underway, and subject to planning approval, could see construction commence in the autumn. The car park will take approximately 15 months to construct and once opened will be followed by the delivery of the leisure / attractions components of the scheme.

On the 25 January the Council Executive authorised the making of a compulsory purchase order for the remaining leasehold units on the site, which is currently being prepared by the Council’s Legal Team. In the meantime negotiations continue with the tenants via their agents.

With regard to the relocation of the Courts and Tribunal Services, the Council remain in dialogue with HMCTS and are continuing to work towards supporting their relocation from the site as one of the Town Deal schemes enable the comprehensive delivery of Blackpool Central (Phase 3).

#### **6.6 Winter Gardens Conference Centre**

Construction of the new state-of-the-art Blackpool Conference Centre continues, with progress accelerating across all areas of the works to complete the development.



External cladding is now nearing completion with the main elements left to finish in this regard being the remainder of the Terracotta cladding to the front elevation of the building, due to be complete mid-June 2021.

Much of the internal wall and ceiling construction is now complete and follow on works including mechanical and electrical installations, and fitting of sliding folding partitions to the event spaces are well underway. Renovations to the historic façade of the Empress Ballroom, which will form an internal feature to the inside of the new building are also progressing well. Significant elements of plant have now also been installed including the vehicle lift, which provides vehicular access to the upper event space, air conditioning and other roof top plant is also in position, and passenger lifts and escalators are due to be installed during April.

COVID-19 led to the closure of site March 25 to April 27 2020 as previously reported with works recommencing after this date following the implementation of measures to minimise the danger of COVID-19 to operational personnel, including staggered welfare breaks, social distancing and enhanced personnel hygiene facilities. The COVID-19 situation is monitored carefully by the Project Management team with regular liaison on this specific topic. The currently anticipated project completion date is Autumn 2021.

## 6.7 **Hotels**

The enhancement of Blackpool's hotel capacity continues unabated with the 3\* Premier Inn on Talbot Square now complete despite setbacks experienced as a result of the pandemic.

The resort's first 5\* hotel, the Sands Venue Resort Hotel, is due for completion in Autumn 2021 and work is progressing well on the 4\* Holiday Inn Hotel development as part of Talbot Gateway Phase 2. Following receipt of outline planning consent for the proposed Winter Gardens 4\* hotel, we continue to work with the majority site owner to support the scheme to development.

Notwithstanding the setback of not securing Future High Street funding we are continuing to work with the private sector to bring forward a development to create a new 131-bed bespoke boutique hotel in the former Post Office building. The project is now under consideration for inclusion in a Levelling Up bid submission in June this year.

Other hotels are also planned as part of the Blackpool Central scheme.

## 6.8 Showtown

There has been significant progress since the last report:

- The tendering process for the main basebuild fit-out contractor has been completed and a preferred contractor selected. The contract price has been agreed and is within budget.
- The next milestone will be when the basebuild contractor starts on-site, which we are hoping will happen within the next few weeks.
- The tendering process for the main exhibition fit-out elements is virtually complete.
- The main exhibition fit-out contractor has been selected, as have the audio-visual hardware specialists and the audio-visual creative content company.
- The tendering for the manual interactives and the large artworks is continuing and will be completed soon.
- All of these contracts are within the project budget allocations.
- There will be an extended period of off-site development for the exhibition creation prior to them moving on-site for the actual installation phase.

The delivery of the Activity Plan, which details the public engagement programme, has been severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic but some elements are being delivered virtually such as the Get Dancing project which builds on Blackpool's dance heritage to create a new dance for Blackpool whilst helping to combat loneliness by bringing people together through dance. Working with musician, Callum Harvie, and dance company, House of Wingz, a new piece of music has been composed which went out via social media with the invitation to everyone to create their own dance moves. Over 120 videos have been submitted from all over the world. House of Wingz are now gaining inspiration from them to create the new dance which everyone will be encouraged to learn. This will be launched at the next press event in April. In addition, the new Showtown website is almost ready to launch and we are just finalising a marketing strategy and implementation plan which will take us up to the main Showtown launch in 2022. We are working with PR company, Brazen, and have an action plan for various PR stories and events through 2021 starting with a major PR event focused on us getting on-site.

Although Showtown is being developed and created by Blackpool Council, in the longer term a new operating company will be established to run it for which preparations are now being made.

## 6.9 Quality Corridors

This very successful project was originally approved in September 2016 at a total value of £7.34m with £6.6m Growth Deal funding and an additional £450k of Growth Deal funding approved in December 2019 with a scheme total value now of £7.84m.

The scheme is working to transform key gateways and streets in Blackpool town centre. There are two distinct elements to the project, the first, and largest, being improvements to the highways network. Over the last three years significant highways and public realm improvements have been delivered in parts of Church Street, Counce Street, Cookson Street, Dickson Road and Talbot Road (in conjunction with the tramway works). Street furniture has been installed including bollards and benches. Trees have featured in some renewed streets along with some public art. Works are now complete on Edward Street, Deansgate and Topping Street.

The second element, the Property Improvement Fund, provides in excess of £1m in grants to assist property owners and businesses in priority streets to improve the external appearance of their

properties and to encourage take up of vacant space. Some excellent examples of this include Café Continental and the Mortgage Shop on Topping Street, Deansgate Kitchen, Sunseekers and Asia's Finest on Deansgate, Andsome Barbers on Edward Street, 101-122 Topping Street and 118-126 Church Street, Samaritans 66 Topping Street and Showtoppers. Examples of shopfront works undertaken can be seen in Appendix 8(b).

Other schemes currently on-site include The Brew Room, Cedar Tavern, Blackhurst Budd solicitors on Edward Street and a major scheme ongoing to facilitate a £400k external facelift of the Ibis Styles Hotel (former Clifton Hotel).

Works are also soon to commence on 28 Topping Street to enable a refurbishment and reuse of the retail property and the creation of 3 brand new shopfront units at 4-8 Edward Street, both Council owned properties. A pipeline of further properties are in place to benefit from existing resources, with around 34 properties expected to be improved in total by conclusion of the programme.

#### 6.10 **Heritage Action Zone**

After a slow start due to the pandemic, work has now begun on phase 1 of the Winter Gardens element of the HAZ. This phase consists of the refurbishment of the five remaining historic frontage sections of the Church Street Elevation which will be followed later in the year with the replacement of all the later shopfronts under Empress Buildings with restored late Victorian frontages in hardwood and stained glass. Work is now also about to commence on the former Blacks building with works to restore the external fabric of the units at no's 4-8. This will restore historic timber shopfronts in advance of refitting the interior to form three shops with associated flats specifically aimed at live/work spaces for creative businesses. This will be followed in the summer by commencement of work at 28 Topping Street to convert the building into a creative hub with retail space for local makers, workshop space on two levels and a potential performance rehearsal space in the basement. Architectural renderings of the proposed elevations can be seen in Appendix 8(a).

In addition to the above projects we've also been awarded some additional spend to cover items like the first year of charges for the Council's new footfall monitoring system, a study looking at mapping the local cultural resources, a review of the town centre conservation area's public realm and place making opportunities and a small amount of money to deliver art in empty shop windows.

The latest news is an award of £85k for a programme of cultural activity on the high street which will include makers markets, film screenings, public makers' workshops, performance commissions and activity themed around children.

#### 6.11 **Town Deal**

Following Blackpool's Town Deal submission on 31 July 2020 we received Heads of Terms from Government on 27 October 2020 which Blackpool agreed via the Town Deal Board and Executive for £39.5m to work up 7 of the 9 projects submitted. This remains the largest Town Deal agreed nationally.

In addition, we received confirmation of £1m of Towns Fund "accelerated funding" which had be

spent on capital elements of Town Deal schemes by the end of March 2021. This was used to acquire land at Devonshire Road to support the relocation of the Courts building.

Allocation of the resources to projects was subsequently approved and submitted to Government with supporting information and this has now been approved subject to the satisfactory development of business cases and their appraisal by November 2021.

NB Many of these projects will contribute directly to the regeneration of the Town Centre.

<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>BRIEF DETAIL</b>	<b>ALLOCATION</b>
<b>Blackpool Central Courts Relocation</b>	Funding support to allow relocation of Blackpool Magistrates and County Courts catalysing the delivery of the Blackpool Central	£8m
<b>Multiversity</b>	To facilitate Blackpool Council, Blackpool & The Fylde College and Lancaster University's plans to create a new world class learning "Multiversity" facility, near the town centre	£9m
<b>Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone (EZ)</b>	To improve the infrastructure on, and bordering the Blackpool Airport EZ to increase development opportunities, improve access and advance both physical and digital connectivity.	£7.5m
<b>Youth Hub</b>	A town centre located physical and virtual Youth Hub for coordinated partner delivery of employability and skills provision for 16-24 year olds who are Not In Education Employment or Training (NEET),	£0.5m
<b>Southern Quarter / Revoe Community Sports Village</b>	Activity to transform Revoe through refurbishment and new build in line with the Revoe Masterplan. Projects will include community sport facilities, and, support Blackpool FC development proposals.	£5.5m
<b>The EDGE (Stanley Buildings)</b>	To create the Edge, a leading centre for entrepreneurs - a vibrant focal point in the town centre for the development of growing small businesses.	£4.5m
<b>Illuminations</b>	The Project will renew and re-invigorate Britain's biggest light show to rejuvenate a tourism and hospitality industry blighted by the COVID-19 pandemic.	£4.5m

#### 6.12 Reopening High Streets Safely Fund

A funding agreement with Government was signed in November 2020, well into the Autumn COVID 'lockdown'. Despite this, strong efforts have been made to identify and highlight eligible schemes for the £123k grant, not easy given the specific ERDF criteria, restrictions and timelines.

Alternative funding was obtained for the Visitor Insights initiative, so £20k of the grant is now available for the other specified projects (temporary highway measures to encourage social distancing and a town centre marketing campaign, both currently not possible due to the extended COVID lockdown) and any complementary schemes that meet the criteria to be added.

With COVID restrictions potentially easing, this may present opportunities to spend the grant, as the deadline has been extended by three months until the end of June 2021.

### 6.13 **Welcome Back Fund**

At the timing of writing this report Government had just announced a new Welcome Back Fund against which Blackpool will receive £223k and specific details are still awaited. The press release states:

*“A new £56 million Welcome Back Fund will help councils boost tourism, improve green spaces and provide more outdoor seating areas, markets and food stall pop-ups – giving people more safer options to reunite with friends and relatives. Part of this funding will be allocated specifically to support coastal areas, with funding going to all coastal resorts across England to safely welcome holiday makers in the coming months.*

*The funding can also be used by councils to:*

- *Boost the look and feel of their high streets by investing in street planting, parks, green spaces and seating areas to make high streets as beautiful and welcoming as possible*
- *Run publicity campaigns and prepare to hold events like street markets and festivals to support local businesses*
- *Install signage and floor markings to encourage social distancing and safety*
- *Improve high streets and town centres by planting flowers or removing graffiti”*

Proposals will be developed for the utilisation of this resource to support the town’s recovery.

### 6.14 **Levelling Up Fund**

As part of the Budget the Chancellor announced a broad package of complementary UK-wide interventions including: the UK Levelling Up Fund

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-fund-prospectus>

The Levelling Up Fund is a capital scheme that will invest in local infrastructure that has a visible impact on people and their communities and will support economic recovery .This includes a range of high value local investment priorities, including transport schemes, urban regeneration projects and cultural assets. The Fund will be delivered through local authorities and will focus on capital investment in local infrastructure.

#### Key points

- Blackpool is in pole position as a Tier 1 area to apply in the first round.
- We already have some qualifying proposals worked up that failed to secure Future High Streets funding and for highways Local Pinch Point funding that has now been included within the Levelling Up Fund
- Having been through the Town Deal process with the Town Deal Investment Plan and having established the Town Deal Board, Investment Panel and Engagement Team, we are geared up to meet the requirements regarding engagement and business case preparation including having a panel of independent appraisers to hand
- With having two MPs constituencies in Blackpool we potentially qualify for two bids with a maximum of 3 projects in each up to a total value of £20m for spend by 2024 the Prospectus states that the number of bids that a local authority can make will relate to the number of MPs in their area. Accordingly, local authorities can submit one bid for every

MP whose constituency lies wholly within their boundary. Where an MP's constituency crosses multiple local authorities, one local authority should take responsibility as the lead bidder and local areas should work together to designate that lead bidder MPs whilst not having a power of veto, their support is part of the assessment. Blackpool South lies wholly within Blackpool. Blackpool North and Cleveleys lies within Blackpool and Wyre.

- As Transport Authority Blackpool can also potentially qualify for a third bid of £20-£50m for a cross-boundary transport project though this would need to be agreed with Lancashire County Council who also potentially qualify as Transport Authority.
- Some projects which we are hoping to bring forward might be able to be advanced initially through the Community Renewal Fund)

### Current position

Blackpool has far more potential schemes than the funds available but the eligibility criteria reduce what is possible. Preliminary discussions have started with both Blackpool MPs and the neighbouring authorities to establish their views. Projects that are already relatively worked up and can start in the 2021/22 year are a key requirement for the first round alongside the need to keep below the £20m limit and a 3 project limit. For a first round bid to meet these criteria would require a primary focus on the Blackpool South constituency although acknowledging that the town centre lies in both Parliamentary constituencies. Potential projects include those that did not receive support through the Future High Streets Fund process (such as the Post Office refurbishment for a boutique hotel, land acquisitions to support the major town centre office development and the Adelaide Street Transport Hub), the extension of the Quality Corridors scheme and public realm improvements towards Central Drive to continue the implementation of the Revue Masterplan, all present strong possibilities that will be assessed against the detailed qualifying criteria.

Other schemes would also be worked up if we qualify for a second bid once the criteria and timelines associated with that are known with a focus on the Blackpool North constituency.

### 6.15 **Community Renewal Fund**

The UK Community Renewal Fund, which will provide local areas across the UK with access to £220 million of additional funding as they prepare for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund due to launch in 2022. It is targeted to help to level up and create opportunity across the UK in places most in need in a manner distinct but complementary to the Levelling Up Fund, through investment in skills, enterprise and employment.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus-2021-22>

The Investment priorities should nurture innovative thinking and offer flexibility. Projects may align with one, or deliver across several, of the following investment priorities:

- Investment in skills
- Investment for local business
- Investment in communities and place
- Supporting people into employment

### Key points

- Blackpool Council, as lead authority, is required to invite project proposals from a range of local applicants, including community sector organisations, umbrella business groups and local education providers including universities etc.
  - The Council must appraise these projects and prioritise a shortlist of projects up to a maximum of £3 million with a bid deadline of 18 June 2021
  - 90% of funding is revenue funding. Match funding is encouraged but is not mandatory. A minimum of 10% of costs to be used towards scheme monitoring and evaluation.
  - A range of projects by theme and size can be submitted but it is encouraged that to maximise impact and deliverability, larger projects of £500,000+ are submitted.
  - All project activity must be able to be completed by March 2022.
  - Successful bids will be notified “late July onwards” which means that projects will have to be delivered within a maximum of 8 months
- 

### Current Position

As noted above, it is proposed that the Town Deal Board and its sub group, the Town Deal Investment Panel, provide the overarching assurance for the bid submission subject to the Executive’s final approval. Owing to the requirement to approach community stakeholders and organisations and the broad range of funding themes, a corporate group of Council officers was brought together to form the Community Renewal Fund Project Team to develop a compliant process. Additionally, a consultancy (Ekosgen) has been appointed from a Council Framework Panel to provide scheme development, appraisal and bid development support. The capacity funding made available by the Government will be used to cover their costs.

The Community Renewal Fund Project Team have now reviewed with stakeholders the project application template, added local priorities to the Government-determined assessment criteria, and set in train a process of widespread dissemination of the opportunity using the Council’s website, social media and partner networks to ensure those eligible to bid are made aware of the opportunity.

The timetable allows project applicants up to 4 weeks to develop a bid submission and sufficient time to undertake appraisals, due diligence and final bid completion:

- 
- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| • Launch on Council website                             | - 26 <sup>th</sup> March |
| • Bid Application responses by                          | - 23rd April             |
| • Appraisal of bids                                     | - 26 April-5th May       |
| • TDIP Panel provided with summary of proposed projects | - by 10th May            |
| • Town Deal Board progress update                       | - 14th May Board         |
| • Lead Authority Bid development                        | - 14th – 31st May        |
| • To provide the TDIP Panel/CLT with an early draft bid | - w/c 31st May           |
| • Town Deal Board/Executive sign off (under delegation) | - w/c 7th June           |
| • Bid submission  | - w/c 14th June          |

## **7.0 Appendices**

### 7.1 Appendix 8(a) - Heritage Action Zone Renderings and Images

Appendix 8(b) - Quality Corridors Shopfronts

**8.0 Financial considerations:**

8.1 Each of the developments referred to have significant financial implications for which individual business cases are prepared and factored into the Council's budget. This includes securing significant levels private sector investment and grant funding.

**9.0 Legal considerations:**

9.1 Most of the developments referred to either do or will include individual legal agreements to protect the Council's investment and to secure the planned outcomes.

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

10.1 Each of the developments has a business case which includes a review of risks.

**11.0 Equalities considerations:**

11.1 The implementation of the Council's Growth and Prosperity Programme is designed to create extensive opportunities for employment and economic benefit to Blackpool residents and businesses.

**12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:**

12.1 Whilst sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations are not a key focus of the outlined projects, each project has its own business case that will look to address sustainability and the environment where appropriate.

**13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:**

13.1 Both formal and informal consultation has been and will continue to be a key part of the implementation of such an extensive programme of improvement. For Towns Fund projects, a detailed Engagement Strategy is being implemented.

**14.0 Background papers:**

14.1 None

Appendix 8(a) - Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) Renderings and Images

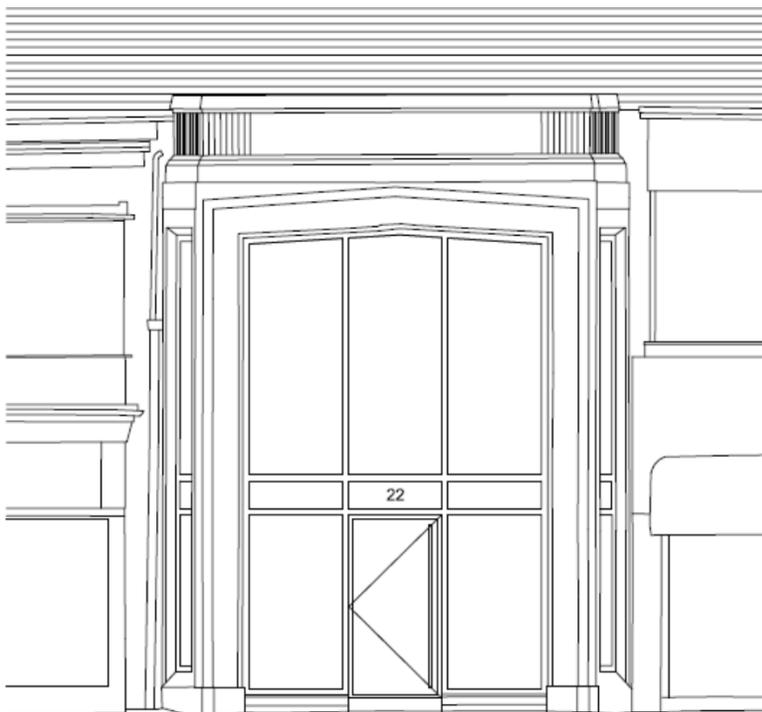
Proposed shopfront elevations – Winter Gardens, Church Street



Proposed elevations – Former Blacks, Edward Street/Deansgate



Proposed front elevation – 22 Topping Street



Appendix 8(b) – Quality Corridors Shopfront Improvements



<b>Report to:</b>	<b>TOURISM, ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Lisa Arnold, Head of Parks, Leisure and Catering Services.
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	14 April 2021

## PARKS AND GREEN ENVIRONMENT ANNUAL REPORT

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider an update on work undertaken, future plans and performance of the Park Development Service.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To scrutinise the work of the service and identify any matters for further scrutiny.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure effective scrutiny of the Park Development Service

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

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

### 4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None.

### 5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is

- "The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool"
- "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience"

### 6.0 Background information

6.1 The report provides an update on the work and performance of the Park Development Service for 2020/21. The Park Development Service is the lead service responsible for the

strategic direction and improvement of Blackpool's parks and open spaces to maximise the benefits that green spaces can offer to social, economic and environmental objectives.

## 6.2 **Parks and Green Environment Service overview**

6.3 The year 2020 has seen a variety of changes within the Park Service due to a multiple of factors including the COVID pandemic, a separation from the operational element of grounds management and the recruitment of new staff. These changes have provided an opportunity for reflection and revaluation of the Park Development Service's work programme.

6.4 The Park Development Service contributes and plays an active part in supporting some of Blackpool Council's key strategies and plans. Including:

- Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy
- Local Plan
- Active Lives Strategy
- Open Spaces Assessment
- Draft Tree Strategy

## 6.5 Parks Operations Transfer

6.6 In early 2020 the operational element of the Park Service was transferred to Cleansing and Environmental Services to provide efficiencies in the service delivery. For clarity in this report, the non-transferred Parks Service staff will be referred to as the Park Development Service.

6.7 The Park Operations team within Cleansing & Environmental Services are responsible for the duties highlighted below and are not included in the scope of this report.

- Undertake day to day maintenance of the parks and greenspaces; including grass cutting, weed removal, shrub pruning, litter picking and leaf blowing
- Responsible for the operation of the Tree Team, undertaking tree management as required on the local authority's tree population
- Responsible for playground safety checks and maintenance of play equipment to ensure play areas are safe and useable
- Undertake maintenance of sport pitches; including grass cutting, line marking and end of season renovations

6.8 The Parks Development Service's responsibilities are outlined below and are included in the scope of this report.

- Creating and delivering a programme of Park and Open Space improvements aiming to maximise the benefits of each park to the community and biodiversity where appropriate.
- Steer the management of each park and open space to direct the efficiency of resources whilst ensuring best practices of management are undertaken by the operational team. This is achieved through providing support and working in partnership with the operational team.
- Sourcing external funding for improvement projects and schemes including playgrounds, buildings and park infrastructure.
- Engaging the community with their local open space to encourage responsible usage and involvement in the park.
- Working in collaboration with Friends groups and the community to ensure each park is developed with the needs of the park users.
- Delivery and coordination of the Park Ranger Service to promote parks and open spaces and engage the community with their open space, including the Early Years Park Ranger programme funded through Blackpool Better Start.
- Support and collaborate with Park Friends Groups to promote and develop parks and open spaces, working to establish new groups in areas where required.
- Coordinate partnerships and lead on the application of Green Flag awards across the town.
- Develop a parks volunteering programme which provides volunteers with support and training required to enable positive management of sites.
- Ensure biodiversity is enhanced on open spaces and that specified ecological sites are undergoing positive management to increase wildlife.
- Supporting and promoting events on parks and opens spaces undertaken by external partners and Friends groups.
- Playing a key role in the delivery of the Green & Blue Infrastructure strategy with partners and stakeholders.

6.9 Following the separation from Parks Operations, there are now 11 members of the Parks Development Team which sit under Lisa Arnold, Head of Parks, Leisure and Catering Services.

## 7.0 **Budget Information**

- 7.1 Due to the COVID pandemic, full budget analysis has not been provided as comparison with previous years is not relevant. In 2020/21 the budget was a shared budget with the operational team and spending was kept below anticipated budgeted figures.
- 7.2 Income however was reduced due to COVID restrictions on events, concessionaires and sports bookings. The team predicted that £50,000 of projected income was not received as a result of the COVID pandemic from predicted events, loss of sport income and concessionaires
- 7.3 The Team were able to secure additional expenditure on parks and open spaces through partnerships with BCH (£46,000), Blackpool Better Start, Ward Councillors, Donated infrastructure schemes (£14,700) and Park Ranger resources and delivery (£10,064).

## 8.0 **Park Development Service Update**

- 8.1 The capacity and work programme of the Parks Development Team has been influenced by the COVID pressures of 2020 and the following updates should take into consideration the impact that the pandemic has had on staff's ability to undertake engagement and onsite work.

### 8.2 Projects Updates

- 8.3 In July 2020 Anchorsholme Park was reopened following redevelopment in partnership with United utilities to include new facilities including a café, interactive play area, amphitheatre, multi-use games area, bowling pavilion and species rich meadows. The opening of the park marked the end of a journey of partnership working with United Utilities over the past 5 years which ensured the best possible outcomes for the park. The opening also marked the start of a new chapter in which the park can now reach its potential of being a destination park that caters for the local community.
- 8.4 Fishers Field on Highfield Road also reopened following 3 years of closure due to a United Utilities underground water tank installation programme. The Football pitches were renovated and when play resumed in the summer following COVID restrictions, the site was opened up to allow Foxhall Football Club access. Work is currently ongoing with Leisure Services to develop changing facilities to enable a full return of the club.
- 8.5 In 2020 Layton Recreational Ground reopened following the development of Queens Park housing area. The new look park includes tree planting, hedges, wetland feature, pathways and entrance features which increase public accessibility of the area.
- 8.6 Harold Larkwood park on Chance Street underwent regeneration with new play facilities, removal of the boundary walls to open up sightlines and tree planting. The programme which

was funded by Blackpool Better Start in partnership with Property Services has significantly opened up and improved the site. A forest school circle was installed in the adjacent community garden and when COVID restrictions allowed, the Park Ranger Service were able to run family engagement sessions.

- 8.7 New play features have been installed on Bispham Cliff Tops to replace previous items which had reached the end of their life and had been removed for safety reasons. The works also included a new fence along the tram boundary to reduce the risks of the tram lines. (£7,000)
- 8.8 Additional improvements have been made to play equipment in Stanley Park including the installation of a new dragon swing. (£17,500)
- 8.9 At Boundary Park, in the Grange Park Housing Estate a new pathway network has been developed. Blackpool Coastal Housing and BetterStart funded the installation of new pathways to create a circular route around the park. This is the first step in encouraging users onto the park and create an opportunity for further development to follow.
- 8.10 Park Ranger Service Update
- 8.11 Impacted by COVID, the Park Ranger Service quickly adapted to a change in their delivery model, which was primarily face-to-face prior to restrictions.
- 8.12 In response to the COVID pandemic, the Park Ranger Service introduced printed packs with activities for children to engage with nature and encourage parents to facilitate nature based learning. The packs have primarily being funded through Public Health programmes and over 10,000 have been printed and distributed to 10 schools across the town. Each pack has a theme such as birds or trees and has activities which can be undertaken in Blackpool's parks led by a parent. An example has been provided as Appendix 9(a).
- 8.13 Due to the Stay at Home guidelines, the Park Ranger Team created online videos of activities, introduced online groups for local families to get involved and increased a Facebook presence to over 2,000 followers.
- 8.14 A highlight for the Park Ranger Service each year previously has been the winter fairy trail in which park volunteers turn Revoe Park Community Garden into a fairy wonderland with an evening of singing and activities. This year the Park Rangers adapted this concept by creating an online trail which encouraged residents to place fairy doors across Blackpool and share the locations on an interactive online map. Volunteers were still able to be part of the event and assisted creating and distributing fairy door packs to encourage participation.
- 8.15 Two new placements for Young People have been developed working alongside the Park Ranger Service gaining skills in community engagement, horticulture and ecological management. These roles are currently undergoing recruitment and are funded through the Kickstart programme in partnership with Head Start.

- 8.16 The work of the Head Start funded Junior Park Ranger scheme has continued in 2020 through the delivery of online engagement and face-to-face when possible. The Junior Park Rangers were actively involved in the Youth Climate Assembly and continue to work with Headstart to influence the climate agenda in Blackpool.
- 8.17 Volunteering and Friends Groups– Open Spaces Network
- 8.18 The Parks Service works with 15 Friends groups across various parks and open spaces who together form the Open Spaces Network. Outside COVID restrictions, Friends are able to support and promote their park through volunteering and running events. This activity was heavily impacted by the COVID restrictions and Friends groups have had to adapt or pause their activities.
- 8.19 Many friends groups have been reaching out to members online and the Friends Of Stanley Park were able to create Friends branded masks and run an online exercise programme with Active Blackpool. The friends of Anchorsholme Park have taken a similar approach, organising knit and natter, gardening and baking groups online to enable the social aspect of friends groups to continue.
- 8.20 The Park Development Service has been able to support groups in interpreting government guidance and providing risk assessment templates to support activities when they are able to run in the summer.
- 8.21 The COVID restrictions have enabled a time of reflection for the Park Development Service and work has been going on to improve policies and procedures around volunteering and Friends groups. A new Volunteer handbook is being drafted and all risk assessments have been reviewed and updated.
- 8.22 The Park Development Service were able to reevaluate the role of the Volunteering Coordinator to create a post which covers the whole town and recruited this post in the autumn. This post will be able to support volunteering activities across Blackpool, identifying training opportunities and work programmes.
- 8.23 Supporting the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy
- 8.24 A part of the Green And Blue Infrastructure Strategy, the Park Development Service has drafted a Tree Strategy which is currently undergoing public consultation. The document aims to protect and enhance the Council's tree population and ensure a right tree in the right place approach.
- 8.25 The Draft Tree Strategy aims to:  
*“To create a thriving urban forest to benefit our local community, wildlife and visitors to the Blackpool Coast, whilst ensuring a healthy, diverse and well-managed tree population.”*

It identifies 4 main objectives:

1. Implement the Tree Strategy in accordance with Blackpool's GBI Strategy, which aligns with Core Strategy Policy CS6.
2. Establish and promote a healthy tree culture and adopt the following practices:
  - Trees viewed as critical infrastructure (ecosystem service).
  - Focus on overall canopy cover and population structure and diversity.
  - Trees have equal priority to other infrastructure such as roads and services.
  - Economic value of trees recognised and valued.
  - Focus on larger longer lived canopy trees.
  - Overall tree population management.
  - Multi-purpose based design.
  - Tree population seen as a continuous resource regardless of ownership boundaries.
3. In accordance with BS 5837:2012, establish a responsible approach to developments and a re-planting specification for removed trees.
4. Manage our tree population with a proactive and informed approach, to maximise ecological, social and economic benefits.

8.26 The Park Development Service has been assisting colleagues in the Planning Service to ensure trees are protected in development applications and Green Infrastructure is promoted. This includes the review of applications and assisting with the creation of Tree Preservation Orders.

8.27 The Park Development Service has been working alongside colleagues in the Parks Operational Team and the Wyres Rivers Trust to ensure the planting of over 4000 trees in Blackpool in 2020. This includes the installation of sustainable living Christmas trees through funding from ward councillors who have been able to redirect funds from previous cut tree installations. The team will continue to lead the tree planting effort across the town in 2021.

#### 8.29 Park Service Management

8.30 During the first lockdown, several members of Parks Service staff were able to assist Public Health and Catering colleagues deliver food parcels as the offices at Stanley Park were transformed into a Community Hub. Whilst this reduced the capacity of the Service to deliver day-to-day duties, it was a worthwhile cause and the team are proud to have been a part of the joint effort in supporting the community.

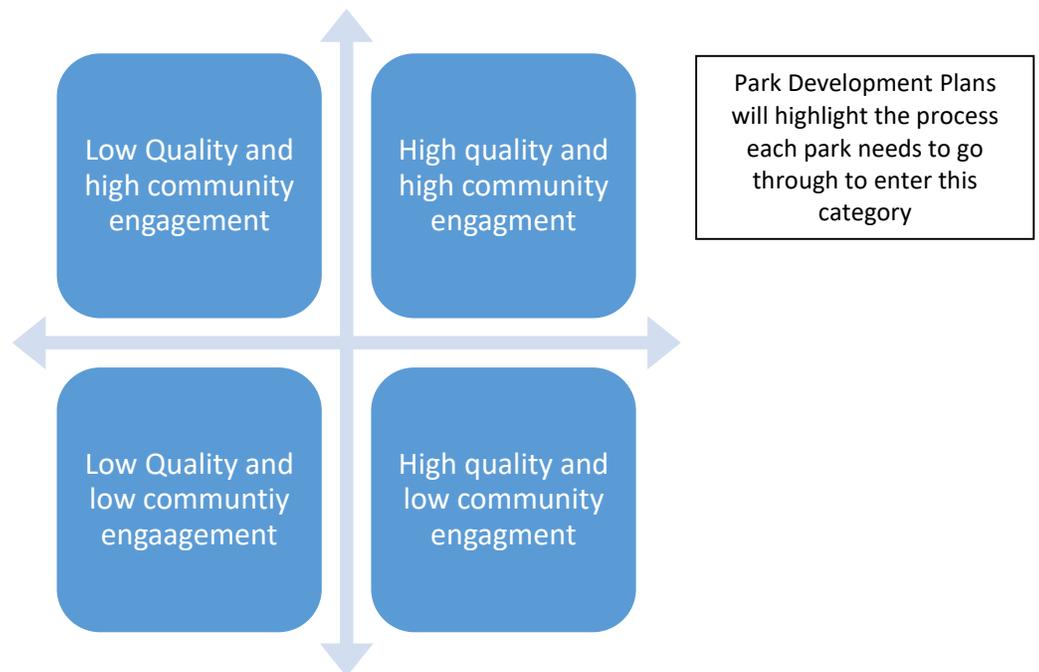
8.31 In November 2020, several swans were reported as dead or unwell on Stanley Park Lake. The Park Development Service immediately contacted DEFRA with suspected Avian Flu and coordinated the response with Public Health England, DEFRA and colleagues across Council services including communications, Environmental Protection and the Parks Operational

team. Sadly over 20 swans lost their lives with each swan being recovered and correctly disposed of to reduce spread by the Parks Operational team.

## 9.0 Up and coming projects and programmes

9.1 The Park Development Service are in the process of creating park development plans for each park which will shape the future vision of each park. The plans will be made in partnership with the friends groups and through consultation with the local community and park users to ensure each park is unique to the role it provides. The process will enable funds to be directed at the parks with the most need and ensure a consistent approach across the borough. This pro-active approach will also put each green park in a positive position when external funding opportunities arise that support the identified priorities for the space.

9.2 Each Park Development Plan will use the Open Spaces Assessment and Green Flag criteria to highlight potential projects and areas for development. The Park Development Service is taking this proactive approach to help reduce the adhoc requests which lead to disjointed park development and each park not reaching its full potential. Each park is unique and is at a different stage of development so it is hoped that the Park Development Plans are the first step to improving the quality of Blackpool's open spaces.



9.3 The Park Development Service will be working closely with friends groups, ward Councilors and the community to create each Park Development plan as well as a menu of projects along with costings and routes to funding providers.

- 9.4 The Park Development Service has been working in partnership with colleagues at the Enterprise Zone and Leisure Services to ensure new sport facilities there are of a high standard and suitable for the requirements of Blackpool's sport users. This work will continue to be a priority for the Park Service in 2021 as the scheme develops and the new sports plateau is opened in the autumn.
- 9.5 The Park Development Service is a key part of Blackpool Council's successful bid to European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for energy and green improvements to Grange Park. The Parks Service will be working in partnership with Groundwork to implement the £87,000 tree planting element within the programme. They will also be lead in the delivery of the new play area in Grange Park as part of the wider development scheme there.
- 9.6 In order to ensure a positive partnership with ENVECO following the move of the Parks Operational Team to the company anticipated for September 2021, the Parks Service have been developing specifications and working agreements which highlight standards and responsibilities.
- 9.7 Part of this process includes Park Management maps which highlight current management practices for grass cutting, shrub pruning and bed maintenance. These maps will create a clear dialogue between the Parks Service, ENVECO and the community and encourage discussion around efficiencies, biodiversity conservation and standards.
- 9.8 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

**10.0 List of Appendices:**

- 10.1 Appendix 9(a): Park Ranger Packs (Sample)

**11.0 Financial considerations:**

- 11.1 Financial considerations are contained at

**12.0 Legal considerations:**

- 12.1 None

**13.0 Risk management considerations:**

- 13.1 The Park Development Service operates within a robust risk assessment framework

**14.0 Equalities considerations:**

- 14.1 The Park Development Service adhere to the Ethical policy of the Council in ensuring

appropriate use of the town's parks and open spaces.

**15.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:**

15.1 Sustainability and climate change issues are contained within the body of the report.

**16.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:**

16.1 None

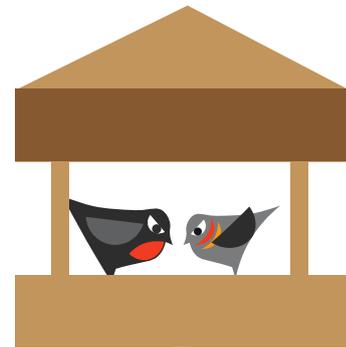
**17.0 Background papers:**

17.1 None



# BIRD

# EXPLORERS



# LET'S BE A MINI RANGER



Rangers help nature and wildlife. We love to protect lots of species and help them stay as wild as possible. Here's a guide on becoming a mini ranger!



Know your stuff!

There are lots of safe foods for birds which we recommend however there are lots of toxic foods that can cause harm. Please check the RSPB online guide before putting food out.

Birds have many predators especially cats. Try to keep bird houses or feeders away from the ground and ledges.



Keep tidy!

Always collect your own rubbish when outdoors. It can be really harmful to local wildlife.

All activities provided are recommended under full adult supervision.



Try using an app to fully identify nature that you come into contact with.

We recommend the Smart Bird App to help locate local birds as well as identify bird song.

*enjoy  
every  
moment.*



# CREATING CONVERSATIONS

Let's talk about the things we are doing!



## Bird Watching

Bird watching is a brilliant way of developing observation skills. Focus on details, talk about the different marking, listen to the different calls.

Notice how our feathered friends behave at different times of the year.

## Bird Feeders

Talk about the seasons.

Why do birds need help during the winter?

What's the importance of berries on bushes and trees?

How can we help birds at different times of the year?

## Food Chains

Play at being in a food chain. Wriggle on a floor like a Worm. Watch out for a swooping Thrush. Sound a Thrushes warning call to protect you from the Sparrowhawk.

Fly high like a Sparrowhawk using your fantastic eyesight to spot your prey.

## Migration

There are many migrating birds that we can spot including, House Martins, Sand Martins, Swallows and Swifts. These little birds travel between Britain and Africa.

Try showing your child how far that is on a World Atlas.

## Mindfulness

Learning to slow down, relax, focus and listen to your environment are skills that Bird watching fosters. Remember that young children's attention spans are a lot shorter than ours. Let them choose how long they join in with this activity. Little and often.





BLACKPOOL PARK RANGERS  
Connecting our town to nature

# LET'S HAVE AN ADVENTURE

## STANLEY PARK

Stanley Parks Ecological Site has a wonderful section devoted to bird feeding. This area encourages all different types of garden birds to visit the park such as Blue Tits, Great Tits and Robins.

Exotic birds are also known to dine at the bird feeding site, with brightly coloured wild Parakeets that cheerfully forage at a close distance. Don't forget our wetland fowl that Stanley Park Lake is home to including Herons and Swans.



LOOK OUT FOR



ROBIN



GREAT TIT



BLUE TIT



# BIRDWATCHING

Birds are brilliant at foraging their own food like seeds, nuts, berries and minibeasts. Making bird feeders and keeping your bird feeding area well stocked will attract all different types of garden birds. It will also help the birds during the harsher winter months.



## WHAT YOU NEED

Nothing! (Maybe some patience)

Bird watching can be equipment free but you may want to use some binoculars for a closer look. We encourage you to take a notepad and pencil for some bird sketches.



## WHAT TO DO

Sit nice and quiet so you don't frighten any of your bird friends.

Keep checking through your binoculars and use a spotter sheet to identify the birds you see.



## WHERE TO GO

There are so many lovely places in Blackpool to spot birds. You can even encourage them to your own garden or local park by making bird feeders.

Marton Mere have their own bird hides so you can go on a bird watching stake out. Stanley Park have a wonderful bird feeding area in the ecological area.



## MAKE YOUR OWN BINOCULARS

What you need

2 cardboard tubes

Coloured card

Glue

Materials for decoration

String

Sellotape

Wrap coloured card around each cardboard tube and glue down the edge of the paper to secure in place. Stick both tubes together using the glue stick.

Decorate your binoculars  
Sellotape string from one tube to the other so you can wear them whilst birding.



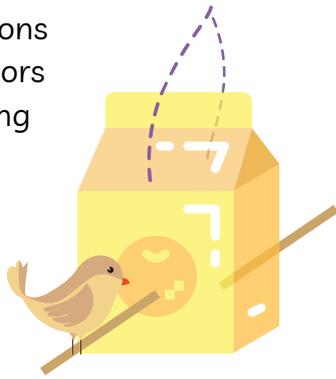
# BIRD FEEDERS

Birds are brilliant at foraging their own food like seeds, nuts, berries and minibeasts. Making bird feeders and keeping your bird feeding area well stocked will attract all different types of garden birds. It will also help the birds during the harsher winter months.

## WHAT YOU NEED



- 2ltr Juice Carton
- Paper
- Glue
- Crayons
- Scissors
- String



## HOW TO CREATE A BIRD FEEDER

- Wash the juice carton and rinse well, leave to dry fully.
- Stick the paper on your carton covering it all.
- Decorate your bird feeder with crayons or stickers.
- Ask an adult to help cut a large semi circle at the bottom of the carton.
- Make a hole in the top of the carton on the opposite side to the juice lid.
- Thread some string through the juice lid hole and the hole you have made and tie a knot so you can use this to hand your bird feeder.



## WINTER PINECONE FEEDER

- Pine cone
- Lard
- Birdseed
- String



- Tie some string securely under the scales of a pinecone.
- Roll the pinecone into some lard covering all the scales.
- Roll the pinecones in some bird seed

## BIRD RING

- Wire
- Dried Fruit
- Hoop Cereal

- Shape your wire into an open circle.
- Start threading the cereal hoops and dried fruit.
- Tie the wire together in a loop and hang from a tree or a bird table.



# SHARE A STORY

Reading with nature

## STORY CUBE

Watch Melissa at "Get Blackpool Reading" Facebook page as she shows us how to create your own story cubes. Simply give them a roll to help you invent your own hilarious sentences and stories with your family. The possibilities are endless!



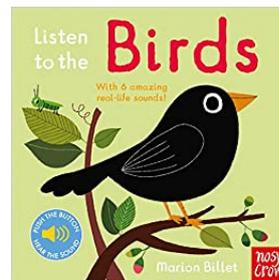
## SHADOW PUPPETS

Create a shadow puppets with your hands to create your own stories. Perfect for bedtimes using a lamp light. Check out Pinterest for a guide to animal hand shadows. You can even use a stick and card to draw a picture template as silhouette puppets.

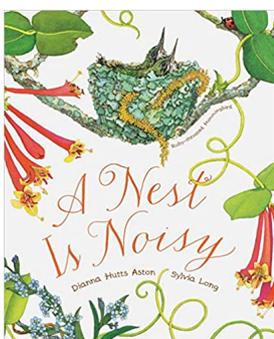


## BIRD SOUNDS

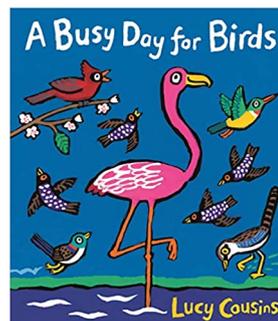
Make some bird music by cheeping, chirping, whistling and singing. Listen to some bird song on the Woodland Trust Website. Try to copy all the different types of sounds.



A really fun push button book where you can listen to and learn all the different bird sounds.



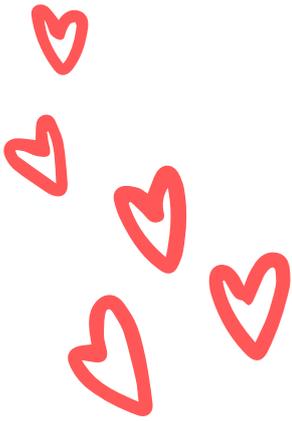
A lovely illustrated book describing all different types of nests. what animals lay eggs and how do they build their nests.



A brilliant book for interactive story telling.



# LET'S SING!



The Owl and the Pussycat  
Went to sea in a beautiful pea-green boat,  
They took some honey, and plenty of money,  
Wrapped up in a five pound note.

The Owl looked up to the stars above  
And sang to a small guitar,

"O lovely Pussy!

O Pussy, my love,

What a beautiful Pussy

You are, you are, you are,

What a beautiful Pussy you are.

"Pussy said to the Owl"

You elegant fowl how charmingly

Sweet you sing.

O let us be married,

Too long we have tarried;

But what shall we do for a ring?

"They sailed away, for a year and a day,

To the land where the Bong-tree grows,

And there in a wood a Piggy-wig

Stood with a ring at the end of his nose,

His nose, his nose,

With a ring at the end of his nose.

"Dear Pig, Are you willing To sell for one shilling  
your ring?" Said the Piggy, "I will"

So they took it away,

And were married next day by the Turkey

Who lives on the hill.

They dined on mince,

And slices of quince,

Which they ate with a runcible spoon.

And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand they  
danced by The light of the moon, the moon, the

Page 80,

They danced by the light of the moon.



<b>Report to:</b>	<b>TOURISM, ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	John Blackledge, Director of Community and Environmental Services
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	14 April 2021

## PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY UPDATE REPORT

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To review the difficulties in maintaining the 47 public rights of way in Blackpool and consider any additional scrutiny work to be undertaken.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 That the proposed annual survey, data collection and clearances proceed as planned.

2.2 That the Committee identify any further scrutiny work to be undertaken.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 In order to keep the public rights of way open and useable to the public, where resources and budgets allow.

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

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

### 4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 Not to proceed with data collection and necessary clearances would involve other public rights of way falling into disrepair and becoming unusable to the public.

### 5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is

- "The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool"
- "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience"

### 6.0 Background information

#### 6.1 Details of the number of pathways in Blackpool Council

There are 47 Public Rights of Way (PROW) footpaths within Blackpool, covering 12km.

## 6.2 **Detail of the number that are blocked or impassable**

The following footpaths have been identified as being 'unpassable'.

- Footpath 5 which has been blocked by residents in the area – they have been notified and if the footpath isn't opened up Highways will arrange for it to be opened after the 12 April, the notification date on the notice.
- Footpath 10 is not extinguished but closed due to antisocial behaviour (ASB) and remains gated under a public space protection order (PSPO).
- Footpath 11 is overgrown. Additionally, it has come to our attention that the caravan park security guards have been stopping people walking through the caravan park on the PROW. Recently, the caravan park appears to have fenced off the footpath further to the north. Additionally, there is heras fencing remaining from the development at the junction of Wheatlands Crescent which would also restrict the path if it were cleared. The Highways department commissioned Ecology Services consultants to independently assess the footpath. Amphibians, breeding birds, hedgehogs, reptiles and bats need to be considered in any future works. No works should be undertaken until such time amphibians have been fully considered. Damaging the habitat could be unlawful if great crested newt are present. Surveys of the nearby ponds would need to take place in April 2021.
- Footpath 40 has an alleged obstruction but may require the hedge to be cut back next to the dyke. More investigation required.
- Footpath 49 the PROW isn't thought to be blocked by the property, it runs where the hedge is. Landowner has been notified to cut back the hedge to allow passage by the 23 April.
- Footpath 59 has an overgrown hedge and is owned by Blackpool & Fylde college – they have been notified to clear the hedge and route.

## 6.3 **The ideal solution to rectify, including how much this would cost**

As there is no funding and no one in post, the ideal solution would be to hire a full time Rights of Way and Enforcement officer. However, the going rate for such a post ranges from £25k to £30k+ without on-costs.

On top of that a current estimate of works for the current state of the PROW is approx. £40k+. This presumes the Grounds Maintenance department have the people and time to undertake the works at the appropriate time of year.

The Highways department are working on a priority system for the PROW network. Some PROW may need little maintenance but others, such as some of those deemed unpassable, would require multiple incidences of planned maintenance annually. This would assist the Grounds Maintenance Department in determining which routes to undertake routine maintenance on to better enable them

to fit it into their busy seasonal schedule. The department is also working on informing land owners of their responsibilities annually and following up with enforcement action later in the year, if resources and funding are available.

Due to the lack of resources, it may be possible to recruit volunteers to assist in keeping the rights of way clear to pass. The time and costs implications of this are currently unknown.

#### 6.4 **Details of challenges that exist**

The total budget requirements for all highway maintenance should be in the region of £5m. The actual budget is £1.5m so the council has to prioritise funding for maintenance in the right place at the right time and in priority order for risk management. There has never been any budget provided for the PROW, the total allocated funding is for all highway assets.

Although there is a statutory provision to maintain the PROW they would only be classified as low usage and attract an annual survey. PROW enquiries make up approx. 0.1 to 0.2% of all highways enquiries annually.

With no Rights of Way officer or Enforcement officer these issues are dealt with reactively by the department who's staff are working flat-out on other projects.

Operationally, the Highways department aren't best placed to undertake the PROW maintenance works. The Grounds Maintenance department would be a good fit for this, if they had the appropriate resources and could fit some of this into their busy schedule

The maintenance is seasonal. According to the Grounds Maintenance department, the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* prevents them undertaking clearance works once nesting season occurs.

Anti social behaviour (ASB). A number of paths are subject to ASB. Whilst a path cannot be extinguished for ASB, they can be subject to a public space protection order (PSPO) for ASB. If there is evidence of ASB the Community Safety team in Public Protection can gate a PROW to close it, like they have done already with footpath 10. There was historic ASB on footpath 11, so to re-open the path would possibly see ASB return and risk the closure of the path via a PSPO. One solution, if the path can be cleared, would involve the installation of an approx. 100m fence from the junction of Kipling Dive / Wheatlands Crescent to the end of Wheatlands Crescent. This solution is currently uncoded.

#### 6.5 **Current work being undertaken**

A number of signs (20+) have been ordered and will be installed on the Moss as highlighted in the report, and footpath 19 by Blackpool North Shore golf course on Devonshire Road.

A lot of these works are on private land, and as such the land owner should maintain the right of way in the first instance. If they don't the department can enforce. However, as mentioned previously, the department does not have any enforcement officers.

As we are now in nesting season, the Grounds Maintenance department aren't necessarily able to undertake works where there may be hedgerow or trees. Highways asked for an independent

assessment of footpath 11 in order to clear it in nesting season. Unfortunately, due to the possibility of amphibians at ground level we may not be able to do so until September. Therefore the recommendation for now is the footpath is temporarily diverted. The best diversion would be to redirect the access to footpath 11 on Preston New Road to Paddock Drive by approx. 58m. The path would run northwest up Paddock Drive and west along Kipling Drive to the Mere access on Kipling Drive next to Kipling Court. The other proposed diversion route through the caravan park would likely be rejected as they have recently signed a long lease with the Estates department. When Estates were asked if they could renegotiate the lease with the caravan park, it was suggested the request would likely be refused due to ASB issues within the grounds. Regarding diverting the path on a permanent basis, it should be noted that in April 2012, the Peak and Northern Footpath Society recommended that footpath 11 should be diverted, albeit through the caravan park. As this isn't likely to be an option due to the lease with the Estates department, Footpath 11 could be permanently diverted via a Definitive Map Modification Order to the proposed temporary diversion above, via Kipling Drive. The Highways department is awaiting confirmation of land ownership to pursue the temporary diversion.

The PROW are due to be resurveyed this year in more detail to obtain a more accurate picture of the assets condition and cost. This survey is annual.

#### **6.6 Current budget and possible funding opportunities**

There is no budget for public rights of way. Any reactive spend is diverted from the Highways Maintenance budget, meaning less is spent on the maintenance of roads and footpaths e.g. less potholes will be filled.

Members could elect to use their Ward Funding on these assets as they are valuable in terms of healthy lifestyles encouraging exercise for local residents.

7.0 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? **No**

#### **8.0 List of Appendices:**

8.1 Appendix 10(a) – Ecology Report on footpath 11  
Appendix 10(b) – Proposed Diversion of footpath 11

#### **9.0 Financial considerations:**

9.1 There is currently no explicit budget for Public Rights of Way staff, inspections, surveys or maintenance.

#### **10.0 Legal considerations:**

10.1 Highways Act 1980, section 130. Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

#### **11.0 Risk management considerations:**

11.1 Ecological considerations and anti-social behaviour on certain routes.

**12.0 Equalities considerations:**

12.1 None

**13.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:**

13.1 Potential ecological issues on Footpath 11, outlined in Appendix 10(a).

**14.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:**

14.1 Independent ecological advice sought regarding nesting season and amphibians on Footpath 11.

**15.0 Background papers:**

15.1 None

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## Appendix 10(a) - Footpath 11 Ecology Report

Following the site meeting this morning, as discussed, these are the most appropriate steps to open up the footpath as best practice. The steps outlined are assuming that the clearance will wait until after the breeding bird season has ended.

### Brief description of the footpath.

The footpath is approximately 2m wide with an approximate section length of 400m. The path is encroached along its length by branches from adjacent trees and scrub. There are also areas of fly tipped brash and occasional piles of garden waste at intervals.

As I understand it, in order to clear the footpath, tracked machinery with an attached cutter will be used to any remove ground vegetation, including bramble scrub. Manual cutting will also be undertaken of any branches from adjacent scrub and trees. It is expected that tree removal will not be necessary to open up the footpath.

### Ecological considerations/constraints

Amphibians, breeding birds, hedgehog, reptiles and potentially bats. In the first instance, no work should be undertaken until such time amphibians have been fully considered. Damaging the habitat could be unlawful if great crested newt are present.

- **Amphibians:** There are ponds located near to the site and ground clearance works could impact upon great crested newt (GCN) if present. Mark the full extent of the footpath on a plan and place a 250m buffer around it to determine how many ponds are located within the buffer. Survey data for these ponds is required but may be available in the public domain due to the adjacent housing scheme. The housing scheme is ongoing and there was no evidence of newt fencing, so it's likely that GCN has been proven absent. The pond closest to the works contained fish, which lowers its value to GCN. If the survey data can be obtained and is within date (2 survey seasons) and proving GCN to be absent, no further surveys would be required for the footpath works. If the survey data is out of date and GCN were absent, then I recommend that new survey information is obtained using eDNA sampling in mid-April. However, to fully inform the appropriate approach to amphibians, the historical pond data should be obtained at the earliest opportunity to avoid delays. Traditional amphibian surveys, if required have timing constraints, which need to be considered as soon as possible.

Assuming only common amphibians are an issue, then a safe method of working should be adopted, which can be outlined in a brief method statement and following a toolbox talk.

- **Breeding Birds:** It is agreed that the works will wait until the breeding season has ended (September 2021) and thus removing the need for further bird surveys. September is suggested over August because the habitat is suitable for wood pigeon.
- **Hedgehog:** It is advised that ground clearance works potentially affecting hedgehog is undertaken prior to their hibernation period. Taking breeding birds into consideration, the window of opportunity is between September and October.
- **Reptiles:** The habitats did not appear to be ideal for reptiles, but habitat clearance methods for amphibians will also be suitable for moving reptiles if present out of harms way. This could be covered during a toolbox talk.

- **Bats:** The footpath corridor did not appear to have any trees that would be required to be removed, although there are trees adjacent to it. The footpath corridor however was heavily overgrown in places, which greatly reduces the likelihood of bats using it for commuting and accessing any bat roost features if present. It needs to be confirmed as soon as possible if any trees are to be removed. If this is the case, then they should be inspected for their bat roost potential prior to removal. If the trees do contain bat roost potential, then bat activity surveys may be required, which can only be undertaken between May and August.

It would appear that the pruning works will be small scale affecting only level low branches (recently grown stems of limited thickness). If heavy pruning of large limbs is required, then they should be checked by an ecologist to determine whether they have any bat roost potential prior to removal.

Because ultimately breeding bird habitat is being lost, a bird box scheme should be implemented. Also, to take full advantage of a potential new bat commuting corridor, bat boxes should also be considered. There has been no indication as to whether new lighting will be introduced to the footpath. Ecologically, this is not advised but if needed, then a sensitive lighting scheme should be considered a priority.

The only other potential ecological receptors is badger, but the footpath is located in a built up area and no signs of badger were seen during the meeting. I would advise that a vigilant approach to the works is undertaken, especially if removing trees. Information on this could be covered during a toolbox talk.

If you have any further questions or require quotes for further surveys, please get in touch.

Simon

Simon Booth  
Senior Consultant Ecologist

## Appendix 10(b) - Footpath 11 Proposed Diversion



### Key

Footpath 11 – Yellow

Proposed diversion – Blue

Proposed diversion extension to meet FP56 – Orange

Footpath 56 – Red

Footpath 57 - Green

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<b>Report to:</b>	<b>TOURISM, ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	14 April 2021

## SCRUTINY WORKPLAN

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 The Committee to consider the Workplan and to monitor the implementation of Committee recommendations, together with any suggestions that Members may wish to make for scrutiny review topics.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To approve the Committee Workplan 2020-2021, taking into account any suggestions for amendment or addition.

2.2 To monitor the implementation of the Committee's recommendations/action.

2.3 To note the outcome of the Housing and Homelessness Scrutiny Review.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure that recommendations/actions are being monitored, the Workplan is up to date and is an accurate representation of the Committee's work.

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? N/A

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

### 4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 N/A

## **5.0 Background Information**

### **5.1 Scrutiny Workplan 2020/2021**

- 5.1.1 The Workplan is a flexible document that sets out the work that the Committee will undertake over the course of the year.
- 5.1.2 Committee Members are invited, either now or in the future, to suggest topics that might be suitable for scrutiny in order that they be added to the Workplan.

### **5.2 Monitoring Implementation of Recommendations**

- 5.2.1 The table attached at Appendix 11(c) has been developed to assist the Committee in effectively ensuring that the recommendations made by the Committee are acted upon. The table will be regularly updated and submitted to each Committee meeting.
- 5.2.2 Members are requested to consider the updates provided in the table and ask follow up questions as appropriate to ensure that all recommendations are implemented

### **5.3 Scrutiny Review Checklist**

- 5.3.1 The Scrutiny Review Checklist is attached at Appendix 11(b). The checklist forms part of the mandatory scrutiny procedure for establishing review panels and must therefore be completed and submitted for consideration by the Committee, prior to a topic being approved for scrutiny.
- 5.3.2 The Committee is recommended to place an emphasis on the priorities and performance of the Council when considering requests for scrutiny reviews.

### **5.4 Housing and Homelessness Scrutiny Review**

- 5.4.1 On 22 March 2021 the Council's Executive considered and approved the recommendations contained in the Housing and Homelessness Scrutiny Review's Final Report.
- 5.4.2 Following this an Housing and Homelessness Annual report will be provided to the Committee going forward. The first report will be provided to the November 2021 meeting of the Committee and will include an update on the implementation of the review's recommendations.
- 5.4.3 A copy of the Executive Decision EX15/2021 can be found at Appendix 11(d)

**5.5 Flood Risk Management Review Panel**

5.5.1 On 26 January 2021 the Flood Risk Management Review Panel met to consider the Flood Risk Management Annual Report and the draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Lancashire 2021-2027.

5.5.2 The Review agreed to recommend that an update on Flood Risk work be provide to the 16 June 2021 meeting of the TEC Scrutiny Committee. In this report members asked that the following information be provided:

- Details on the implementation of the strategy,
- The establishment of Local Flood Forums; and
- Progress on bids submitted (the potential work at Stanley Park Lake in particular).

5.5.3 The Review Panel’s report can be found at Appendix 11(e).

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

**5.6 List of Appendices:**

Appendix 11(a) - Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee Workplan

Appendix 11(b) - Scrutiny Review Checklist

Appendix 11(c) – Tourism, Economy and Communities Committee Action Tracker

Appendix 11(d) – Executive Decision EX15/2021 Housing And Homelessness Scrutiny Review Final Report

Appendix 11(e) – Flood Risk Management Review Panel Report

**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 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:**

12.1 None

**13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:**

13.1 None.

**14.0 Background papers:**

14.1 None.

<b>Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee - Work Plan 2020-2021</b>	
14 April 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Town Centre Regeneration Update</b> – To include information on the progress, the long term impact of lockdown on economic development and forecast for current and planned regeneration projects and how these will support job creation in the town.</li> <li><b>2. Tourism Performance</b> - To include a representative of a Blackpool Tourist attraction and details of Business Tourism. To look forward to the 2021 season and any long term impact from the pandemic.</li> <li><b>3. Parks and Green Environment Annual Report</b> – To include information on the impact of the 2020 Covid-19 Lockdown and future plans.</li> <li><b>4. Arts and Culture Update</b> – To receive an update on the impact of Covid-19 on art and cultural venues in Blackpool.</li> <li><b>4. Public Rights of Ways</b> – To include details of the scope of a review of public rights of way and future steps.</li> </ol>
16 June 2021 (TBC)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Flood Risk Management Update</b> – To include information on the implementation of the Lancashire Flood Risk Strategy, the progress of bids submitted (such as at Stanley Park Lake) and the establishment of Local Flood Forums</li> <li><b>2. Leisure Services Annual Report</b></li> <li><b>3. CCTV Review Report</b></li> <li><b>4. Engagement of Consultants Annual Report</b></li> <li><b>5. Climate Emergency Update</b> – Steps taken following declaration of Climate Emergency in Full Council July 2019 and the outcome of the Climate Assembly.(Subject to change)</li> <li><b>6. Provisional Revenue Outturn Report</b></li> <li><b>7. Treasury Management Outturn Report</b></li> <li><b>8. Capital Strategy 2021-2022</b></li> </ol>
6 October 2021 (TBC)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Tourism Performance</b> - To include a representative of a Blackpool Tourist attraction and details of Business Tourism. To look forward to the 2021 season and any long term impact from the pandemic.</li> <li><b>2. Housing and Homelessness Update</b> – To include information on the implementation of the recommendations of the Housing and Homelessness Scrutiny Review Panel.</li> </ol>
8 December 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Car Parking Annual Report</b></li> <li><b>2. Town Centre Regeneration Update</b> - To include information on the progress, the long term impact of lockdown on economic development and forecast for current and planned regeneration projects and how these will support job creation in the town.</li> </ol>

<b>Scrutiny Review Work</b>	
23 September 2019	Full scrutiny review of <b>Housing Strategy/Homelessness</b> . To have a look at the impact of strategy and policy on homelessness levels and prevention of homelessness. The scope of the review will be revisited to reflect the impact of the pandemic on provision.
23 September 2020	<b>Active Lives Strategy Review Panel</b> to consider draft strategy – September 2020 (jointly with the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee)
2 December 2020	<b>Community Safety Partnership Review Panel</b> – to consider the performance of the CSP and impact of lockdown on its work.
26 January 2021	<b>Flood Risk Strategy Review Panel</b> – To input into draft Lancashire Flood Risk Strategy.
27 April 2021	Review of the <b>Illuminations</b> including sustainability, future plans and commercialisation.
Autumn 2021	<b>Arts and Culture</b> - Details of the impact of Covid-19 arts and culture within Blackpool.
Autumn 2021	<b>Economic Development</b> - Details of the impact of Covid-19 on Economic Development within Blackpool, including details of the <b>Town Deal</b>
TBC	<b>Sustainability Strategy Policy</b> development scrutiny of the draft strategy.
TBC	<b>Lancashire Waste Strategy Policy</b> development scrutiny of the draft strategy.
TBC	<b>Air Quality Strategy</b> policy development scrutiny of the draft strategy.

**SCRUTINY SELECTION CHECKLIST**

**Title of proposed Scrutiny:**

The list is intended to assist the relevant scrutiny committee in deciding whether or not to approve a topic that has been suggested for scrutiny.

Whilst no minimum or maximum number of ‘yes’ answers are formally required, the relevant scrutiny committee is recommended to place higher priority on topics related to the performance and priorities of the Council.

Please expand on how the proposal will meet each criteria you have answered ‘yes’ to.

	Yes/No
The review will add value to the Council and/or its partners overall performance:	
The review is in relation to one or more of the Council’s priorities:	
The Council or its partners are not performing well in this area:	
It is an area where a number of complaints (or bad press) have been received:	
The issue is strategic and significant:	
There is evidence of public interest in the topic:	
The issue has potential impact for one or more sections of the community:	
Service or policy changes are planned and scrutiny could have a positive input:	
Adequate resources (both members and officers) are available to carry out the scrutiny:	

**Please give any further details on the proposed review:**

**Completed by:**

**Date:**

## MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

.	DATE OF REC.	RECOMMENDATION	TARGET DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	UPDATE	RAG Rating
1	23 January 2019	That bi-annual updates on the implementation of the Single Use Plastics Policy be included on future agendas	May 2020	John-Paul Lovie/John Greenbank	Items for monitoring the implementation of the SUP policy are to be included in the Climate Emergency Update going forward.	Ongoing
2	23 January 2019	That bi-annual updates on the progress of Town Centre Regeneration Projects be included on future agendas	Ongoing	Nick Gerard/John Greenbank	Items for monitoring the progress of Town Centre Regeneration Project have been scheduled for every six-months. Next Update 14 April 2021.	Ongoing
4	2 December 2020	That the draft CSP Community Plan be brought to a review panel meeting.	November/December 2021	Dominic Blackburn/John Greenbank		Ongoing
5	26 January 2021	That an update on details on the implementation of the strategy, the establishment of Local Flood Forums and progress on bids submitted (the potential work at Stanley Park lake in particular).	16 June 2021	Clare Nolan-Barnes/John Blackledge/John Greenbank	A update is scheduled for the 16 June 2021 meeting of the Committee.	Ongoing
6	5 February 2021	That the Flood Risk Management Annual Report 2020-2021 include the following;	January/February 2021	Clare Nolan-Barnes/John Greenbank	The Flood Risk Management Annual Report was received at a dedicated review meeting on 26 January 2021 with the relevant details included.	Complete

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An update on Highways England's involvement with the Lancashire Flood Risk Strategy</li> <li>An update on the work of Flood Forums</li> <li>- Details of Projects in flood affected areas</li> </ul>				
7	3 February 2021	That the Committee receive the schedule of debt write offs for the past five years.	Before 14 April 2021	Steve Thompson	The details of the write-offs were circulated to the Committee on 4 February 2021	Complete
8	3 February 2021	To receive confirmation of the number of Business Loans Fund applications in 2020/2021	Before 14 April 2021	Steve Thompson	The details of Business Loan applications during 2020/2021 were circulated to the Committee on 4 February 2021	Complete
9	3 February 2021	To receive details of the impact proposed rent increases be provided.	Before 14 April 2021	Steve Thompson	The details of the proposed rent increase were circulated to the Committee on 4 February 2021	Complete
10.	3 February 2021	That details of areas under consideration for conservation area status.	Before 14 April 2021	Alan Cavill		Ongoing
11.	3 February 2021	That a copy of the Strategic Environmental Risk Assessment Plan be shared.	Before 14 April 2021	John-Paul Lovie	The risk assessment was shared with the Committee on 4 February 2021	Complete

<b>Notice of:</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE</b>
<b>Decision Number:</b>	EX15/2021
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager
<b>Relevant Cabinet Member:</b>	Neal Brookes, Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	22 March 2021

## HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS SCRUTINY REVIEW FINAL REPORT

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the Housing and Homelessness Scrutiny Review Final Report.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To consider the report and offer a response to the recommendations contained within the Action Plan, forwarding the recommendations to the relevant organisations for consideration and implementation.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 The recommendations contained within the final report seek to deliver improvements to the Housing Service.

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

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

### 4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 The Executive must consider the recommendations outlined in the Scrutiny Review but may accept them, reject them or vary them.

### 5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience".

**6.0 Background information**

- 6.1 As part of its workplanning workshop for the 2019-2020 Municipal Year the Tourism, Economy and Communities (TEC) Scrutiny Committee identified housing and homelessness as an issue for review.
- 6.2 Housing and homelessness were considered significant issues facing Blackpool. In spring 2018, Full Council had agreed a Housing Strategy and Homelessness Prevention Strategy in response to the housing issues and Members wished to review what impact these had had and what other work was being undertaken to address these issues.
- 6.3 Following the workshop the Scrutiny Committee agreed on 19 June 2020 to undertake the review.
- 6.4 A total of eight meetings were held as part of the review process between September 2019 and December 2020. The review heard evidence from Housing Officers, the relevant Cabinet Member, local housing providers, representatives of homelessness charities and an individual with lived experience of homelessness in Blackpool.
- 6.5 The final report details the findings and recommendations of the review and is attached at Appendix 2(a) to the Executive report.
- 6.6 In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny / Cabinet Member Relations Protocol, the final report has been considered by the Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee on 3 February 2021, which approved the report for consideration by the Executive. Councillor Neal Brookes, Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform has provided their comments on the recommendations contained within the report.
- 6.7 The Chairman of the Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Martin Mitchell, who was also the lead Councillor for this review, had been invited to the Executive meeting to make representations on behalf of the Committee.
- 6.8 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

**7.0 List of Appendices:**

- 7.1 Appendix 2(a) – Housing and Homelessness Scrutiny Review Final Report

**8.0 Financial considerations:**

8.1 Contained within Appendix 2(a) of the report.

**9.0 Legal considerations:**

9.1 Contained within Appendix 2(a) to the Executive report.

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

10.1 Contained within Appendix 2(a) to the Executive report.

**11.0 Equalities considerations:**

11.1 Not applicable.

**12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:**

12.1 Not applicable.

**13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:**

13.1 Contained within Appendix 2(a) to the Executive report.

**14.0 Background papers:**

14.1 Minutes of the 3 February 2021 meeting of the Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee.

**15.0 Key decision information:**

15.1 Is this a key decision? No

15.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number:

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

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

**16.0 Call-in information:**

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

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

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE**

**17.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):**

Date informed: N/A

Date approved: N/A

**18.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):**

18.1 None.

**19.0 Executive decision:**

19.1 The Executive resolved as follows:

To approve the final report and recommendations resulting from the scrutiny review of the Housing and Homelessness subject to the Cabinet Member's comments in the report and the additional observations made at the meeting listed below in response to the comments made by the Lead Councillor:

- i. In respect of recommendation 3 that a named independent person had already been identified namely Ian Treasure of Fulfilling Lives to lead the Homelessness Support Group. A key aim though remained to avoid the duplication of meetings.
- ii. In respect of recommendation 6 that it should be noted that the Council adopted the "Everybody In" process rather than utilising the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol. It needed to acknowledge that this would be dependent on funding but an undertaking would be given to bring a report to the Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee as early as possible.
- iii. In respect of recommendation 9 the Cabinet Member supported the possible use of a mystery shopping exercise and that it could be useful. The Cabinet Member emphasised though that it would form part of a range of monitoring tools.

**20.0 Date of Decision:**

20.1 22 March 2021

**21.0 Reason(s) for decision:**

21.1 The recommendations contained within the final report seek to deliver improvements to the Housing Service.

**22.0 Date Decision published:**

22.1 23 March 2021

**23.0 Executive Members in attendance:**

23.1 Councillor L Williams, in the Chair

Councillors Benson, Brookes, Campbell, Farrell, Hobson, Kirkland, Smith and Taylor

**24.0 Call-in:**

24.1

**25.0 Notes:**

25.1 Councillor Mitchell as Chairman of Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee and lead Councillor for the review was in attendance and made representations to the Executive. Councillor Mitchell paid tribute to the work of the Councillors on the review and the supporting officers, noting that the review had identified significant good practice particularly in the changing landscape of coronavirus. In response to the Cabinet Member's written comments in the report - Councillor Mitchell made the following observations in regards to recommendation 3- the view that it would be important to identify a named independent person to co-ordinate homeless support, in regards recommendation 7 that a report should be brought to the Committee in advance of next winter to enable meaningful engagement and in regards recommendation 9 that an independent mystery shopping exercise remained potentially beneficial.

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<b>Report to:</b>	<b>TOURISM ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Mr John Greenbank, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser (Scrutiny)
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	14 April 2021

## SCRUTINY REVIEW OF FLOOD RISK STRATEGY

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To update on the work undertaken by scrutiny members on the review of Flood risk Strategy.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To consider the update , the recommendations made and identify any further work to be undertaken on Flood Risk.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure the Committee has an overview of ongoing work.

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

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

### 4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None.

### 5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

### 6.0 Background information

6.1 On 11 February 2020 members of the Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee held a Review Panel meeting to consider the Flood Risk Annual Report and the draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Lancashire 2021-2027.

Councillor Gerard Walsh chaired the meeting with the following Members in attendance:

Councillor Paula Burdess

Councillor Fred Jackson

Councillor Jane Hugo

Councillor Paul Wilshaw

Councillor Paul Galley

Councillor Jim Hobson, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment, Mr John Blackledge, Director of Communities and Environment and Ms Clare Nolan-Barnes, Head of Coastal and Environmental Partnerships, were also in attendance.

Mr Blackledge and Ms Nolan-Barnes presented the draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Lancashire 2021-2027 to the review panel.

The review panel heard that officers were looking to increase public engagement to address flood risk issues in local communities. As part of this forums in Anchorsholme and Valencia had been contacted and volunteers had come forward to offer input into planning to manage future flood risk.

Members of the review questioned when the Local Flood Risk Forums would be established and were informed that their implementation had been delayed by Covid-19 but that it was intended that work on starting them would begin in February/March 2021. But it was recognised that flooding was a subject of particular public concern and that many people were willing to come forward.

The review welcomed the establishment of Local flood Risk Forums and asked that an update on their establishment be provided to the TEC Scrutiny Committee's June meeting.

The Strategy also outlined that great resources will be allocated to flood risk management by the Council, including some officers from Development Management. An Asset Register of flood management infrastructure was also being developed. A copy of which would be circulated to members once it had been completed.

Standardised reporting of flooding events had also been looked at and the format for reporting was now the same across the north west. This would make the sharing of information and easier and clearer for partners. Officer also worked closely with Housing Developers to help identify potential issues and that the correct planning approvals are being sought. It was hoped that this approach would reduce flooding

events by preventing issues before they occur.

Officers also stressed that in future the Council would seek to focus on work that was less 'piecemeal' and instead look to understand how to join-up projects to achieve a greater impact. In order to accomplish this Officer would be looking at understanding how flooding occurred in Blackpool, and what assets were available to address it.

Greater pooling of expertise and resources of Flood management was also discussed, with the Lancashire wide approach to preparing and reacting to flooding planned. Partners included Lancashire County Council, United Utilities, the Environment Agency, Fylde Borough Council and Wyre District Council.

The details of a number of bids to help fund flood management projects were outlined at the meeting. Blackpool was reported as leading on a bid for funds from the Innovative Resilience Fund, for a portion of the £50m available on behalf of Lancashire. If this was successful the funding would be of benefit to authorities across the county. The Council had also bid for £10m from the Government for 18 schemes to help flood management in Blackpool. One of these schemes involved the dredging of the Stanley Park Lake, which would also improve the quality of the lakes water.

It was expected that the Government would identify 20 schemes nationally to receive funding. Officers confirmed that they would report back on the outcomes of these bids to members.

Members of the review also discussed the changes that were occurring to beach topography caused by reduction in sand. Mr Blackledge explained in response that funding had been received for 2021-2022 to do a review of the topography and that the results would inform future flooding work.

The Review agreed to recommend that an update on Flood Risk Work be provide to the 16 June 2021 meeting of the TEC Scrutiny Committee. In this report members asked that the following information be provided:

- Details on the implementation of the strategy,
- The establishment of Local Flood Forums; and
- Progress on bids submitted (the potential work at Stanley Park Lake in particular).

6.1 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

**7.0 List of Appendices:**

7.1 None.

**8.0 Legal considerations:**

8.1 None.

**9.0 Human resources considerations:**

9.1 None.

**10.0 Equalities considerations:**

10.1 None.

**11.0 Financial considerations:**

11.1 None.

**12.0 Risk management considerations:**

12.1 None.

**13.0 Ethical considerations:**

13.1 None.

**14.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:**

14.1 None.

**15.0 Background papers:**

15.1 None.